

ALASKA LEGISLATURE SPECIAL COMMITTEE/SUBJECT FILES 8672

2853 SCOMM 125: HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION 2001-02



Alaska Council of School Administrators

[Home Page](#)
[AASA](#)
[AAESP](#)
[AASSP](#)
[ALASBO](#)
[Related Links](#)
[Contact Us](#)

Alaska Council of School
Administrators

326 Fourth Street, Suite
404

Juneau, AK 99801

(907) 586-9702

Where are the Teachers? We Need a more powerful Magnet! by Darroll Hargraves, Executive Director

What's the problem? What's getting the attention?

Interesting isn't it? During the past few years, public attention has been focused on funding, construction, standards, and testing. Each of these issues is important. However, whenever superintendents get together to talk about immediate and future concerns, another issue tops the agenda - the need to recruit, hire, and keep certified and qualified teachers and administrators.

The recent announcement by the University of Alaska that a five year program will be required for certification will further reduce the number of Alaskans to fill positions in our schools.

Alaska is not alone. In fact, teacher shortages are entering a critical stage across the nation. U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley consistently expresses a concern about the ability of our schools to attract the very brightest and best into education careers. As student enrollments continue to climb nationally, demand is outstripping supply at a time when the hurdles are being lifted even higher. For example, the shortage is becoming even more acute because many states are increasing their standards for teachers and some are requiring them to have majors in the subjects they teach or to pass qualifying tests. The recent announcement by the University of Alaska that a five-year program will be required for certification will further reduce the number of Alaskans to fill positions in our schools.

Salaries have not kept pace with what talented people can make outside the classroom. A recent Quality Counts 2000, 50state survey, conducted by Education Week, found that one in five college graduates who began teaching in 1993-94 left within three years. The brightest novice teachers, as measured by their college-entrance exams, were the most likely to leave, the study revealed.

There was a time, not so long ago, when Alaska was a magnet for educators.

What's at stake here? The immediate concern for many educators is having excellent teachers in the classroom—preparing students to pass exit exams that are looming in their future. Even more importantly, they are concerned about preparing students for life in the 21st century.

There was a time, not so long ago, when Alaska was a magnet for educators. Our salaries were the highest in the nation. Our recruiters could promise adventure,



Voters can expect to vote on a general obligation bond package that will fund schools and some of the state's deferred maintenance backlog.

good hunting and fishing, and a lifestyle that attracted exceptional talent. Let's face it. What worked in the past is not getting us the number and level of certified, qualified educators we need today and will need in the future.

While average teacher salaries in Alaska are still above the national average, we are now caught in what the New York Times calls a bidding war. That war has spread from coast to coast, and we are not winning. In fact, we are being outmaneuvered as never before. Take, for example, the incentives being offered in several states. California is offering \$10,000 interest-free loans for buying a home, \$30,000 bonuses for attaining advanced certification, and \$11,000 to repay college loans. In Texas, \$2,000 signing bonuses are becoming commonplace. Southern states such as Florida, Georgia and Mississippi have districts paying bonuses of up to \$6,000 to retain quality teachers.

As crises show signs of becoming catastrophes, some state legislatures and state departments of education have gotten the ball rolling on bringing retired teachers and administrators back into the system. Those early retirement incentives that were sold, in some case, as a way to remove the "dead wood" are now looking more like they've caused a "brain drain."

Salaries are a major problem, both for teachers and administrators. Alaska's largest districts provide an example of how noncompetitive our salaries are. These districts have budgets, enrollments, numbers of employees, physical plants, and demands comparable to large districts outside the state that are paying their superintendents nearly double. In fact, an Alaska board member recently admitted to the media that their superintendent is underpaid and speculated that if the present superintendent left and had to be replaced, it would require an additional \$50,000. Even that level of an increase would be low compared to salaries paid in comparable districts outside.

Granted, we need to pay attention to standards, facilities, and a number of other critical issues. At the same time, let's not forget that our ability to attract and keep outstanding teachers and administrators is basic to everything we hope to accomplish. Alaska needs a constant flow of quality, certifiable educators. While the problem may not be completely solved during this session of the Legislature, we simply must make sure that it receives the attention it deserves. The future of our kids depends on it.



Alaska Council of School Administrators

[Home Page](#)
[AASA](#)
[AAESP](#)
[AASSP](#)
[ALASBO](#)
[Related Links](#)
[Contact Us](#)

Alaska Council of School
Administrators

326 Fourth Street, Suite 404

Juneau, AK 99801

(907) 586-9702

Leadership Tools for Quality Schools by Darroll Hargraves, Executive Director

When the advisory group for the Alaska Staff Development Network set goals for this year the priorities were:

Expansion of comprehensive training efforts focusing on systemic change and implementation of standards-based education system,

Comprehensive instructional leadership training for principals,

Training in educational applications of technology to help educators enable students to meet Alaska content and performance standards.

A few months ago the Gates Foundation announced that they are making funding available based upon the number of principals and superintendents in private and public schools in each state. The superintendents and the two principals associations in Alaska have joined together with the Alaska Staff Development Network to apply for this grant. This is a unique opportunity for school administrators to establish the needs of administrators and develop a program that will focus on meeting those identified needs.

Superintendents and principals in the state recently received and responded to a survey sent to them by the design team in an attempt to more closely identify the needs that will be addressed by the Gates Proposal. Over 35% of the survey forms were completed and returned. The possibility that a program will be designed which will deal with the needs identified by administrators is an exciting development.

The Alaska Leadership Tools for Quality Schools Program will be administered by the Alaska Council of School Administrators in partnership with project partner organizations. The project will be governed by a Steering Committee composed of key representatives of project partner organizations:

- Ray Barnhardt, University of Alaska Fairbanks/Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative
- Bob Blum, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
- Keith Brosz, Alaska Private Schools Administrators
- Darroll Hargraves, Alaska Assoc. of School Administrators/Alaska Council of School Administrators
- Jack Heesch, Alaska Human Resource Investment Council, Office of the Governor
- Frank Hill, Alaska Federation of Natives/Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative/ Native Administrators for Rural Alaska
- Mary Johnstone, Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals
- Carol Kane, Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals



- Vernon Marshall, NEA-Alaska
- Doug North, Alaska Pacific University
- Carl Rose, Association of Alaska School Boards
- John Rusyniak, Alaska Society for Technology in Education
- Al Smith, University of Washington
- Mark Standley, Apple Computer, Inc.
- Kelly Tonsmeire, Alaska Staff Development Network

Superintendents and principals can be appreciative of the work this group is doing to design a quality leadership program for working school administrators.

Let's Attract the Brightest and Best into Education Careers

THE APPLICANT POOL IS THINNING

By Darroll Hargraves
Executive Director, ACSA

When does a crisis become a catastrophe? It's a question we'd better start asking now. Why? Because, for communities across Alaska and our nation, the pipeline is drying up as school systems try to attract the qualified teachers and administrators they need to provide leadership for children's education in Alaska.

The sense of urgency couldn't be greater, according to "The Shrinking Applicant Pool," a commentary in the November 8, 2000, issue of *Education Week*. The author, University of Memphis professor Thomas Glass, knows his stuff. In fact, he has conducted studies of the American school superintendency for the 1990s and for the first decade of the 21st century. He did not look specifically at Alaska, but what he learned reflects the story in Alaska.

Alaska has been blessed with magnificently talented and dedicated people who have served as superintendents and principals. However, a recent study indicates that our nation's nearly 14,000 school districts will be faced with hiring 8,000 new superintendents during the first eight years of the 21st century, primarily because of retirements and people simply leaving the field. Another study revealed that 55 percent of rural, 45 percent of suburban, and 47 percent of urban school districts are currently facing a shortage of qualified candidates for the principalship. In Alaska we may see 33% of the superintendents vacate their position each year. Where does that leave us? It sets us up for a leadership gap in some of the most important public positions in our democracy.

Glass points out reasons for "thin applicant pools" which may apply to Alaska:

- strains in board-superintendent relations;
 - salary that is inadequate to cover the responsibility and risk;
 - spouses who find it difficult to move because they hold professional positions in their communities;
 - a search process that is often so public and intrusive that it can put administrators at risk in their present positions;
 - a growing tendency for superintendents and most of the rest of us to be increasingly concerned about quality of life, no matter what the salary;
 - media that are poised for attack at the drop of an application;
 - family concerns, ranging from the ability to afford quality housing to moving children at sensitive ages;
 - retirement systems that are not portable from state-to-state;
 - vacancy notices that seem to exclude new candidates, and school boards that change after a few years and want to hire "their own superintendent."
- What's at stake? The education of our children and the future of our state and nation are on the block! While it is hard to break old habits, perhaps the time has come to face some of the problems Glass has pointed out.
- What question should we be asking. I suggest we rev up discussion. How can we continue to attract the brightest and best in our society into careers in education—in this case, the superintendency?"
- I'd like to enhance Glass' suggestions with key questions that should guide us in our discussions. Here are a few:
- School systems are often the largest institution in the community, with a larger staff and budget, more extensive physical plant, and responsibility for delivering a vitally important service to hundreds or thousands of people. Are we willing to consider what the leaders of these organizations would make if they were CEOs or top managers of similar sized businesses?
 - Are we willing to offer extended contracts that will attract outstanding education leaders who would like a bit more job security?
 - Is it possible for us to realize that superintendents are overburdened by never-ending demands, that they are always on call, and that they need help to get the job done? Too often, administrators are forced to shift focus from what makes a difference in the classroom to dealing with the whim of a single-issue person with friends in high places that drives some people right out of education.
 - Can we accept the fact that anyone who is a leader of learning must also continue to learn? Too often, when educators attend a conference, someone yells, "Junket." Most people in professional life understand that travel and conferences, coupled with ongoing concern about making sure everything is moving ahead on the home front, is very hard work.
 - Can outstanding school board members convince some of their colleagues that micro-management and treating educators with only a marginal level of respect will jeopardize education for children?
 - Is it possible for administrators, teachers, school boards, and communities to work as a team on behalf of even better education for students?

These are issues each and every community must face if we hope to prepare our children for life in a new century and new millennium. When you come down to it, ensuring the best possible education for Alaska's children will ultimately be the most important thing we ever do.



Alaska Council of School Administrators

[Home Page](#)
[AASA](#)
[AAESP](#)
[AASSP](#)
[ALASBO](#)
[Related Links](#)
[Contact Us](#)

Alaska Council of School
Administrators

326 Fourth Street, Suite 404

Juneau, AK 99801

(907) 586-9702

School Improvement Requires People Improvement by Darroll Hargraves, Executive Director

An event, which remains the high mark of my career as superintendent of schools, happened when I was superintendent of the Ketchikan Borough School District. We had been successfully balancing the budget with solid support of the Borough. The community and members of the board were generally positive about the improvements in curriculum and instruction. In a regular meeting of the School Board, directions were given to me to develop a plan of services for staff development with a budget of \$125,000. The board gave no other directions except that they should be given the opportunity to review the plan of services and be kept informed.

I had never seen or hear of a School Board taking the initiative for staff development in this way. The Board was committed to possibly the most important aspect of a successful school. At the time I considered the action of the Board to be progressive and sensitive to the main ingredient for implementing change.

It has been of concern that new demands for school improvement have increased, as the emphasis and funding for staff development has decreased. Staff development has been the first thing to be cut when districts are confronted with tight budgets. It takes a tough board and superintendent to commit to staff development as the last thing to cut from the budget. The larger community often proposes cutting funding for staff training. It is difficult to understand why funding for staff development is often viewed as a perk for teachers.

Staff development should be a major activity and expenditure for public schools at a time when standards, exit exams, and student security are major concerns of politicians, business leaders, and parents.

It was of interest to me a few years ago to learn that a certain oil company was spending more training the custodial staff assigned to the care and upkeep of their office building lobby than school districts were budgeting for teacher development. No successful business leader would expect to re-engineer their business without giving attention to staff development and budgeting for the cost.

It is encouraging to see the wave of staff development taking place this past summer in an attempt to train a large number of teachers and administrators to deal with the implementation of standards and the requirements of the exit exam for graduates.

The change in approach and philosophy which currently consumes so much what we do in public schools mandates a rethinking by policy makers about the emphasis to be placed on development of school personnel in Alaska's schools. Legislators, state policy makers, and local school boards need to examine their own position regarding the use of the public purse for staff development programs that are necessary for implementing the changes they have required.



Legislators, state policy makers, and local school boards need to examine their own position regarding the use of the public purse for staff development programs that are necessary for implementing the changes they have required.

Subject: Alaska Teacher Retention and Recruitment

Date: Wed, 5 Sep 2001 16:09:39 -0400

From: kbouta@northstar.k12.ak.us

To: Representative_Con_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us

FROM:

NAME: Katherine Bouta
ADDRESS: 1024 Cranberry Ridge Drive
Fairbanks, AK 99712

Representative Bunde:

I have heard you are asking for public comment in October on the issue of teacher retention and recruitment and I wanted to address the issue. The main problems in Alaska now for recruiting and retaining teachers are salary and student loads. Why should teachers stay in Alaska when they could be paid a bonus for signing a one year contract in another state and receive a higher yearly salary? While teachers do the work we do because we love it, we also believe in the American way - which stresses how much a person makes, and how well he/she can take care of his/her family.

Related to this is that as we have fewer teachers, the sizes of the classes we teach increase. I teach high school English, and now have 142 students. That means for every essay I ask for, I can expect to grade 142 papers, which equals 1136 papers in a year if I only require 4 papers a semester/8 papers a year. If I take 10 minutes a paper (minimal time) to grade each, that is 189 hours of just grading papers. That does not include any time for grading tests, in-class work, or other homework, or the time I spend teaching in the classroom. Yet, I cannot prepare my students for the High School Qualifying Exam in Reading or Writing, or meet the state educational standards if I ask any less of them. And I am not alone. I find most high school English teachers now exploring other careers, such as grant writing or administrative assistants in firms, which would pay them more, while demanding less of their time.

I realize hiring more teachers and paying our teachers better salaries is expensive. Yet we are told over and over that our children's education is a top priority and our society's most valuable asset. And most communities are hard pressed to come up with money, although that is partly because they will not raise the taxes to find the money. We need a state educational tax of \$15 each person who works in the state, and pressure needs to be brought upon communities who have no local educational tax to have one of \$10 per person living in the community. \$25 a year is a cheap way to show we value education - if our state and communities truly value education.

Sincerely,

Katherine Bouta

SCOMM

125:10

Mat-Su School District

Meeting Location: Mat-Su Legislative Information Office
600 East Railroad Avenue
Wasilla

Meeting Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Directions:

Glenn Highway north toward Wasilla

Left on Parks Highway (first stoplight on Glenn)

Stay on Parks until you reach downtown Wasilla (past Wasilla Lake; McDonald's, Carrs)

Left on Knik Goose Bay Road (at light; if you turn right, it's Main Street)

Immediate left onto Railroad Ave. (Greater Wasilla Chamber of Commerce is on corner)

Follow to end of road--LIO is located in a "mini-mall" on right side

**Mat-Su Borough School District
Expected Participants**

Administration:

Patricia Chesbro, Superintendent
Dr. Don Chicarell, Asst. Superintendent of Instruction
George Troxel, Director of Elementary & Secondary Education
Michael Melear, Director of Student Support Services (Special Education)
Paula Harrison, Director of Human Resources

Hearing Coordinator: Kim Floyd, Mat-Su S.D. Public Information Specialist

Late additions:

Barb Morris, President, Mat-Su Education Association (MSEA)
Dr. Larry Jacobson, Principal, Teeland Middle School
Karl Schleich, Principal, Ron Larson Elementary School
Mac Whyte, Principal, Colony High School
Pam Fenstamaker, Assistant Director, Student Support Services
Kristin Forrester, Director, Career & Technical Education

That's all! Thanks for your patience!

Other education professionals and community members from Mat-Su School District may participate. Those names were not available when the packets were sent out.

Scheduled School District Participants

In the Mat-Su Borough School District, we are experiencing critical shortages in qualified teaching staff, specialists, and school-level administrators. Specifically, our district faces difficulties in hiring and retaining Special Education teachers, instructors of math and science, and critical support personnel such as counselors, nurses, school psychologists, and hearing and language specialists. In addition, the district faces challenges in the recruitment of principals.

Large-scale recruitment efforts, especially in the area of special education, have yielded some results. However, our ability to recruit is overshadowed by the teacher shortage being experienced on a national level. One of our area's greatest challenges is our inability to compete with higher salaries and greater benefits being afforded by districts in the Lower-48. The State of Alaska no longer holds the attraction of higher salaries and greater benefits.

Special Education:

Throughout the past three years, the Mat-Su Borough School District has experienced a critical shortage in teachers with special education endorsements.

- In 1999, we hired approximately 25 special education teachers, and were required to grant waivers to four additional teachers.
- In 2000, we hired approximately 38 new special education teachers, and were required to grant waivers to two additional teachers. Further, we involuntarily transferred six teachers from regular education to special education.
- In 2001, we hired approximately 35 new special education teachers, and involuntarily transferred four teachers from regular education to special education.

Math & Science:

In regular education we have noticed that the pool of quality applicants is shrinking in areas such as math and science.

Student Support Services:

The district has struggled to fill critical support positions throughout the past four years. In fact, during the 2000-01 school year, some of the following positions were left vacant as a result of the shortage:

- school psychologists
- counselors
- occupational therapists
- speech therapists
- physical therapists,
- school nurses

Alaska School District Profiles



Below is the information you have requested.

Mat-Su Borough Schools

125 West Evergreen
Palmer, AK 99645-0000

Phone: (907) 746-9255

Fax: (907) 745-0194

District E-Mail: jfelix@msb.mat-su.k12.ak.us

Website: www.mat-su.k12.ak.us/schdist

Superintendent: Patricia Chesbro, Superintendent

E-Mail: Patricia.Chesbro@msb.mat-su.k12.ak.us

School Board President: Robert Johnson

E-mail the Webmaster





MSBSD

Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District

"Developing productive citizens for an ever-changing world"

Tuesday, September 18, 2001 15:35:01

[School Board](#) | [Schools](#) | [Departments](#) | [Employment](#) |



Artwork by "KW" in Mrs. Zimmer's 4th Grade Class - Meadow Lakes Elementary

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District is nestled in the picturesque Matanuska-Susitna Valley, in an area commonly known as Alaska's "bread basket." The "Valley," the state's largest and most productive agricultural area, is located approximately 50 miles north of Anchorage. The district spans 24,502 square miles, an area larger than the entire state of West Virginia.

The Mat-Su Borough School District is home to 30 schools

ranging in enrollments from 32 to more than 1,000 students. With a districtwide enrollment of approximately 12,600 students, Mat-Su is the third largest school district in Alaska--behind Anchorage and Fairbanks, respectively. Our educational facilities include 16 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 2 junior/senior high schools, 3 comprehensive high schools, 2 K-12 schools, 2 alternative schools, a correspondence program, and an online computer school. The district is scheduled to open four new schools within the next several years: an elementary and middle school in fall 2001; a high school in fall 2002; and, a elementary school by fall 2004. The district is the Borough's largest employer with approximately 1500 staff members; more than half the district's employees are teachers.

The district prides itself in the quality of its employees, which is evidenced by the number of state and national awards won each year by its teachers, administrators, and staff. Currently, the district employs the 2001 Alaska Teacher of the Year, the Alaska National Distinguished Principal (1999, 2000, & 2001), a Milken Family Foundation Educator, Alaska's 2001-02 Christa McAuliffe Fellow, and more National Board Certified Teachers than any other district in the state.

On the first round of state testing on Alaska State Standards, Mat-Su students fared better than or equally well as every other large district in the state. In fact, the district's 10th graders recorded the highest scores of all large schools in the state on the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE). The district is very involved in the state's Quality Schools Initiative and is recognized throughout the state as a leader in education. Innovative and successful teaching practices better ensure "that no students are left behind."

The district's number one priority is student safety and healthy, positive learning environments. The district is also committed to reducing class sizes at all grade levels, and high school and Kindergarten classes will see reductions in the upcoming school year. In an exciting announcement recently, the district unveiled plans to reduce Kindergarten class sizes to no more than 18 students during the 2001-02 school year.

The district's annual operating budget for the 2001-02 school year is approximately \$117 million. Funding for the district is provided through federal, state, and local resources, with the majority of the funding being provided by the state. Approximately 89.9 percent of the district's operating budget is dedicated to personnel salaries and benefits. At only three percent of operating costs, the district's administrative overhead continues to be one of the lowest in the state.

[Links for Employees](#)
[Web Based Email](#)
[GroupWise Web Access](#)
[Email Account Directory](#)
[Encarta Online](#)
[CyberPatrol Site](#)
[Submission](#)
[Report Card to The Public](#)
[Alaska Development](#)
[Standards](#)
[Alaska Statewide](#)
[Databases](#)

Members

PRESIDENT Robert Johnson PO Box 3914 Palmer, AK 99645 PHONE: (907) 745-4555	VICE PRESIDENT Dan Contini HCO4 Box 9394 Palmer AK 99645 PHONE: (907) 745-3535 <u>chief@mtaonline.net</u>	CLERK Helene Antel Brooks HC 02 Box 7516 Palmer, AK 99645 PHONE: (907) 746-1547 <u>habatty@alaska.net</u>	
MEMBER Robert Wells HC05 Box 6871 Palmer, AK 99645 PHONE: (907) 746-5585	MEMBER Linda Menard 351 West Swanson St., Suite #1 Wasilla, AK 99654 PHONE: (907)376-5855 <u>LMenard@msb.mat-su.k12.ak.us</u>	MEMBER Carl Gatto PO Box 2894 Palmer, AK 99645 PHONE: (907)745-3711 <u>cgatto@gci.net</u>	MEMBER Mike Chmielewski Box 3454 Palmer, AK 99645 PHONE: (907) 746-5868 <u>mcski@alaska.net</u>

BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Julena Felix
125 W. Evergreen Street
Palmer, AK 99645
PHONE: (907) 746-9272

If you have questions regarding this website, contact JFelix@MSB.Mat-Su.k12.ak.us

[To School Board Home Page](#)



Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District

Schools

[Home](#) | [School Board](#) | [Schools](#) | [Departments](#) | [Employment](#) |

Elementary Schools

[Big Lake Elementary](#)

[Butte Elementary](#)

[Cottonwood Creek](#)

[Elementary](#)

[Finger Lake Elementary](#)

[Goose Bay Elementary](#)

[Iditarod Elementary](#)

[Meadow Lakes Elementary](#)

[Pioneer Peak Elementary](#)

[Sherrod Elementary](#)

[Snowshoe Elementary](#)

[Sutton Elementary](#)

[Swanson Elementary](#)

[Tanaina Elementary](#)

Middle Schools

[Colony Middle](#)

[Palmer Junior](#)

[Middle](#)

[Wasilla Middle](#)

High Schools

[Burchell High](#)

[Colony High](#)

[Palmer High](#)

[Wasilla High](#)

Charter & Other Schools

[Academy Charter School](#)

[Community Technology Center](#)

[Correspondence School](#)

[Glacier View School](#)

[Houston JR/SR High School](#)

[Mat-Su's Online Learning](#)

[Program](#)

[Midnight Sun Charter School](#)

[Susitna Valley JR/SR High](#)

[School](#)



MSBSD

Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District

"Developing productive citizens for an ever-changing world"

Certified Openings

Teaching Vacancies

Special Education (multiple)
Counselors (multiple)
Math/science
Language Arts
Elementary

Speech Therapist (2)
School Psychologist (2)

Band/Music (Middle School and High School)
Counselors (multiple)
VOCATIONAL ED - ALL AREAS

For further information please contact:

Marilyn Feller, Personnel Specialist
Mat-Su Borough School District
125 West Evergreen Avenue
Palmer, AK 99645
Phone: 907-746-9242 Fax:
907-745-0667

Marilyn Feller



mfeller@msb.mat-su.k12.ak.us

Administrative Openings

Classified Openings

The Mat-Su Borough School District employs approximately 800 teachers, nurses, counselors, therapist and specialist. The following is required to be on file in the Human Resources Department prior to consideration for a certified vacancy: Application, transcripts, placement file, three confidential letters of recommendation, teacher certification, screening interview (All application materials must be submitted collectively - confidential references must come in sealed envelopes and be sent with the application package.)

Teacher Application Packet

Counselor Application Packet

Nurse Application Packet

Librarian Application Packet

Specialist Application Packet (includes: psychologist, behavior specialist, visually impaired specialist, audiologist, resource specialist, work study specialist)

Therapist Application Packet (includes: occupational therapist, speech pathology, physical therapist)

Salary Schedule

SCOMM

125:11

Northwest Arctic Borough School District

Meeting Location: School District Board Room
Kotzebue

Meeting Time: 123:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Directions: The NWARB School District Van will handle transportation for the committee.

**Northwest Arctic Borough
Expected Participants**

In Person:

Lincoln Saito, Executive Director for Chukchi University Campus
Charles Mason, Chief Executive Officer, NWAB School District
Bobby Schaeffer, School Board Member
Jennifer Davis, NAEA Representative

Via Teleconference:

Lisa Weber, NAEA President
Possibly other teachers from Kotzebue

Written Testimony:

Andy Baker, community member, former Assembly President
Ross Schaeffer, NWAB Mayor

Other education professionals and community members from NWAB School District may participate. Those names were not available when the packets were sent out.

Scheduled School District Participants

Notes

Suggestions for Teacher Recruitment and Retention in Rural Alaska

Recruitment

***Rural school districts need to staff a full time recruiter position.** This person would recruit at job fairs, make personal visits to selected colleges and universities that offer specific programs of study that are of critical need to rural Alaska. Schedule and facilitate onsite conference interviews at campuses, attend teacher related conventions such as NEA, New Teachers' Convention, and act as liaison with the Alaska Teacher Placement at UAF and the Alaska tourism industry. The recruiter would disseminate school district and community information. The recruiter would make personal contacts while on campuses with education departments, career centers, outdoor sports clubs and wild life oriented clubs/organizations in order to attract and make contact with those individuals who are interested in Alaska's unique lifestyle.

***Create a "Future Teachers of Alaska" organization/club at the high school level.** This organization would serve to attract high school students to the teaching field by offering experience working with elementary and middle school students as volunteers with possible credit toward HS graduation. Regular meetings would take place in which members discuss ongoing education related issues with a faculty advisor. **Future Teachers of Alaska** would also provide assistance for members with; college/university selection, grant and scholarship applications, loan applications, professional organizations, as well as locating student teaching positions within their home community schools.

Recruitment Incentives

***Student Loan Assumptions**

Permit teachers who are newly hired by rural Alaska school districts to apply to have their student loans from financial institutions to be "refinanced" by the Alaska Student Loan Corporation as "Alaska Student /Teacher Loans". After five years of verifiable Alaska service the loan is forgiven as with the current system in place.

***Teacher Savings Plan**

Create an employee savings plan as many businesses and as the NSBSD had in place years ago in which teachers may contribute up to 6% of their salary before taxes and the school district contributes 3%. Teachers must remain with the district for a minimum of five years before they will be eligible to withdraw the school district's contribution.

Housing and Teacher Retention

***Offer Low Interest Mortgages**

Housing shortages and teacher retention are critical concerns for the Bush communities. It is well known in the rural areas that teachers who invest in housing, or "put down roots", are most likely going to become part of the community for several or more years.

Most teachers however do not have the funds or the incentives to invest in housing in rural Alaska.

The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation could work in partnership with Alaska's rural school districts to offer an incentive that would encourage a partial solution to both teacher retention and to address the severe housing shortages.

The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation could offer "low interest, zero down, no-qualifying new construction loans" to teachers who would be eligible for "tenure" status with their district and are a first time "rural community home buyer". The teacher would qualify through income and tenure with the school district.

The school district would then guarantee the loan for the first three years. During this time the teacher must occupy the home, continue to be employed by the school district, and remain in good standing. After three years the school district would release any lien and the teacher would only be obligated to the mortgage company.

Teacher Certification

*Previously tenured Alaska teachers who have left the profession and let their certificates lapse past one year should be eligible for re-certification without the Praxis requirement. Those teachers having taught with districts "outside" and hold valid certificates with another state should not be required to retake the Praxis.

*UAA, UAF, University of Alaska Pacific, and Sheldon Jackson College could offer Praxis preparation courses and workshops, including distance delivery, to those teachers and students who are required to take and pass the Praxis.

*Emergency certificates and one-year conditional certificates should be "renewable" by the state for an additional year at the request of the rural superintendent through some sort of "good cause exception".

Advantages

Funding for recruitment positions, Praxis preparation course of study, and a pre-professional organization/club creation at the high school level such as "Future Teachers of Alaska" could be financed with State and Federal grants.

The Alaska Student Loan Corporation is already in place.

The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation is already in place.

**Northwest Arctic Borough School District
Bullet Points on Teacher Shortage**

- **More money for:**
 - **Adequate teacher housing**
 - **Competitive Salaries**
 - **Benefits**
 - **Staff Development**
 - **Incentives**
- **Public safety, VPSO & Troopers**
- **Allow RIP'ed personnel to return without a penalty**
- **Retirement – Return to Tier I**
- **Invest in teacher preparation programs**
- **Upgrade the University of Alaska programs**
- **Forgiveness on student loans**
- **More scholarship \$\$'s for teacher candidates**
- **INS – Expediting procedures to hire Canadian applicants**
- ✓ • **Allowing personnel to file unemployment claims when they leave to work in another state**

Suggestions from Rep. Joule's office regarding cultural expectations of Kotzebue area community members.

Casual dress is probably better than business dress. Recommend slacks with a button down shirt or sweater, no tie and no jacket.

Elders often speak at length on a subject and cutting them off is considered very rude, as is walking out on a person who is speaking.

Since you have limited time I am not sure of the best way to handle that, Reggie may be of help in that area.

Also of note is that if people have gloves on they should take them off for introduction purposes and shaking hands.

Alaska School District Profiles



Below is the information you have requested.

Northwest Arctic Borough Schools

P.O. Box 51
Kotzebue, AK 99752-0000

Phone: (907) 442-3472 x233

Fax: (907) 442-2392

District E-Mail: cmason@nwarctic.org

Website: www.nwabsd.schoolzone.net

Superintendent: Charles Mason, Chief Executive Officer

E-Mail: cmason@nwarctic.org

School Board President: Sophie Ferguson

E-mail the Webmaster



Northwest Arctic Borough School District

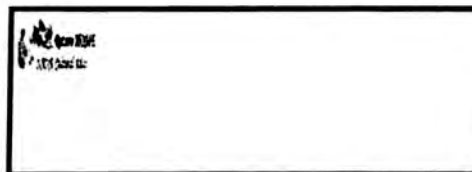


"Leading the Way"

We will develop the most precious resource of the Arctic, our children's minds, by providing a quality education.

-Vision Statement

Visit the Cultural Atlas created by Northwest Arctic Borough School District students and staff from Kiana, Kotzebue, and Selawik. The Cultural Atlas is being developed to share resources that will help people understand the relationship between the past, present and future of the People and culture of the NANA region. We would like to share our traditions, stories, and methods using the technology we have today.



Copyright 2000 Northwest Arctic Borough School District
P.O. Box 51, Kotzebue, Alaska 99752
Telephone: 907-442-3472 Fax: 907-442-2392
Web Manager



Northwest Arctic Borough School District

School Board

Vision Statement:

We are developing the most precious resource of the Arctic, our children's minds, by providing a well-rounded quality education.

School Board Members:**Sophie Ferguson, President**

(3 Year Term) 1999 - 2000

Elsie Bahr, Secretary

(3 Year Term) 1998 - 2001

Rena Brown, Parliamentarian

(3 Year Term) 1998 - 2001

Miles Cleveland, Sr.

(3 Year Term) 1997 - 2000

Marcy Fairbanks, Vice-President

(3 Year Term) 1999 - 2002

Kenny Gallahorn

(3 Year Term) 1998 - 2001

Gia Hanna

(3 Year Term) 1999 - 2002

Paula Mills

(3 Year Term) 1997 - 2000

Ron Moto, Treasurer

(3 Year Term) 1998 - 2001

Bobby Schaeffer, Parliamentarian

(3 Year Term) 1999 - 2002

Vince Schuerch

(3 Year Term) 1997 - 2000

Contact Information:

P.O. Box 131, Kotzebue, AK 99752
Home (907) 442-3156

P.O. Box 20, Noorvik, AK 99763
Home (907) 442-636-2250

P.O. Box 115, Selawik, AK 99770
Home (907) 484-2308

P.O. Box 105, Ambler, AK 99786
Home (907) 445-2185 Fax (907) 445-2141

P.O. Box 1194, Kotzebue, AK 99752
Home (907) 442-3663 Work/Home (907) 442-3700
Message (907) 442-3701 FAX (907) 442-2770

P.O. Box 946, Kotzebue, AK 99752
Home (907) 442-3805 Work (907) 442-3147
FAX (907) 442-2127

P.O. Box 1043, Kotzebue, AK 99752
Work (907) 442-3301 Toll Free (800) 478-3301
(907) 442-2866 - Fax

P.O. Box 21, Noatak, AK 99761
Home (907) 485-2159

P.O. Box 15, Deering, AK 99736
Home (907) 363-2118

P.O. Box 1148, Kotzebue, AK 99752
Home (907) 442-6019

P.O. Box 29, Kiana, AK 99749
Home (907) 475-2188

SCOMM

125:12

**General Research:
Teacher Recruitment and Retention**

**In Preparation for
Statewide Hearings
on the
Teacher Shortage
October 22-24, 2001**

**House Special Committee on Education
Representative Con Bunde, Chair**

Alaskan Legislative Action

1993-2001

By Senator Leman

adn.com

Anchorage Daily News

Shortage of teachers haunts us

Compass*(Published May 9, 2001)*

Teachers are disappearing from Alaska's classrooms in increasing numbers. At the beginning of this school year there were almost 90 teaching vacancies statewide. There are over 300 vacancies for next year. Overcoming this shortage will take new, innovative policies to recruit, hire and retain qualified teachers.

Effective teachers are critical to student learning. Robert Holland, writing in the April/May 2001 issue of Policy Review, chronicles a number of recent studies that reveal, aside from parental involvement, effective teachers are the most important factor in student success, across grade levels and around the country. No other factor -- per pupil expenditures, class size, physical environment, parental income -- is more important to student achievement than well-educated, motivated teachers.

The teacher shortage is a nationwide phenomenon. Illinois public schools had 2,637 unfilled teaching jobs just a few months ago. Tucson Unified School District was short 200 teachers when school began this year. Maryland faces a shortage of 10,350 teachers by fall 2001.

States are reaching beyond their borders to attract qualified teachers to overcome these shortages. A recent University of Alaska Anchorage newspaper contained a large advertisement from the Clark County, Nev., School District. This district came to UAA to recruit last month. Alaska school districts recruited as recently as last week in Kansas, Oklahoma and New Mexico.

Some states are also raising the recruiting stakes by employing cash incentives to attract teachers. Other states are employing signing bonuses, or one-time stipends for teachers who achieve national board certification.

Alaska has limited capacity to provide for its own teaching needs. The best estimates are the University of Alaska graduates less than 30 percent of the new teachers needed in Alaska and not all of these graduates enter the teaching profession. The university graduates well-qualified students to be teachers, but it simply does not produce enough graduates to meet Alaska's need.

Proactive legislation can help alleviate the teacher shortage. We can make it easier to recognize the credentials of teachers certified in other states. We can ease the re-entry of previously certified teachers who want to return to the classroom. We can improve teacher medical coverage. We can create incentives for retired teachers to return to the classroom. I introduced SB 149 to implement these ideas. This bill passed the Legislature.

Retired teachers represent an available pool of experience and teaching talent in Alaska. SB 149 gives them the option to enter the work force again without losing their pension benefit. Testimony from teachers made it clear that this will encourage their return to the classroom.

Innovative solutions can increase the qualified teaching pool. We should allow people who have degrees in fields like math, physics and chemistry to teach those subjects. Music professionals and foreign languages experts should also be able to teach in the classroom. This smart and practical solution is contained in Sen. Pete Kelly's Senate Bill 86. This also passed the Legislature.

This approach is proving its worth around the country. In programs like Teach for America, thousands of college graduates not majoring in education have been placed directly into jobs in some of the toughest schools in the country. The results? Their supervisors rated them well above average across the board in intellect, motivation and classroom management.

I was raised in Ninilchik, on the Kenai Peninsula. One of my favorite high school teachers was Miss McCune. She was tough yet approachable. She challenged and inspired me. I remember her lessons well. I wish every student in Alaska could have the benefit from learning from a teacher like Miss McCune. By attracting good teachers to Alaska, I believe they will.

Sen. Loren Leman is the Senate Majority Leader, vice chairman of the Senate HESS Committee, and a member of the Senate Finance and Senate Labor and Commerce committees. He is the father of three children.

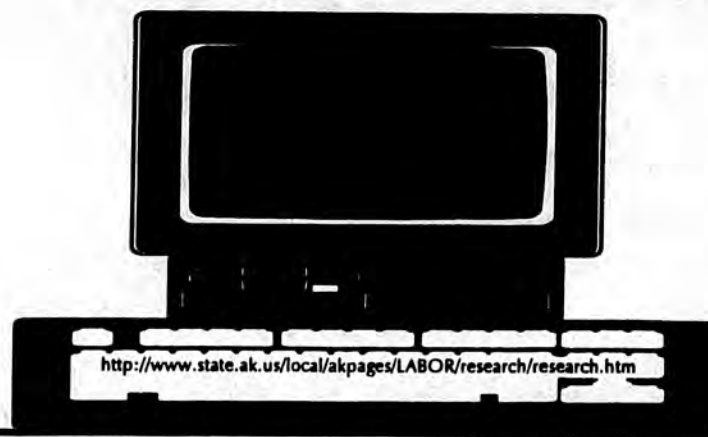
Close Window

Copyright © 2001 The Anchorage Daily News (www.adn.com)

"Alaska Economic Trends"

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| February 1998: | Public School Education -
A Big Industry |
| September 2000: | The Aging of Alaska's
Workforce |

ALASKA ECONOMIC TRENDS



Alaska Economic Trends is a monthly publication dealing with a variety of economic-related issues in the state.

Alaska Economic Trends is funded by the Employment Security Division and published by the Alaska Department of Labor, P.O. Box 21149, Juneau, Alaska 99802-1149. For more information, call the DOL Publications Office at (907) 465-6019 or email the authors.

Material in this publication is public information and, with appropriate credit, may be reproduced without permission.

Editor's Note: The views presented in guest articles in *Alaska Economic Trends* do not necessarily reflect the views of the Alaska Department of Labor.

Tony Knowles, Governor
State of Alaska

Tom Cashen, Commissioner
Department of Labor

Diana Kelm, Editor

February 1998
Volume 18
Number 2
ISSN 0160-3345

Alaska
Department
of Labor



- 2 Public School Education—A Big Industry
- 13 Alaska Employment Scene:
A Decade of Employment Growth
Employment Scene Tables:
 - 15 Nonagricultural Wage and Salary
Employment—Alaska and Anchorage
 - 15 Hours and Earnings for
Selected Industries
 - 16 Nonagricultural Wage and Salary
Employment in Other Economic Regions
 - 17 Unemployment Rates by Region and Census Area

Printed and distributed by
ASSETS*, a vocational training
center and employment program.

Cover design by Jim Fowler

This publication, funded by the
Department of Labor's
Employment Security Division,
was produced at a cost of
\$.70 per copy.

Public School Education— a Big Industry

Email: Neal_Fried@labor.state.ak.us

Email: Brigitta_Windisch-Cole@labor.state.ak.us

by Neal Fried and Brigitta Windisch-Cole

Local public education is one of Alaska's largest industries. Alaska's local school districts, combined, represent one of the state's biggest employers. Jobs with local school districts in kindergarten through 12th grade number over 20,000—nearly seven percent of all wage and salary jobs in Alaska. No industry is more ubiquitous. Often local education is the single largest employer in a community. In fact, two of the state's 10 largest employers are school districts. In many communities, one of the few employers is the local school district.

Local education is also a billion-dollar business. In Alaska, unlike nearly anywhere else in the country, local education is a basic sector employer. This anomaly occurs because, with almost 70 percent of all funds for local education coming from the state budget, oil revenues, not local tax dollars, provide the major funding for this industry. (See Figure 1.) As a result, when these education dollars are spent, they represent new economic activity in the state and in all of its communities. Therefore, local education spending in Alaska is not only an investment in education but also has immediate economic impacts. This article will explore these economic effects and will discuss the employment opportunities provided by this industry.

For the purpose of this article, local education represents public education, covering kindergarten through grade 12. Private schools are not within the scope of this analysis.

The ubiquitous industry

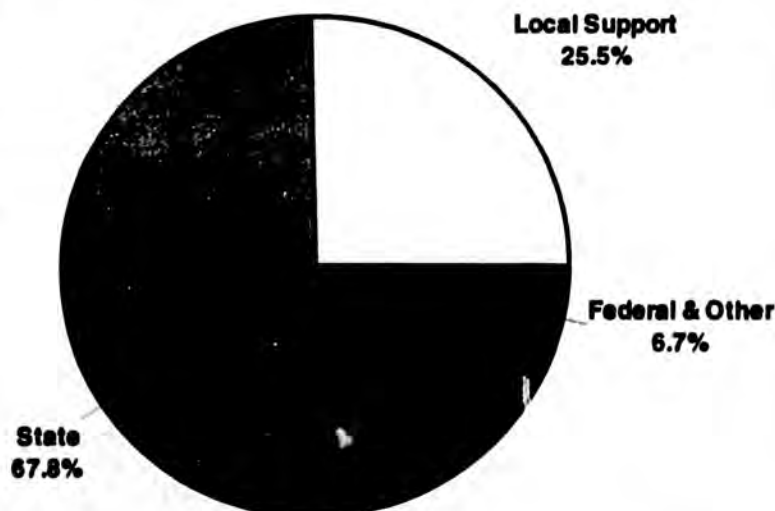
In 1997, over 127,000 children, more than one-fifth of the state's population, attended public school in Alaska. (See Figure 2.) Only Utah had a larger percentage of its population in school. Alaska's high proportion of schoolchildren creates education-related jobs in practically every community. During 1997, on average, more than \$7,500 was spent educating each child.

In many communities, both large and small, the local school district is one of the largest employers, if not the largest. For example, in the Bristol Bay, Anchorage and Mat-Su Boroughs, the Copper Center region, Bethel and many other areas, the local school district is the single largest employer. In some communities, the public schools are one of the few sources of full-time, nonseasonal employment. In the Bethel, Wade Hampton (Yukon Delta area), and the Yukon Koyukuk census areas, more than 20 percent of wage and salary employment comes from school districts. (See Table 1.) In

Neal Fried and Brigitta Windisch-Cole are labor economists with the Research and Analysis Section, Administrative Services Division, Alaska Department of Labor. They are located in Anchorage.

Figure • 1

Sources of the \$910 Million Spent for Local Education in Alaska in 1996

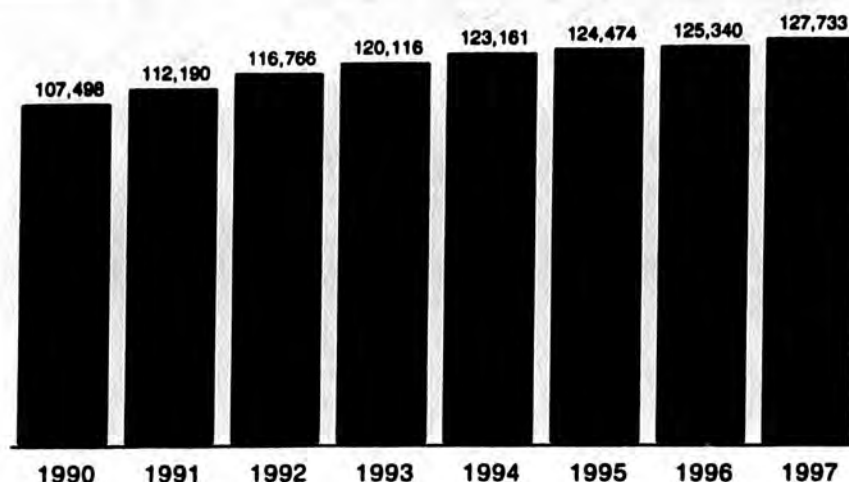


Source: Alaska Department of Education, 1996.

Figure • 2

Alaska's School Enrollment Continues to Climb Kindergarten through Grade 12

Source: Alaska Department of Education.

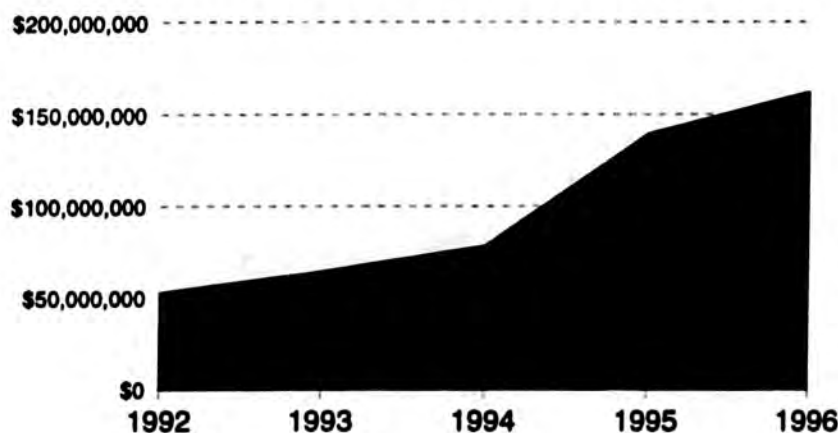


eight other boroughs or census areas, schools provide over 10 percent of wage and salary employment. In addition, these employment numbers do not include all employees connected to, but not employed by, the school district, such as contracted school bus drivers. Neither do they include the hundreds of millions of dollars spent on school construction around the state, (See Figure 3.), nor the employment and income multiplier effects these education jobs create.

Figure • 3

School District Capital Expenditures

Source: Alaska Department of Education.



The payroll impact of local education is even greater. (See Table 1.) In 1996, the total payroll for local education was \$641 million. (See Table 2.) This total is nearly equivalent to the payroll of the oil industry. In the economically depressed region of Wade Hampton, in the Yukon Delta area, almost half of the payroll in the region comes from its local school district. In all but two areas of the state, the average wage in education is greater than the overall average wage for that region. The average annual wage for local education in Alaska in 1996 was \$36,557 as compared to Alaska's overall annual average wage of \$32,088. The exceptions were the North Slope Borough and the Valdez-Cordova census area where high oil industry wages pushed average earnings above the norm.

The industry keeps growing

During the 1990s, school enrollment has steadily grown, spurring growth in local education employment. In 1997, employment in public education topped

the 20,000 mark. (See Figure 4.) In recent years, public education has been the impetus for nearly all the growth in local government. Because of its large size, turnover, and recent early retirement incentive programs, local education is providing more employment opportunities than it has since the 1980s.

Discussing employment opportunities in this industry often translates into examining opportunities for teachers. (See Figure 5.) Teaching positions account for nearly half of the jobs in local education. (See Figure 6.) The other half of public education's occupational profile includes various types of professionals, service workers, support and managerial positions. Most of the discussion in this article, however, refers to teachers, since they are largely the backbone of this industry.

Job opportunities for teachers are good

During the past two years, and probably for the next two years, the job outlook for teachers in Alaska is more positive than it has been in a long time. Many factors affect the supply and demand for teachers. On the demand side, there is growth in enrollments, teacher-pupil ratios, funding, legal requirements and the national labor market for teachers. Influencing the supply side are the number of graduates, wages, the national supply of certified teachers and the general condition of the overall job market. In Alaska, there are two distinct labor markets for teachers—school districts that are

Figure • 4

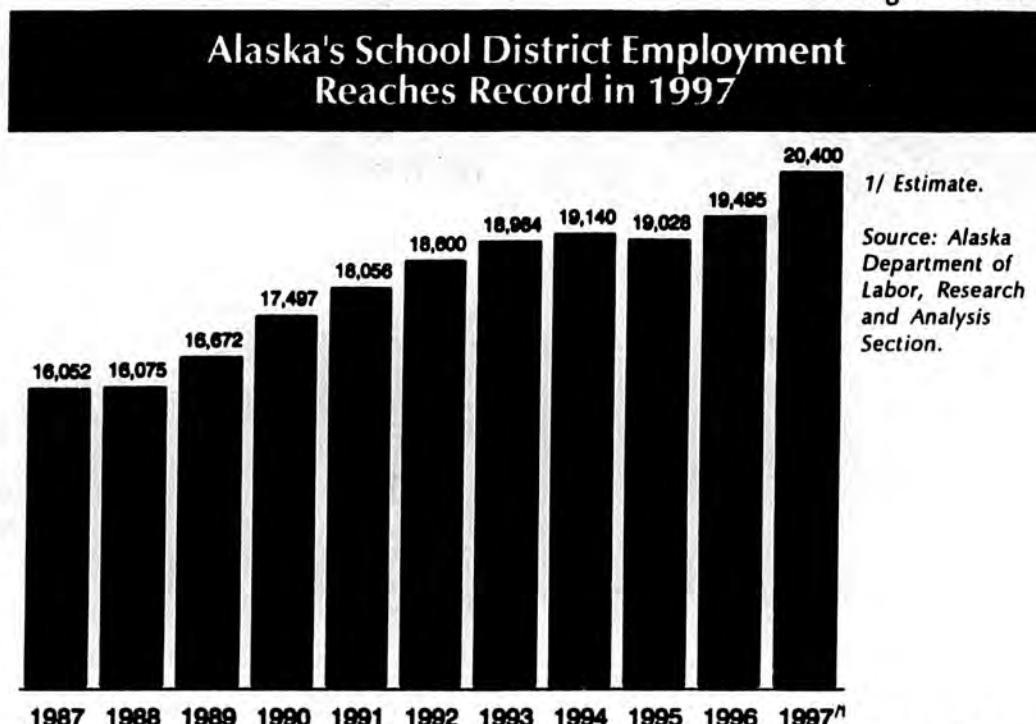


Figure • 5



Table • 1

School Districts Play an Important Role in Alaska's Economy

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.

Area:	Share of Total Area Employment in 1996	Share of Total Area Payroll in 1996
Statewide	6.7%	7.6%
Aleutians East Borough	5.5	5.9
Aleutians West Borough	3.2	3.6
Municipality of Anchorage	4.4	5.3
Bethel Census Area	21.5	27.5
Bristol Bay Borough and Lake & Pen. Borough	14.1	17.2
Denali Borough	5.3	6.1
Dillingham Census Area	14.1	17.1
Fairbanks North Star Borough	5.5	6.9
Haines Borough	8.1	10.0
Juneau Borough	4.0	5.5
Kenai Peninsula Borough	8.7	10.1
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	5.0	5.0
Kodiak Island Borough	6.0	7.9
Lake & Peninsula Borough	(combined with Bristol Bay Borough)	
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	14.7	21.2
Nome Census Area	16.8	20.6
North Slope Borough	7.4	5.3
Northwest Arctic Borough	15.6	16.4
Prince of Wales/Outer Ketchikan	10.4	12.3
Sitka Borough	6.6	8.2
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	12.7	12.4
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	14.8	17.2
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	8.4	8.0
Wade Hampton Census Area	29.0	48.5
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area	8.8	10.4
Yakutat Borough	8.9	9.0
Yukon Koyukuk Census Area	25.8	26.6

urban or on the main road system, and the rural job market.

The urban teacher scene

For the past two decades, a constant flood of applicants chased after a limited number of teaching jobs in urban and on-the-road system school districts. Many of these districts, particularly the larger ones, were often quite passive about re-

cruiting for most teaching positions because the applicant pool was so large. It was not unusual for the school districts of Fairbanks, Anchorage, Mat-Su, Kenai and Juneau to have thousands of applicants on file. During the 1980s, there were years when there were only 10 openings for secondary teachers for the entire Anchorage School District. During this period, the following comment appeared in one of Alaska's newspapers: "to become a school teacher . . . appears almost analogous to becoming a movie star." However, more recently the script has changed.

The year 1997 or 1998 may go down as a record year for new hires in Alaska's public education system. (See Figure 7.) Last year the Alaska Teacher Placement staff predicted that "Alaska's demand for educators would be astronomically high." This demand is partially due to the current local and statewide early retirement incentive programs that began in 1996 and will continue through the year 2000. Although this is the third time an early retirement incentive package has been offered, under present circumstances it is translating into almost unprecedented opportunities for teachers in Alaska. Thus far, 435 teachers have taken early retirement, and the number

will increase significantly. The Anchorage School District alone expects to see more than 220 and possibly as many as 300 teachers retire at the end of the 1997-98 school year. This is in addition to those who took advantage of the package last year. Therefore, demand is high and opportunities are good.

During the first wave of early retirements, many urban districts drew on their large local supply of

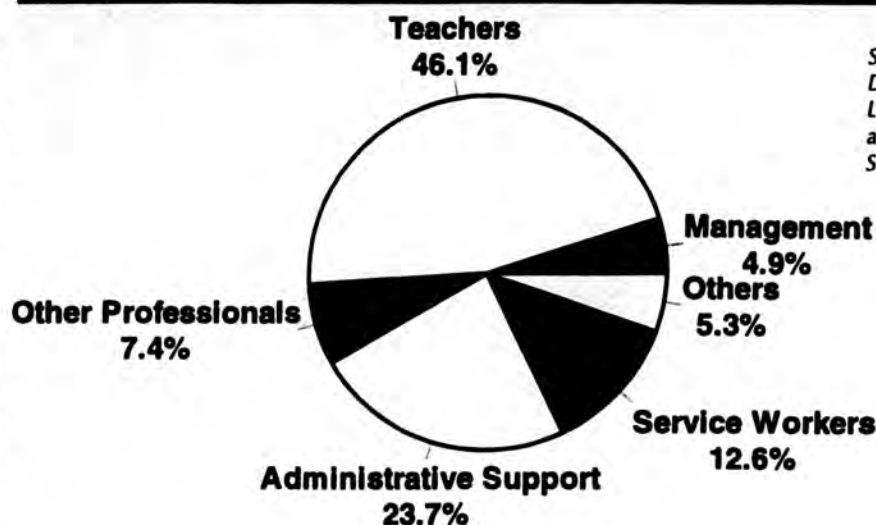
Figure • 6

individuals with teaching credentials. This included a large pool of substitute teachers. As a result the supply of substitutes in many school districts is now stretched thin. Additionally, the supply of students graduating with teaching credentials from Alaska's schools has changed little during the past five years. Their numbers actually fell a bit during the past two years. (See Figure 8.)

A tighter national market further affects this drawdown on Alaska's supply of teachers. Growing enrollments nationwide and some education initiatives, such as California's effort to cut classroom size, have increased the demand for school teachers around much of the country. The median age of teachers nationally is higher than that of the overall workforce; therefore, as older teachers retire, they are creating more opportunities for new teachers. And the hot overall national job market is attracting people with teaching credentials into other professions. Additionally, salaries for Alaska's teachers during the past decade have increased more slowly than they have in much of the rest of the nation. (See Figure 9 and Table 3.) This combination of factors has meant that fewer applicants with teaching credentials from elsewhere in the country are looking for teaching jobs in Alaska.

As a result, many of Alaska's school districts are having to make greater efforts to recruit teachers. For example, during last year's three job fairs put on by the Alaska Teacher Placement, there were fewer candidates to choose from as the year progressed. By the third job fair, there were only 130 registrants for 90 positions compared to a

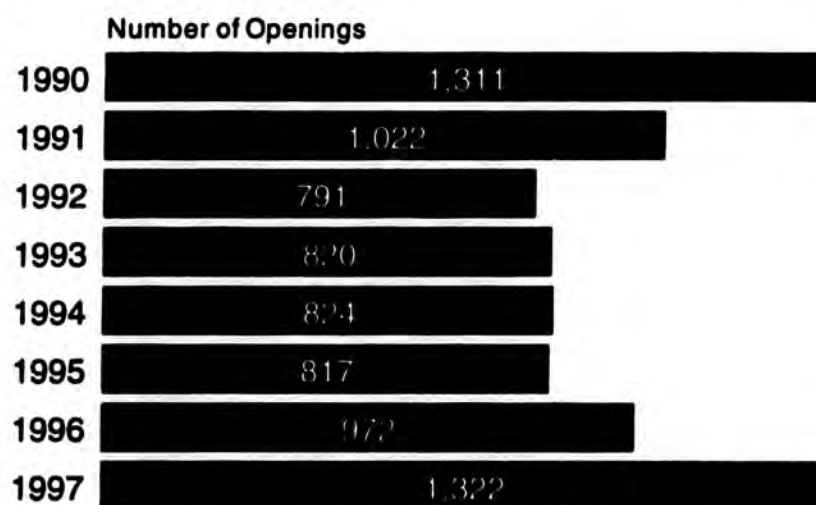
The Job Breakdown in Local Education in Alaska's Schools



Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.

Figure • 7

Openings for Teachers in Alaska's Public Schools



Source: University of Alaska Fairbanks, Alaska Teacher Placement.

3-to-1 ratio of registrants to positions during the first fair. For the first time, students in the 1998 graduating class of the University of Alaska-Anchorage's School of Education are being recruited well before graduation. The Anchorage School District also experienced a first by putting on a job fair in December to recruit teachers in antici-

(continued on page 8)

Table • 2

School District Employment and Earnings by Area in 1996

Census Area or Borough	Name of District	Location of Headquarters or District Office	Average Annual Employment	Total Payroll by School District
Statewide			17,532	\$840,910,978
Aleutians East Borough	Aleutians East School District	Sand Point	95	2,484,188
Aleutians West Borough	Pribilof School District	St. Paul	53	1,820,507
	Unalaska City School District	Unalaska	75	2,406,499
	Aleutian Region District School Center	Unalaska	8	285,506
	Adak Region School District ¹	Adak	3	288,743
Municipality of Anchorage	Anchorage School District	Anchorage	5,285	211,481,340
Bethel Census Area	Kuspuk School District	Aniak	136	4,250,179
	Lower Kuskokwim School District	Bethel	946	29,070,874
	Yupik School District	Akiachak	115	3,170,866
Bristol Bay Borough and Lake & Peninsula Borough	Bristol Bay Borough Schools	Naknek	70	2,139,660
	Lake & Peninsula Borough Schools	King Salmon	159	5,770,963
Denali Borough	Denali Borough Schools	Healy	73	2,408,841
Dillingham Census Area	Dillingham City Schools	Dillingham	97	3,578,251
	Southwest Region Schools	Dillingham	193	6,114,063
Fairbanks North Star Borough	Yukon/Koyukuk School District ²	Fairbanks	28	1,180,902
	Fairbanks N.S. Borough School District	Fairbanks	1,651	60,338,999
Haines Borough	Haines Borough Schools	Haines	71	2,262,465
Juneau Borough	Juneau City Schools	Juneau	654	26,045,011
Kenai Peninsula Borough	Kenai Peninsula Borough	Soldotna	1,408	48,446,078
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	Ketchikan Gateway Borough Schools	Ketchikan	284	10,444,588
	Southeast Island School District	Ketchikan	112	2,369,631
Kodiak Island Borough	Kodiak Island Borough Schools	Kodiak	376	12,359,054
Lake & Peninsula Borough (combined with Bristol Bay Borough)	Lake & Peninsula Borough Schools	King Salmon	(see above)	
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	Mat-Su Borough Schools	Palmer	1,482	59,371,910

(continued on next page)

School District Employment and Earnings by Area in 1996 *(continued)*

Census Area or Borough	Name of District	Location of Headquarters or District Office	Average Annual Employment	Total Payroll by School District
Nome Census Area	Nome Public Schools	Nome	120	4,309,180
	Bering Strait School District	Unalakleet	453	14,437,121
North Slope Borough	North Slope Borough Schools	Barrow	608	26,771,109
Northwest Arctic Borough	Northwest Arctic Borough Schools	Kotzebue	381	14,214,340
Prince of Wales/ Outer Ketchikan Census Area	Annette Island Schools	Metlakatla	78	2,776,553
	Craig City Schools	Craig	73	2,082,824
	Hydaburg City School District	Hydaburg	30	822,262
	Klawock City School District	Klawock	47	1,527,241
Sitka Borough	Mt. Edgecumbe (State government))	Sitka	47	1,575,009
	Sitka Borough School District	Sitka	208	6,971,668
Skagway-Hoonah- Angoon Census Area	Hoonah City School District	Hoonah	60	1,640,886
	Pelican City School District	Pelican	11	368,223
	Chatham School District	Angoon	104	2,494,060
	Skagway City Schools	Skagway	29	857,647
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	Alaska Gateway Schools	Tok	110	2,973,154
	Delta/Greely School District	Delta Junction	131	4,727,015
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	Copper River School District	Glennallen	126	3,188,080
	Cordova City School District	Cordova	75	2,623,770
	Valdez City School District	Valdez	150	6,009,358
	Chugach School District (Whittier)	Anchorage	33	1,066,391
Wade Hampton Census Area	Kashunamiut School District	Chevak	47	1,712,985
	St. Mary's City Schools	St. Marys	35	801,562
	Lower Yukon School District	Mountain Village	428	13,053,080
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area	Kake City School District	Kake	51	1,181,662
	Petersburg School District	Petersburg	97	3,450,479
	Wrangell Public Schools	Wrangell	82	2,755,468
Yakutat Borough	Yakutat School District	Yakutat	38	1,196,982
Yukon Koyukuk Census Area	Yukon/Koyukuk School District ¹²	Fairbanks	137	3,795,800
	Galena City School District	Galena	46	1,417,666
	Nenana School District	Nenana	39	1,092,766
	Tanana City School District	Tanana	25	797,013
	Iditarod Area School District ¹³	Mc Grath	129	3,952,039
	Yukon Flats School District	Fort Yukon	130	4,248,468

Table • 3

Average Teacher Salaries by State 1989-90 and 1996-97

1/ Estimated by
the National
Education
Association.

Source: National
Education
Association.

	1989-90	1996-97	Percent of Change	1997 Percent of U.S. Average
United States	\$31,367	\$38,509	22.8%	100.0%
Alabama	24,828 ¹	32,549	31.1	84.5
Alaska	43,153 ¹	50,847	17.8	132.0
Arizona	29,402	33,350	13.4	86.6
Arkansas	22,352	29,975	34.1	77.8
California	37,998	43,474	14.4	112.9
Colorado	30,758	38,175	24.1	99.1
Connecticut	40,461	50,426	24.6	130.9
Delaware	33,377	41,436	24.1	107.6
District of Columbia	38,402	45,012	17.2	116.9
Florida	28,803	33,881	17.6	88.0
Georgia	28,006	36,042	28.7	93.6
Hawaii	32,047	36,842	15.0	95.7
Idaho	23,861	31,818	33.3	82.6
Illinois	32,794	42,679	30.1	110.8
Indiana	30,902	38,575	24.8	100.2
Iowa	26,747	33,275	24.4	86.4
Kansas	28,744	35,837	24.7	93.1
Kentucky	26,292	33,950	29.1	88.2
Louisiana	24,300	28,347	16.7	73.6
Maine	26,881	33,800	25.7	87.8
Maryland	36,319	41,148	13.3	106.9
Massachusetts	34,712 ¹	43,806	26.2	113.8
Michigan	37,072 ¹	44,251	19.4	114.9
Minnesota	32,190	37,875	17.7	98.4
Mississippi	24,292	27,720	14.1	72.0
Missouri	27,094	34,342	26.8	89.2
Montana	25,081	29,950	19.4	77.8
Nebraska	25,522	31,768	24.5	82.5
Nevada	30,590	37,340	22.1	97.0
New Hampshire	28,986	36,867	27.2	95.7
New Jersey	35,676	49,349	38.3	128.1
New Mexico	24,756	29,715	20.0	77.2
New York	38,925	49,560	27.3	128.7
North Carolina	27,883	31,225	12.0	81.1
North Dakota	23,016	27,711	20.4	72.0
Ohio	31,218	38,831	24.4	100.8
Oklahoma	23,070	29,270	26.9	76.0
Oregon	30,640	40,900	33.5	106.2

(continued on next page)

(continued from page 5)

tion of the 1998-99 school year. The Alaska Teacher Placement Spring Annual Fair is anticipating a record number of recruiters in 1998.

Far more opportunities in rural Alaska

In many ways, recruitment of teachers in rural school districts is not different from recruitment in more urban areas; it is simply far more intense. Turnover is much higher in rural Alaska. In 1996, before the most recent early retirement package, rural school districts replaced nearly 21 percent of their staff versus nine percent for urban and on-the-road system districts. In 1997, the first year of the early retirement package, the Yupiit school district, based in Akiachak, replaced 47 percent of its teachers. Some school districts will not be extending the retirement packages next year for fear of losing too many experienced teachers.

Often the small size and isolation of rural communities are given as reasons for a much higher turnover rate. Stress related to the meeting of two cultures is also a contributor. Other factors include the absence of a career ladder, housing and weather problems and the lack of amenities. Although starting salaries in most rural school districts are higher than those in urban districts, the cost-of-living differences and high travel costs often cancel out the higher salaries. (See Table 4.)

Table • 3

Most rural school districts generally have little or no pool of local qualified teachers to choose from. Nearly 60 percent of their new recruits come from out-of-state. The average tenure for rural school teachers is far shorter than in urban areas. It is not uncommon for teachers of rural school districts to use their experience as a stepping stone into urban Alaska. Although fewer rural teachers are taking advantage of the early retirement package, these districts are feeling the ripple effect. For example, the Lower Kuskokwim school district, the state's largest rural district, typically experiences a 10 percent turnover rate, but last year that rate climbed to 14 percent. Higher turnover means there are far more opportunities for individuals with teaching credentials to find jobs in rural Alaska.

Always shortages in some areas

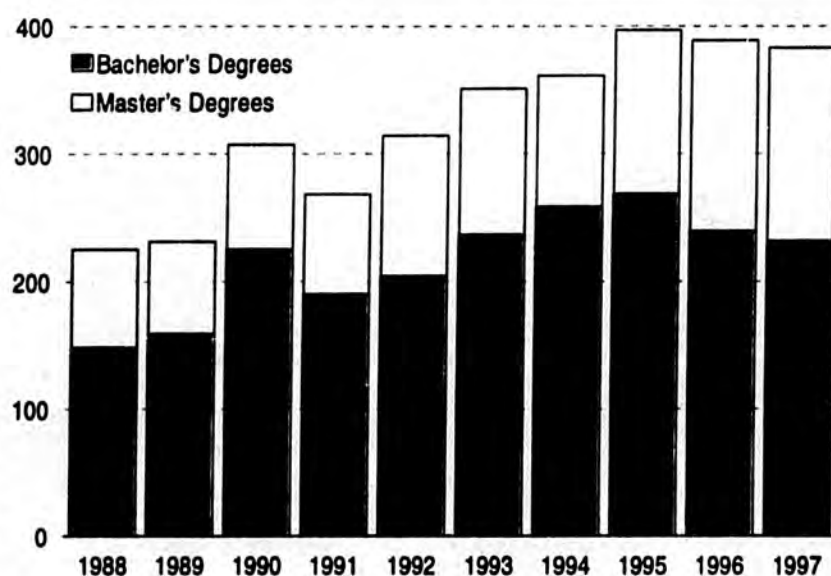
Both urban and rural school districts find certain occupations persistently difficult to fill because there are not enough qualified applicants. (See Table 5.) Special education has topped the shortage list for more than a decade. There are several factors pushing the demand for special education teachers. The number of special-ed students is climbing faster than general enrollments, partially due to federal legislation that continues to expand the coverage of eligible students. The integration of special-ed students into regular classrooms also requires more teachers. There is more turnover and burnout

Average Teacher Salaries by State 1989-90 and 1996-97 (continued)

	1989-90	1996-97	Percent of Change	1997 Percent of U.S. Average
Pennsylvania	33,338 ¹	47,429	42.3%	123.2%
Rhode Island	36,057	43,019	19.3	111.7
South Carolina	27,217	32,659	20.0	84.8
South Dakota	21,300	26,764	25.7	69.5
Tennessee	27,052	33,789	24.9	87.7
Texas	27,496	32,644	18.7	84.8
Utah	23,686	31,750	34.0	82.4
Vermont	29,012	37,200	28.2	96.6
Virginia	30,938	35,837	15.8	93.1
Washington	30,457	37,860	24.3	98.3
West Virginia	22,842	33,169	45.2	86.1
Wisconsin	31,821	38,950	22.4	101.1
Wyoming	28,141	31,721	12.7	82.4

Figure • 8

Education Graduates from University of Alaska Number of Graduates



Source:
University of
Alaska,
Institutional
Research.

Table • 4

Teachers' Base Salary 1996-97

Source:
Association of
Alaska School
Boards.

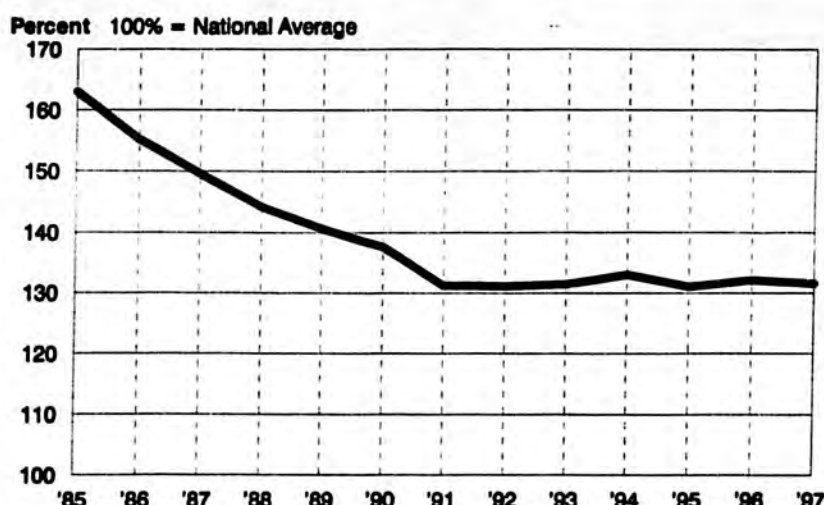
District	Location of District Office	Average Annual Salary
Alaska		\$32,542
Alaska Gateway Schools	Tok	34,329
Aleutian Region District School Center	Unalaska	32,600
Aleutians East School District	Sand Point	36,100
Anchorage School District	Anchorage	30,079
Annette Island Schools	Metlakatla	32,073
Bering Strait School District	Unalakleet	31,939
Bristol Bay Borough Schools	Naknek	33,667
Chatham School District	Angoon	32,285
Chugach School District	Anchorage	29,383
Copper River School District	Glennallen	31,965
Cordova City School District	Cordova	30,414
Craig City Schools	Craig	30,208
Delta/Greely School District	Delta Junction	31,400
Denali Borough Schools	Healy	30,939
Dillingham City Schools	Dillingham	34,244
Fairbanks N.S. Borough School District	Fairbanks	31,931
Galena City School District	Galena	34,500
Haines Borough Schools	Haines	28,209
Hoonah City School District	Hoonah	31,908
Hydaburg City School District	Hydaburg	29,593
Iditarod Area School District	McGrath	32,780
Juneau City Schools	Juneau	31,242
Kake City School District	Kake	32,189
Kashunamiut School District	Chevak	35,500
Kenai Peninsula Borough	Soldotna	29,500
Ketchikan Gateway Borough Schools	Ketchikan	30,544
Klawock City School District	Klawock	29,621
Kodiak Borough Schools	Kodiak	32,482
Kuspuk School District	Aniak	34,070
Lake & Peninsula Borough Schools	King Salmon	31,500
Lower Kuskokwim School District	Bethel	33,947
Lower Yukon School District	Mountain Village	34,039
Mat-Su Borough Schools	Palmer	31,037
Nenana School District	Nenana	32,321
Nome Public Schools	Nome	31,820
North Slope Borough Schools	Barrow	39,474
Northwest Arctic Borough Schools	Kotzebue	33,441
Pelican City School District	Pelican	32,718
Petersburg School District	Petersburg	30,712
Pribilof School District	St. Paul	34,810
Sitka Borough School District	Sitka	30,506
Skagway City Schools	Skagway	29,165
Southeast Island School District	Ketchikan	29,344
Southwest Region Schools	Dillingham	35,560
St. Mary's City Schools	St. Marys	32,596
Tanana City School District	Tanana	33,718
Unalaska City School District	Unalaska	35,700
Valdez City School District	Valdez	34,631
Wrangell Public Schools	Wrangell	28,000
Yakutat School District	Yakutat	28,687
Yukon Flats School District	Fort Yukon	31,520
Yukon-Koyukuk School District	Fairbanks	34,172
Yupik School District	Akiachak	34,500

among special-ed teachers than among other teaching staff. In Alaska, only the University of Alaska-Anchorage offers special-ed teaching credentials. There is a strong demand for special-ed teachers throughout the United States. Therefore, the shortage of teachers specializing in this field will likely remain unchanged for the foreseeable future.

A growing number of school districts are grappling with a shortage of applicants qualified to teach secondary science and math. School districts are also experiencing a shortage of music and art teachers. The rapid introduction of technology and computers into the classroom is causing the demand for teachers endorsed in technology and computers to grow faster than the supply. Districts also are struggling to fill school counselor positions. Because many rural schools are small and one teacher often teaches a variety of subjects, multiple endorsements can be critical; but many rural school districts are finding these positions difficult to fill. In a similar vein, a number of rural districts are finding it harder to locate teaching couples. These teams are sought after because of housing availability. Alaska's school-age population is far more ethnically and racially diverse than the state's overall population, and diversity in this age group is increasing rapidly. Most school districts feel there is a real shortage of minority candidates. The demand for Native Alaskan teachers is so strong that a number of programs exist to increase the supply of

Figure • 9

Average Teacher Salaries in Alaska As Percentage of the National Average



Source: National Education Association.

Native Alaskan teachers. Teachers who can teach English as a second language or are bi-lingual are also in big demand. Recruitment in the area of elementary education seems to be less problematic.

Other staff can also be difficult to recruit. Filling the positions of physical and occupational therapists is a perennial problem. These shortages are likely to persist because they also reflect the national labor market. School districts also note shortages of speech pathologists, school psychologists and librarians.

A good time to find a job in local education

Local education is big business in Alaska. It is often the largest employer in a community. Alaska's public education payroll is nearly as large as that of the oil industry. In rural Alaska it's not unusual for local education to be the primary source of both employment and payroll. Local education employs over 20,000 people in the state and has always been an important source of employment opportunities. During the past year, and over at least the next two years, local education will generate an above average number of job opportunities. An early retirement package, a strong demand for educators nationally, fewer out-of-state applicants and a generally tighter job market have led to better than usual job opportunities for teachers and others associated with local education. Given the industry's size and its diverse needs, opportunities will continue to exist even after the last wave of retirees moves through the system.

Table • 5

A Partial List of Jobs In Local Education Which Are In Strong Demand

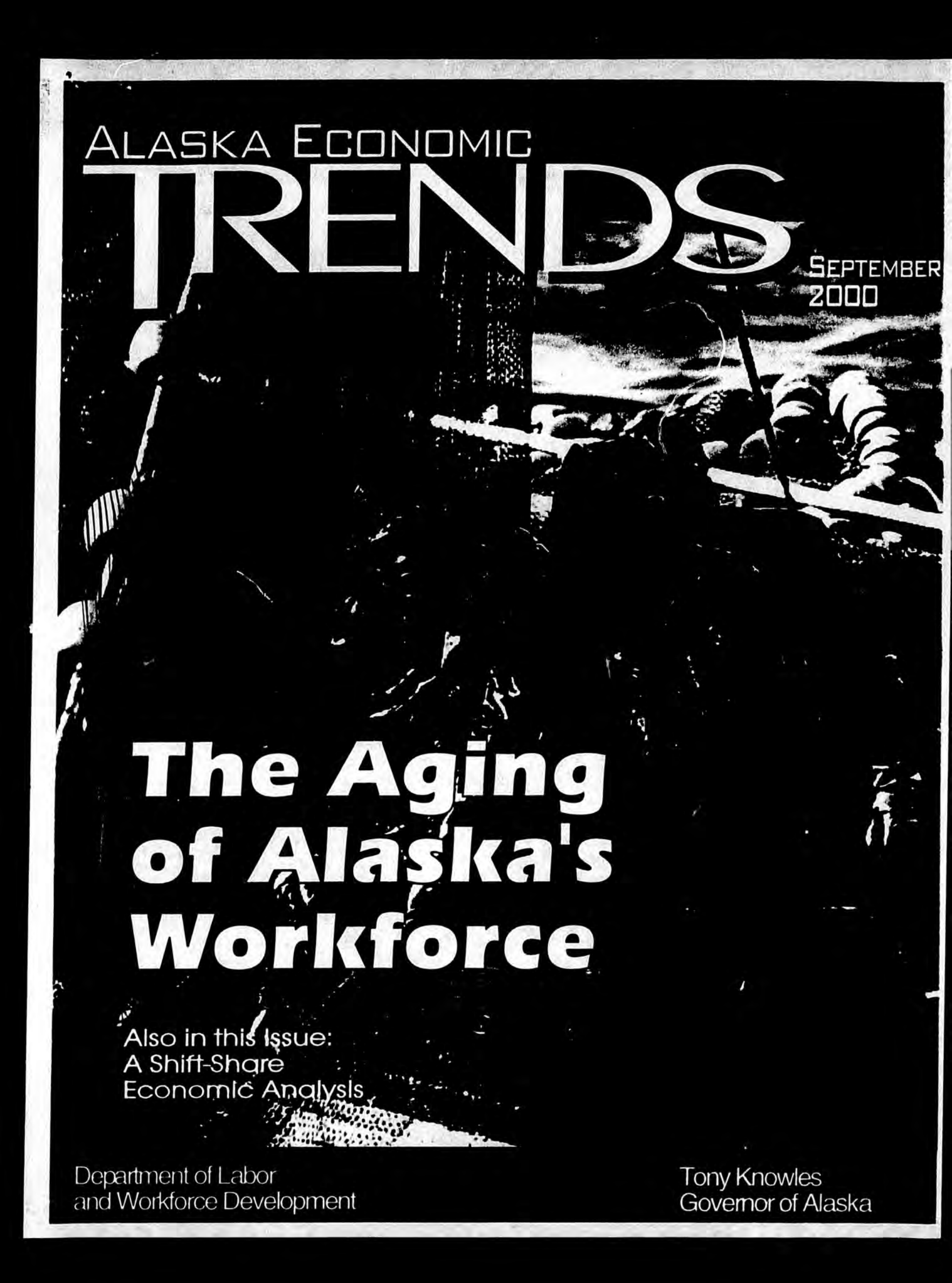
Teaching Staff

Special Education Teachers
Math And Science Teachers
Music Teachers
Art Teachers
Technology and Computer Teachers
Teachers With Multi-Endorsements
Minority and Native Alaskan Teachers
Bi-Lingual Teachers
Teaching Couples

Other Staff

School Counselors
Physical Therapists
Occupational Therapists
School Psychologists
Speech Pathologists
Librarians

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.



ALASKA ECONOMIC

TRENDS

SEPTEMBER
2000

The Aging of Alaska's Workforce

Also in this Issue:
A Shift-Share
Economic Analysis

Department of Labor
and Workforce Development

Tony Knowles
Governor of Alaska

ALASKA ECONOMIC **TRENDS**

**September
2000
Volume 20
Number 9**

<http://www.labor.state.ak.us/research/research.htm>

ISSN 0160-3345

Alaska Economic Trends is a monthly publication dealing with a variety of economic-related issues in the state.

Alaska Economic Trends is funded by the Employment Security Division and published by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, P.O. Box 21149, Juneau, Alaska 99802-1149.

Printed and distributed by Assets, Inc., a vocational training and employment program, at a cost of \$.82 per copy.

For more information, call the AKDOL Publications Office at (907) 465-6018 or email the authors.

Material in this publication is public information and, with appropriate credit, may be reproduced without permission.

Trends is available on the Internet. See URL above.

The views expressed in guest articles are not necessarily those of AKDOL.

Cover photo by John Hyde, courtesy of Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**Tony Knowles, Governor of Alaska
Ed Flanagan, Commissioner of Labor
and Workforce Development**

Joanne Erskine, Editor

Email *Trends* authors at:

Jeff_Hadland@labor.state.ak.us

JKenworthy@astf.org

John_Boucher@labor.state.ak.us

Jeff Hadland and John Boucher are staff in the Research and Analysis Section, Administrative Services Division, Department of Labor and Workforce Development in Juneau.

**Subscriptions: Stephanie_Stutler@labor.state.ak.us
(907) 465-4500**

Cover design by Chris Snyder

Contents:

- | | |
|---|----|
| The Aging of Alaska's Workforce | 3 |
| Are labor shortages around the corner? | |
| A Shift-Share Economic Analysis | 10 |
| How Alaska compares to the national economy | |
| Employment Scene | 17 |
| Economy absorbs more workers in June | |
| Western Alaska fisheries are in serious trouble | |
-

The Aging of Alaska's Workforce

by Jeff Hadland, Economist, and
Greg Williams, Demographer

Are labor shortages around the corner?

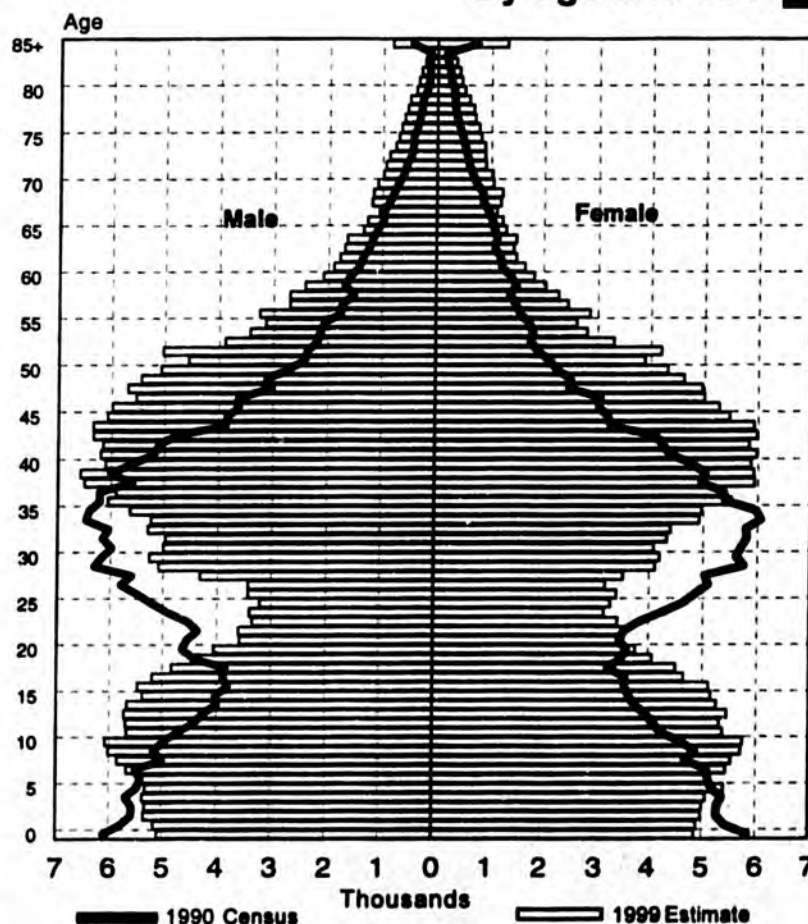
Historically, Alaska has had a relatively young population. Oil pipeline construction in the mid-1970s and the employment boom associated with high oil prices in the early '80s brought a large number of young workers to Alaska. Many of these workers remained in Alaska and have aged in place, resulting in a significant increase in the average age of Alaska's workers. Because of a number of demographic factors, it is not likely there will be enough children of those older workers to fill the anticipated employment needs of Alaska employers over the coming decade. The potential labor shortage presents opportunities for unemployed and underemployed Alaskans. A rise in the average age at retirement may also help reduce the potential shortage. The "graying" of the Alaska worker will place new demands on training institutions. It may push wages higher and is likely to lead to more nonresident workers.

Alaska's demographic profile

Alaska's median age has risen from 29.3 in 1990 to 32.9 in 1999, due in part to a change in migration patterns and long term demographic trends. There has been a continued decline in the number of 18-year-olds migrating to Alaska. In 1998-99, the number of 18-year-olds coming into Alaska was equivalent to about 4 percent of the 18-year-old population. This is about half of the percentage of in-migrants experienced during the first couple of years of the decade. There has not been any general increase in out-migration

of persons of college age, except for that related to military cutbacks. In fact, the percentage of 18-year-olds leaving the state (about 9 percent

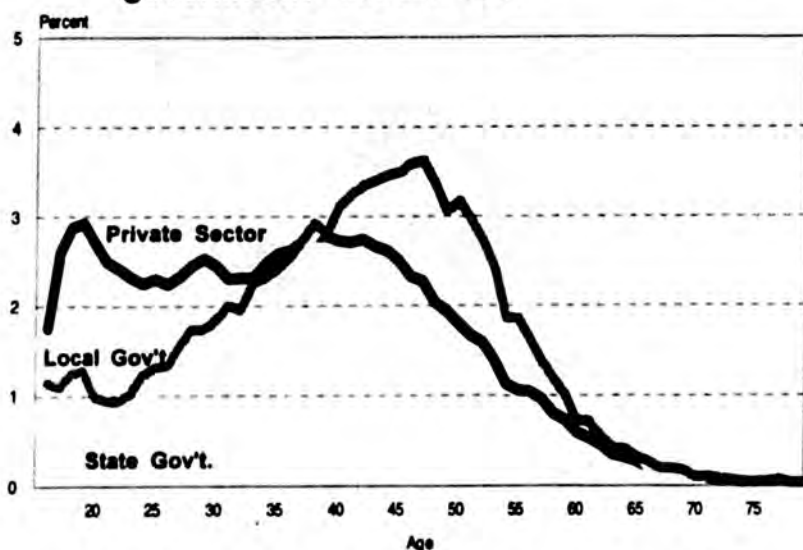
Alaska Population 1990 & 1999 By age and sex



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development,
Research and Analysis Section

2 Percent Distribution by Age

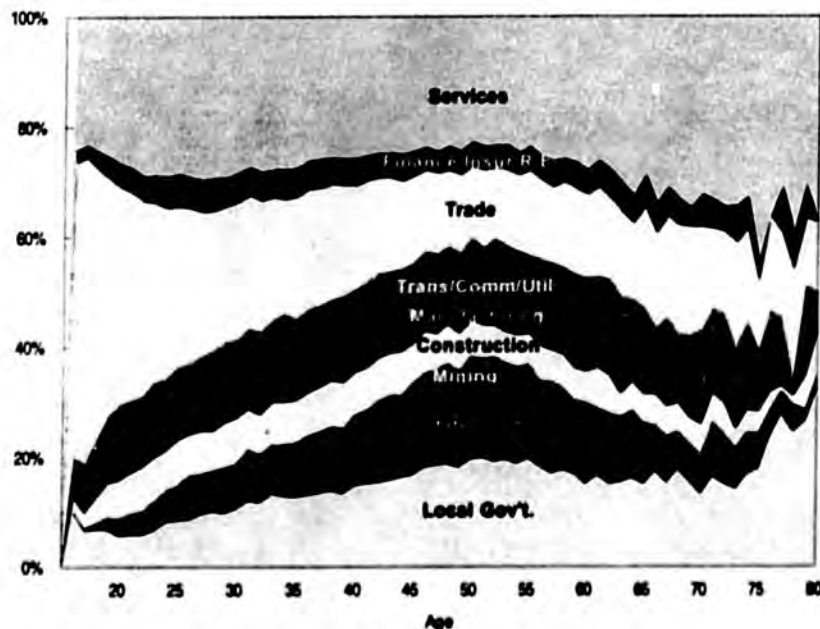
Workers in private sector, state and local government—Alaska 1999



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

3 Workers by Industry and Age

Percent—Alaska 1999



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

annually) is lower than at any time during the 1990s.

The decline of young adults in Alaska is primarily a result of long term demographic trends. The number of Alaskans age 20 to 34 has declined significantly in total numbers (by about 36,000) since the 1990 census. Exhibit 1 shows how the relatively low number of Alaskans that were in their early teens in 1990 is reflected in the low number of Alaskans in their early twenties today. Just as a disproportionately large number of Alaskans approach retirement age there will be relatively few Alaskans that will have completed postsecondary education or training needed to fill the openings created by retiring workers.

Age profile of Alaska workers

Employment openings result from several factors including overall industry growth, normal turnover, retirements, and death. Assuming no significant change in the average retirement age, the quickly increasing average age of workers suggests that retirement (and death) will play a bigger role in the number of Alaska job openings during the next several years.

Although many private sector industries are expecting a significant increase in those eligible to retire, there are major differences in the age profiles of private versus public sector workers in Alaska. (See Exhibit 2.) The average age of private sector wage and salary workers in Alaska in 1999 was 36.1 years, while state and local government workers had an average age of 43.5 and 41.1 respectively. About 29 percent of state government workers and 25 percent of local government workers were age 50 or older in 1999. Although Alaska federal government wage records are not available for analysis, the *Washington Post* reported in their May 7, 2000, issue that based upon Office of Personnel Management data, 30 percent of federal government workers will be eligible to retire in the next five years.

Young Alaska workers are much more likely to work in the wholesale or retail trade industries while middle-age workers are much more heavily represented in state and local government. (See Exhibit 3.) The state and local government sectors have the largest numbers of workers age 50 and over and among the very highest percentages of workers age 50 and over. (See Exhibit 4.) Although there is no significant difference in the age profiles of education and non-education government workers, most teachers are eligible for retirement after 20 years, while most non-education Alaska state and local government workers first hired prior to mid-1986 are eligible for full retirement at age 55. Although many workers continue to work after they are first eligible to retire, there is likely to be a significant need for replacement teachers and other government workers over the next decade.

Industries and occupations facing the highest retirement rates

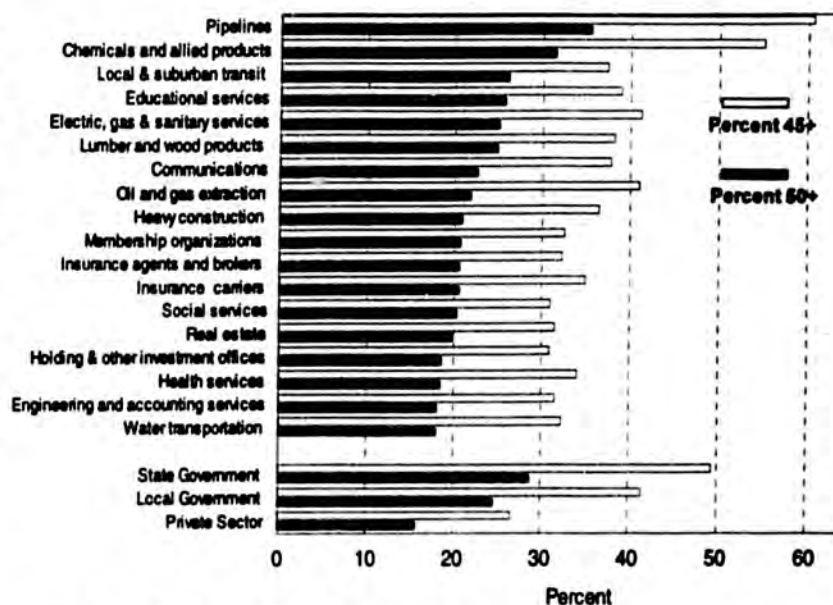
Private sector industries with the largest number of workers age 50 and over include health services, oil and gas extraction, membership organizations, engineering firms, eating and drinking places, social services, and air transportation. (See Exhibit 9.) In 1999 the health services industry, which includes medical services and hospitals, had more than 3,100 workers age 50 and over.

Large industries with high percentages of workers age 50 and over include pipelines, chemicals, educational services, electric utilities, lumber and wood products, communications, oil and gas extraction, and heavy construction. For industries with more than 100 total workers, pipelines had the oldest average age, with the average worker about 47 years of age in 1999. Many of these industries will need to replace workers with skills that can be acquired only through extensive training or education.

The health services industry and the oil industry

Workers Age 50 and Over Industries with high percentages 4

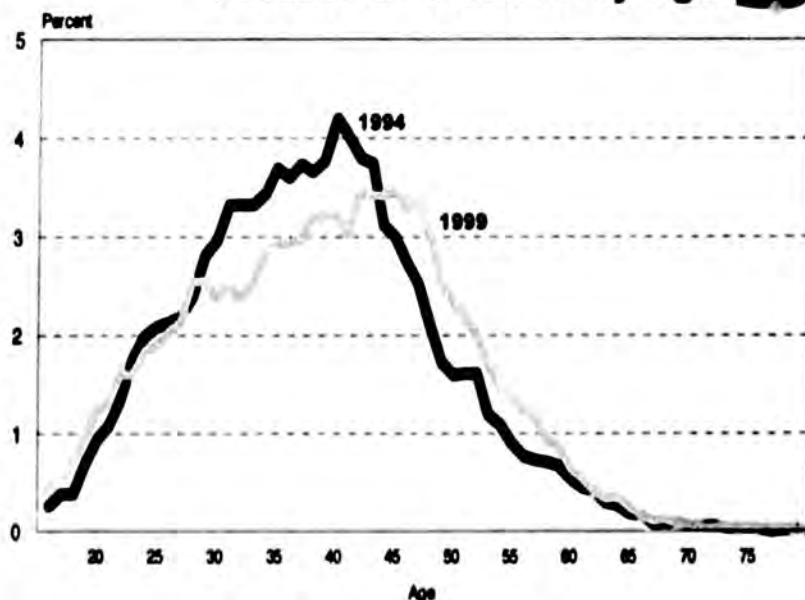
Alaska 1999



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

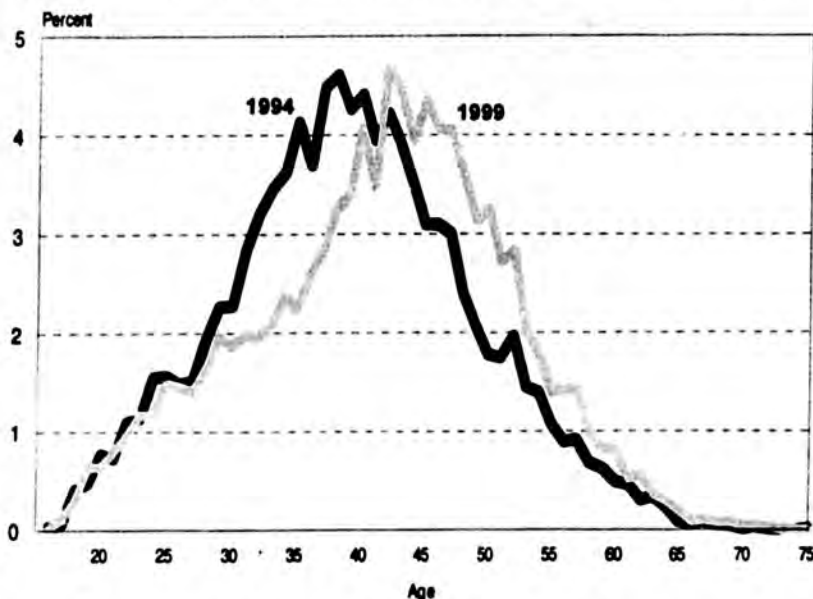
Alaska Health Service Workers 5

Percent distribution by age



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

6 Oil Industry Workers Percent distribution by age—Alaska



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

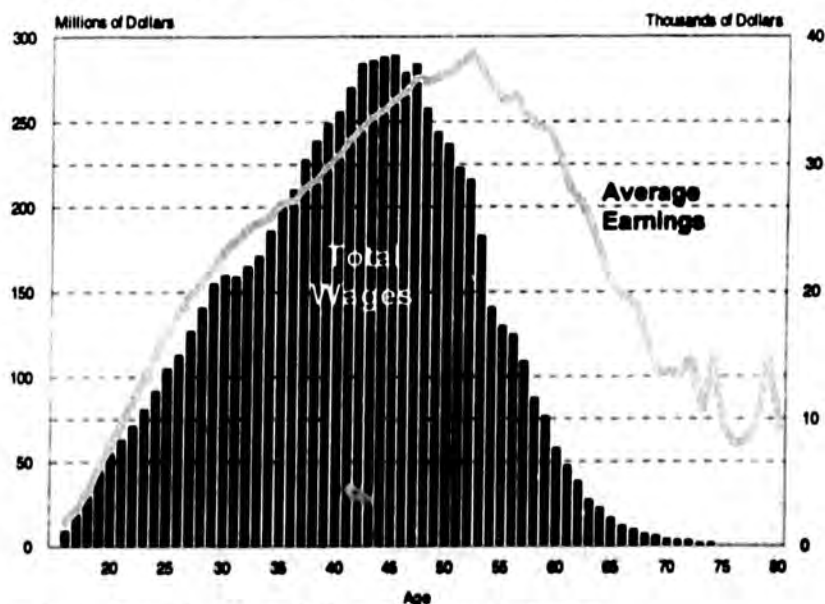
have each had a significant shift in their worker age profile in the five years since 1994, with a much larger number of workers clustered in the 45 to 50 year age group. (See Exhibits 5 and 6.)

A large cluster of older workers is found in state and local government. Alaska's local governments had the highest total number of workers known to be age 50 and over in 1999, nearly 9,900 workers or about one-quarter of total workers employed during the year. State government had more than 6,500 workers age 50 and over and 11,000 workers age 45 and over. Workers age 45 and over comprised nearly 50 percent of total workers (a large increase from the 39.5% of workers age 45 and over in 1994). Only 36.8% of Alaska's private sector workers were age 45 or older.

Occupations

Occupations with the largest number of workers age 50 and over include general office occupations, janitors, elementary school teachers, sales clerks, general managers, bookkeepers, secretaries, and registered nurses. Five of the top 20 occupational categories with the largest number of workers age 50 and over are teaching-related occupations. (See Exhibit 10.)

7 Wage/Salary Earnings by Age Averages and totals—Alaska 1999



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Many occupations are specific to particular industries and are easy to identify and target for training programs. The largest number of workers age 50 and over in the mining industry were petroleum technologists and technicians. There were more than 400 carpenters in the construction industry over age 50. (See Exhibit 8.)

Total and average earnings by age

Workers' average wage and salary earnings change over their lifetime. With additional education, experience, and attachment to the labor force, earnings increase. In 1999, average earnings of Alaska workers peaked at age 52 at \$38,712. (See Exhibit 7.) Earnings decline after

Jobs with Many Workers Over 50 In selected industries—Alaska 1999

8

age 52 as workers quit, retire, or work part-time. As older workers retire, jobs that pay the most and require significant training and education will become available.

Training Alaskans for jobs

The number and percent of workers in Alaska that are nonresident has fallen to its lowest level in over ten years. About 18 percent of all workers employed at some time during the year were estimated to be nonresident in 1999. Alaska's per capita personal income and average earnings are currently hovering at the national average, providing little economic incentive for workers from high wage areas in western states to choose jobs in Alaska. Training Alaska workers may be the best and least expensive solution for many employers. The oil industry, health care industry, and construction industry have begun to develop new training programs to provide skilled workers to meet anticipated hiring needs.

Analysis of demographic trends, employment forecasts, and nonresident hire by occupation can assist in identifying Alaska's unique training needs for the coming decade.

Methodology

Alaska's 1999 and 1994 wage files were matched with historical Permanent Fund Dividend applicant and Alaska voter registration files in order to obtain date of birth information on as many Alaska workers as possible. Age information was available for about 86 percent of workers employed in wage and salary jobs in private sector, state and local government in 1999, with a larger percentage of age information available in those industries with a high percentage of resident workers. Age and worker information was not available for federal government, military, or the self-employed. Each worker employed at any time during the year, whether full-time or part-time, was included in the analysis; however, only workers eligible to vote or eligible for a PFD were matched. The worker population for this analysis consisted primarily of year-round residents.

		Number of Workers Age 50 and Over
Mining		
	Petroleum Technologists & Technicians	133
	Misc. Plant Systems Operators	106
	Electricians	93
	Truck Drivers, Heavy	68
Construction		
	Carpenters	423
	Construction Laborers	281
	Operating Engineers	197
	Electricians	195
	Truck Drivers, Heavy	134
Manufacturing		
	Cannery Workers, incl. Seafood Process	688
	Misc. Hand Working Occupations	80
	Excavating & Loading Machine Operators	49
	Automobile Mechanics	43
Transportation, Communications, Utilities		
	Bus Drivers	374
	Airplane Pilots & Navigators	318
	Reservation Agents & Ticket Clerks	195
	Communications Equipment Repairers	178
Wholesale Trade		
	General Office Occupations	77
	Salespersons NEC	74
	Stock & Inventory Clerks	57
	Freight, Stock, & Material Movers NEC	57
	General Managers & Other Top Executives	52
Retail Trade		
	Sales Clerks	879
	Cashiers	324
	Supervisor; Sales, Retail	242
	Waiters & Waitresses	216
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate		
	General Office Occupations	148
	General Managers & Other Top Executives	137
	Secretaries	87
	Bank Tellers	80
Services		
	General Office Occupations	658
	Registered Nurses	550
	Janitors & Cleaners	496
	Social Workers	413
Local Government		
	Elementary School Teachers	1,207
	Teacher Aides	736
	Secondary School Teachers	613
	Janitors & Cleaners	504
	Teachers, except Postsecondary	449

Notes: Age data from 1994 through 1999 PFD and 1999 Voter Registration File. Employment data preliminary. NEC = Not elsewhere classified.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

9 Industries with Largest Number of Workers 50 and Over

Wage and salary workers employed during 1999—Alaska

	Total Workers	Total with Age Info	Average Age	Percent 45 and Over	Number 45 and Over	Percent 50 and Over	Number 50 and Over
State Government	23,186	22,475	43.5	49.6	11,146	28.9	6,504
Local Government	41,625	39,836	41.1	41.7	16,593	24.8	9,878
Total Private Sector	291,947	237,403	36.1	26.8	63,677	15.9	37,745
Health services	18,333	16,670	39.5	34.3	5,716	18.7	3,125
Membership organizations	9,883	9,238	37.9	32.8	3,028	20.9	1,935
Social services	10,132	9,116	38.0	31.2	2,848	20.5	1,867
Oil and gas extraction	9,804	8,242	41.8	41.2	3,395	22.1	1,818
Eating & drinking places	26,011	20,466	29.7	14.2	2,898	8.5	1,737
Business services	12,669	10,336	36.2	26.0	2,684	16.5	1,703
Engineering, accounting, research, mgmt & services	10,794	9,220	39.0	31.8	2,930	18.3	1,684
Transportation by air	11,301	9,518	38.0	28.9	2,749	17.5	1,666
Construction-special trade contractors	11,494	9,799	36.5	24.4	2,393	13.5	1,323
Food and kindred products	22,991	6,959	36.6	28.5	1,982	17.9	1,249
General merchandise stores	12,430	10,823	32.2	18.4	1,995	11.3	1,226
Communications	5,422	5,139	40.7	38.0	1,955	22.8	1,174
Hotels and other lodging places	10,676	7,504	34.2	23.7	1,782	14.7	1,101
Miscellaneous retail	8,429	7,160	33.3	22.8	1,635	14.6	1,045
Building construction-general contractors	7,875	6,815	36.9	26.2	1,786	13.8	939
Automotive dealers & gasoline service stations	8,042	7,250	34.1	20.2	1,463	12.0	867
Heavy construction other than building	4,730	4,106	40.1	36.7	1,507	21.1	865
Food stores	8,939	8,032	32.0	18.6	1,497	10.5	843
Electric, gas & sanitary services	3,304	3,123	41.6	41.4	1,294	25.3	789
Real estate	4,224	3,845	38.3	31.7	1,218	20.1	772
Wholesale trade-nondurable goods	6,601	5,689	35.4	21.9	1,247	12.2	695
Local & suburban & interurban highway transit	3,009	2,543	39.3	37.6	957	26.3	669
Wholesale trade-durable goods	4,932	4,503	37.5	27.5	1,238	14.7	661
Depository institutions	4,803	4,504	35.7	23.3	1,048	13.7	618
Amusement & recreation services	5,894	4,460	32.3	19.4	865	12.0	533
Motor freight transportation & warehousing	3,646	3,312	37.2	28.0	928	15.8	524
Holding & other investment offices	2,720	2,563	38.0	31.1	797	18.8	482
Lumber and wood products, except furniture	2,578	1,882	40.4	38.4	722	25.1	473
Water transportation	3,181	2,451	37.8	32.5	796	18.2	447
* Educational services	1,739	1,504	41.0	39.1	588	25.9	390
Bldg. materials, hardware, garden supply, mobile home	3,010	2,700	35.4	24.5	662	13.8	373
Personal services	2,486	2,152	34.8	23.4	504	16.4	352
Pipelines, except natural gas	965	936	46.6	60.8	569	35.7	334
Legal services	1,926	1,778	38.6	31.7	563	17.4	309
Printing, publishing and allied industries	2,098	1,896	36.6	25.7	487	14.6	276
Automotive repair, services & parking	3,326	2,916	32.3	16.0	467	9.2	267
Insurance agents, brokers & service	1,133	1,061	39.1	32.5	345	20.8	221
Transportation services	2,270	1,902	34.0	19.9	378	11.0	210
Chemicals and allied products	635	627	45.4	55.3	347	31.7	199
Home furniture, furnishings & equipment stores	1,915	1,652	32.7	20.1	332	11.4	189
Metal mining	1,585	1,325	37.3	26.4	350	13.7	181
Insurance carriers	914	867	40.4	35.2	305	20.8	180
Apparel & accessory stores	1,974	1,670	28.9	15.9	266	10.3	172
Miscellaneous repair services	1,155	965	36.6	25.3	244	15.4	149

Note: Age data from 1994 through 1999 PFD and 1999 Voter Registration File. Employment data preliminary.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Occupations with Largest Number of Workers 50 and Over

Wage and salary workers employed during 1999—Alaska

10

	Total Workers	Total with Age Info	Avg Age	Percent 45 and Over	Number 45 and Over	Percent 50 and Over	Number 50 and Over
General Office Occupations	14,233	13,006	36.3	27.7	3,597	17.2	2,235
Janitors & Cleaners	6,769	5,934	38.3	34.0	2,019	21.3	1,261
* Elementary School Teachers	5,070	4,880	42.4	46.1	2,252	25.4	1,241
Sales Clerks	9,764	8,445	31.7	19.6	1,657	12.6	1,064
General Managers & Other Top Executives	3,056	2,832	45.8	56.5	1,600	35.9	1,018
Bookkeepers & Accounting & Auditing Clerks	5,009	4,747	39.2	32.2	1,528	19.3	917
Secretaries	4,375	4,164	40.1	36.8	1,524	21.9	910
Registered Nurses	3,732	3,260	43.8	48.1	1,567	25.2	823
* Postsecondary Teachers	1,814	1,681	48.3	65.8	1,106	47.8	804
Management Related Occup., NEC, et al	3,827	3,563	39.5	36.6	1,304	21.8	775
* Adult Education & Other Teachers, NEC	2,979	2,692	41.7	41.9	1,127	28.6	771
* Teacher Aides	4,467	4,238	38.6	32.5	1,376	18.0	764
Manual Occupations, NEC	8,800	7,178	32.8	18.5	1,328	10.4	749
Cannery Workers, incl. Seafood Processors	16,520	4,575	34.8	25.0	1,144	16.0	734
Carpenters	5,242	4,538	38.4	29.5	1,337	15.6	708
Social Workers	3,220	3,013	40.3	38.7	1,166	22.3	672
* Secondary School Teachers	2,846	2,667	41.8	43.3	1,154	23.7	632
Bus Drivers	1,786	1,635	45.1	52.4	857	36.0	589
Admin. Support Occup., including Clerical	2,483	2,335	39.5	36.1	844	23.3	545
Officials & Administrators; Other, NEC	1,818	1,736	44.1	51.4	892	30.9	536
Mgr; Administrative Services	1,982	1,888	43.4	46.0	868	27.9	526
Construction Laborers	5,266	4,631	34.5	21.0	974	10.9	506
Maids & Housemen	3,528	2,734	35.6	28.7	786	18.0	492
Guards & Police, except Public Service	1,957	1,717	40.7	38.6	663	27.7	475
Cashiers	5,339	4,750	31.5	16.9	802	9.9	470
Receptionists	3,488	3,161	34.6	23.9	756	13.9	439
Truck Drivers, Heavy	1,890	1,744	42.0	41.2	718	24.9	435
Maintenance Repairers, General Utility	2,194	1,909	39.5	35.1	671	21.5	410
Administrative Assistants & Officers	2,061	1,899	38.9	33.4	635	21.2	402
Operating Engineers	1,859	1,649	42.1	42.4	699	24.0	395
Electricians	2,128	1,858	40.0	34.1	634	21.2	393
Airplane Pilots & Navigators	2,042	1,458	42.3	40.0	583	26.3	383
Cooks, Institution & Cafeteria	1,484	1,265	43.9	46.5	588	30.2	382
Mechanics & Repairers, NEC	1,625	1,516	40.9	38.9	589	23.9	362
Supervisory Mechanics & Repairers	1,373	1,294	44.2	49.8	645	27.7	358
Sheriffs, Bailiffs, & Other Law Officers	1,476	1,455	41.6	42.4	617	24.5	356
Kitchen Workers, Food Preparation	3,304	2,698	32.0	21.3	576	13.0	351
Misc. Food & Beverage Preparation Occup.	3,952	3,067	31.4	18.1	554	11.4	351
Waiters & Waitresses	5,911	4,528	31.7	13.7	622	7.7	348
Salespersons NEC	2,628	2,335	33.9	21.9	511	14.0	328
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, & Attendants	2,333	2,124	37.5	27.4	582	15.3	325
Accountants & Auditors	1,696	1,616	40.6	34.3	555	19.0	307
Bartenders	2,014	1,725	38.7	29.5	509	17.2	297
Supervisor; Sales, Retail	1,905	1,776	38.8	27.8	493	16.6	295
Record Clerks NEC	785	762	45.8	52.5	400	37.1	283
Stock & Inventory Clerks	1,921	1,783	36.1	26.6	475	15.6	279
Misc. Plant Systems Operators	902	852	45.6	58.3	497	31.8	271
Heavy Equipment Mechanics	1,289	1,100	42.5	42.6	469	24.2	266
Teachers, Except Postsecondary	1,075	1,006	41.8	43.2	435	26.1	263
Teachers, Special Education	1,038	974	43.5	50.6	493	26.2	255
Administrators, Elementary & Secondary Ed.	553	531	48.4	71.9	382	47.6	253
Inspectors & Compliance Officers	980	845	43.4	47.6	402	28.8	243
Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, NEC	3,348	2,991	32.9	15.7	470	8.0	240
Personnel, Training, & Labor Relations Spec.	770	753	44.3	51.5	388	31.5	237
Civil Engineers	1,045	981	42.2	41.2	404	24.1	236
Supervisory Food & Beverage Preparation	1,602	1,384	36.8	27.7	384	17.1	236
Automobile Mechanics	2,078	1,891	36.3	22.2	419	12.4	234
Purchasing Agents & Buyers, NEC	1,221	1,142	40.9	35.2	402	20.0	228
Engineers, NEC	928	829	43.0	44.8	371	27.4	227
Truck Drivers, Light	2,323	2,092	35.1	19.9	416	10.6	221
Reservation Agents & Ticket Clerks	1,800	1,630	34.7	23.2	378	13.6	221
Technicians, NEC	1,048	993	40.5	38.3	380	22.1	219
Health Aides, Except Nursing	1,318	1,255	37.9	29.0	364	16.4	206
Plumbers, Pipefitters & Steamfitters	1,542	1,393	38.5	29.4	409	14.5	202
Lawyers	947	900	42.0	40.7	366	18.3	165

Note: Age data from 1994 through 1999 PFD and 1999 Voter Registration Files. Employment data preliminary. NEC = not elsewhere classified

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

**Selected Research on Teacher Recruitment
and Retention**

from

Education Commission of the States

Education of the States Resources Teacher Quality - Recruitment and Retention

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) provides a wealth of information regarding Teacher Recruitment and Retention. It can be found under the Issue of Teaching Quality. There are also a number of Sub-Issues that provide interesting information.

The following topics may be found at <http://www.ecs.org/html/issue.asp?issueid=129&subIssueID=65>. Those titles highlighted in bold print are included in this packet.

- Certification/Licensure
- **Compensation**
- Evaluation
- **Hard-to-Staff Schools**
- Induction/Mentoring
- **Preparation/Education**
- Professional Development
- Overview
- **What States Are Doing**
- Pros & Cons
- Selected Research & Readings
- The ECS View
- ECS News
- **Other Web Sites**
- Tenure

From ECS Website

Teacher Quality: Compensation

What States Are Doing

<http://www.ecs.org/html/IssueSection.asp?issueid=129&subissueid=78&s=What+States+Are+Doing&alldocs=yes>

"How the Single Salary Schedule Works" - A detailed description of the single salary schedule used in most school districts in the country, with a model showing the incremental increases based on additional earned credits or experience. From *Paying Teachers for What They Know and Do: New and Smarter Compensation Strategies to Improve Schools* (Allan Odden and Carolyn Kennedy, Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 1997) ...

Iowa Approves Performance Pay for its Teachers MS Word - This Education Week article describes the new teacher compensation system approved by legislators in Iowa. The new plan will pay educators based on their performance in the classroom and student achievement, rather than the number of years spent teaching. Expected to cost upwards of \$40 million the first year, the plan will articulate standards for educators, reinvent the evaluation system and outline a teacher-bonus plan. Critics question how it will be financed in future years. (Julie Blair, Education Week, May 16, 2001)...

Kansas' Performance-Based Teacher Licensure Policy - A performance-based method for licensing teachers, approved by the state board of education in 2000, will allow new teachers two years to demonstrate their ability to teach before being fully licensed. In addition, the state's teacher preparation programs will be approved in part on the basis on how well their graduates perform. The regulations are designed to align with the state's school improvement standards and move toward performance-based accountability. They take effect in 2003. ...

Legislative Language MS Word - **Multistate compilation of legislation on teacher compensation - incentive/merit pay.** (Education Commission of the States, 2000)...

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards MS Word - Twenty-one states provide financial rewards to teachers who attain certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. In some states, the reward is a one-time bonus, in others, an ongoing percentage of salary. In the 1999-2000 legislative sessions, Georgia joined this list of states with a salary increase of 10% for National Board certification. Likewise, Virginia now provides annual awards of \$5,000 to teachers achieving and maintaining national certification. ...

Recent State Legislation: Teacher Compensation: Collections from the ECS state policy database

Teacher Compensation--Benefits

Teacher Compensation--Incentive/Merit Pay/Career Ladders

Teacher Compensation--Retirement

Teacher Compensation--Salaries

Teacher Compensation--Salary Schedules

What States Are Doing Archives

Recent State Legislation

Teacher Recruitment/Retention--Incentives

Education Commission of the States • 707 17th Street, Suite 2700 • Denver, CO 80202-3427 • 303-299-3600 • fax 303-296-8332 • www.ecs.org

The following summary includes policies enacted since 1998. Summaries are collected from *StateNet*, *Lexis-Nexis*, state Web sites and state newsletters. *StateNet* and *Lexis-Nexis* descriptions reflect the content of bills as introduced and may not reflect changes made during the legislative process. To assure that this information reaches you in a timely manner, minimal attention has been paid to style (capitalization, punctuation) or format.

State	Status/Date	Level	Summary
HI	Signed by governor 05/2001	pre-K-12 Postsec.	Establishes the Hawaii education loan program and special fund for the purpose of providing financial support to students who graduate with a bachelor's degree in education and who agree to teach in the Hawaii public school system. Title: H.B. 1667 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
HI	Signed by governor 05/2001	pre-K-12	Offers an incentive to state teachers to take professional development course work by allowing them a 100% state tax deduction on tuition costs. Title: S.B. 1315 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
KS	Signed by governor 05/2001	pre-K-12 Postsec.	Relates to professional service scholarships for teachers and ethnic minorities; requires recipients to teach in under-served areas and in hard-to-staff disciplines; provides for repayment of scholarships if teaching agreements are not met; also provides service scholarships for other professions. Title: H.B. 2014 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
LA	Signed by governor 05/2001	pre-K-12 Postsec.	Creates the Critical Teacher Shortage Incentive Program. The program provides newly certified teachers who agree to practice in their profession as a classroom teacher in elementary or secondary schools in the area of mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics or special education, three thousand dollars per year for the first four consecutive years for which they practice. Title: H.B. 651 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
MS	Signed by governor 05/2001	pre-K-12	Deletes the automatic repealer on the State Employer Assisted Housing Loan Program for teachers in critical teacher shortage areas. Title: S.B. 2181 Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet
GA	Signed by governor 03/2000	pre-K-12	In schools and school systems where there is an insufficient supply of qualified teachers in mathematics, science, special education, or foreign language, teachers may be advanced an additional step on the salary schedule if they agree to teach in these areas. The Office of Educational Accountability shall decide whether a school or a system is experiencing

a shortage. This program is dependent on funding from the General Assembly.

Title: H.B. 1187

Source: Georgia Department of Education

MO Signed by governor
07/99

pre-K-12 Metropolitan school districts participating in volunteer tutoring program and with 5% shortage of certified teachers may apply for a waiver allowing retired teachers to teach in district for up to two years without losing retirement benefits. District to place emphasis on hiring retired teachers including but not limited to reading, math, science and special education.

Title: H.B. 889

Source:

MO Signed by governor
07/99

pre-K-12 Missouri Critical Teacher Shortage Forgivable Loan Program established, making undergraduate and graduate forgivable loans available, subject to appropriation, to eligible students entering programs of study leading to a degree in a teaching program in a critical teacher shortage area. Eligible candidates must be, among other stipulations, full-time ed. students, have declared intent to teach in a state-board-identified shortage area, and have minimum 2.5 GPA if undergraduate or 3.0 GPA if graduate student.

Credit for repayment of a forgivable loan shall be in an amount not to exceed \$4,000 in loan principal plus applicable accrued interest for each full year of teaching service, with maximum credit of \$8,000 in principal plus applicable accrued interest for each full year of teaching service in a high population density, low-economic condition urban school or at a low population density, low-economic condition rural school.

Title: H.B. 889

Source:

MS Signed by governor
04/99

pre-K-12 Increases the salaries of public school teachers; requires the payment of an annual salary supplement and a 1-time process reimbursement to school district counselors acquiring the Nation Board for Certified Counselors' endorsement as a National Certified School Counselor and to speech-language pathologists and audiologists acquiring the certificate of clinical competence from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Title: H.B. 471

Source: Lexis-Nexis/StateNet

From ECS Website

Teaching Quality: Other Web Sites

<http://www.ecs.org/html/IssueSection.asp?issueid=129&subissueid=0&s=Other+Web+Sites&alldocs=yes>

Other Web Sites

American Federation of Teachers (AFT) - AFT is a professional union representing one million teachers, school support staff, higher education faculty and staff, health care professionals, and state and municipal employees. Featured links on this Web site include publications and press releases, AFT on the Issues and the teacher quality main page.

Center for Educational Renewal - The Center for Educational Renewal (CER) was founded in 1985 to advance the simultaneous renewal of P-12 schools and the education of educators within the larger context of education in a democracy. On this Web site, co-sponsored with the Institute for Educational Inquiry and the National Network for Educational Renewal, organization initiatives, programs and publications are presented on how a school and teaching renewal agenda can be implemented.

Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy (CTP) - Founded in 1997, CTP is a consortium of five universities, which has been created to investigate the relation between excellent teaching and policymaking at national, state and local levels. CTP's mission is to investigate the relation between excellent teaching and policymaking.

Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) - CPRE, a consortium of researchers from five of the nation's leading universities, provides a range of publications - from policy briefs to full-scale research reports - on the impact of new accountability policies on students, teachers and schools.

Milken Family Foundation - The Milken Family Foundation supports education issues in various ways, including strengthening the profession by recognizing and rewarding outstanding educators; expanding professional leadership and policy influence; and attracting, retaining and motivating the best talent to the teaching profession. Various links to different education initiatives and programs can be found on this Web site.

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future - NCTAF's goal is to transform teacher development in ways that will dramatically enhance student academic achievement and has created a reform agenda for how teachers are prepared, recruited, selected, inducted, and supported, and how schools support, assess, and reward their work.

National Education Association (NEA) - The Web site of NEA, America's largest teacher organization, offers information on a multitude of education issues.

National Teacher Policy Institute - A project of the Teachers Network, this institute was established to bring teachers' voices to educational policymaking.

NCSL Teacher Quality Web Site - Provides information on teacher quality issues, such as research, recruitment and compensation, preparation, licensure and certification, induction and professional development.

Teacher Quality Clearinghouse - The Teacher Quality Clearinghouse is a guide to the latest news, analysis and research on teacher quality policies. Resources available on this Web site include: links to education organizations; research; information about school and educator accountability, teacher pay and incentives, and school staffing.

The Holmes Partnership - The Holmes Partnership is a network of universities, schools, community agencies and national professional organizations working to create high-quality professional development and school renewal to improve teaching and learning. Its work is centered around six goals, which the Web site outlines: high-quality professional preparation; simultaneous renewal; equity, diversity, cultural competence; scholarly inquiry and research; school and university-based faculty development; and policy initiation.

Thomas B. Fordham Foundation - This foundation supports research, publications, and action projects of national significance in elementary/secondary education reform, as well as significant education reform projects in Dayton, Ohio and vicinity.

West Ed - WestEd seeks ways to combine traditional and innovative assessment methods into coherent, affordable and valid systems that provide the feedback desired for all levels of accountability. The Assessment and Standards Development Services (ASDS) program found on this Web site is involved extensively at the local, state and national levels in planning, developing, implementing and evaluating standards and assessment tools, methods and systems. Among others, project areas include teacher professional development and assessment.

STATE EDUCATION *Leader*

VOLUME 18

NUMBER 2

Spring-Summer 2000

EDUCATION
COMMISSION
OF THE STATES



Education Commission of the States • 707 17th Street, Suite 2700 • Denver, CO 80202-3427 • 303-299-3600 • fax 303-296-8332 • www.ecs.org

Teaching Quality — Hard-to-Staff Schools

Contents	
Focusing Policy on Hard-to-Staff Schools	Leadership: ■ Bank Street Principals Institute
Preparing Teachers for Hard-to-Staff Schools	It's Tough To Find Teachers in Rural Wyoming
Issues and Strategies in Teacher Recruitment	California Strives To End Teacher Flux
Quality Induction is Crucial	Leading Hard-to-Staff Schools
Filling Hard-to-Staff Schools in Pennsylvania	Where Are the Data: Issues of Educator Supply and Demand
Recruitment: ■ Los Angeles Unified School District Intern Program (LAUSD) ■ Virginia's Teaching Scholarship Loan Program	High-Stakes Accountability and Hard-to-Staff Schools
Induction: ■ Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program	A Rural Perspective
Preparation: ■ Pathways to Teaching Careers	Hard-to-Staff Schools: An Urban Teacher's Experience

Focusing Policy on Hard-to-Staff Schools

By Michael Allen

Our country faces a teacher crisis — the product of multiple factors. There is a growing student population in many parts of the country. A significant percentage of teacher preparation programs are plagued by high attrition and the failure of many of their graduates to enter the teaching profession. Teachers who do enter the profession often don't stay very long; one-third of new teachers leave the profession within five years. Moreover, in certain subject areas — most commonly mathematics, physical science, bilingual education and special education — many schools have trouble finding adequately trained teachers.

In addition to problems with teacher supply, there are concerns about teacher effectiveness. While the majority of teachers are competent and caring, too many are not successful in helping their students reach the high achievement levels that today's complex society and workforce require of them. In some cases, teachers simply lack the skill or temperament to be effective with the students they have. In other cases, the school culture may not support learning and teaching or may lack adequate physical facilities, including instructional technology. In still other cases, however, teachers lack sufficient subject-matter knowledge or the ability to teach it well.

Problems Exacerbated

In schools considered "hard-to-staff," these problems are exacerbated and can have disastrous consequences for the students who attend them.

What, exactly, is a "hard-to-staff" school? The designation is not a precise technical term but merely denotes those schools that have a particularly difficult time finding and retaining adequately trained teachers who are effective with their student populations. Commonly, such schools have a high percentage of relatively new teachers because more experienced teachers, whose seniority gives them greater choice over their teaching assignment, tend to go elsewhere.

Many hard-to-staff schools are inner-city schools with a high percentage of students living in poverty. There are also a significant number of hard-to-staff rural schools because they are located in economically depressed or isolated districts that offer very low salaries or lack the amenities that more cosmopolitan or prosperous regions have to attract teachers.

Student Success Depends on Teachers

Recent research by William Sanders of the University of Tennessee, Ronald Ferguson of Harvard University and others has demonstrated that the most powerful school factor in students' educational success is their teachers. Indeed, research convincingly shows that repeated effective teaching can overcome much of the negative impact of socioeconomic disadvantage.

A study by Richard Ingersoll of the University of Georgia, however, has found significant disparities in the background of teachers at high-poverty vs. low-poverty secondary schools. For example, while 27% of mathematics and 51% of physical science teachers at low-poverty schools nationally lack a major or minor in their teaching field, those numbers rise to 43% and 65% in poor schools. Within specific states, both rural and urban, students in high-poverty schools may be as much as four times more likely to have teachers without a major in their teaching field than students at wealthier schools. Other studies confirm that poor and minority students tend to have inferior teachers.

Predictably, the consequences for students in hard-to-staff schools of not having adequately trained or effective teachers are profoundly negative. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 86% of the students in low-poverty schools who graduate in the top quarter of their high school class go on to four-year colleges. This compares to 58% of the top graduates at high-poverty schools. When college graduation is considered, according to the Education Trust, 48% of young people from high-income families graduate college by age 24, compared to only 7% of young people from low-income families.

Better Staffing Essential

Clearly, if the nation is to guarantee an adequate education and solid career opportunities for all children, we must put an effective teacher in every classroom and focus particularly on recruiting, preparing and retaining teachers for hard-to-staff schools. How do we do this?

There is no definitive answer to the problem posed by hard-to-staff schools, and the ultimate solutions to the various issues involved will vary from state to state. Nevertheless, there are some clear factors to consider, some general approaches that have strong expert consensus behind them, and some individual programs and strategies that have demonstrated success or promise in specific, limited implementation.

First, policymakers must understand as completely and precisely as possible the specific problems and challenges their hard-to-staff schools face and identify the avenues of solution most likely to succeed in their state. Several articles in this issue of *State Education Leader* seek to give policymakers an indication of the kind of information they need to address the problem successfully, or show how policymakers have tailored their approaches to the realities of their states. These include the article on "Where Are the Data? Issues of Educator Supply and Demand" by Sabrina Laine; the article on "A Rural Education Perspective," by Steven Street; the practitioner articles by Susan Brown and Randy Hillstead that describe, respectively, an urban teacher's and a rural superintendent's experiences; and the articles by Delaine Eastin and Eugene Hickok that discuss how two different states are approaching teacher-shortage problems.

Recruitment Strategies Important

One of the key issues policymakers must address is teacher recruitment. Hard-to-staff schools pose their own set of challenges. For high-minority schools, the recruitment of minority teachers, who are woefully underrepresented in the teaching force, may be a promising solution; well-qualified minority teachers may be particularly effective with these students.

For isolated rural schools, the recruitment of "home-grown" teachers who already live in the area may be an effective strategy. The article on "Issues and Strategies in Teacher Recruitment" by Janice Poda discusses the teacher recruitment issue and notes some of the strategies tried by the South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment.

Few recruitment efforts are likely to be effective by themselves, however. Effective preparation is essential, but preparation specifically to enable new teachers to succeed in hard-to-staff schools is the exception rather than the rule. Denise Littleton's article on "Preparing Teachers for Hard-to-Staff Schools" discusses the specific preparation needs of persons who teach in hard-to-staff schools and offers suggestions for how both teacher preparation programs and state policymakers can address them.

Induction the Next Step

Yet no matter how good their preparation program, new teachers are not finished products. They require continuous mentoring and good support to develop into committed and successful teachers, especially at hard-to-staff schools. Without such support, they are likely to be overwhelmed and frustrated and to leave the schools in which they work (as Susan Brown did) or the teaching profession, altogether. In his article, "Quality Induction for Beginning Teachers Is Crucial," Willis Hawley discusses the contribution a good induction program can make to the effectiveness and longevity of a new teacher, the important features of such a program and its potential cost.

Leadership Essential

Beyond preparation and induction, the quality of school leadership is becoming recognized as another essential factor in recruiting and retaining teachers in hard-to-staff schools and in enabling them to be effective. The study by Richard Ingersoll mentioned earlier also found that teachers nationwide cite inadequate administrative support as one of the major factors in their decisions to change schools or leave the profession. In his article on "Leading Hard-to-Staff Schools," John Gardner discusses the personal characteristics and the kind of actions principals need to undertake to be effective leaders and to create an environment in which teachers can truly teach.

Policy Impact

In addition to these core strategies, an issue of interest to many educators and policymakers is the impact of several increasingly popular policies on hard-to-staff schools. In her article "High-Stakes Accountability and Hard-to-Staff Schools," Catherine Anthes examines a number of important concerns and questions.

Finally, a number of program profiles written by Mary Fulton, ECS policy analyst, give readers a sampling of the diverse array of strategies that have been developed and implemented to address the issues faced by hard-to-staff schools. While ECS does not recommend or endorse these particular programs, the staff does believe they are worthy of serious consideration.

ECS Actions

For the past year, ECS has been looking at ways to increase the quality and effectiveness of the nation's teachers through the "Quality Teachers for the 21st Century" initiative under the leadership of 1999-2000 ECS Chairman, Wyoming Governor Jim Geringer. Recommendations from that initiative can be found in a separate ECS publication entitled *In Pursuit of Quality Teaching: Five Key Strategies for Policymakers*.

Concurrently, ECS is in the midst of a three-year project, generously supported by the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds, to help states improve the quality of their teacher workforce, with a particular view toward the problems of hard-to-staff schools.

This publication is one of the first fruits of the Wallace Funds project and is meant to give state policymakers examples of what states and districts have done to address the problem of securing

teachers for hard-to-staff schools. The publication also is designed to stimulate further discussion of the critical issues involved. A more in-depth study on the issues of hard-to-staff schools is scheduled for publication this fall.

Allen is director of ECS' teaching quality initiative.

Preparing Teachers for Hard-to-Staff Schools

By Denise Littleton

Theoretically, preparing teachers for hard-to-staff schools should be no different than preparing teachers for any school. Yet, nearly one-third of all new teachers leave during the first five years of teaching, with higher attrition rates in urban, rural and disadvantaged school districts. Teacher shortages are reported nationally with large numbers of uncertified and unqualified teachers hired annually to work in hard-to-staff schools. This situation suggests a revolving door of new and inexperienced teachers are filling slots to teach children who generally need the most experienced and well-trained teachers.

Research is clear that student learning is affected by teachers' qualifications and experience. In addition, a major contributor to educational inequality and inequity is the exposure of urban students to less-trained and -experienced teachers. A well-prepared and well-qualified teacher workforce is critically needed to meet the instructional needs of children attending hard-to-staff schools.

What Can Education Schools, Departments and Colleges Do?

To ensure all children have competent teachers, education schools, departments and colleges should continually evaluate their programs to determine if graduates are meeting local, state and national standards in teacher preparation. This translates into a teacher who is trained in the following areas.

- **Content.** A teacher should be thoroughly knowledgeable in the major or the content he or she intends to teach.
- **Pedagogy.** Knowledge of pedagogy and a repertoire of teaching methods are crucial.
- **Teaching strategies.** A teacher should be creative and able to demonstrate various teaching strategies.
- **Learning theories.** Knowing how to design and implement instruction based upon accepted and established learning theories is critical for teaching effectiveness.
- **Technology.** Use of instructional technology is widely accepted as a useful tool and, according to some research, enhances student achievement.
- **Child and adolescent development.** As a child grows and develops, many areas such as cognition, language, socioemotional development and others affect and are interdependent with learning. A teacher who is aware of how each child functions in these areas can design instruction to maximize learning.
- **Curriculum development.** Knowledge about the content and how it is best presented for sequential or higher-level thinking, for example, accentuates learning.
- **Classroom management procedures.** Effective strategies to manage the classroom promote Learning.
- **Behavior and motivation.** Knowledge of motivational behavior and techniques can be used to optimize learning
- **Human relation skills.** Teachers have to be effective in working with students, parents, colleagues and community representatives.
- **Exceptional students.** With the inclusion of many special-needs students in the regular classroom, teachers need training to meet these students' needs.
- **Assessment.** Teachers should be able to assess and interpret results for effective instruction.

- **Programs that work.** Knowledge of programs that work provides the basis for replication, adaptation and modification in the classroom. It provides the knowledge base to develop new programs that work.
- **Diversity and multicultural education.** With projected increases in the numbers of minority students, all teachers need knowledge of their students' different languages, cultures, socioeconomic status, races and developmental backgrounds. Such knowledge can be used to develop effective instruction, select appropriate instructional materials, manage classroom behavior and select effective motivational techniques, as well as develop a positive rapport with students, parents and community representatives.

Diverse Experiences Needed

Prospective teachers need not only a curriculum to promote mastery of their content but also a variety and continuum of teaching and other field experiences in diverse settings. Such experiences should occur early and continue throughout the professional education sequence with clear feedback for professional growth and development.

Opportunities should be provided for prospective teachers to challenge, evaluate and understand their own belief systems and develop successful interpersonal skills to work in hard-to-staff schools. Believing that all students can learn, as well as being resilient, resourceful, persistent, industrious, reliable, caring, cooperative and creative, are just some of the attributes successful teachers in hard-to-staff schools need to acquire.

What Else Can Be Done?

By working together, there is much that states and school districts can do to assist education schools, departments and colleges in preparing teachers for hard-to-staff schools. Here are some ideas:

1. **Provide funding support and/or competitive grants to help colleges and schools develop or expand teacher education programs to increase the number of teachers certified in high-need areas and for hard-to-staff schools.** Programs could be developed at both the undergraduate and graduate levels geared toward the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.
2. **Provide scholarship support to participants enrolled in such programs or forgivable loans to graduates who teach in hard-to-staff schools.** There are several national models such as the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Pathways to Teaching Careers programs and the Ford Foundation projects that have demonstrated success in producing teachers committed to working in hard-to-staff schools. Participants are recruited from nontraditional pools, such as teacher aides, substitute teachers and other school paraprofessionals. These teacher candidates are older, have valuable life experiences and are familiar with the schools, students and communities in urban areas. Graduates tend to be committed and have remained in urban schools for at least three years.
3. **Provide incentives and funding to develop new programs for first-year teachers.** There are several possibilities that could be initiated based upon teacher and school district needs:
 - Develop a mentoring or induction program in which all first-year teachers are assigned a mentor, who is well-trained, capable, and given the time and support to assist a beginning teacher.
 - Implement a first-year teaching internship in which the employee is full-salaried but still provided supervisory support from the university. A well-trained cadre of university clinical faculty would be needed to support this initiative. Such a program would foster a school/university collaboration, which could spawn other school/university programs that would be mutually beneficial.
4. **Develop policies and support systems to retain teachers in hard-to-staff schools.** This includes providing better salaries, adequate resources, supportive leadership, a collegial atmosphere, and encouraging teacher input in curriculum and other school decisions.
5. **Develop flexible certification and licensing procedures without compromising standards and teacher quality.** In too many instances, passing state licensure examinations is the sole criterion for teacher certification without regard to teaching effectiveness. In other words, no matter how many other criteria a teacher may have met, if he or she does not pass the test, the teaching position may

be lost. Often the question is asked: How can teachers be effective if they don't pass such examinations? Yet, many school districts report they are dismissing excellent teachers they wish to retain. In these situations, guidelines or other policies should be developed to retain teachers who are making a difference.

Overall, a variety of innovations can be used to prepare and retain excellent and experienced teachers in hard-to-staff schools. If student achievement is a priority, then teachers must be qualified; prepared to meet local, state and national standards; and given the resources and support to do their jobs well. Retaining them should be no less a priority.

Littleton is a professor in the Department of Early Childhood, and director of the teacher recruitment program at Norfolk State University, Virginia.

Issues and Strategies in Teacher Recruitment

By Janice Poda

Teachers wanted! That's the cry heard from coast to coast as school districts scramble to find teachers to fill vacancies created by baby boomers retiring, smaller class sizes, higher graduation requirements and gaps left by teacher education graduates who never enter the classroom. Rural and inner-city schools are the hardest hit by this teacher shortage, which includes those teaching out of field — that is, a subject in which they have neither a major nor a minor.

As more evidence points to the positive impact quality teaching has on student achievement, school districts are taking additional measures to ensure that every child has a caring, competent teacher.

Short-term Solutions

When an adequate supply of well-qualified teachers is hard to come by, both short- and long-term solutions are needed. Here are some ideas for the short run:

- **Fringe benefits for part-time teachers:** Currently, most part-time teachers do not qualify for health and dental insurance and other benefits afforded full-time teachers.
- **Job sharing:** Because a number of teachers leave the profession to raise their children, job sharing may be one way to encourage former teachers to return to the profession.
- **Signing bonuses or moving expenses:** Many states and school districts have resorted to these and other incentives to attract teachers. Unfortunately, most of these incentives cause morale problems among the faithful employees who have served the school district for a long time.
- **Speedy application process:** Teachers often become frustrated with hiring processes that delay their ability to finalize a commitment. Communication between the applicants and the school districts often is limited, and teachers are expected to complete an application for each district where they apply.

One means of streamlining the application process is to make Web-based applications available. This past year, South Carolina implemented a statewide online application system that only requires one application for all 86 school districts in the state (www.winthrop.edu/scteach). School district personnel can access the applicant information as frequently as they like.

Of course, such incentives as the above can be offered only by school districts with sufficient resources, which rural and inner-city schools often lack. One alternative may be for the state or school districts to offer bonuses or salary increases for longevity with the amount of the bonus or salary higher in school districts that have the most difficulty attracting and retaining teachers.

Long-term Strategies

Long-term strategies for recruiting teachers must not be forgotten during this period of a teacher shortage. Young people have many career choices and educational opportunities today. They often eliminate teaching as a career choice because of negative images of teaching and discouragement by adults, frequently teachers and parents.

The South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment, created and funded by the General Assembly in 1986, has focused on strategies to pique the interest of middle and high school students by giving them firsthand experiences in teacher-like activities. Seventh and 8th graders participate in ProTeam, where they learn study skills, decisionmaking, goal setting, communication skills and teaching methods. The students read stories to younger students, tutor, teach mini-lessons and learn what it is like to be a teacher.

High school students, mostly seniors and some juniors, participate in the Teacher Cadet Program. Offered as a high school course to academically able students (3.0 grade point average and five teacher recommendations), the programs include three units: "The Learner," "The School" and "The Teacher and Teaching." The keystone portion is the field experience where students work in classrooms actually teaching lessons, tutoring students, working with small groups, etc.

Teacher Cadets frequently engage in self-reflection and analyses of their goals, strengths and weaknesses so they can make better-informed decisions about their career choices. Approximately 35% of the 25,000 students who have participated in the program have become teachers or are enrolled in teacher education programs.

"Grow-your-own" programs such as ProTeam and Teacher Cadet can be the most cost-effective and time-efficient methods of recruiting teachers. Even though it takes four or five years to move students from a precollegiate program through a teacher education program, the participants are more likely to return home and stay. By knowing the culture of the area, the acclimation and induction of these teachers is more likely to be successful. (For more information about the ProTeam or Teacher Cadet Programs, contact the South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment, <http://www.scctr.org>.)

Other suggestions for recruiting teachers

- Participate in recruitment fairs/career days
- Make direct contact with individual college career counseling and placement offices
- Share information about housing, community life, social, civic, fraternal and religious organizations, and activities
- Offer scholarships for candidates to pursue teacher education.

Poda served for 10 years as director of the South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment. She now directs the South Carolina Department of Education's new Division of Teacher Quality.

Quality Induction Is Crucial

By Willis D. Hawley

Of all the initiatives to improve the quality of teaching in America's schools, the most significant are those that seek to ensure beginning teachers start their careers with substantial professional support and opportunities to enhance what they know and are able to do. There are two main reasons why this investment is productive: to improve student achievement and to reduce teacher attrition, especially among teachers with the greatest promise.

First, no matter how good their teacher preparation programs have been, beginning teachers have much to learn. Indeed, without adequate professional support, novice teachers often narrow their repertoire of competencies and focus on less sophisticated and less effective instructional strategies. The lives of beginning teachers are full of questions about what needs to be done, given the situation and the children they have.

They are ready to learn, and what they learn will shape their perceptions of what good teaching is and what it means to be a teacher. The absence of opportunities for professional development focused on

particular challenges new teachers face means that the students of new teachers, as well as those they will teach throughout their careers, suffer accordingly.

Reducing Attrition

Second, excellent induction programs can substantially reduce teacher attrition, probably by 50% or more. This is important for several reasons:

- Research shows that novice teachers (those in their first three or four years), like workers in virtually all fields, are markedly less effective than their more experienced colleagues. Reducing the attrition of new teachers will increase the number of experienced teachers.
- Those persons most likely to leave teaching tend to be those with the greatest promise because they perceive that they cannot realize the high goals they set for themselves and their students. Reducing the number of new teachers that districts must hire will mean the district will be able to select beginning teachers who, on average, are better educated and better prepared to teach.
- Reducing attrition also means that states and districts will have to invest less in teacher recruitment and provide induction programs for fewer novices.

Attributes of an Effective Program

Ensuring that beginning teachers have a quality induction experience would seem to be a "no-brainer." Most successful companies, the military and many other government agencies invest more in their new employees than do schools. Many other nations treat their beginning teachers with more respect than the United States does. Why, then, don't more teachers have better induction experiences?

The answer to this question may lie in what the elements of an effective induction program are. While no one program will fit the needs or resources of all districts, those who have studied induction have identified several characteristics that are found in the most effective programs:

- Mentoring by senior colleagues who are trained and compensated for this role and who, in turn, are supported by a school-based team. Most highly regarded programs assign mentor teachers to the role full time for two or three years. Ideally, mentors are based in the novice teacher's school and have experience teaching the same grades and subjects.
- Time provided for professional development targeted on improvement needs that are identified by continuing evaluation of the novice's performance. This will require (1) that beginning teachers have fewer classes to teach or have meaningful time away from their students during the year, and (2) a rigorous system for evaluating the performance of beginning teachers that is essentially formative but can result in denial of full licensure.
- Teaching assignments that minimize different preparations and match the content the teacher has been prepared to teach.
- Placement in schools with good leaders where good teaching and student learning can be witnessed and learned from.
- Continuation of assistance for a second year, usually at a much reduced level of investment, with program elements tailored to each new teacher's developmental progress.
- Partnerships between the district administration and the teachers' organization. In some cases, institutions of higher education are also involved.

Induction Program Costs

Some of these policies and practices will have significant financial and political costs. Financial cost will vary, of course, with teacher salaries and program elements. The widely regarded induction programs in Santa Cruz, California, for example, cost about \$5,000 per teacher during the first year and much less in the second.

Implementing good programs also requires dealing with issues of senior teachers' rights, teacher assignment policies and parents who resent "losing" outstanding teachers to mentoring or who want their children taught by more experienced teachers.

But the costs of inadequate induction programs for novice teachers are high. The high rates of attrition common in many districts, the unnecessarily slow professional development of new teachers, and the inability to retain those teachers with the greatest promise and to screen out those unsuited to the challenges undermine the learning opportunities of almost all students.

And, the assignment of inexperienced and underqualified instructors to teach students with the greatest needs for high-quality teaching is nothing less than education malpractice.

Hawley is professor of education policy and leadership at the University of Maryland. He formerly served as executive director of the National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching.

Filling Hard-to-Staff Schools in Pennsylvania

By Eugene W. Hickok

In communities across America, school leaders have a difficult time attracting teachers to work in their schools. Whether it is because of a community's geographic location or a school or school district's reputation, prospective teachers are not lining up to fill critical positions. The result: classroom sizes are larger, teachers are working double-duty, and critical programs are being cut or eliminated because there is no one to teach them.

The urban and rural districts seem to have the most difficult time filling teaching positions. Safety issues in inner-city schools cause many prospective teachers to seek employment elsewhere, and rural districts often have a hard time attracting teachers because of the remoteness of their locations.

Pennsylvania is working hard to provide new options and assistance to districts experiencing staffing shortages.

Alternative Certification

In 1999, we introduced an alternative certification program that allows professionals who do not hold teaching degrees to teach in a Pennsylvania classroom while pursuing certification. This program allows experts in certain curricular fields to share their expertise and commitment to educating the state's children. Persons who choose this path to teaching must hold a bachelor's degree and have earned a 3.0 grade-point average or have 10 years of practical experience in their field.

After a rigorous local screening, candidates for alternative certification will receive intensive instruction in classroom management and pedagogy before they enter the classroom. Once there, they will be paired with a mentor teacher and required to take any additional coursework they need to become great teachers.

Recruitment and Retention

In addition to the alternative certification program, Pennsylvania school districts are taking various steps to recruit and retain quality teachers in their hard-to-staff schools. They are working with current high school students to encourage them to enter the teaching profession. Local schools also are providing a more nurturing support system within their district to retain current teachers and eliminate turnovers. And, school districts are intensifying efforts to recruit teachers early in their senior years of college.

School administrators are starting early to attract potential teachers by partnering with local education colleges. They are inviting college students into their classrooms sooner in their collegiate careers, beginning the process of marketing their schools and showing future teachers potential positions.

Other districts are attempting to "grow their own" teachers by encouraging high school students to enter the teaching profession and return to their hometowns to teach. This option is especially helpful in rural areas, where it often is difficult to attract the number and quality of candidates they need.

Finally, school administrators are working hard to provide a strong support system for the teachers they already have to ensure minimal turnover. Creating a family or team atmosphere appeals to teaching candidates looking for a supportive environment in which to teach.

State leaders working with their local school districts can ensure that every child in every school has the benefit of a well-prepared, committed individual teaching in their schools.

Hickok is secretary of education for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and an ECS commissioner.

Recruitment

Los Angeles Unified School District Intern Program (LAUSD)

Background: The LAUSD Intern Program originated from 1984 legislation that created a teacher trainee program as part of a comprehensive reform package, the Hughes-Hart Education Reform Bill. This legislation allowed districts experiencing teacher shortages to hire uncertified individuals and offer training through which they could become certified. In 1987, the legislature expanded the program and renamed it the District Intern Program. Since its inception, the LAUSD program has recruited and trained 1,100 novice teachers.

Objective/Goal: The LAUSD District Intern Program is designed to recruit academically competent individuals for hard-to-staff schools and subject areas experiencing teacher shortages. The program recruits secondary English, mathematics and science teachers, as well as elementary and bilingual teachers.

Description/Components: Potential participants must have a baccalaureate degree with 20 units in a subject-matter major, pass a state-approved exam in the subject area to be taught, and pass the California Basic Educational Skills Test.

Mentoring support is provided for two years from a mentor teacher and focuses on (1) procedural knowledge of LAUSD, (2) subject-matter content prescribed by the state and district, (3) the district's approach to organizing and planning instruction, and (4) survival skills.

Interns participate in a year-round, two-year program that consists of regular training sessions and a strong focus on multicultural education.

Contact Information: Mary Lewis, director, LAUSD District Intern Program, 323-932-2055
<http://certificated.lausd.k12.ca.us/cert/index2.htm>

Virginia's Teaching Scholarship Loan Program

Background: During the 2000 session, the Virginia Legislature consolidated several proposals to revise and expand the Teaching Scholarship Loan Program, which has been in place for several years. The measure increases the number of and amount for the scholarships and targets certain teaching disciplines, high-poverty rural and urban schools and minority students.

Objective/Goal: The scholarship program is intended to recruit more individuals into the teaching field, as well as into disciplines and geographical areas with teacher shortages.

Description/Components: The purposes of the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program are to accomplish the following:

- Increase the number of students pursuing careers in teaching

- Increase the number of teachers in the critical teacher shortage disciplines as established by the board of education
- Help paraprofessionals enrolled as full- or part-time students in an approved teacher education program complete the program to become fully licensed teachers
- Expand eligibility to sophomores, juniors, seniors and graduate students enrolled full- or part-time in an approved teacher education program
- Increase the diversity of persons pursuing careers in teaching through the Diversity in Teaching Initiative.

Before a teaching scholarship is awarded, the recipient must agree to attend an approved teacher education or graduate education program in an accredited four-year institution of higher education in Virginia. Upon graduation, he or she must teach in a Virginia public school in a critical teaching shortage discipline, in a school with a high concentration of students eligible for free or reduced lunch, or in a rural or urban region with a teacher shortage.

Scholarship recipients must begin teaching in the first full academic year after graduating from college, satisfy the eligibility requirements for a teaching license, and teach continuously in Virginia for the same number of years that they received the scholarship. The Board of Education is empowered to recover funds awarded as a scholarship if a recipient fails to meet the obligations.

The Diversity in Teaching Initiative created five pilot programs, geographically distributed across the commonwealth, to attract and encourage elementary and secondary school students to pursue a career in teaching. Outreach activities for students of diverse backgrounds include mentor programs, collaboration between public schools and higher education institutions, and other programs to generate interest in the teaching profession.

Contact Information: <http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?001+ful+SB737ER> (legislation)
<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?001+ful+CHAP0570> (statute)

Induction

Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program

Background: First implemented in 1989, Connecticut's BEST Program is a comprehensive support and assessment program for beginning teachers. The teacher-induction program was part of recommendations from the Governor's Commission on Equity and Excellence and included in the 1986 Education Enhancement Act.

Objective/Goal: The BEST Program is designed to help beginning teachers strengthen their knowledge of subject-matter and instructional strategies, enhance their understanding of students as learners, and begin a career of lifelong learning and professional growth.

Description/Components: New teachers must successfully complete the program within three years of beginning their first jobs to move beyond Connecticut's initial teaching license. Teachers who have not met the assessment standard by year two receive more individualized feedback and must resubmit a teaching portfolio. The program consists of the following requirements:

■ Year One:

Districts are required to assign mentors or mentor teams to new teachers to develop essential skills related to classroom management, instruction and student assessment.

Teachers' essential skills are measured through the Connecticut Competency Instrument (CCI).

Teachers are encouraged to participate in CCI clinics and content-focused support seminars.

■ Year Two:

- Beginning teachers focus on developing skills to foster active student participation in their own learning.
- Teachers prepare and submit a teaching portfolio that documents planning, teaching and student learning.
- Teachers continue to participate in CCI clinics and content-focused support seminars.

Contact Information: Beverly Hartstone, BEST Program Manager, Connecticut State Department of Education, 806-566-2098; <http://www.state.ct.us/sde/btra/index.htm>

Preparation

Pathways to Teaching Careers

Background: The Dewitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund (now Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds) established the Pathways to Teaching Careers program in 1989 in New York City. The teacher recruitment and preparation program is operating in 42 colleges and universities nationwide and has served 2,140 participants. The program targets paraprofessionals (classroom aides), noncertified teachers and returned Peace Corps volunteers.

Objective/Goal: The primary goal of the Pathways program is to increase and diversify the supply of well-trained public school teachers willing to work in hard-to-staff, low-income schools.

Description/Components: School districts typically play the lead role in recruiting candidates for the Pathways program.

- A committee representing a broad range of K-12 and higher education personnel and community representatives usually handles selection of candidates.
- Individual programs develop their own selection criteria, but most require acceptance into the teacher education program. In addition, test scores, grade point averages, letters of recommendation, interviews and writing samples are used for selection.
- Participants receive scholarship support for up to 80% of their tuition, and some programs provide stipends for books and other expenses.
- Most programs offer a wide range of support services, including orientation, academic advisement, tutoring, assistance with study and test-taking skills, monitoring of student progress, child care, cohort support networks, family support programs, supervised teaching experiences and mentoring.
- Participants typically must complete the same course requirements expected of other teaching candidates. Revisions might include a greater emphasis on hands-on activities, the application of theory, topics of interest to urban teachers and multicultural aspects of pedagogy.

Outcomes and Evaluation: The Urban Institute concluded a four-year evaluation of the Pathways program and found the following preliminary outcomes:

- Program participation goals were exceeded by 20%, or by 115 participants.
- Seventy-five percent of participants were from racial/ethnic minority groups compared to the national representation of 13% minorities in the teaching force.
- Eighty percent of participants completed their teacher education program, compared with a national average of 60%.

The Urban Institute is conducting a long-term evaluation of the Pathways program and will look at the following measures: (1) completion of certification requirements, (2) placement in teaching, (3) teaching effectiveness and (4) retention. Initial work as part of this study indicated that principals rated 427 Pathways teachers fairly high on effectiveness, assigning an average of 4.3 on a 5-point scale, where the average would be 3.0.

Contact Information: Nathaniel Jackson, Southern Education Foundation, 404-523-0001, <http://www.wallacefunds.org> (see Programs section)

Leadership

Bank Street Principals Institute

Background: Established in 1989 by Bank Street College, the Principals Institute is a competitive master's program leading to New York State administrative certification. Since its inception, the institute has served about 400 students. Recently, Bank Street began a district-based program in which cohorts of candidates are selected from among teachers in one district.

Objective/Goal: The Principals Institute was established to recruit and prepare leaders for New York City's schools, including women and minorities.

Description/Components: Applicants must be New York City teachers and complete a rigorous selection process.

- Academic faculty and practicing New York City administrators serve as instructors.
- Program includes (1) site visits to diverse schools, (2) an intensive internship under the guidance of selected mentor principals, (3) seminars on timely issues and (4) speaker sessions with leaders from government, education and the private sector.
- As a final project, candidates design their own schools.
- Participants earn a master's degree in supervision and administration and fulfill eligibility requirements for administrative certification.
- In exchange for free tuition, participants commit to work in city schools under regents' reviews for low performance.

Outcomes and Evaluation: According to Bank Street College:

- Eighty percent of the institute's students are placed in supervisory administrative positions in the city's public schools.
- Fourteen of the 15 students in the district-based program were offered administrative positions prior to receiving their degrees.
- Based upon the blueprints, some of the participants' final projects have led to the creation of new schools.

Contact Information: Bank Street College Principals Institute, 212-875-4404
<http://www.bnkst.edu/html/leadershipcenter/html/principal.html>

It's Tough to Find Teachers in Rural Wyoming

By Randy Hillstead

In Wyoming, it is not as easy to get good teachers as it used to be. During the 1980s, oil prices were high, and teachers' salaries were, too. Now, oil prices are going back up, but teachers' salaries are still low.

In the mid '80s, Wyoming was among the top five states in teacher salaries; 15 years later, it is close to the bottom. To keep up with inflation, the starting salary should now be \$30,000, but in 1999, it was approximately \$22,000. Finding good teachers has become much harder.

For example, in 1999, Uinta County School District #6, a rural community in southwest Wyoming, had firsthand experience in the difficulty of finding teachers. Late in the year, the district had a special education teacher and a math teacher move to areas where they could make more money. The district

immediately began searching for replacements, both in hard areas to find quality applicants. For the math teacher position, the superintendent requested a list of all math graduates from surrounding universities. He personally called every one of them.

Of more than 100 graduates, not one expressed an interest in coming to southwest Wyoming. Finally, one certified math teacher who had family in the community and was interested in coming "back home" applied for the job — which left a nearby district in a similar bind. Just one applicant for such a critical position. The story was much the same for the special education teacher — just two applicants. Other districts haven't been as lucky.

Hillstead is superintendent of schools for Uinta County School District #6 in southwestern Wyoming.

California Strives To End Teacher Flux

By Delaine Eastin

In California, the need for new teachers is especially acute. Approximately 100,000 additional students from extremely diverse backgrounds enter the state's schools annually. Last year, California added more students than Wyoming teaches. Furthermore, the state has implemented a massive class-size reduction program in kindergarten through 3rd grade, which has necessitated hiring thousands of additional teachers. As a result, one in every 10 California classrooms, many of them in poor and urban areas, has a teacher on an emergency credential or waiver.

Compounding the problem, newly hired teachers frequently are assigned to hard-to-staff schools and classrooms. The connection between teachers and students is in constant flux as teachers rotate in and out of the classrooms.

To avoid such problems, California must recruit new teachers in record numbers, retain teachers already in the classroom and retrain those who are now serving a changing student population with new challenges not common a couple of decades ago. Meeting these challenges will require the state to undertake a collaborative strategy, beginning with teacher recruitment.

Recruitment Efforts

For hard-to-staff schools, one of the most promising programs is the California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program, which recruits and trains prospective teachers from the ranks of classroom aides. It is crucial for students to have role models from their own communities, and aides are likely to be from the surrounding communities. This program allows California to tap a pool of talented, caring, prospective teachers who may not be reached otherwise.

Additional promising recruitment practices include expanding credentialing opportunities for second-career teaching candidates and supporting distance learning, such as CalStateTEACH, an online, multiple-subject credential program. Furthermore, credential reciprocity for National Board-certified and other out-of-state teachers is being expanded. Coordinating with community colleges and four-year institutions to encourage prospective teachers and recruiting candidates with math, science and technology expertise are also high priorities.

Retaining Current Teachers

Once teachers have been recruited and prepared, the next step is to keep them in the profession. Our experience shows that support — financial, intellectual and human — helps retain new teachers.

California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program offers new teachers intensive training and mentoring in methods of teaching diverse students. Overall, teachers participating in BTSA leave the profession at a far lower rate than those who do not participate.

Some new initiatives being considered include low-cost housing loans that would be forgiven after five years of teaching. A scholarship- and loan-forgiveness program is proposed for persons who agree to teach in schools with a high percentage of emergency permit teachers, in rural schools or in designated

subject-matter shortage areas for four years. A financial incentive for National Board-certified teachers to teach in low-performing schools also is being proposed.

California recognizes the need to make the teaching profession more attractive. The state's booming economy, with unemployment under 5%, provides many increasingly lucrative opportunities for college graduates. Competition is particularly intense for graduates with expertise in science, mathematics and technology. To make matters worse, home prices, the highest in the nation in certain California areas, are out of reach for most new teachers.

The challenges will not get easier in the foreseeable future. Fifty percent of the state's teachers will be retiring over the next 10 years, and the state's college and universities will not be able to prepare enough new teachers to meet this demand. Additional paths into teaching must be investigated, incentives to teach in hard-to-staff schools provided and roadblocks removed.

Raising Salaries

Teacher salaries are the elephant in the room. Not only are teachers California's lowest-paid professionals, but they also are entrusted with its most valued resource. Teachers should be paid more generously, with the school year lengthened to 200 days and teachers paid accordingly. Summer school and after school should be paid on the same salary schedule as regular classroom teaching time. All teachers should be paid according to the salary schedule for staff development time and should have 10 days of these opportunities.

Recognizing Hard Work

While we can build a system that draws people to the profession, we have to be increasingly sensitive to the fact that teaching is hard work. California cannot expect to retain high-quality teachers if we do not respect their need for professional places to work, professional development, and financial and human support.

Leaders in the education community must approach this task with their full commitment. To do less — to ignore the vital role that teachers play — will sabotage all other efforts to raise student achievement.

Eastin is California superintendent of public instruction and an ECS Steering Committee member.

Leading Hard-to-Staff Schools

By John Gardner

Most schools in which teachers do not want to teach are also schools that parents don't want for their children, that children don't want to attend and in which leaders don't understand their jobs.

Thousands of years ago, the Athenian general Xenophon pointed out that Greek mercenary soldiers marching home from distant, hostile Syria learned the hard way that leadership comes in different varieties, and that not all kinds work in every circumstance. Xenophon compared the methodical diligence of generals required to keep troops marching forward with the exhortative mania that served against impossible odds — say, 20,000 unexpected Assyrians not happy to meet Greek troops going anywhere.

That's pretty much what some schools look like to their principals or the principals sent to do something about them. Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), for example, has had more than its share of experience with such schools.

Succeeding in Spite of the Odds

Fortunately, MPS also has had success. One of the most problematic schools, for instance, this spring led the district in test, proficiency and accountability improvements. Ten others that were formally closed five years ago have demonstrated extraordinary results in parent preference, academic achievement and student behavior.

The magic recipe always includes leadership. Strong, committed, effective leaders do not, by themselves, guarantee success, but the lack of such leadership absolutely ensures continuing failure.

"Turn-around" principals come in a bewildering variety of styles and backgrounds. But they have all shared qualities too often overlooked by superintendents or administrators identifying leaders to do the job. In MPS's experience, successful principals share the following characteristics:

- They don't need everyone to like them. Turning around failing schools requires principals willing to be very unpopular with many, sometimes most, faculty members for extended periods of time.
- They involve faculty in a long-range plan. Few schools turn around in one year; three is a minimum, and four to six is generally what is required. Teachers need the reassurance and framework of a three-to-six-year plan, and they need to be part of making it — selecting the curriculum, defining the measurements of improvement, evaluating one another and the school's progress, and correcting course as they go.
- They get rid of teachers who do not, or cannot, get with the plan. A long-range plan isn't a plan unless the team is executing it. No one likes giving a bad evaluation, involuntarily transferring out or terminating a teacher who can't teach or help the plan succeed. But nothing is accomplished by carrying nonproducers.
- They benchmark progress. Like everyone else, teachers need interim measurements on the long road forward. A semester of specific improvements in what students learn can keep people trying and engender a culture of confident commitment.
- They celebrate success. Teachers need more than plans and accountability. They need to know not just that they're succeeding, but that leaders recognize and appreciate their accomplishment.
- They coach, not command. Good principals are not afraid to get in front of a teacher's students and show them how to do it. Their directions are based on a clear consensus and record of achievement.
- They have the courage to fail. All schools turning around fail in their efforts at least some of the time. Effective principals acknowledge failure calmly and encouragingly, and appreciate teachers for trying something new and difficult.

Making Teaching Successful

The prescription for generating schools that parents choose and in which students stay is to create environments where teachers successfully teach — an environment of consensual collegiality framed by professional standards, enlivened by inspired commitment. It's the principal's job to create this environment.

None of this, however, is possible unless school boards give principals the autonomy and authority to do their jobs. Unless principals can control school budgets, effectively hire and fire staff, define and implement curriculum, and conduct their own staff training, they are little more than building caretakers in the juvenile warehousing business.

This requires school boards and superintendents that are confident, in turn, that principals are senior managers worthy of the assets, budgets, staff and students entrusted to them.

Gardner is the at-large board member of the Milwaukee Public Schools and a veteran political organizer.

Where Are the Data? Issues of Educator Supply and Demand

By Sabrina W.M. Laine

A wave of recent research efforts make the case that the quality of the teacher is the single most important contributor to students' school success. In addition, implementing standards-based reform in K-12 education and an increasing emphasis on performance-based accountability systems have led state and federal policymakers to focus more heavily on recruitment, preparation, retention and qualifications of

CORRECTION

**THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT(S)
HAVE BEEN REFILMED TO
ASSURE LEGIBILITY OR PAGINATION**



Central Microfilm Services
Department of Education & Early Development
State of Alaska

The magic recipe always includes leadership. Strong, committed, effective leaders do not, by themselves, guarantee success, but the lack of such leadership absolutely ensures continuing failure.

"Turn-around" principals come in a bewildering variety of styles and backgrounds. But they have all shared qualities too often overlooked by superintendents or administrators identifying leaders to do the job. In MPS's experience, successful principals share the following characteristics:

- They don't need everyone to like them. Turning around failing schools requires principals willing to be very unpopular with many, sometimes most, faculty members for extended periods of time.
- They involve faculty in a long-range plan. Few schools turn around in one year; three is a minimum, and four to six is generally what is required. Teachers need the reassurance and framework of a three-to-six-year plan, and they need to be part of making it — selecting the curriculum, defining the measurements of improvement, evaluating one another and the school's progress, and correcting course as they go.
- They get rid of teachers who do not, or cannot, get with the plan. A long-range plan isn't a plan unless the team is executing it. No one likes giving a bad evaluation, involuntarily transferring out or terminating a teacher who can't teach or help the plan succeed. But nothing is accomplished by carrying nonproducers.
- They benchmark progress. Like everyone else, teachers need interim measurements on the long road forward. A semester of specific improvements in what students learn can keep people trying and engender a culture of confident commitment.
- They celebrate success. Teachers need more than plans and accountability. They need to know not just that they're succeeding, but that leaders recognize and appreciate their accomplishment.
- They coach, not command. Good principals are not afraid to get in front of a teacher's students and show them how to do it. Their directions are based on a clear consensus and record of achievement.
- They have the courage to fail. All schools turning around fail in their efforts at least some of the time. Effective principals acknowledge failure calmly and encouragingly, and appreciate teachers for trying something new and difficult.

Making Teaching Successful

The prescription for generating schools that parents choose and in which students stay is to create environments where teachers successfully teach — an environment of consensual collegiality framed by professional standards, enlivened by inspired commitment. It's the principal's job to create this environment.

None of this, however, is possible unless school boards give principals the autonomy and authority to do their jobs. Unless principals can control school budgets, effectively hire and fire staff, define and implement curriculum, and conduct their own staff training, they are little more than building caretakers in the juvenile warehousing business.

This requires school boards and superintendents that are confident, in turn, that principals are senior managers worthy of the assets, budgets, staff and students entrusted to them.

Gardner is the at-large board member of the Milwaukee Public Schools and a veteran political organizer.

Where Are the Data? Issues of Educator Supply and Demand

By Sabrina W.M. Laine

A wave of recent research efforts make the case that the quality of the teacher is the single most important contributor to students' school success. In addition, implementing standards-based reform in K-12 education and an increasing emphasis on performance-based accountability systems have led state and federal policymakers to focus more heavily on recruitment, preparation, retention and qualifications of

current and future teachers and administrators. But in most states, the lack of good data on teacher quality and quantity is hampering policymakers' ability to make data-driven decisions.

In response to the growing requests for more and better data, Congress reauthorized the Higher Education Act in 1998 with new accountability and reporting provisions. These provisions spur teacher preparation programs to begin addressing how to collect and report information about their graduates that previously was not available to the public. In a separate but related effort, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) began working with its 15 partner states to identify indicators of success in improving teacher quality as a result of reforms around teacher preparation and professional development, recruitment and higher standards for teachers. Some NCTAF partner states have begun working together in regional groups such as the Southeast and Midwest to help one another respond to new demands for teacher data.

Increasing Data Burdens

All of these efforts have placed new burdens on existing state systems for collecting and reporting teacher-quality data. While there are existing state, national and regional sources of educator supply and demand data, such as the National Center on Education Statistics, the American Association for Employment in Education and occasional studies conducted by the Southern Regional Education Board and individual states, most data are too broadly defined to be useful.

More helpful to policymakers would be data that focus less on absolute numbers and more on identifying areas of uneven distribution of educators. To make informed decisions, policymakers need data on educator shortages according to location, different populations and academic fields.

Midwest Study

To better understand the issue of educator supply and demand in the Midwest, the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) commissioned a study (1) to begin to identify the availability of accurate and timely data on the quantity of teachers being prepared and those already in the pipeline, and (2) to highlight existing identifiable gaps in the supply of teachers in the Midwest. NCREL convened teams of state education agency, higher education and union officials from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin and asked them to select the highest priority indicators of teacher supply and demand.

Researchers from the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota then analyzed the information to identify data being collected nationally and in each state relating to the key indicators. They came to the following conclusions:

- Teachers shortages exist in some but not all curriculum areas.
- The changing demographics of the region have increased the need for teachers of color.
- Special education is a unique area of concern because of high rates of attrition.
- The region produces enough elementary teachers to meet its needs, and some states produce a large surplus.
- Effectiveness of attempts to better train, attract and retain educators across the region and nation is in many cases unknown.

The study illustrated that efforts to understand how teacher mobility affects an entire region such as the Midwest have been limited, but that there is an enormous desire among states to move beyond the current situation of inadequate data collection and to learn from one another. Having comparable data to support policy decisions that address issues of teacher quality and quantity will come only when educators and researchers agree on what data are important and how the data can be used to improve student learning.

Laine is director of the Evaluation & Policy Information Center of the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

This publication is made possible through the generosity of the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds as part of the fund's sponsorship of a three-year ECS project on "Focusing State Policy on Quality Teachers for

High-Stakes Accountability and Hard-to Staff Schools

By Catherine Anthes

In the early 1970s, the National Assessment of Educational Progress began measuring student performance against content standards. Since then, states and the federal government have introduced a variety of measures to respond to public pressures to improve schools and increase student achievement. The latest of these is "high-stakes" testing and accountability systems, where student promotion and retention, and often school accreditation, depend on results.

In many urban and many rural districts, where the challenges are greater, state leaders are becoming concerned about the impact on teachers and teaching in hard-to-staff schools.

Some of those concerns and fears include the following:

- Recruitment of teachers for hard-to-staff schools may become even more difficult if teachers are required to "turn around" failure rates of low-performing schools. John Wilson, president of the North Carolina Association of Educators says, "High-stakes testing has made low-performing schools a negative place to work." The turnover rate for teachers in North Carolina's lowest-performing schools is more than double the state's average rate, and fears are that it will get even worse if high-stakes testing is implemented.
- Teachers might migrate from low-performing schools to middle-class, suburban schools where students are more likely to come from more affluent, better-educated families and therefore perform better on tests.
- Teachers in low-performing schools might "teach to the tests," compromising student learning and driving away teachers who may no longer see the teaching profession as stimulating, creative and flexible.
- Some teachers worry that high-stakes standardized testing harms instruction and does not give teachers the information they need to improve their skills or assist students.
- In some places, there has been a high-stakes test backlash — students refusing to take the test, teachers refusing to hand out the tests and parents protesting the tests. With tensions and stakes already high in low-performing schools, there is a high potential for revolt against the high-stakes movement.

On the Other Hand, Praise

Proponents of high-stakes testing, however, believe it can benefit students, including those already disadvantaged by being in hard-to-staff schools. They say:

- Students understand what is expected from them, enabling them to achieve at higher levels and encouraging them to work harder to achieve those standards.
- High-stakes systems highlight achievement gaps that exist between rich and poor districts and among ethnic and cultural groups, forcing educators to address this problem.
- Such tests improve performance for all students and achieve continuity in instruction.
- Schools can use data from high-stakes accountability systems to reallocate resources to areas of weakness.
- The public can track student gains and losses from year to year.
- With the proper incentives and support, teachers welcome the opportunity to make a difference by teaching at a low-performing school in a high-stakes system.

Policymaker Considerations

Policymakers need to take individual district and school circumstances into account when considering high-stakes testing systems, particularly in hard-to-staff areas. Some of these considerations include:

- **Proper preparation and support for the high-stakes systems:** In many cases, states have underestimated the costs, time and resources it takes to develop an acceptable high-stakes education system. Teachers need training and professional development relating to the new tests, administrators must learn how to analyze and properly use test data, and schools need extra funding for myriad activities, not the least of which is remediation programs for students. In hard-to-staff schools, it is even more important to pay attention to the issues of cost and time since these schools usually have fewer resources to begin with.
- **Sufficient attention to professional development:** Despite teachers' role in making any assessment system successful, they typically have only rudimentary knowledge about the purposes, content and implementation plan of new high-stakes tests. Policymakers need to ensure that funds are provided for teachers to learn about the tests.
- **Teacher support:** Since teachers are the backbone of the education system, it is vital that they play a role in creating and implementing high-stakes systems. It is especially important in hard-to-staff schools to allow teachers to have ownership of the accountability system. If teachers are not a part of the process and do not support the system, hard-to-staff districts will have even more difficulty attracting and retaining good teachers.
- **High-stakes for everyone:** "The stakes should be as high for policymakers as they are for the high school students required to take the tests and for the teachers who may be evaluated on the basis of student performance. Those who promote high-stakes testing should be held accountable for providing proper analysis as well as the necessary educational opportunities to ensure student success," says Professor Gary Natriello at Columbia University. Students, teachers, schools and districts that face harsh consequences for poor test performance should be assured that policymakers understand and support the work it takes to make such changes successful. The New Ohio Institute has taken this principle to heart and developed an assessment of policymaker support for Ohio's education accountability system (www.newohio.org).
- **Consideration of both high achievement and progress:** While the ultimate goal of high-stakes accountability is high levels of achievement for all students, that goal is much more difficult for students who are already underachieving and who face the kinds of socioeconomic barriers often encountered at hard-to-staff schools. Thus, particularly in hard-to-staff and low-performing schools, it is important to give students, schools and teachers some credit for significant progress and acknowledge that it may take these students more time to demonstrate high levels of achievement.

Anthes is an ECS research assistant.

A Rural Perspective

Hiring quality teachers in rural schools is a formidable challenge today for a variety of reasons.

Traditionally, concerns related to finding teachers for rural schools tended to emphasize extreme physical environments such as mountains and deserts, great distances between communities, unpredictable weather conditions, sparse populations and scattered, limited social support resources. Improvements in rural school systems have addressed some of these areas of concern, but these circumstances continue to have a negative effect on rural schools' ability to hire and retain teachers.

Recent rural education studies identify even more challenges. Many rural communities throughout America are in decline. Recent socioeconomic studies of rural America indicate the poverty rates in many rural American communities are second only to urban centers — 16.3% and 19% respectively. Despite the current and anticipated growth of minority populations in some rural communities, other communities lose school-age populations as the number of family farms continues to dwindle.