were suggested for these non-personal services and administrative costs. The cost factors in AS 14.17.460 represent each district's estimated average basic need per student divided by the statewide estimated average basic need per student.

**Results of using FY99 Data to Calculate District Cost Factors following the McDowell 1998 Alaska School Operating Cost Study**

For the current period, actual FY99 student data and actual basic need dollars were used to recalculate cost factors as presented on page 18 of the 1998 Alaska School Operating Cost Study.

Because the instructional portion of basic need is set in statue with the school size table and because there is not a mechanism to adjust basic need for district costs, one would not expect districts' basic need dollars to significantly change from one year to the next unless there was a drastic change in a district's school size configuration. Correspondingly, if basic need remains stable, than the cost factors derived from dividing each district's basic need per student by the statewide basic need per student would not be expected to change.

The results obtained from recalculating cost factors using FY99 data are presented in appendix A. The results do not provide a basis, or insight, to recommend changes to existing cost factors. The results do however point to several areas of concern in the current cost factor methodology.

The current cost study methodology does not account for the changes that SB 36 made to the foundation formula for calculating correspondence study dollars or special education intensive dollars. The results of using FY99 data with the cost

study methodology shows that those schools with correspondence students have an elevated cost factor. For example, Galena's cost factor is set in statute at 1.348 but using the cost study methodology with FY99 correspondence dollars assigns Galena a cost factor of 6.631. The increases the methodology calculates for districts with correspondence students are not warranted by increased costs. Additionally, because the formula simply divides each district's average basic need per student by the statewide average basic need per student, the impacts affecting districts with correspondence studies are also carried into the statewide average.

By using a calculation based on adjusted average daily attendance and average basic need to calculate cost factors any imperfections in the adjustment to average daily attendance or in the determination of basic need, are incorporated into district cost factors. Further, without identifying the underlying elements of true cost differences there is not a process to evaluate outcomes.

## Conclusion

The 1998 Alaska School Operating Cost Study reported that compensating districts for actual district costs incurred was an unsatisfactory long-term solution. Based on our review of the methodology, and the outcome of calculations using FY99 data, we agree with the study's conclusion that the current methodology is unsatisfactory.

We recommend that a request-for-proposal be developed that requires identification of the underlying elements affecting school costs and determines a methodology for measuring those underlying elements. This will improve our cost factor methodology from that of compensating districts for current basic need to an improved method of allocating funding based on differences in applicable costs.

Consideration should be given to the elements that contribute to costs in school districts. The investigation should evaluate whether the previously studied elements of travel, supplies, utilities, insurance, and communication correctly identify cost elements in districts, or whether other items should be added, or if different factors driving school district costs are applicable. Once the underlying elements are identified, a measurement tool applicable to each element should be identified.

The results obtained from recalculating cost factors using FY99 data under the 1998 cost study methodology do not provide a basis to recommend changes to existing cost factors because the formula does not adequately evaluate for cost differences in district level costs and the methodology does not adequately account for changes in the foundation formula after SB 36.

**Recommendation**

The department recommends that district cost factors remain at their current levels as designated in statute under AS 14.17.460 because there is not any empirical data to support changing the district cost factors at this time. The department also recommends that a new district cost model be developed to properly account for cost differences between districts on an ongoing basis.

## FY99 Computatation of District Cost Factors

| School District | (1) FY99 Instructional Level Expenditures | (2) FY99 District Level Expenditures | (3) FY99 School Level Expenditures | (4) FY99 District Level Expenditures | (5) Impact of School Level Revisions | (6) Weighted Impact of School & District Level Revisions | (7) Current (FY 99) Basic Need | (8) Revised Basic Need | (9) Current (FY 99) Basic Need Per Student | (10) Unadjusted Multiplier | (11) District Cost Factor |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 622,823,619 | 338,506,511 | 65% | 35% | | | 813,867,788 | | 5,516 | | |
| Alaska Gateway | 2,997,683 | 2,048,003 | 59% | 41% | | | 4,977,441 | | 6,468 | 1.173 | 1.296 |
| Aleutian Region | 492,197 | 546,358 | 47% | 53% | | | 975,111 | | 8,208 | 1.488 | 1.644 |
| Aleutians East | 2,302,187 | 2,676,885 | 46% | 54% | | | 3,670,346 | | 6,728 | 1.220 | 1.348 |
| Anchorage | 209,452,072 | 76,372,647 | 73% | 27% | | | 258,251,043 | | 4,991 | 0.905 | 1.000 |
| Annette Island | 2,489,601 | 1,724,851 | 59% | 41% | | | 2,448,946 | | 4,939 | 0.895 | 1.000 |
| Bering Strait | 11,706,858 | 12,267,042 | 49% | 51% | | | 20,512,192 | | 7,266 | 1.317 | 1.455 |
| Bristol Bay | 1,632,441 | 1,265,562 | 56% | 44% | | | 2,751,026 | | 6,098 | 1.105 | 1.221 |
| Chatham | 1,664,365 | 1,316,342 | 56% | 44% | | | 2,688,735 | | 5,497 | 0.996 | 1.101 |
| Chugach | 839,298 | 859,828 | 49% | 51% | | | 1,234,166 | | 7,866 | 1.426 | 1.576 |
| Copper River | 3,050,705 | 2,516,105 | 55% | 45% | | | 5,624,665 | | 6,186 | 1.121 | 1.239 |
| Cordova | 2,459,543 | 1,757,664 | 58% | 42% | | | 3,372,679 | | 5,274 | 0.956 | 1.056 |
| Craig | 1,837,411 | 1,260,688 | 59% | 41% | | | 2,866,823 | | 4,986 | 0.904 | 1.000 |
| Delta Greely | 3,930,540 | 3,063,337 | 56% | 44% | | | 6,603,913 | | 6,323 | 1.146 | 1.266 |
| Denali | 2,077,774 | 1,803,864 | 54% | 46% | | | 3,510,658 | | 6,243 | 1.132 | 1.251 |
| Dillingham | 3,531,431 | 1,966,385 | 64% | 36% | | | 4,204,216 | | 6,042 | 1.095 | 1.210 |
| Fairbanks | 72,876,411 | 32,879,603 | 69% | 31% | | | 88,576,188 | | 5,214 | 0.945 | 1.044 |
| Galena | 3,720,080 | 9,516,538 | 28% | 72% | | | 11,747,583 | | 33,105 | 6.001 | 6.631 |
| Haines | 2,121,521 | 1,347,464 | 61% | 39% | | | 2,873,678 | | 4,949 | 0.897 | 1.000 |
| Hoonah | 1,634,172 | 1,444,138 | 53% | 47% | | | 1,855,937 | | 5,327 | 0.966 | 1.067 |
| Hydaburg | 419,259 | 568,515 | 42% | 58% | | | 978,223 | | 5,235 | 0.949 | 1.049 |
| Iditarod | 2,976,552 | 4,075,269 | 42% | 58% | | | 5,240,176 | | 7,825 | 1.419 | 1.568 |
| Juneau | 26,149,536 | 9,738,260 | 73% | 27% | | | 30,632,003 | | 5,021 | 0.910 | 1.006 |
| Kake | 917,143 | 1,133,529 | 45% | 55% | | | 1,450,472 | | 4,982 | 0.903 | 1.000 |
| Kashunamiut | 1,409,301 | 1,533,516 | 48% | 52% | | | 2,751,775 | | 6,811 | 1.235 | 1.365 |
| Kenai | 48,259,961 | 24,656,506 | 66% | 34% | | | 59,675,398 | | 4,859 | 0.881 | 1.000 |
| Ketchikan | 11,276,914 | 6,223,865 | 64% | 36% | | | 14,774,370 | | 4,887 | 0.886 | 1.000 |
| Klawock | 1,269,410 | 931,150 | 58% | 42% | | | 1,537,191 | | 5,055 | 0.916 | 1.012 |
| Kodiak | 14,370,291 | 8,486,571 | 63% | 37% | | | 17,811,243 | | 5,325 | 0.965 | 1.066 |
| Kuspuk | 3,523,450 | 3,125,405 | 53% | 47% | | | 5,531,642 | | 6,878 | 1.247 | 1.378 |
| Lake & Peninsula | 4,087,174 | 4,169,360 | 50% | 50% | | | 7,378,871 | | 7,369 | 1.336 | 1.476 |
| Lower Kuskokwim | 25,163,924 | 18,855,045 | 57% | 43% | | | 36,670,132 | | 7,138 | 1.294 | 1.430 |
| Lower Yukon | 11,255,759 | 8,504,546 | 57% | 43% | | | 19,427,864 | | 6,840 | 1.240 | 1.370 |
| Matanuska | 61,906,788 | 22,150,470 | 74% | 26% | | | 70,235,033 | | 5,158 | 0.935 | 1.033 |
| Nenana | 1,094,922 | 1,525,356 | 42% | 58% | | | 2,220,939 | | 9,389 | 1.702 | 1.881 |
| Nome | 4,025,758 | 2,726,728 | 60% | 40% | | | 5,734,040 | | 6,258 | 1.134 | 1.253 |
| North Slope | 20,020,075 | 19,098,608 | 51% | 49% | | | 19,700,591 | | 7,132 | 1.293 | 1.429 |
| Northwest Arctic | 12,323,886 | 11,813,417 | 51% | 49% | | | 21,898,559 | | 7,381 | 1.338 | 1.478 |
| Pelican | 276,916 | 348,793 | 44% | 56% | | | 338,328 | | 6,099 | 1.106 | 1.222 |
| Petersburg | 3,176,667 | 1,957,271 | 62% | 38% | | | 4,708,300 | | 4,850 | 0.879 | 1.000 |
| Pribilof | 885,092 | 1,236,683 | 42% | 58% | | | 1,816,576 | | 6,783 | 1.230 | 1.359 |
| Sitka | 8,038,682 | 3,207,312 | 71% | 29% | | | 9,500,317 | | 4,958 | 0.899 | 1.000 |
| Skagway | 668,697 | 754,929 | 47% | 53% | | | 1,135,902 | | 5,465 | 0.991 | 1.095 |
| Southeast Island | 1,794,504 | 1,632,270 | 52% | 48% | | | 2,933,015 | | 5,440 | 0.986 | 1.090 |
| Southwest Region | 5,764,965 | 4,143,933 | 58% | 42% | | | 8,643,414 | | 6,774 | 1.228 | 1.357 |
| St. Mary's | 688,727 | 703,215 | 49% | 51% | | | 1,355,439 | | 6,388 | 1.158 | 1.280 |
| Tanana | 540,615 | 1,235,715 | 30% | 70% | | | 1,230,895 | | 7,128 | 1.292 | 1.428 |
| Unalaska | 2,063,788 | 1,720,125 | 55% | 45% | | | 2,924,426 | | 5,926 | 1.074 | 1.187 |
| Valdez | 4,907,866 | 3,000,547 | 62% | 38% | | | 5,608,590 | | 5,289 | 0.959 | 1.060 |
| Wrangell | 2,325,866 | 1,426,328 | 62% | 38% | | | 3,264,842 | | 4,815 | 0.873 | 1.000 |
| Yakutat | 1,025,300 | 916,127 | 53% | 47% | | | 1,345,234 | | 5,095 | 0.924 | 1.021 |
| Yukon Flats | 2,959,179 | 3,362,200 | 47% | 53% | | | 5,077,399 | | 7,941 | 1.440 | 1.591 |
| Yukon Koyukuk | 4,125,363 | 3,898,453 | 51% | 49% | | | 6,917,970 | | 7,225 | 1.310 | 1.448 |
| Yupiit | 2,314,999 | 3,013,190 | 43% | 57% | | | 4,673,273 | | 7,095 | 1.286 | 1.421 |

Notes to columns:
- Columns (1) and (2) are from 1999 school district audited financial statements
-Column (1), The term "Instructional Level Costs," includes aggregrated costs for intructional personnel. This is also referred to as "School Level Costs," in the McDowell report.
- Columns (5), (6), and (8) are represented on the spreadsheet to show comparison to the 1998 study calculation, but these are not used in FY99 because there were no changes in school or district level components contained in the instructional size table after the 1998 study changes, therefore actual basic need is used for FY99.
- Column (7) current basic need is taken from the FY99 foundation calculation
- Column (9) per student basic need is determined by dividing column (7) by the size-adjusted student count in each district.

# ALASKA SCHOOL OPERATING COST STUDY

## REVIEW OF CALCULATED COST FACTORS

PREPARED FOR:

**Alaska Department of Education and Early Development**

801 WEST 10TH STREET

JUNEAU ALASKA, 99801

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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary ..... 1
Statement of the Situation ..... 2
Review of District Level Cost Factors ..... 3
Recommendations for Further Work ..... 6

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development retained the McDowell Group to review the 1999 updates to the District Cost Factors. We have examined the new calculations, the underlying database and assumptions, and have discussed changes in the education environment with Department representatives.

Our recommendations are as follows:

1. The methodology used to adjust Average Daily Membership (ADM) for the impact of school size is sound and amenable to update. This methodology is based on an empirical analysis of school level (instructional) costs. The Department should use recalculated ADM's using the most recent census in their revised calculation of Basic Need.

2. The methodology used to calculate District Cost Factors (DCF's) is not amenable to update for a number of reasons discussed in this report. We find the re-calculated results to not be meaningful. We recommend that the Department use the 1998 factors for the revised calculation of Basic Need.

3. We reiterate our recommendation in the 1998 *Alaska School Operating Cost Study* that further study is required for the district level costs. On the other hand, the standards for school level costs remain valid today. Readers are reminded that the District Cost Factor is a single number resulting from the blending in two costs – school level (instructional) costs and district level (administration and non-personal services) costs. The methodology selected in that report to allocate district level costs was simply a first step in transitioning the State of Alaska toward using an empirical basis for identifying actual school cost. Because school districts have greater discretion in controlling non-personnel and administrative costs, a methodology that develops standards or goals and directs funding in accordance with achieving the standards/goals may be a preferable option.

# Statement of the Situation

In early 1998, the McDowell Group prepared the *Alaska School Operating Cost Study* for the State of Alaska Legislative Budget and Audit Committee. The purpose of the study was to determine adjustment factors that compensate for the impact of school size and geographical location on school operating costs. These factors were incorporated into the Public School Funding Formula.

It is important to stress that this study dealt with only one piece – operating costs - of a large and complex puzzle termed the School Foundation Formula. It was not intended to determine the cost of basic educational (Basic Need), but only how to allocate a portion of Basic Need (i.e., certain school operating costs) as defined by legislative appropriation. Also, Basic Need is only a starting point for public school funding; many adjustments are made for local contributions, federal impact aid, special needs, and other factors. Since the report was published, additional legislation has been enacted which has "adjusted" the District Cost Factors; all of these adjustments have been determined outside of the study analysis.

In our report, we cautioned the Committee that this was an important step, but only a first step in the process of transforming the funding process into one that has a scientific and empirical basis. Previous to 1998, District Cost Factors were based primarily on outdated (1985) household market basket costs unrelated to the cost of operating schools. A major advance of the Alaska School Operating Cost Study was, for the first time since statehood, to base District Cost Factors on what it cost to actually operate schools. The priority focus of the study effort was placed on the most significant port of operating costs, namely school level or instructional costs accounting for at least 70% of the total. The second major advance was to base school level (instructional) costs on standards for staffing schools of various sizes. The result was a sound defensible means of allocating instructional costs consistent from district to district that allows for updating based on changes in ADM.

However, such a standard was not possible for district level costs and the solution was an imperfect one that now prevents updating of the district level cost component of the DCF. Instead of a uniform standard like that calculated for school size, districts were simply allocated district level costs based on each district's actual expenditures per student in FY 1996, the most recent year available at the time of the study. As a result of this acknowledge shortcoming, we recommended that the Committee implement a transition period to evaluate if adjustments are needed, and put further work into understanding the non-personnel and administrative costs, research that eventually could lead to standards for district level costs.

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development is now in the process of recalculating the cost factors using 1999 data. Several issues and concerns about the District Cost Factors have emerged in this work. The McDowell Group views this situation as an excellent opportunity to review the assumptions, strengths and limitations of our earlier study.

To accomplish this review, the McDowell Group examined the worksheets used to recalculate the District Cost Factors (DCF's), as well as the underlying data used in the calculation. We noted that several adjustments needed to be made to audited financial statement information, consistent with the 1998 study. We also examined the additional data manipulation required to account for the increased roles of correspondence study and accounting transfers.

The purpose of DCF's is to account for wide variations in district level costs depending on geographic location. For example, remote districts with several small schools may pay eight times as much per student for heating oils as does a large urban district, even though the shelf price for oil is only two times as high. Non-personal services and administrative costs were combined into the district level cost pool for simplification, although it is clear that these costs have unique cost drivers. The use of actual expenditures had the effect of taking into account all of each district's unique geographic variables such as climate, insulation of buildings, utility and fuel costs, and so forth, including each district's local policies that affect spending. The disadvantage of this method is the absence of standards that resulted in compensation of districts for their current financial management practices – whatever they may be.

The McDowell Group report found that data limitations precluded the determination of a consistent standard for these costs across school districts. Therefore, a simple methodology of comparing actual per-student spending on non-personnel and administrative costs by each school district to the State average was employed. This methodology is far less rigorous than that used to account for variations in school level cost, but it was considered reasonable insofar as district level costs are comparatively small. However, district level costs are often most significant in smaller, multi-site rural districts where a larger portion of the total budget must be allocated to non-personal services out of necessity. As a result, the 70/30 rule (that was neither a part of the 1998 study nor a recommendation of it), forces many districts to skimp on necessary non-personal services costs or seek an exemption. While the intent of the rule is commendable - to address administrative costs and to encourage maximizing the money spent on instruction its effects are impractical for many smaller districts.

The 1998 *Alaska School Operating Cost Study* presents the computation of DCF's in Table VII on page 18 of the report. In response to a request by the Legislative Budget & Audit Committee, a single adjustment factor was calculated blending two components – school level costs and district level costs. DCF's are therefore calculated by dividing each district's estimated Basic Need per student by the statewide estimated Basic Need per student (Basic Need was used as these revenues are a good proxy for district expenditures).

This methodology is simple and represents a reasonable first step in accounting for district cost differences. It also, unfortunately, contains several features that make their continued use problematic:

- **The methodology's basis accepts 1996 expenditure patterns as reflective of a district's needs and drives future spending to approximate and/or exceed this baseline.** This basis was largely driven by the state of the database at the time the study was conducted. Financial statement expenditure data was considered to have the greatest accuracy, although several adjustments were made to the audited numbers for several districts in an attempt to level the comparison.

  The net result is to accept that the 1996 expenditures for each district are reflective of their need, rather than alternative methods of independently assessing the need or developing a standard for cost. This is a reasonable method for a "point in time" analysis but is clearly less preferable to the other two alternatives in future years.

  Assuming that districts essentially spend what they receive, this methodology reinforces itself, that is, it drives the district to the same level of spending each year. The lack of a standard means that districts that were relatively under-funded prior to 1998 continue to be hampered in their district level cost allocation. For districts with ample funding, there is little incentive to economize. Further, extraordinary events, such as unexpectedly high fuel costs, can have a devastating effect on districts with tight budgets. In fact, the major incentive, if this methodology remains in place, is for the districts to increase spending levels resulting in a higher average versus the state average. This is a driver the state may wish to avoid.

- **Some factors have increased in significance in school operational and accounting practices that were not considered by the 1998 study.** Correspondence study has increased markedly at some school districts. This effect was not analyzed in the 1998 report and will skew results when included in the recalculation of cost factors.

  For the present cost factor re-calculation, the Department has to contend with the increased practice of transfers. Again, this practice was not considered in the 1998 report and results may be skewed when factored into the recalculation.

  Financial statements serve a number of purposes, but are not designed as cost research tools. While some accounts may be useful for comparisons, we are of the opinion that the analysis of cost drivers for district level costs may not be adequately served by financial statement data alone.

- **Recalculation using Fiscal Year 1999 data illustrates that the underlying methodology is an inappropriate driver and/or does not hold up to accounting/operational changes.** Trial runs to re-calculate cost factors show two main effects. The first is that the large majority of district cost factors are unchanged (as predicted). The second is that a small number of districts have very large changes, primarily due to the operational or accounting changed that were not analyzed in the 1998 report. It is our recommendation that these changes to the DCF's should not be implemented without further study.

- **Improvements to financial and operational data initiated by the Alaska Department of Education cannot be incorporated into the current calculation.** The Department of Education has undertaken initiatives to ensure financial statement standardization and improve the quality of enrollment data using the Oasis database. These advances set the stage for better school cost data that can support more detailed cost study. Hence, a data quality limitation that existed at the time of the 1998 study has been removed. The improvement in data means that a new method for calculating administrative and non-personal services cost factors can be considered. Again, a new method should consider standards and the goals of the State of Alaska that underlie Alaska's huge fiscal commitment to education.

- **Variations in district level costs are diluted by school level costs in this calculation.** For the sake of "simplicity," two distinct cost pools - non-personnel and administrative costs - were combined and then further blended with instructional costs. What results is a very large – and complex – cost pool. It is entirely possible that the portfolio effect has damped critical variations, punishing some districts with higher than average costs and thereby rewarding others.

- **Waiver requests to the 70/30 instructional/non-instructional regulations have increased each year and are an indication that review of this methodology is required.** As previously mentioned the 70/30 regulation was not part of the study and would not have been recommended by the study team if our opinion had been sought. It is our understanding that the original intent was to encourage districts to minimize administrative costs and allocate more money to instruction. This is certainly a commendable goal. However, most district level costs are non-personal services costs that provide the basic infrastructure of education, such as books, building utility, fuel and maintenance costs, insurance and the like. Smaller districts with inefficient buildings, severe climates and other factors out of their control are the most likely to have district level costs in excess of 30%, some in excess of 40%.

# Recommendations for Further Work

The 1998 McDowell Study put significant analysis into school level (instructional) costs, which comprise the major percentage of school operating costs. This analysis produced a methodology that can be updated yearly with the assurance of providing meaningful allocations.

As stated in the 1998 report, the State of Alaska should continue to improve its Public School Funding Formula and engage a similar quantitative effort into district level costs. Though the magnitude of these costs is well below instructional costs, they comprise a value that is certainly significant and can impact many districts, especially those on the margin of adequate funding. Data collection and standardization has apparently improved to the point that such a study will produce meaningful results.

Updating the District Cost Factors using the current methodology with 1999 data will result in more questions than answers. We recommend that the current DCF's be maintained and the Department's efforts be placed in re-examining the methodology.

There are two primary approaches to an analysis of district level costs. The first is a study similar to the one in 1998 that seeks to understand the reasons for why these costs vary by school size and location. For these types of indirect costs, a typical study would be to determine major cost pools and identify unique drivers for the pools. A private industry approach to understanding indirect costs is to develop cost pools based on distinct activities, hence the name activity-based costing (or ABC). The ABC approach has become quite popular in the public sector as well, as it can lead to the creation of standards that can be used to monitor and control indirect costs.

The second approach is a rate-setting approach. Indirect cost would be examined to the extent that expenditure goals could be developed. A funding methodology could then be devised to provide incentives to school districts for achieving these goals. This approach requires a more clearly defined public policy component than the activity-based approach.

In closing, the McDowell Group offers a two-step recommendation. The first is to assemble a preliminary study team comprised of Alaska education experts with a mix of rural and urban school district operations experience. This study team would determine and examine critical issues and develop project objectives. The second step is to design an on-going cost research program that specifies data that will properly account for regional and school size differences in district level and administrative costs.

# TAB 2

# Comparison of Old to New Funding Formula

# Public School Funding Formula
## *Comparison of Old to New Funding Formula*

**Introduction**

The passage of Senate Bill 36, Ch. 83, SLA 1998, carried with it certain reporting requirements for the Department of Education & Early Development to the 22nd Alaska State Legislature by January 15, 2001. This report responds to the requirement under Section 47 that the department review *Funding Communities* versus *School* adjustments in the public school funding formula. In addition, a letter of intent adopted by the legislature provided further direction to the department in completing the required reports. This report will highlight key components and adjustments within Alaska's public school funding formula and illustrate the application of these components and adjustments from the previous funding *community* based formula to the current *school* based funding formula.

For the past 20 years, Alaska's public school funding formula has historically contained four major adjustments to the formula. These same adjustments can be found in most public school funding formulas in the nation. These adjustments include:

1. sparseness and size of student population;
2. special needs or categorical funding;
3. regional cost differences;
4. equalization; and
5. supplemental funding floor.

Fiscal year 1999 was the first year of implementation of Senate Bill 36 and distribution of public school funding based on the new school based funding formula. Table 1 provides a comparison of the prior community based funding formula and the current school based funding formula using the same fiscal year 1999 data set. This comparison required the conversion from instructional units under the old community formula to per student units under the newly adopted school formula. Fiscal year 1999 is the only year school district state aid was calculated using the old and new formula. This comparison was required for the first year of implementation to determine the supplemental funding floor for the school districts that needed additional funding to help transition to the new formula.

The department has analyzed each of these adjustments and compared their use with the prior funding community formula and under the new school funding formula.

**Sparseness and size of student population**

Senate Bill 36 changed the method that the State of Alaska used to determine adjustments for sparseness and size of student population. The previous funding formula utilized a concept known as *funding communities*. The average daily membership of schools within a school district were grouped into funding communities and a formula was applied to determine the number of instructional units for the purpose of calculating each school district's basic need.

The McDowell Group assembled a panel of Alaskans with many years of experience in the field of education to review and make recommendations to improve the

adjustment mechanism in the public school funding formula. The group reviewed the funding community concept and its application under the instructional unit funding formula. The group determined that although the definition of funding communities was not being applied consistently across school districts, that even a consistent application would not result in an equitable distribution system of resources. The group determined that the **school**, not the **community**, is the fundamental cost center for delivering instructional services. The panel determined that adopting the school as the basis for funding would result in a more equitable allocation of instructional resources by providing comparable levels of instructional staffing in all schools regardless of district size and location. The group determined that schools of similar size should receive similar resources for staffing regardless of location.

Table 2 shows the change in the distribution of resources from the *funding community* concept model to the *school* model that was adopted by the legislature under Senate Bill 36. This comparison does not include other adjustments due to changes in district cost factor or special needs funding. As shown in Table 1, the range of change is an increase of 15.8% for the Alyeska Central School to –36.8% for the Aleutian Region School District by the elimination of the funding community concept and basing the allocations on the number of students at each school. The school district with the largest increase was Petersburg at 11.2%.

It should be noted that the McDowell Group review panel did not suggest that any school districts were over funded under the previous funding community model rather some districts appeared to be under funded under the school funding model. Table 3 shows the change in dollars per student under the new formula as compared

to the old formula. This table shows that under the old formula for the first 10 to 20 students, the allocation remains the same at $12,200 per student. This flat level of funding for the first group of 20 students was to provide funding for fixed cost associated with operating a school facility. The change in funding on a per student basis gradually decreases after the first 20 students to accommodate for economies of scale, while the new formula provides a larger allocation initially for the fist 10 students, it decreases to below $8,000 per student by the time you reach 20 students. Table 4 demonstrates the reduction in resources being allocated to small schools serving less than 100 students.

Another issue that contributes to the change in funding is the number of items that receive adjustment. For example in FY 99, using the funding community model there were 267 funding communities that received the adjustment for size while with the per school model there were 499 adjustments for size. Of the 499 adjustments for schools there were 143 schools serving less than 100 students. Table 5 shows the number of funding communities compared to the number of schools by district and the number of schools serving less than 100 students by school district.

The funding community formula had a hold harmless provision for school districts that experienced a 10% drop in K-12 instructional units from one year to the next. The year before the school district experienced a decrease in K-12 instructional units by 10% or more became the base year. In addition to its current K-12 instructional units a school district was awarded in the first year of decline, 75% of the difference from the base year, in the second year 50% of the difference between the current year and the base year, and in the third year 25% of the difference between the current year and the base year.

**Special needs or categorical funding**

Categorical funding for special education, gifted and talented education, vocational education and bilingual/bicultural educational programs changed from the funding community model to the school funding model. The funding community model provided resource allocations to school districts based on the numbers of students and the types of special need services provided to each student. The program adjustments were based on the average cost of providing various levels of service within each of the program areas. For example, special education provided four adjustments ranging from $1,525 for each student identified as gifted and talented to $20,300 for each student identified as requiring special education intensive services. Bilingual/bicultural educational programs had three levels of adjustments for the various types of services that students were identified as needing and vocational education had one adjustment for each student identified as enrolled in a vocational program course.

With the passage of Senate Bill 36, and the implementation of the school based funding formula, the legislature approved a block funding approach for allocating resources for special need programs. The school funding model provides an increased adjustment of 20% to the districts' average daily membership after it has been adjusted for school size and district cost factor. The 20% increase is intended to allocate resources for special education, gifted and talented education, vocational education and bilingual/bicultural educational programs. This change has resulted in an increased allocation for categorical programs of approximately $13 million dollars under the school funding model over the funding community model. It is important to understand that although there are additional resources allocated for

special needs programs under both funding models, school districts are not required to expend these funds on special needs programs. In other words, the funds are discretionary and local school boards have the responsibility to determine the appropriate expenditures for these funds.

**Regional cost differences**

Senate Bill 36 continues to provide an adjustment for regional cost differences. The McDowell Group report defined these costs as "District Cost Factors." The District Cost Factors differ from the previous Area Cost Differentials in how they were derived. There is also a slight change in the way they are applied in the two funding formulas. The previous Area Cost Differentials were applied to all instructional units which included the K-12 and categorical units. The current District Cost Factors are applied to the student counts at the point they have been adjusted for school size and carry through to the 20% special needs adjustment. The District Cost Factors are not applied to the adjustments for students requiring intensive services or correspondence program counts.

The previous Area Cost Differentials were calculated using a market basket approach measuring the differences in items such as fuel and utilities between districts. The current District Cost Factors were calculated using school district audited financial data and reflect the per student district operating cost, compared to per student statewide operating costs, as well as other adjustments. The District Cost Factors represent the cost of goods, numbers of students, dispersion of schools, cost of travel, and other factors that affect district operational costs. Because the

District Cost Factors reflect factors other than the price of goods, neighboring districts will not necessarily have similar cost factors.

Senate Bill 36 requires the department to review the District Cost Factors and recommend changes to the legislature every other year beginning January 2001. The department intends to employ the McDowell Group methodology in order to update the current District Cost Factors. The first report on the District Cost Factors and the results of the department's review are presented to the legislature under a separate report.

**Equalization**

The funding community and the school models both make adjustments for instructional units or average daily membership then apply dollars to the base to arrive at Basic Need. Basic Need is the starting point of the equalization formula and provides all districts with needed resources based on the various formula adjustments. Funding components of Basic Need include required local effort, federal impact aid, and state aid. These three components determine the shares of local, federal, and state resources that make up Basic Need.

The State of Alaska must meet a federal equalization test known as the "disparity test" in order to consider federal impact aid dollars in the public school funding formula. The disparity test measures the amount of revenue per student among the 53 school districts. The federal law limits the per student wealth between districts to 25%. The wealthiest district in the state is not allowed to have more than a 25% increased per pupil revenue over the poorest district in the state. The state

maintains this standard by placing a cap on local contributions that exceed the required local effort. The state imposed cap on excess local contributions is equal to 23% of the districts' basic need. Again, all districts are considered equal at basic need so by placing a cap on excess local revenues equal to 23% of the districts' basic need, the state will continue to meet the federal equalization standard of 25%.

**Supplemental funding floor**

The supplemental funding floor is a mechanism to assist school districts in the transition from the funding community based formula to the school formula. In the first year of the new formula, districts that qualified for more state aid under the funding community formula than they did under the new school formula were allocated transition funding called the "Supplemental Funding Floor."

For example, under the funding community formula a district may have qualified for $10,000 per student but under the new school formula calculation, will qualify for $9,000 per student. Using the supplemental funding floor, under the school formula the district was allocated $9,000 per student plus an addition $1,000 per student as a supplemental funding floor to ease the transition to the new funding level. As the school districts' student population changes, the $1,000 per student of supplemental funding floor will erode. The erosion of the supplemental funding floor will eventually bring the school districts' per student allocation down to a total of $9,000 per student as determined by the new school funding formula.

This transitional provision differs substantially from other transitional or hold harmless clauses previously used when the funding formula was modified.

Previous transition language required a school district to adjust to its new funding level in a three-year period. The supplemental funding floor only erodes due to changes in the district student population providing a much more gradual change to the new funding level.

School districts qualified for a total of $17.4 million dollars in supplemental funding floor in fiscal year 1999. As the supplemental funding floor erodes, the money is lost from the funding formula. This means the public school funding formula will have $17.4 million less in state support once the supplemental funding floor is completely eroded.

**Recommendations**

The department recommends the repeal of AS 14.17.490(d), erosion of the supplemental funding floor.

The department recommends that AS 14.17 be amended to include a hold harmless provision for school districts that experience a decrease in student enrollment of 10% or more from one year to the next.

Alaska Department of Education and Early Development
Public School Funding Formula
Funding Community versus Per School Funding FY 99

Table 1

| | Prior Funding Community Formula | SB36 Per School Formula | Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Size Adjustment** Including correspondence programs | 614,147,116 | 606,662,800 | (7,484,316) |
| **Categorical Programs** Special Ed., Gifted and Talented, Vocational and Bilingual/Bicultural | 131,352,520 | 144,362,544 | 13,010,024 |
| **District Cost Factors** | 63,619,950 | 71,898,973 | 8,279,023 |
| **Basic Need** | 809,119,586 | 822,924,317 | 13,804,731 |
| **Required Local** | (136,790,501) | (140,608,152) | (3,817,651) |
| **Impact Aid** | (43,363,354) | (41,830,973) | 1,532,381 |
| **FY99 Cap on Increases @ 60%** | - | (9,070,746) | (9,070,746) |
| **Military Impact Aid and Contracts** | 24,592,406 | 24,592,406 | - |
| **State Aid** | 653,558,137 | 656,006,852 | 2,448,715 |
| **REAA Supplemental Funding** | 1,256,335 | - | (1,256,335) |
| **Quality School Grants** | - | 3,341,825 | 3,341,825 |
| **Supplemental Funding Floor** | - | 17,379,523 | 17,379,523 |
| **Total State Aid** | 654,814,472 | 676,728,200 | 21,913,728 |

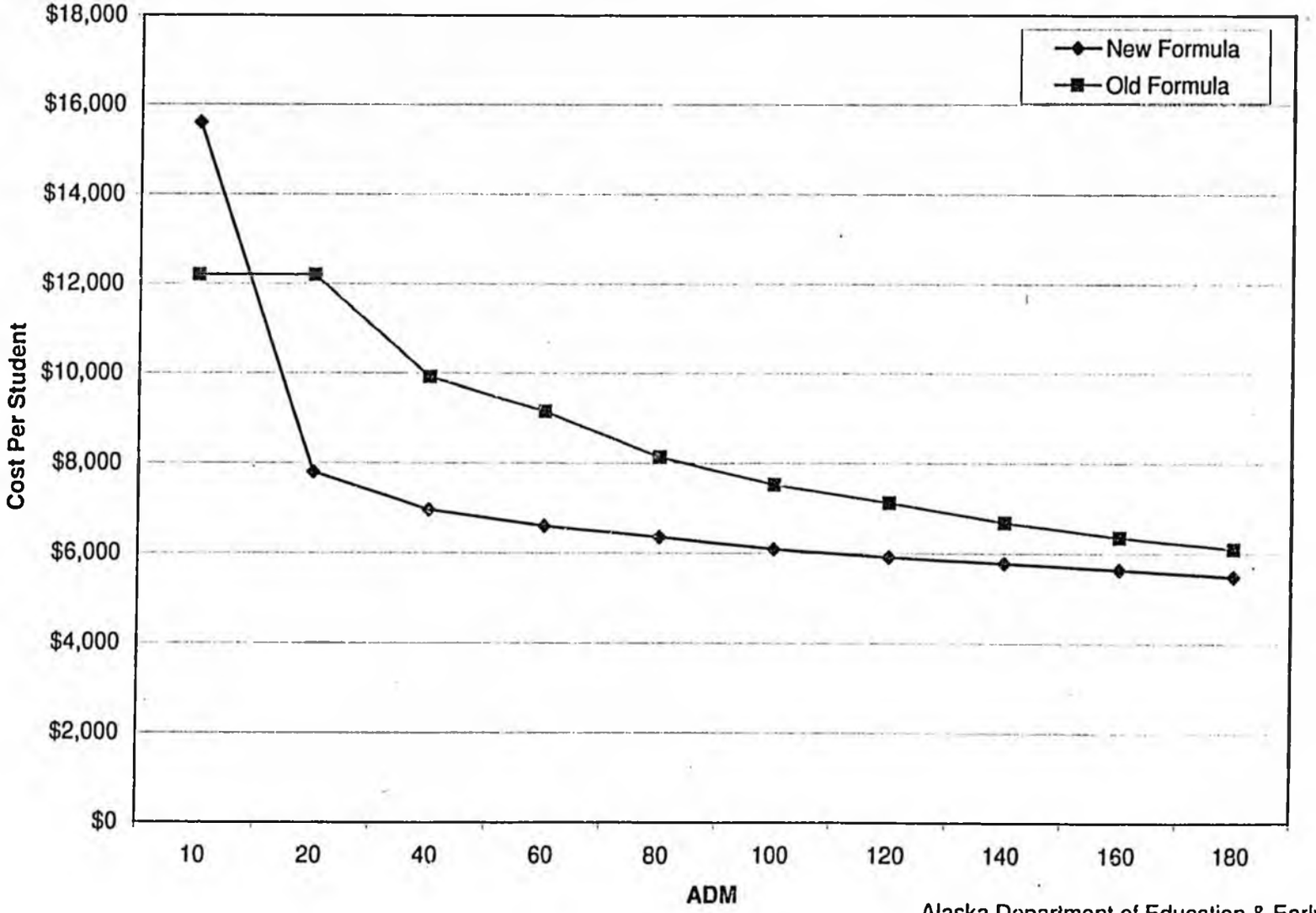
Alaska Department of Education & Early Development
Changes in K-12 adjustments from funding communities to per school model FY99
Prepared 11-10-2001

**Table 2**

| | Old Formula Funding Communities | New Formula Per School | Difference | Percentage Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alaska Gateway | 3,656,340 | 3,154,640 | (501,700) | -13.7% |
| Aleutian Region | 740,540 | 468,072 | (272,468) | -36.8% |
| Aleutians East Borough | 2,475,990 | 2,149,432 | (326,558) | -13.2% |
| Anchorage | 197,508,240 | 203,848,863 | 6,340,623 | 3.2% |
| Annette Island | 1,810,480 | 1,953,643 | 143,163 | 7.9% |
| Bering Strait | 12,261,000 | 11,122,730 | (1,138,270) | -9.3% |
| Bristol Bay Borough | 1,690,310 | 1,777,566 | 87,256 | 5.2% |
| Chatham | 2,144,760 | 1,927,251 | (217,509) | -10.1% |
| Chugach | 1,409,100 | 892,410 | (516,690) | -36.7% |
| Copper River | 4,381,020 | 4,072,806 | (308,214) | -7.0% |
| Cordova | 2,388,760 | 2,519,426 | 130,666 | 5.5% |
| Craig | 2,124,630 | 2,268,376 | 143,746 | 6.8% |
| Delta/Greely | 5,059,950 | 5,080,161 | 20,211 | 0.4% |
| Denali Borough | 2,410,720 | 2,215,647 | (195,073) | -8.1% |
| Dillingham | 2,651,670 | 2,741,495 | 89,825 | 3.4% |
| Fairbanks North Star Borough | 67,542,860 | 68,352,636 | 809,776 | 1.2% |
| Galena | 13,368,150 | 10,844,692 | (2,523,458) | -18.9% |
| Haines Borough | 2,319,220 | 2,335,041 | 15,821 | 0.7% |
| Hoonah | 1,304,790 | 1,372,615 | 67,825 | 5.2% |
| Hydaburg | 805,810 | 736,169 | (69,641) | -8.6% |
| Iditarod Area | 4,152,270 | 3,125,888 | (1,026,382) | -24.7% |
| Juneau Borough | 23,771,090 | 24,084,720 | 313,630 | 1.3% |
| Kake | 1,121,790 | 1,147,194 | 25,404 | 2.3% |
| Kashunamiut | 1,500,600 | 1,591,839 | 91,239 | 6.1% |
| Kenai Peninsula Borough | 49,004,960 | 48,661,963 | (342,997) | -0.7% |
| Ketchikan Gateway Borough | 11,558,890 | 12,155,735 | 596,845 | 5.2% |
| Klawock | 1,199,870 | 1,213,993 | 14,123 | 1.2% |
| Kodiak Island Borough | 13,451,110 | 13,428,860 | (22,250) | -0.2% |
| Kuspuk | 3,847,270 | 3,168,793 | (678,477) | -17.6% |
| Lake & Peninsula Borough | 5,302,730 | 3,948,231 | (1,354,499) | -25.5% |
| Lower Kuskokwim | 21,763,580 | 20,242,022 | (1,521,558) | -7.0% |
| Lower Yukon | 11,325,870 | 11,190,132 | (135,738) | -1.2% |
| Mat-Su Borough | 57,596,810 | 55,059,952 | (2,536,858) | -4.4% |
| Nenana | 2,220,400 | 1,732,576 | (487,824) | -22.0% |
| Nome | 3,567,280 | 3,610,291 | 43,011 | 1.2% |
| North Slope Borough | 11,112,370 | 10,882,926 | (229,444) | -2.1% |
| Northwest Arctic Borough | 12,067,020 | 11,721,480 | (345,540) | -2.9% |
| Pelican | 334,890 | 218,575 | (116,315) | -34.7% |
| Petersburg | 3,439,180 | 3,825,064 | 385,884 | 11.2% |
| Pribilof | 1,216,340 | 1,055,234 | (161,106) | -13.3% |
| Sitka Borough | 7,316,950 | 7,714,756 | 397,806 | 5.4% |
| Skagway | 888,770 | 831,553 | (57,217) | -6.4% |
| Southeast Island | 3,119,540 | 2,152,677 | (966,863) | -31.0% |
| Southwest Region | 5,347,260 | 5,027,109 | (320,151) | -6.0% |
| St. Mary's | 894,260 | 836,060 | (58,200) | -6.5% |
| Tanana | 772,870 | 689,855 | (83,015) | -10.7% |
| Unalaska | 1,801,940 | 1,944,260 | 142,320 | 7.9% |
| Valdez | 3,837,510 | 4,178,380 | 340,870 | 8.9% |
| Wrangell | 2,526,620 | 2,671,443 | 144,823 | 5.7% |
| Yakutat | 1,138,870 | 1,040,318 | (98,552) | -8.7% |
| Yukon Flats | 3,625,230 | 2,554,020 | (1,071,210) | -29.6% |
| Yukon/Koyukuk | 4,668,330 | 3,772,625 | (895,705) | -19.2% |
| Yupiit | 2,723,650 | 2,595,178 | (128,472) | -4.7% |
| Alyeska Central School | 6,259,546 | 7,250,037 | 990,491 | 15.8% |
| Mt. Edgecumbe High School | 1,617,110 | 1,505,390 | (111,720) | -6.9% |
| Totals | 614,147,116 | 606,662,800 | (7,484,316) | |

# Per Student Cost Between Formulas

**Table 3**



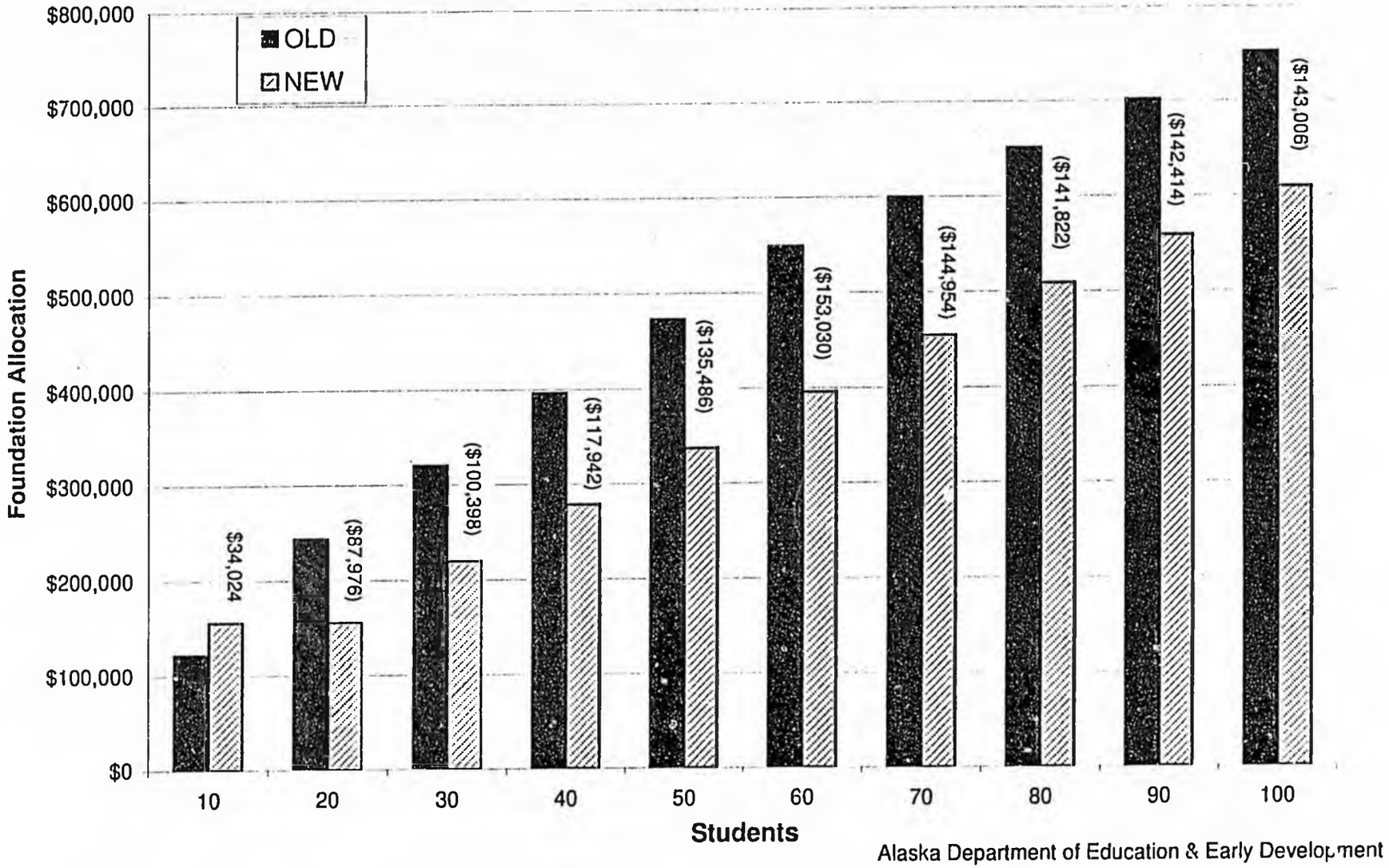

Alaska Department of Education & Early Development



g:/Ejeans/Reports/FoundationProgram/ADMPerKidCostTable.xls

## School Size Adjustment / Old Vs. New Formula

**Table 4**




Alaska Department of Education & Early Development



g:/Ejeans/Reports/FoundationProgram/ADMCostTable

Table 5

## 1999 OLD versus NEW ADM

| DISTRICT | # OF FUNDING COMM. | # OF SCHOOLS FOR ADJUST. | # OF SCHOOLS LESS THAN 100 ADM |
|---|---|---|---|
| ALASKA GATEWAY | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| ALEUTIANS EAST | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| ALEUTIAN REGION | 3 | 8 | 4 |
| ANCHORAGE | 4 | 84 | 0 |
| ANNETTE ISLANDS | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| BERING STRAIT | 15 | 22 | 8 |
| BRISTOL BAY | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| CHATHAM | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| CHUGACH | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| COPPER RIVER | 7 | 9 | 5 |
| CORDOVA | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| CRAIG | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| DELTA/GREELY | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| DENALI | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| DILLINGHAM | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| FAIRBANKS | 5 | 28 | 0 |
| GALENA | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| HAINES | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| HOONAH | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| HYDABURG | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| IDITAROD | 9 | 9 | 7 |
| JUNEAU | 1 | 11 | 0 |
| KAKE | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| KASHUNAMIUT | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| KENAI | 21 | 39 | 9 |
| KETCHIKAN | 1 | 6 | 0 |
| KLAWOCK | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| KODIAK | 9 | 13 | 7 |
| KUSPUK | 8 | 9 | 8 |
| LAKE AND PENINSULA | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| LOWER KUSKOKWIM | 23 | 34 | 13 |
| LOWER YUKON | 11 | 19 | 3 |
| MAT-SU | 15 | 29 | 6 |
| NENANA | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| NOME | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| NORTH SLOPE | 8 | 13 | 4 |
| NORTHWEST ARCTIC | 11 | 19 | 3 |
| PELICAN | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| PETERSBURG | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| PRIBILOF | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| SITKA | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| SKAGWAY | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| SOUTHEAST | 11 | 9 | 7 |
| SOUTHWEST | 9 | 12 | 6 |
| ST. MARY'S | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| TANANA | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| UNALASKA | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| VALDEZ | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| WRANGELL | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| YAKUTAT | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| YUKON FLATS | 11 | 10 | 7 |
| YUKON/KOYUKUK | 10 | 11 | 9 |
| YUPIIT | 3 | 6 | 0 |
| ALYESKA CORRES* | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Mt. EDGECUMBE | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| **TOTALS** | **267** | **499** | **143** |

G:\DistSup\EJEANS\Reports\PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA\99oldVSnewADM.xls

# TAB 3

# Educational Adequacy

Alaska Department of
EDUCATION
& EARLY DEVELOPMENT

# Resolution of the State Board of Education & Early Development

## On the Effective Date of the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska is committed to providing a public school system which produces qualified workers and competent citizens who have met high and rigorous academic standards; and,

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska and Alaska school districts, educators, and parents have been working diligently to develop those standards; and,

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education & Early Development supports the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination as one means of assessing student mastery of state standards in reading, writing, and mathematics; and,

WHEREAS, the State Board believes that ALL children, including students with special needs, limited English proficiency and transient students, military dependents and students who enroll in Alaska late in their high school careers, must have the opportunity to learn in a public education system that recognizes and supports the abilities and individual learning styles of our children; and,

WHEREAS, the opportunity to learn requires qualified teachers, safe schools, curricula aligned to standards, and the opportunity to complete as much as possible the sequence of benchmark examinations in grades 3, 6, and 8; and,

WHEREAS, the state needs to provide the necessary resources to provide those opportunities to Alaska's current high school Class of 2002, the first class required to pass the exam to qualify for a high school diploma; and,

WHEREAS, it is probable that thousands of students will be denied diplomas in 2002 on the basis of a test our public school system has not yet prepared them to pass; so,

THEREFORE, the State Board of Education & Early Development urges Governor Knowles and the Alaska Legislature to adjust the effective date of the high stakes element of the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination to 2006, while still administering the test;

# BUILDING BLOCKS

## Continuing the Progress of Smart Start

*The Next Steps for Supporting Alaska's Young Children and Their Families*


Department of Health & Social Services

Department of Education & Early Development

# STATE OF ALASKA

**Department of Education & Early Development**
**Department of Health & Social Services**

*TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR*

*801 West 10th Street, Suite 200*
*Juneau, Alaska 99801-1894*

*PO Box 110601*
*Juneau, Alaska 99811-0601*


August 2000

Dear Alaskans:

Please join us in supporting these exciting next steps for Alaska's young children and their families. Our department staff and lots of you who work on behalf of children have dreamed of the day when everyone would work together in support of new and innovative ways to improve children's lives. We hope this document helps make that dream a reality.

It is the logical next step in ongoing efforts by Gov. Tony Knowles and Lt. Gov. Fran Ulmer to help children succeed. Through creation of the Children's Cabinet, the "Smart Start for Alaska's Children" initiative, the Children's Budget and many other efforts, we have made great progress. We must keep moving forward.

Because we know the early years—prenatal through 8—are critical for overall child development, we must make sure those years are the best possible. We must work together to make sure every pregnant woman gets adequate prenatal care and nutrition; every child grows up in a nurturing, safe home and community; that all children have hope; and that all children succeed in school and life.

This report identifies many of the challenges facing our young children and their families. It also identifies outcomes, beginning strategies and indicators to help us measure progress. It is our belief that achieving these outcomes will make a significant difference in the health and well-being of Alaska's youngest citizens.

Our children need each of us—the agencies and organizations we work for, and our communities—to work together in new and exciting ways. Our challenge is:

- Are we willing to do things differently?
- What can each of us do?
- How can our programs and services be more coordinated and tailored to meet the individual needs of children, families and communities?
- What action are you willing to take and when?

We thank you for your past support of "Smart Start" and other efforts to improve child well-being. We look forward to working with you on this project to better the lives of every Alaska child.

Sincerely,

Richard S. Cross, Commissioner
Education & Early Development

Karen Perdue, Commissioner
Health & Social Services

# TEAM MEMBERS

**Co-Chairs**

**Karen Pearson**
Deputy Director, Division of Public Health
Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS)

**Marilyn Webb**
Head Start Program Coordinator/Collaboration Director
Department of Education & Early Development (EED)

***A special thanks to everyone who assisted the team!***

**Lisa Balivet**
Coordinator, Child Care Programs, EED

**Nancy Davis**
Chief, Public Health Nursing, DHSS

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**Mary Lorence**
Child Care Program Coordinator, DHSS

**Sally Mead**
Graduate Intern and Head Start Quality Center, Director

**Pam Muth**
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**Wendy Tada**
Special Education Program Manager, EED

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**Robert Tumacder**
Associate Coordinator, Child Care Programs, EED

**Kathi Wineman**
Education Specialist, EED

**L. Diane Worley**
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Coordinator, DHSS

# CORRECTION

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

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# STATE OF ALASKA

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS


Vision, Purpose and Guiding Principles ..... 5

Introduction ..... 7

Assuring Maternal and Child Health ..... 9

Enhancing Early Care and Education ..... 15

Supporting Healthy Stable Families ..... 21

Developing Supportive Neighborhoods and Communities ..... 27

Establishing Support Systems ..... 33

Conclusions ..... 37


# A SHARED VISION

Alaska's young children will be healthy, safe, and successful at home, at school, and in their communities.

# OUR PURPOSE

To improve the health and well-being of Alaska's young children, prenatal through age 8, by creating a comprehensive, collaborative initiative to ensure our collective energies address the critical outcomes and strategies that will support and improve the lives of Alaska's children and families and also that will help us gauge our progress.

# OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our guiding principles consider the ideal early childhood system to be one that is:

- Developmentally appropriate
- Outcome-based and measurable
- Focused first on prevention
- Strength-based instead of deficit-based
- Focused on self-sufficiency
- Collaborative
- Locally owned/community-based
- Staffed by a quaiity workforce
- Assisted by effective management systems
- Non-duplicative
- Accessible
- Information based
- Seamless
- Comprehensive
- Built on providing hope and success for every child

# INTRODUCTION

Building Blocks articulates a shared vision for our children--the critical outcomes and strategies that will improve child well-being and the measures that will help us gauge our progress. Our vision for healthy, successful children begins before birth and goes through childhood.

Consider that in 1997, 9,956 infants were born in our state and 41 of them died between their twenty-eighth day of life and their first birthday. These tragic numbers reflect one of the highest post-neonatal death rates in the nation and tell us that too many babies in Alaska aren't getting what they need to simply survive their first year of life. The reality is, the majority of these infant deaths are preventable.

Young children in our state face other significant hurdles. Therefore, this plan looks at:

- assuring maternal and child health;
- enhancing early care and education;
- supporting healthy stable families;
- developing supportive neighborhoods and communities; and
- establishing support systems.

***We recognize that childhood is a continuum where strength builds upon strength. Together, we will continue the hard work of supporting young children and their families.***

## WHERE WE START

We begin by identifying the tasks that the state Departments of Education & Early Development and Health and Social Services can undertake to support children and families. It is essential for these two departments, which bear primary responsibility for children's programs and services, to develop sustainable partnerships and a commitment to plan and deliver comprehensive services to children and families.

It is our intent to work together to erase the notion that young lives can be divided neatly into agency jurisdictions, and to recognize that childhood is a continuum where strength builds on strength.

Using this initial document as a framework, we will continue the hard work of describing exactly what must be done, when and by whom.

## WHY WE NEED YOUR HELP

Families are the foundation for each child's success and each Alaskan has a role; it is the state's responsibility to partner with families and communities to help children grow up safe, healthy and successful.

As our families, communities and businesses take up specific strategies, things will improve for children. We know that by reversing trends in some critical areas of children's lives, we can expect to see improvement in many other areas as well. The net result will be children who are successful now and, finally, as adults.

***Families are the foundation for each child's success and each Alaskan has a role; it is the state's responsibility to partner with families and communities to help children grow up safe, healthy and successful.***

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

This initiative frames common goals for children birth to age 8, sets out broad strategies, both traditional and innovative, and identifies how we will measure progress.

The strategies included here are intended as a beginning. There is room to review, evaluate and change.

It is our hope that this effort will inspire each of us to ask ourselves:

***What can my community do?***

***What can my agency/business do?***

***What can I do?***

# ASSURING MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

## Challenges

Most Alaska mothers and their young children are healthy and thriving. There remains, however, much room for improvement. Alaska has a high rate of unintended pregnancies and performs poorly on measures of prenatal health. More alarming still, is the fact that Alaska has one of the nation's highest death rates for babies between one month and one year of age. Among children ages 1 to 14, deaths due to illness and injury consistently exceed the national average.

This section focuses on improving birth outcomes and the newborn's earliest environment; ensuring that children maintain physical and mental health; and protecting children from harm and injury. We will work towards:

***By informing Alaskans about relevant health issues and making good prenatal care accessible, we can increase the number of babies born healthy.***

## Planned Pregnancies

Unintended pregnancy is the common thread that connects many risk factors for babies. In Alaska, 41 percent of babies born during 1997 were the result of unintended pregnancies. According to an Institute of Medicine report, women with unintended pregnancies are:

- More likely to expose the fetus to harmful substances;
- Less likely to seek early prenatal care;
- At greater risk of separating from their husband or partner;
- At greater risk of economic hardship;
- More likely to report having experienced domestic violence; and
- More likely to abuse drugs or alcohol.

In 1997, 15 percent of infant deaths in Alaska were caused, in part, by maternal drug or alcohol abuse, according to a recent study. In an additional 21 percent of infant deaths that year, parental drug or alcohol abuse was documented.

## Safe Motherhood

Physical violence against women during pregnancy is another serious health concern. Ten percent of Alaska mothers who delivered a baby between 1996 and 1997 reported that they were abused in the year prior to or during their pregnancy. The problem is especially prevalent among teenagers and Alaska Native women. Women who are involved in violence or who are physically assaulted during pregnancy are significantly more likely to deliver babies that are premature, distressed or stillborn.

***The three most common causes of infant death in Alaska are pre-term birth, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and other suffocation of unknown cause, and birth defects. Based on current scientific knowledge, an estimated 42 percent of these deaths are preventable.***

## Reduction of Adverse Birth Outcomes

The risk of adverse birth outcomes also goes up when a pregnant woman:

- Is less than 18 years of age;
- Is more than 35 years of age;
- Has had four or more previous births;
- Has conceived more than once in 18 months; or
- Is carrying multiple fetuses, particularly as a result of assisted reproductive technology.

## Keeping Children Safe

Alaska children face other dangers as they grow up. In 1997, there were 41 deaths among children between the ages of 1 and 9 in Alaska. Of these deaths, 63 percent were the result of injury.

Motor vehicle accidents accounted for the largest number of deaths, followed by plane crashes, drowning, poisonings and fires. The Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics estimates that among children under age 7 who died in Alaska in 1997, 38 percent were not adequately supervised at the time they were fatally injured. Sixteen percent died when houses without working smoke detectors caught fire.

Statewide, 15 in every 1,000 Alaska children suffers from abuse — most at the hands of a parent.

Abuse and neglect deaths in Alaska are six times more common among infants of mothers with less than a 12th grade education.

## *DID YOU KNOW?*

***In 1997, 15 percent of infant deaths in Alaska were caused, in part, by maternal drug or alcohol abuse, according to a recent study. In an additional 21 percent of infant deaths that year, parental drug or alcohol abuse was documented.***

***A recent survey of Alaska women of childbearing age found that only 24 percent knew that folic acid prevents birth defects.***

***An estimated 70 percent of Alaska mothers do not receive domestic violence screening in prenatal care settings.***

## Positive Outcomes

These are some of the challenges that face us as we attempt to assure maternal and child health. By working together, we can achieve the desired positive outcomes to ensure healthy, successful children.

# OUTCOME #1

## Babies are born healthy.

Achieving this goal means providing information and support to Alaskans before and during pregnancy to help them give their babies the best start in life.

By informing Alaskans about relevant health issues and making good prenatal care accessible, we can increase the number of babies born healthy.

Specifically, we can:

- ✦ Reduce the number of fetal and infant deaths;
- ✦ Reduce the number of babies born underweight or pre-term;
- ✦ Reduce the occurrence of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, developmental disabilities, spinal bifida and other neural tube defects, and HIV in newborns; and
- ✦ Ensure that health problems are identified and treated early.

## Suggested Strategies

1. Make prenatal care more accessible and affordable for Alaska women.
2. Support domestic violence screening, intervention and referral systems in prenatal-care settings.
3. Develop a statewide public awareness campaign about the importance of appropriate prenatal care, including the use of multivitamins and folic acid.
4. Discourage the use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs before conception and during pregnancy.
5. Ensure that women of childbearing age have immediate access to alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs.
6. Assure that pre-conceptional education is available to Alaska women to provide them with information about alternatives to childbearing, health habits and other issues to be considered when planning a pregnancy.
7. Assure that contraceptive services are available to mothers for at least 18 months after the birth of a child.
8. Implement a universal newborn hearing screening program that provides screening, assessment, diagnosis and treatment for hearing disorders.
9. Support public-awareness campaigns aimed at preventing infant injury and death (such as the "Back to Sleep" and the "Never Shake a Baby" campaigns.)
10. Make certain that eligible pregnant women and babies are enrolled in Denali KidCare and WIC.

# OUTCOME #2

## Children's physical health and mental health needs are met.

Disease prevention and early detection of health problems can profoundly influence a child's future soundness of body and mind. Children need routine and preventive medical and oral health care, and attention to behavioral and developmental issues. Specialized, interdisciplinary treatment should be available to children with complex or chronic health problems.

In addition to biological factors affecting a child's health, normal growth and development depend on good nutrition, comprehensive health care, and a safe home and environment.

## Suggested Strategies

1. Increase the number and percent of schools offering child care and other services that encourage young mothers to complete high school.
2. Increase the number of school nurses in schools statewide.
3. Ensure that all women and young children have access to adequate nutrition.
4. Ensure that all newborns, before leaving the hospital, receive a comprehensive health and developmental screening/examination.
5. Ensure that babies identified on newborn screenings (metabolic and hearing) leave the hospital with a plan for follow-up evaluation and treatment if necessary.
6. Offer a follow-up telephone call or home visit to all families of newborns to answer questions and assess the health of the mother and child.
7. Ensure that high-risk newborns, such as low-birth-weight babies, receive appropriate care in the hospital and at home following discharge.
8. Provide regular, periodic, developmental and basic physical and mental health screenings for all children.
9. Ensure that children identified through evaluations as having special health or developmental needs receive appropriate services.
10. Encourage families to establish a continuing relationship with a primary heathcare provider.
11. Promote public awareness about the importance of immunizations for children from birth to 5 year olds. Ensure easy access to immunizations.
12. Ensure that children who are removed from their natural homes receive appropriate physical and mental health and developmental assessments to determine what services they need.
13. Identify and refer families who may be eligible for Medicaid or child insurance programs.
14. Provide school-based health and counseling programs, including substance abuse counseling and treatment for young children.
15. Increase the number of children with access to affordable medical, dental and mental health care.

# OUTCOME #3

## Children are free from harm and injury.

Alaska has the second highest rate in the nation for post-neonatal deaths, those occurring between the first month and first year of life. Only the District of Columbia fares worse on this measure.

The post-neonatal death rate is closely associated with specific risk factors in babies' homes, including drug or alcohol abuse, domestic violence, child abuse or neglect, or serious maternal illness.

Beyond infancy, Alaska children face other dangers at home and in their neighborhoods and communities. Between 1994 and 1997, young children in Alaska required hospitalization as a result of 355 falls, 118 poisonings and 55 dog bites.

***Last year, the state Division of Family & Youth Services received 16,294 reports of suspected child abuse. About two-thirds of these reports involved children under 10 years of age.***

### Suggested Strategies

1. Implement a child-injury prevention program that focuses on both intentional and unintentional injuries.
2. Promote public awareness of and intolerance for child abuse and neglect.
3. Ensure that criminal records checks are part of the hiring procedure for all staff in any facility that deals with the direct care of children.
4. Ensure that the state adequately monitors foster homes to promote the health and safety of the foster child.
5. Promote the use of safety devices: child passenger restraints, life-jackets, helmets, smoke detectors and gun locks.
6. Expand proven parent education, including traditional cultural-based parenting, and support counseling programs to teach parents non-violent conflict resolution in order to prevent child abuse and neglect.
7. Implement community-based programs to help families and children cope with the effects of living in unsafe and violent communities.

# INDICATORS

The following indicators will be used to measure progress and gauge success in achieving outcomes:

- The rate of unintended pregnancy
- The proportion of pregnant women who receive early and adequate prenatal care
- The rate of alcohol, cigarettes, and illicit drug use among pregnant women
- The post-neonatal death (between 28 days and one year) rate
- The rate of completed immunizations for children 5 years of age
- The rate of intentional and unintentional injuries in children 1-8 years of age
- The rate of substantiated child abuse and neglect
- The number of children wait-listed for early intervention services

# Next steps to assuring maternal and child health

***What can my community do?***

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

***What can my agency/business do?***

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

***What can I do?***

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

# ENHANCING EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

## Background

Early care and education refers to programs serving children from birth through age 8. Recent research links high-quality early care and education to long-term positive outcomes for children in educationai achievement, economic well-being and social/emotional behavior.

## Key markers of high-quality programs are:

- healthy, safe environments;
- adequately staffed with well-trained and well-compensated personnel;
- family-centered, recognizing families as the primary educators and nurturers of children;
- community-based, recognizing that the most effective programs are planned for and implemented locally;
- child-centered and developmentally appropriate with on-going and varied methods of assessments;
- nurturing of staff, children and families;
- culturally responsive;
- inclusive of children with special needs and abilities; and
- supportive of children's physical, social, emotional and intellectual well-being.

Additionally, research shows providing effective services for young children is less about bridging the gap between different types of programs and more about ensuring continuity in these key markers of quality.

The benefits of high-quality early care and education can only be maintained if the same key elements of quality are present in all types of programs, including public school programs. As more parents and families understand the key elements of high-quality programs, they will require it for their children.

***Adults born in poverty who attended a high-quality, active learning preschool program, have half as many criminal arrests and have higher earnings and property wealth than those who did not. The public will receive more than $7 in return for every dollar invested in quality preschools.***

## DID YOU KNOW?

***In January 1998, there were 450 active family child care providers who were exempt from licensing regulations and who self-certified that they met the minimum health and safety standards. In May 2000, this number totaled 1,100.***

***Despite a high exposure to illness on the job, less than one-third of child care workers have health insurance and even fewer have a pension plan. The average wage of child care workers in Alaska is $8 an hour.***

***During Fiscal Year 1999, Alaska lost approximately 733 licensed child care spaces.***

# OUTCOME #1

## All early care and education for children birth through age 8 is high quality.

***In 1999, Head Start served 3,351 children —23 percent of the eligible children who live in poverty.***

Recent studies indicate that most of the settings where young children receive care fall short of the key markers of quality. Directly linked to program quality are staff education and experience, wages and turnover rate.

Today, providers who work in child care settings receive poverty level wages with few or no benefits or training opportunities. Low wages and poor working conditions account for the fact that child care has one of the highest turnover rates of any occupation.

Other critical links to quality are the standards and regulations that guide early care and education programs; and the state's ability to provide technical assistance, monitor programs and enforce regulations.

### Suggested Strategies

1. Establish early care and education program standards and regulations that reflect markers of quality.
2. Require all early care and education programs to meet or exceed established health, safety and program standards.
3. Develop and implement trainer qualification and course standards for early childhood education across the state.
4. Provide statewide access to professional development in early childhood education.
5. Establish education standards for early care and education practitioners.
6. Require early care and education practitioners to meet educational standards for their position.

7. Improve the wages and benefits of people who work in the early care and education field.
8. Require all early care and education programs to have an active parent involvement component.

# OUTCOME #2

## All children and families can find and access appropriate early care and education.

Access to reliable, high-quality programs that meet the individual needs of children and families is essential for parents to achieve and sustain self-sufficiency; for children's health and intellectual development; and to provide support for children at risk.

Family economic pressures, welfare reform, single-parent homes and other factors all have contributed to an increased demand for out-of-home care and education.

While some families have reasonable access to early care and education programs, a substantial number of Alaska families cannot find or afford care that meets their needs. For example, regular early care and education arrangements are often beyond the reach of working poor families if they do not have access to subsidies.

Specialized care for infants, children with special needs or care that accommodates evening, weekend or rotating work schedules is in short supply.

Some children live in families that face serious challenges and risk factors such as poverty, abuse and neglect, illiteracy, homelessness and serious emotional/behavior problems.

These risk factors can seriously compromise child and family well-being. Fortunately, risk is not destiny. Study after study shows that timely, intensive and comprehensive early intervention can improve quality of life and give children at risk a chance for success.

***The average annual cost of college tuition at the University of Alaska is $3,465. The average annual cost of preschool care in Fairbanks is $5,676. The average annual cost of infant care in Fairbanks is $6,840.***

## Suggested Strategies

1. Increase the supply of early care and education programs for all children birth through age 8, especially programs serving infant/toddlers and school-age children, and those operating during non-traditional hours.
2. Increase opportunities for all children, ages 3-5, to participate in early childhood education programs.
3. Provide opportunities for children with special needs to be educated and receive services with their non-disabled age mates in typical early childhood settings.

*Specialized care for infants; children with special needs; or care that accommodates evening, weekend or rotating work schedules is in short supply.*

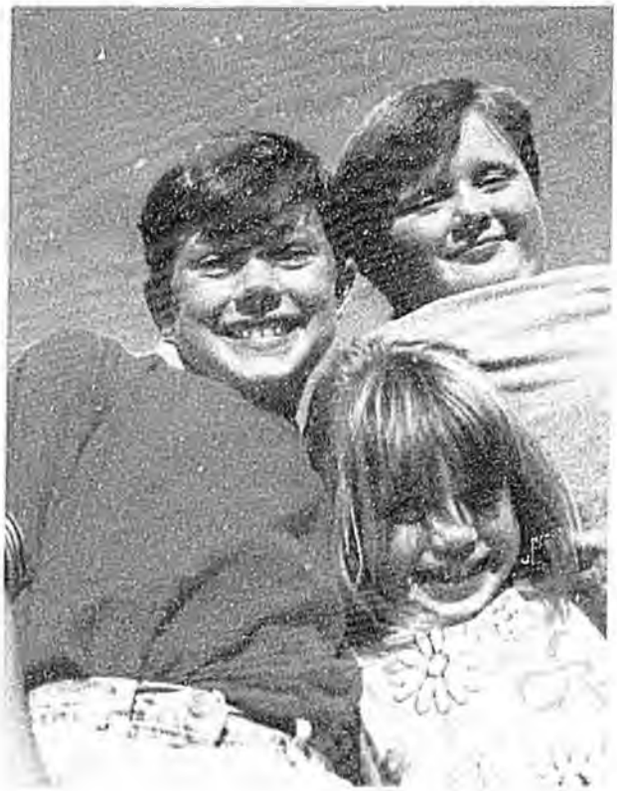
4. Change the subsidy rate schedule to reflect the policy of parents paying no more than 10 percent of their income for child care.
5. Provide parents and the public with consumer information that promotes informed early care and education choices.
6. Encourage employer involvement in providing child care resources for employees.
7. Provide technical assistance to communities interested in determining and planning for the child care needs of parents, families and children in their community.

# OUTCOME #3

## All children have the opportunities and supports they need to succeed in school.

When children have appropriate supports during their early years, they are more likely to enter kindergarten socially and linguistically competent, and physically and emotionally healthy.

These supports cannot end at the beginning of public school. To maintain the developmental growth and progress made by children in the early years, elementary schools must ensure key markers of quality are present in public school programs.



Currently, prevention and early intervention programs in Alaska serve only a fraction of eligible children. In 1999, Head Start served 3,351 children—23 percent of the eligible children who live in poverty. Even Start Family Literacy programs served 164 children and 75 families of enrolled children.

## Suggested Strategies

1. Support children in the continuation of their home culture and language while helping them to speak, read and write English.
2. Provide resources for children in transition and those who are not making expected developmental progress to receive individual supports.
3. Require K-3 teachers to be certified in early childhood development or acquire an early childhood endorsement.
4. Use a variety of appropriate methods to regularly assess and monitor children's progress in all areas of development.
5. Establish partnerships between parents, health, social services, early care and education programs, elementary schools, local boards and organizations to insure continuity of quality, comprehensive care and education through grade 3.

6. Develop collaborative health plans that address health and education, including: environment; health education; meals and nutrition; physical education; health services; counseling, psychological and mental health services; staff wellness; family/parent and community partnerships.
7. Support elementary schools in their efforts to have an ongoing and comprehensive safety/conflict resolution program in place, which is coordinated between families, the school, and the community.
8. Ensure mental health specialists are available to assist early care and education providers, teachers, parents and other program personnel with the identification of early warning signs of negative or disruptive behavior, barriers to learning and child/student success, and to provide guidance and intervention strategies.
9. Require full-day/every-day kindergarten, with children in attendance at least four hours a day.

***Fortunately, risk is not destiny. Study after study shows that timely, intensive and comprehensive early intervention can improve quality of life and give children at risk a chance for success.***

## INDICATORS

The following indicators will be used to measure progress and gauge success in achieving outcomes:

- Percent of providers/teachers who have a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or beyond in early childhood education
- Average wage of staff at child care centers
- Number of early care and education programs that meet national accreditation standards for quality
- Percent of child care providers working in the same program continuously for one year
- Number of child care slots available for every 100 infants
- Number of child care slots available for every 100 children ages 12 months to 13 years
- Percent of eligible Head Start children who are served
- Percent of all kindergartners who attended preschool
- Percent of students proficient in reading, writing, and math at the end of third grade
- Percent of kindergarten children who demonstrate all of the tasks/behaviors in the four developmental areas included on the Alaska Developmental Profile

# Next steps to enhancing early care and education

***What can my community do?***

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2. _____

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***What can my agency/business do?***

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***What can I do?***

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# SUPPORTING HEALTHY STABLE FAMILIES

## Possibilities

From the moment of birth, children depend on their parents and families to provide for their needs. Families are responsible for:

- **Economic support.** The family is the social unit that provides life-sustaining resources—food, clothing, shelter and other necessities.
- **Health care and wellness.** In addition to providing for the basic health care needs of children, the family must protect its members against family and community violence, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse.
- **Education and socialization.** The family is the primary educator of children and is responsible for transmitting social and cultural values. Setting, teaching and enforcing rules, norms and appropriate behaviors transmits social values.
- **Family maintenance.** Families are the main providers of the emotional nurturance, intimacy, understanding and support that sustains children.

Young children have a greater chance of achieving success if these needs are met. When these needs have been met, children have the opportunity to grow physically, emotionally and intellectually.

Some families face challenges and hardships that make it difficult or impossible to meet the needs of their children. For families facing multiple hardships, comprehensive prevention and early intervention, extended family and community support are essential.

Extensive research tells us that children are naturally resilient beings, and that, given the right supports, healthy children can emerge from unhealthy situations.

## The main characteristics of resilient children are:

- social competence;
- problem solving ability;
- a positive outlook on life;
- a sense of autonomy; and
- a sense of control over what happens to them.

Instead of waiting for children to experience multiple hardships, our systems should act earlier, integrate and enhance what is available to families and aim to practice family-centered services.

This focus area is directed at ensuring the basic needs of all children are met—that parents and families have the supports they need to nurture their children. If these goals are met, children are likely to be safe in their homes.

For those children who need external supports to keep them safe, services must be provided swiftly to guarantee their safety.

## *DID YOU KNOW?*

***Instead of waiting for children to experience multiple hardships, our systems should act earlier, integrate and enhance what is available to families and aim to practice family-centered services.***

***In Alaska, eighty-three percent of female prison inmates were sexually abused before the age of 12.***

***Seventy percent of all open child protection cases involve some form of substance abuse.***

***The economic stability of families is fundamental to the well-being of children.***

# OUTCOME #1

## Children live in families where their basic needs are met.

Children are dependent on the adults in their lives and on the environment around them to provide for their most basic needs including food, clothing, safe and secure housing, health care and freedom from harm.

Beyond these basic needs children require healthy experiences that promote their physical, social and emotional development. In order for families to meet even the most basic needs of children, they must have training, education and opportunities for meaningful employment. The economic stability of families is fundamental to the well-being of children.

### Suggested Strategies

1. Promote employability of parents so they have the possibility of jobs with benefits and affordable child care that will allow them to work.
2. Ensure families receive assistance for basic needs, especially health care, while building skills to become self-sufficient.
3. Support the development of accessible housing for families with different income levels.

# OUTCOME #2

## Parents and families have the skills and knowledge to nurture, educate and advocate for their children and themselves.

***Every family, regardless of income or education, needs support to meet their children's needs and to deal with today's parenting challenges.***

Most Alaska families get the support they need to meet the needs of their children. But for some families, life is changing in ways that can undermine efforts to nurture children.

Every family, regardless of income or education, needs support to meet their children's needs and to deal with today's parenting challenges.

Supports are the skills, opportunities, experiences and resources that help families fulfill their responsibilities, grow and develop, overcome challenges and achieve success.

Supports may include the expertise of a pediatrician, the encouragement of a teacher, a job training program, or guidance from the family's church. Supports are not meant to become a substitute for families; they are intended to strengthen family functioning.

One of the most often cited family stressors is the growing economic pressure on families. Today, there are more working mothers and more single parent families—26 percent of Alaska families are headed by single parents; more family isolation and violence; and more young children in poverty—12-19 percent statewide with rates as high as 30 percent in Southwest Alaska.

Families experiencing these and other challenges need extra help to meet the basic needs of their children.

## Suggested Strategies

1. Provide all families with information about early development.
2. Include parents in planning and decision-making processes at both the program and individual service level.
3. Provide parents with needed supports to foster their child's development, especially parents of children with special needs.
4. Provide all students with information on child development, brain development, effects of substance abuse on prenatal and child development, and family violence issues before they leave high school.
5. Ensure that all families have necessary literacy skills to support their child's language development.

# OUTCOME #3

## Children live in families that have access to a continuum of health and human services.

Of primary importance for all families is access to competent and comprehensive health and human services. All children need services like well-baby checkups, immunizations, nutrition services, and access to health care professionals when they are sick.

Some families will need long-term access to services and supports. For example, a child born with special needs will need the expertise of an infant/toddler specialist, specialized supports during their preschool years, and continuing assistance in public schools.

There must be a check-and-balance system—a continuum of care and support—where individuals, families, schools, peer groups, and community institutions work together effectively when there are problems in children's lives.

***All children need services like well-baby checkups, immunizations, nutrition services, and access to health care professionals when they are sick.***

### Suggested Strategies

1. Create and support integrated community teams that use a strength-based family service model in planning for and delivering services.
2. Ensure all children and families have access to a continuum of services.
3. Identify and minimize barriers to service accessibility, including: transportation, child care, cost of services, access without lengthy waiting visits, service delivery that makes sense for families (i.e. schools, homes, neighborhood centers).
4. Develop outreach strategies for isolated families so they can access community-based service delivery.
5. Increase the pool of mental health professionals who are qualified to serve young children and their families and ensure they are accessible to schools, child protection caseworkers, early care and education providers.

# OUTCOME #4

## Children live in violence-free homes.

If the three previous outcomes are met, children are likely to be safe in their homes. However, many children and families face severe hardships.

The most destructive force facing Alaska children is living in homes where there is family violence, and alcohol and drug abuse. Statistics demonstrate that domestic violence is a leading indicator that child abuse is occurring in the same household. Unfortunately, our support systems may not act when there is no evidence of physical harm against the child.

For those children who are at-risk of physical and emotional harm, it is critical that services be provided as early as possible, reducing the need for children to be removed from their homes to guarantee their safety.

Tiers of support are needed to ensure all children are safe, beginning with prevention and early intervention programs.

## Suggested Strategies

1. Develop a three-tiered support system to provide comprehensive intervention services to families who: 1) exhibit early warning signs of risk; 2) have been identified through the child protection system as at risk of out-of-home placement for their children; and 3) require immediate action to remove children from harm.
2. Provide mental health services for all children who are identified as at risk, who have been taken into state custody, or who have been referred for mental health assessment by families, child care providers, teachers, or human service providers.
3. Require a risk-assessment on all children in the home when an incident of domestic violence has been reported.
4. Require a substance abuse screening for parents/guardians of children taken into custody.
5. Establish a permanency plan for each child taken into custody.
6. Ensure substance abuse programs are immediately accessible, culturally diverse, match the needs of the individual and provide aftercare supports in the home community.
7. Continue the development of statewide child abuse prevention networks that emphasize community resource building and the development of a prevention framework that is comprehensive, consistent and integrated statewide.

***Tiers of support are needed to ensure all children are safe, beginning with prevention and early intervention programs.***

# INDICATORS

The following indicators will be used to measure our progress and gauge success in achieving our outcomes:

- Percent of stable new families: first birth to mother who has completed high school, is age 20 or older and father's name is recorded on birth certificate
- Number of families with income below the federal poverty threshold
- Percent of children entitled to child support who are receiving it
- Number of people on waiting lists for community mental health and infant learning services, etc.
- Number of families receiving food stamps
- Number of domestic violence reports where children are witnesses

# Next steps to supporting healthy stable families

***What can my community do?***

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2. _____

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3. _____

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***What can my agency/business do?***

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3. _____

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***What can I do?***

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# DEVELOPING SUPPORTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES

## Opportunities

Alaska is blessed with a rich diversity. Alaskans live in small villages and tiny towns, on islands, in highway communities, and in suburban and urban neighborhoods. Even within larger populations there are many sub groups who share a common vision and values that represent another kind of community.

What all communities share is the opportunity for collective action to promote healthy circumstances for young children and their families. Strategies for change have been found to be most effective when they grow out of communities and when they are led by local people and organizations.

***What all communities share is the opportunity for collective action to promote healthy circumstances for young children and their families.***

The state can encourage and support local efforts and assure that policies and service systems do not create barriers to community success. It is, however, vital for the community to engage the public and build the political will for change.

At a national level, the Healthy Community Agenda Campaign has identified seven characteristics of a healthy community. These patterns should be viewed as complimentary and as having a cumulative positive effect.

## A healthy community

1. **Practices Ongoing Dialogue.** Seeks to build relationships among residents to create a shared commitment to take action.
2. **Generates Leadership Everywhere.** Seeks to cultivate new leaders, using effective styles of facilitation and collaboration to make sure everyone is heard, and builds the commitment and wherewithal to improve.
3. **Shapes Its Future.** Recognizes a problem and starts to do something about it, finds out that others are interested and creates a shared vision, realizing that there is much within their control.
4. **Embraces Diversity.** Sees diversity and differences as a source of vitality, strength, and renewal. Recognizes the community is not all it can be until everyone is participating.
5. **Knows Itself.** Seeks data and information about the community, knows what data needs to be collected based on what is important to the community. Does not allow the lack of data to be an excuse for inaction.

*Strategies for change have been found to be most effective when they grow out of communities and when they are led by local people and organizations.*

6. **Connects People and Resources.** Helps to connect people to health care and social services, cultural offerings, and recreational opportunities. Recognizes that an accessible and resource-rich environment leads to improved health and quality of life.
7. **Creates a Sense of Community.** Understands who and what they are, based on a shared set of values and behavioral standards, neighborliness, an acknowledgment of interdependence and a commitment to the common good.

By taking action and making choices that support these seven characteristics, a community is moving toward realizing a broad definition of health and well-being that includes concerns for personal well-being, society, the economy and the environment.

There is evidence that the patterns and the actions that support them, will lead to healthier people, in economically and socially viable communities that preserve the riches of the natural environment.

# OUTCOME #1

## Children are safe in their communities.

*There must be adequate environmental safeguards, including safe water for drinking, appropriate sewage and waste disposal, and clean-air standards.*

Young children depend on communities and neighborhoods to take deliberate steps to ensure their safety and provide opportunities for play and development. There must be adequate environmental safeguards, including safe water for drinking, appropriate sewage and waste disposal, and clean-air standards.

There must be adequate protections against the leading causes of death in young Alaska children—unintentional and intentional injuries. Appropriate child-protection systems, relief and support systems for parents and children in distress, as well as safeguards related to transportation, firearms, toxins, communicable diseases, and crime must be in place to give children the security they need.

### Suggested Strategies

1. Establish community standards for safe playgrounds.
2. Ensure that communities know the types of injuries children experience and understand their causes.
3. Support community policies and practices to eliminate or reduce known hazards.
4. Promote safety programs or coalitions in communities that increase protections for young children.
5. Assure adequate animal control efforts to prevent bites and mauling.

6. Develop community plans for shelter or safe homes for families suffering from domestic violence.
7. Assure an adequate police, fire and emergency response system.
8. Educate community members regarding the health and safety of all children in the community so they can take action when children are in danger.
9. Ensure that the community has appropriate standards for clean air, safe water, sewage and waste disposal.

***We must provide adequate protections against the leading causes of death in young Alaska children—unintentional and intentional injuries.***

# OUTCOME #2

## Children grow up in communities where healthy behaviors are valued.

Healthy communities articulate and model behaviors that promote the well-being of young children.

These behaviors encompass all aspects of life—from physical fitness to healthy relationships. However, some of the behaviors most detrimental to children in our state relate to the use and abuse of alcohol, illegal drugs, inhalants and tobacco.

Healthy communities look for ways to discourage children from using harmful substances, and step in when adult use threatens the health and safety of young children.

Communities that are clear and consistent about behavioral standards lay a foundation of support that helps families make choices that are in the best interests of their children.

### Suggested Strategies

1. Ensure zero tolerance for drunken driving.
2. Educate the community regarding local rates of smoking and other tobacco use and about community action to stop vendors who sell to children.
3. Educate the community about local rates for alcohol consumption and alcohol-related crime.
4. Support community efforts to prevent tobacco, drug and alcohol abuse including exposure to second-hand smoke.
5. Encourage community sponsorship of social and recreational opportunities for children and families to promote physical fitness and healthy lifestyles.
6. Ensure services are available in the community for those battling drug, alcohol and tobacco addiction.
7. Promote community support and sponsorship of public-awareness campaigns aimed at preventing common health problems.

## OUTCOME #3

### Children live in communities that plan and act collectively in their best interest.

*Children thrive when there are a variety of supports and opportunities available in their community.*

Children thrive when there are a variety of supports and opportunities available in their community. In these communities, every generation is actively involved in the support of young children. Communities that value and protect young children and their families show a commitment to child-rearing that benefits the whole population.

Local governmental policies and laws can support families by subsidizing or reducing fees for young children's activities. Community organizations and businesses can put in place family-friendly policies and practices.

Faith communities can provide reliable support for children and families. By taking on responsibilities outside of their own families, individual volunteers also can make meaningful investments in their communities.

### Suggested Strategies

1. Assist communities in writing a plan for supporting young children and their families.

2. Help communities develop mentoring programs, family supports and activities that are intergenerational.
3. Help communities promote inclusive community dialogue on issues of concern to children and their families.
4. Help communities develop neighborhood parks and play areas that are child and family friendly.
5. Encourage communities to recruit parents of young children for local policy or advisory committees or boards.
6. Provide community-specific data about the health and well-being of young children.
7. Encourage volunteers to work with and support young children in their communities.

## OUTCOME #4

### Children live in communities where facilities are available for broad use.

Communities can support children and their families by making public facilities available for their use. These facilities include schools, libraries, health clinics, hospitals, recreational facilities, community activities centers, senior centers, child-care centers, museums and theaters.

Facilities that welcome children provide a sense of community and promote safe, positive experiences.

We recognize that, increasingly, community resources are necessary to build and maintain public facilities. To support children and families, communities need economic stability—which goes beyond the scope of this project. However, it is important for all children to have a variety of opportunities within their communities, regardless of family income.

***Communities can support children and their families by making public facilities available for their use.***

## Suggested Strategies

1. Support opening schools for community use outside of regular school hours.
2. Support community efforts to make other public buildings available for activities that involve young children and their families.
3. Help communities find ways to support local facilities that sponsor or plan activities for young children.
4. Encourage local businesses to support or sponsor activities for children in their community.
5. Support community efforts to develop adequate housing.
6. Support community efforts to ensure that few families with young children live in poor or very poor neighborhoods.
7. Support community efforts to develop and maintain streets and other public places.

***It is important for all children to have a variety of opportunities within their communities, regardless of family income.***

# INDICATORS

The following indicators will be used to measure progress and gauge success in achieving outcomes:

- Crime rate
- Incidence of alcohol-related crime
- Incidence of alcohol-related child abuse and neglect
- Voter turnout rate for local elections
- Number of schools open for use outside of regular school hours

# Next steps for developing supportive neighborhoods and communities...

***What can my community do?***

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

***What can my agency/business do?***

1. _____

_____

2. _____

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3. _____

_____

***What can I do?***

1. _____

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2. _____

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3. _____

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# ESTABLISHING SUPPORT SYSTEMS

## Collaboration

***Building Blocks*** identifies significant and measurable outcomes for our youngest children and their families.

Success in achieving and maintaining desired outcomes for children is directly tied to state and local support systems working together.

**The state is responsible for:**

- Creating child and family policy through legislative and executive action;
- Setting policy guidelines and standards;
- Generating state revenues and receiving revenues from federal and private sources;
- Administering funds through contracts, grants, etc. to other state agencies, local agencies or private providers;
- Creating and providing training and technical assistance to state, local and private personnel;
- Monitoring for compliance with established federal and state policy and guidelines;
- Setting research and data collection priorities and evaluating outcomes at both the state and local level; and
- Initiating planning efforts to ensure a package of comprehensive, seamless services are available to children and families across departments.

***The strength of support systems can be found in the way state agencies work together and the relationships they establish within local communities.***

In Alaska, the state departments of Education & Early Development and Health and Social Services administer the majority of children's programs. Five other departments also administer programs for children and families.

The state has taken some significant steps in building strong interdepartmental and community relationships. Through the Governor's Children's Cabinet, the annual State of the Child Address, the Governor's Budget for Children, implementation of the Alaska Children's Trust, and consolidation of some children's programs in the expanded Department of

Education & Early Development, the executive branch has established a strong policy focus on young children and their families.

If the state is to make progress in improving outcomes for children, both the legislative and executive branches of government must maintain a strong and directed focus on early childhood issues and establish them as a high priority in legislative, funding and policy agendas.

*If the state is to make progress in improving outcomes for children, both the legislative and executive branches of government must maintain a strong and directed focus on early childhood issues and establish them as a high priority in legislative, funding and policy agendas.*

The strength of support systems can be found in the way state agencies work together and the relationships they establish within local communities. While a strong cabinet-level relationship has been established, few formal mechanisms exist at the program manager level to build collaborative relationships.

Personal relationships seem to be the primary reason that state agencies work, or do not work together. Consequently, there is no guarantee that departments will collaborate to make joint funding, service-delivery, or long-range planning decisions.

The majority of direct services are provided at the community level through local government, private service providers, for-profit or nonprofit agencies and others. Every state agency has some type of relationship with local communities.

Primarily these relationships are based on funding either through direct pass-through funds or grants and contracts to local service providers. As a result, state/local relationships are often fragmented and complicated. Few communities have developed a comprehensive plan for young children that the state could use as a guide for funding and technical support.

The development of this initiative, which blends the responsibilities of two departments, is a major step in building a strong support system.

# OUTCOME #1

## Children and families are supported by state and community systems.

The following strategies are focused on building an ideal system of supports that reflects the comprehensive needs of young children.

### Suggested Strategies

1. Establish an interdepartmental budget planning process that identifies barriers and opportunities for sharing resources, and plots comprehensive services.
2. Link budget and funding to outcomes/strategies and develop a process to track funding and outcomes over time.
3. Educate state and community personnel about the state budget process.
4. Set concrete, measurable goals for child well-being and establish a performance accountability system for evaluating outcomes.

5. Develop an interdepartmental data/research plan that identifies data/research needs.
6. Establish and support methods to report/publish data for communities, the public, state/private agencies.
7. Provide technical assistance, resources, etc. to communities to develop comprehensive plans that address needs of young children and their families.
8. Develop a state process to support and assist communities with the implementation of local plans.
9. Establish an Early Childhood Collaboration Council to combine or coordinate the work of existing committees; establish formal partnerships between the state, communities, private agencies and businesses; and develop recommendations, action plans or policies for state and local consideration.
10. Establish formal mechanisms to sustain collaboration between departments at the program manager level and below and to integrate service planning efforts, and eliminate duplication of efforts.
11. Establish a formal structure for collecting information on and coordinating interdepartmental activities, grants, projects.
12. Establish state policies and procedures that model family-friendly work policies and practices, professional development in the field of Early Childhood Education, and best practices for children.
13. Formalize state policy and goals for children birth through age 8 by expanding the existing State Board of Education & Early Development goals.
14. Focus on prevention as a state priority by establishing funding strategies dedicated to prevention.
15. Establish processes and timelines for initiative completion and establish a schedule for review, revision and reporting on progress of the initiative.
16. Report on indicators of child well-being.

## INDICATORS

The following indicators will be used to measure progress and gauge success in achieving outcomes:

- Development of inter-agency work plan
- Development and implementation of inter-agency budget
- Implementation and publication of interdepartmental indicators of child well-being

# Next steps to establishing support systems

***What can my community do?***

1. _____

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2. _____

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3. _____

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***What can my agency/business do?***

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2. _____

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***What can I do?***

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# IN CONCLUSION AND INTO THE FUTURE

Children are our state's greatest natural resource. Families, communities and those who work on behalf of children, at every level, sincerely desire to do more and better work each day for children.

Why the focus on prenatal through age eight? This initiative focuses on young children because it is the best place to start—a touch point for children and families. Here we can begin the prevention and intervention work that can eliminate or mitigate future problems and reduce the need for costly remediation later. The focus on helping Alaska's children to be healthy and successful cannot begin too soon.

*Building Blocks* articulates many of the challenges faced by children and their families today and identifies outcomes and strategies which, if accomplished, could significantly improve the lives of many children.

**The next step is ACTION** by many people, in many places, for a sustained period of time. Families, communities and the government need to decide what they can do individually and collectively and do it.

The departments of Education & Early Development and Health and Social Services are committed to beginning now, using this plan as a framework, to develop joint workplans that are integrated and build upon each other's work and strengths. Grants will be written together, program plans and service delivery systems will be jointly designed and implemented and collaborative evaluation put into place to determine program and service effectiveness and efficiency.

Many individuals, representing diverse groups and opinions, provided input into the development of this initiative. They offered ideas, editing, support and encouragement.

These individuals and many more are invited to become full partners in its implementation. This is a work in progress and it will take the creative capacity and energy of everyone in Alaska to turn the initiative into programs and services that better serve Alaska's young children and improve their overall health and well-being.

We have begun the preparation...how the race is run and whether we win it on behalf of all the children depends on each of us. Please encourage your friends, family, business and professional colleagues and community groups to identify at least one thing they can do that will make a difference for children. Every effort and every person will make a difference. The children are counting on us—we must not let them down.

# Next steps . . .

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2. _____

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## Next steps . . .

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3. _____

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1. _____

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2. _____

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3. _____

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# STATE OF ALASKA

**Department of Education and Early Development**
**Department of Health and Social Services**

*TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR*

**Richard S. Cross, Commissioner**
**Karen Perdue, Commissioner**

Response Form
For
**Building Blocks**
Continuing the Progress of Smart Start:
*The Next Steps for Supporting Alaska's Young Children and Their Families*

Please complete the following. We will use this information to communicate with you in the future.

Name_____Occupation_____

Address_____

Phone number_____ Email_____

Where did you receive your copy of **Building Blocks**? _____

Would you like to receive more information on **Building Blocks**? ____Yes ____No

Would you like to help in your community? _____Yes _____ No

Which focus area of **Building Blocks** interests you most?

____Assuring Maternal and Child Health
____Supporting Healthy Stable Families
____Enhancing Early Care and Education
____Developing Supportive Neighborhoods and Communities

If you have a few moments, your response to the following questions will enhance our work:

1) Thinking of health and education needs of infants and young children up to age 8, what are the most critical needs in your community?

2) What, in your opinion, is your community currently doing to help young children? What more could be done?

3) Other Comments?

Please turn this form in at the end of the meeting or you may return it using this information:

Please FAX or mail to:
Carol Prentice, Collaborative Projects Coordinator
Dept. of Health and Social Services
PO Box 110610
Juneau, AK 99811-0610

FAX: (907) 586-1877
Phone: (907) 465-6420
Email: carol_prentice@health.state.ak.us

Thank you for taking time to share your ideas!

***PUBLICATION NOTICE:***

*This booklet was published by the Departments of Health & Social Services and Education & Early Development. It was printed at a cost of $2.34 per copy in Juneau, Alaska.*

*First printing: August 2000*

# CORRECTION

THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT(S)
HAVE BEEN REFILMED TO
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Senate Health, Education, and Social Services Committee

January 31, 2001

Department of Education and Early Development

# Assessment Overview

# Teaching and Learning Support

## SB281 Mission: The mission of the Division of Teaching and Learning Support is to improve student performance.

## Key Performance Measures

**Measure: Percentage of students who meet the proficiency level in benchmark assessments in grades 3, 6, and 8**

*(Developed jointly with Legislature in FY2001.)*

**Current Status:**

Percent Proficient/Advanced in Reading, Writing and Mathematics on Benchmark Examinations, Spring 2000

| Grade | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 72 | 49 | 64 |
| 6 | 70 | 73 | 63 |
| 8 | 83 | 68 | 41 |

↑ what is causing this?

**Benchmark:**

Benchmark examinations were administered for the first time in March of 2000. The State Board of Education and Early Development set the proficiency level for each grade. These proficiency levels are Advanced; Proficient; Below Proficient; and, Not Proficient. These data from the first administration in March 2000 will establish a baseline for measuring student performance. Proficiency is defined as the sum of students who scored at the Advanced and Proficient levels on the Benchmark exams.

**Spring 2000**
**Benchmark Reading Exam Results**

| | Not Proficient | Below Proficient | Proficient | Advanced | Total # |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade 3** | 100-257 | 258-309 | 310-432 | 433-600 | |
| % in Level | 12 | 16 | 59 | 13 | |
| Examinees | | | | | 9,924 |
| **Grade 6** | 100-247 | 248-310 | 311-371 | 372-600 | |
| % in Level | 12 | 18 | 27 | 43 | |
| Examinees | | | | | 9,924 |
| **Grade 8** | 100-232 | 233-270 | 271-324 | 325-600 | |
| % in Level | 10 | 7 | 17 | 66 | |
| Examinees | | | | | 9,574 |

**Spring 2000**
**Benchmark Writing Exam Results**

| | Not Proficient | Below Proficient | Proficient | Advanced | Total # |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 3 | 100-244 | 245-351 | 352-489 | 490-600 | |
| % in Level | 10 | 40 | 45 | 4 | |
| Examinees | | | | | 9,901 |
| Grade 6 | 100-195 | 196-299 | 300-415 | 416-600 | |
| % in Level | 4 | 22 | 50 | 23 | |
| Examinees | | | | | 9,907 |
| Grade 8 | 100-190 | 191-315 | 316-415 | 416-600 | |
| % in Level | 2 | 30 | 45 | 23 | |
| Examinees | | | | | 9,569 |

**Spring 2000**
**Benchmark Math Exam Results**

| | Not Proficient | Below Proficient | Proficient | Advanced | Total # |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 3 | 100-253 | 254-321 | 322-400 | 401-600 | |
| % in Level | 12 | 24 | 36 | 28 | |
| Examinees | | | | | 9,894 |
| Grade 6 | 100-290 | 291-328 | 329-398 | 399-600 | |
| % in Level | 23 | 13 | 35 | 28 | |
| Examinees | | | | | 9,879 |
| Grade 8 | 100-272 | 273-373 | 374-460 | 461-600 | |
| % in Level | 17 | 42 | 33 | 8 | |
| Examinees | | | | | 9,508 |

**Background and Strategies:**
State law requires a comprehensive system of student assessments including a developmental profile for students entering kindergarten or first grade, benchmark assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics at grades 3, 6, and 8, and passage of the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam in order to receive a high school diploma beginning in 2002. The department has:

1. Provided school districts with state performance standards in reading, writing, and mathematics at the appropriate grade levels.
2. Developed the benchmark examinations in reading, writing, and mathematics for grades 3, 6, and 8.
3. Provided professional development opportunities for standards based instruction.
4. Provided technical assistance to school districts in aligning curriculum to state standards.

The department is in the process of:

1. Working with school districts to develop programs that provide students with opportunities to learn in order to reach the state standards at the appropriate age/grade levels.
2. Developing intervention strategies to assist students that fail to meet standards or are at risk of failing to meet standards at the appropriate age/grade levels.
3. Working with school districts to target staff development and teacher in-service opportunities to support standards-based instruction and assessments.

4. Targeting federal grant dollars to support increased student performance in reading, writing, and mathematics.
5. Identifying a new norm-reference assessment, linked to Alaska performance standards that will be potentially administered at grades 4, 5, 7, and 9.

**Measure: Percentage of students performing above the national average on state adopted norm-referenced tests**

*(Developed jointly with Legislature in FY2001.)*

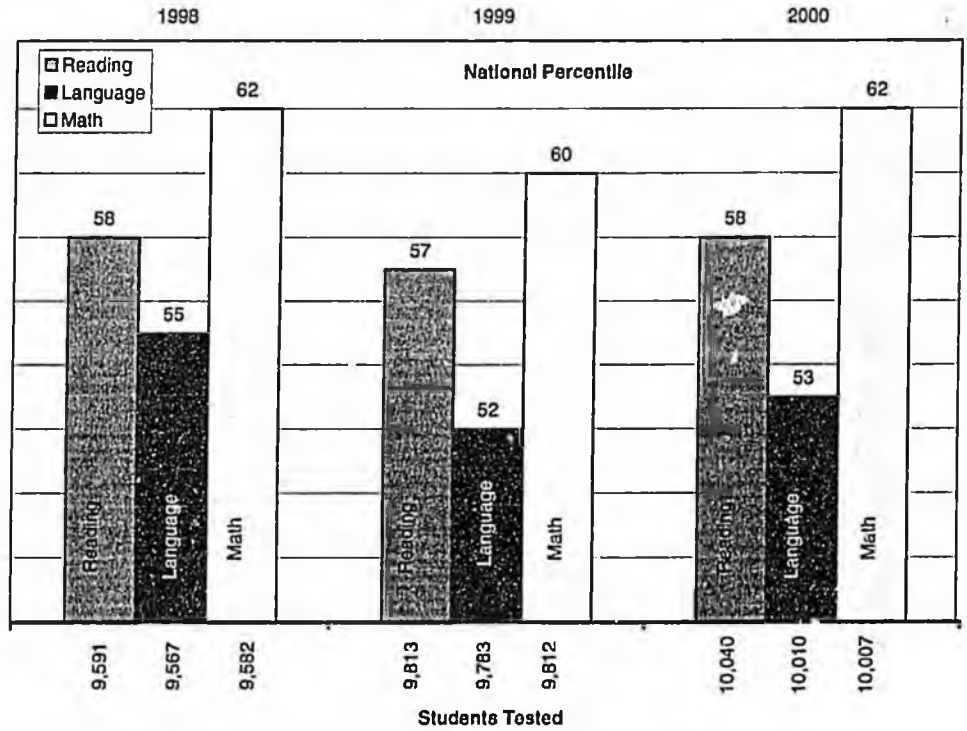
**Current Status:**

In school year 1999-00, 31.9% of Alaska's 4th graders scored in the top quartile in reading, 30.7% in the top quartile in language arts and 37.3% in the top quartile in mathematics.

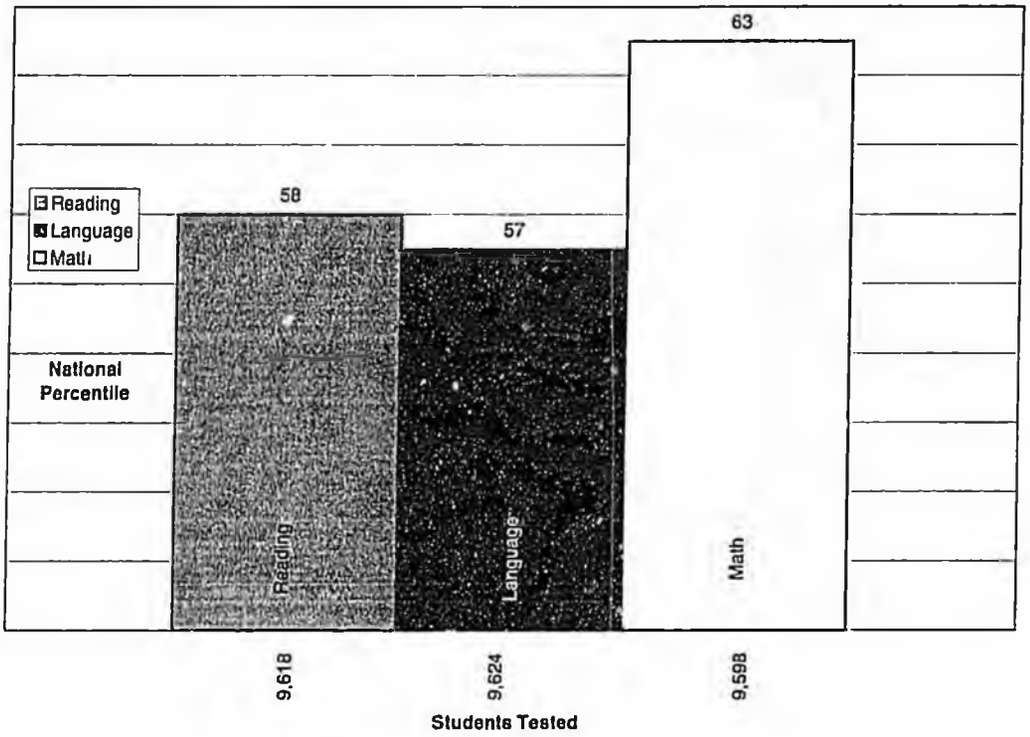
**Benchmark:**

The chart below illustrates the performance of Alaska's 4th grade students on the norm-referenced test in school years 1998 through 2000.

**CAT/5 - Grade 4**




*In the 1999-2000 school year the department changed the CAT/5 from grade 8 to 7 because of the implementation of the Benchmark exam at grade 8. The following chart illustrates the 7th grade results.




**Background and Strategies:**
The department has used the CAT/5 norm-referenced test for the past 5 years. The current contract will expire in June of 2001 and the department will seek competitive proposals for a new norm-referenced test to be used for school year 2000-2001 and beyond. The new contract will solicit proposals for norm-referenced tests at grade 4, 5, 7 and 9. The addition of two new norm-referenced tests at grades 5 and 9 will provide a transition to an assessment system with capabilities not now available. Under the new system, students will be assessed each year from grades 4 to 10 using a combination of Benchmark, HSGQE and norm-referenced tests, which will allow for a measure of student academic growth from year-to-year. The ability to track student growth will allow the department to implement in 2002, a school rating system that will assign a designation of distinguished, successful, deficient or in-crisis to each public school in the state as required by AS 14.03.123.

**Measure: Percentage of students who pass the state high school graduation-qualifying exam**
*(Developed jointly with Legislature in FY2001.)*

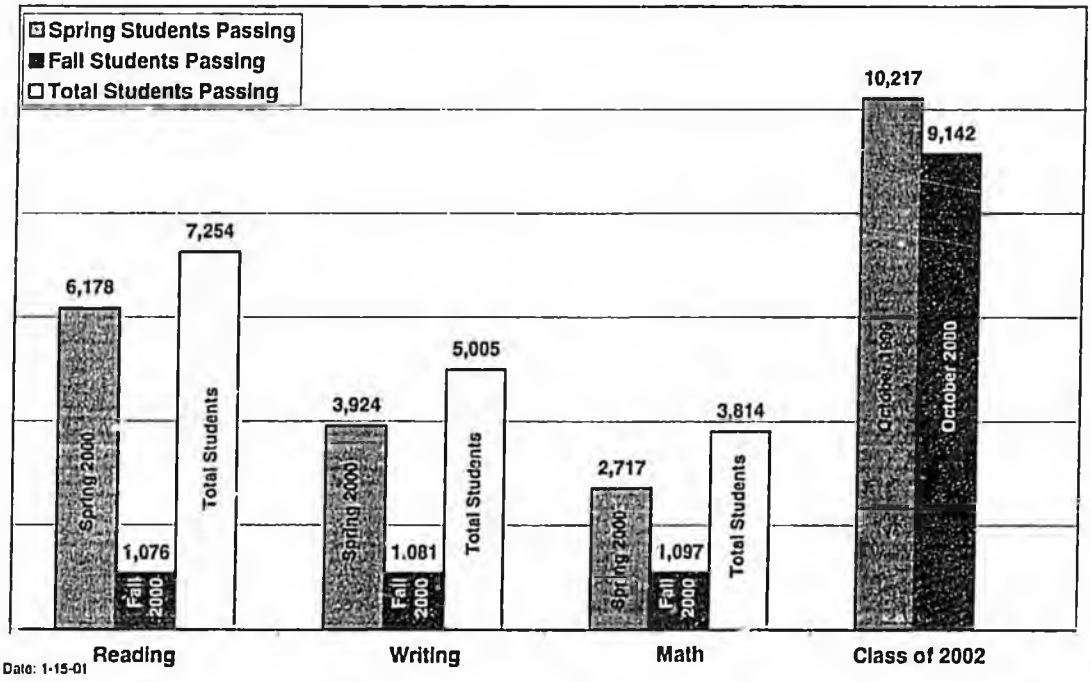
**Current Status:**
Percent of enrolled students passing the first or second administration of the high school graduation-qualifying exam:

Reading - 79%
Writing - 55%
Mathematics - 42%

**Benchmark:**
The High School Graduation Qualifying Examination is completed and was administered for the first time in March of 2000 and again in October of 2000. The State Board of Education & Early Development set the proficiency level for the exam. These data from the first administration of the graduation-qualifying exam will establish the baseline for

measuring student performance for the class of 2002. The exam will be offered in October and March of each school year. Students are eligible to take the exam for the first time in the spring of their sophomore year.

**High School Class of 2002**
**Number of Students Passing the HSGQE**




**Background and Strategies:**
State law requires a comprehensive system of student assessments including a developmental profile for students entering kindergarten or first grade, benchmark assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics at grades 3, 6, and 8, and passage of the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam in order to receive a high school diploma beginning in 2002. The department has:

1. Provided school districts with state performance standards in reading, writing, and mathematics.
2. Developed the graduation qualifying examination in reading, writing, and mathematics.
3. Provided professional development opportunities for standards based instruction.
4. Provided technical assistance to school districts in aligning curriculum to state standards.

The following pages contain Year 2000 Alaska State Assessment Results for grades 3, 6, and 8, and the high school graduation qualifying examination by school district:

## Year 2000 Alaska State Assessment Results - READING

| | Spring 2000 | | | | | | Spring+Fall 2000 | Oct. 1, 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| District | Grade 3 % Prof./Adv. | Grade 3 Tested | Grade 6 % Prof./Adv. | Grade 6 Tested | Grade 8 % Prof./Adv. | Grade 8 Tested | High School % Passed | Grade 11 Enrollment |
| Alaska Gateway | 71 | 44 | 48 | 40 | 68 | 40 | 81 | 32 |
| Aleutian Region | 57 | 7 | 60 | 5 | 71 | 7 | 75 | 4 |
| Aleutians East | 55 | 29 | 43 | 23 | 92 | 26 | 65 | 26 |
| Alyeska Central | 93 | 15 | 89 | 18 | 92 | 34 | 24 | 110 |
| Anchorage | 75 | 3807 | 74 | 3863 | 88 | 3539 | 85 | 3303 |
| Annette Island | 80 | 25 | 66 | 27 | 67 | 30 | 82 | 22 |
| Bering Strait | 33 | 127 | 25 | 143 | 41 | 113 | 45 | 84 |
| Bristol Bay | 69 | 16 | 81 | 21 | 95 | 20 | 100 | 18 |
| Chatham | 62 | 21 | 59 | 22 | 41 | 22 | 92 | 12 |
| Chugach | 75 | 12 | 77 | 9 | 85 | 14 | 50 | 10 |
| Copper River | 84 | 55 | 68 | 53 | 89 | 60 | 75 | 55 |
| Cordova | 86 | 35 | 90 | 42 | 92 | 36 | 96 | 24 |
| Craig | 74 | 35 | 76 | 30 | 85 | 20 | 55 | 38 |
| Delta/Greely | 70 | 41 | 79 | 77 | 86 | 64 | 49 | 59 |
| Denali | 92 | 24 | 76 | 29 | 97 | 30 | 100 | 27 |
| Dillingham | 67 | 42 | 50 | 48 | 82 | 39 | 84 | 37 |
| Fairbanks | 84 | 1254 | 77 | 1155 | 88 | 1203 | 93 | 943 |
| Galena | 80 | 194 | 85 | 197 | 95 | 176 | 74 | 186 |
| Haines | 87 | 23 | 82 | 32 | 79 | 29 | 74 | 35 |
| Hoonah | 64 | 11 | 45 | 20 | 50 | 10 | 83 | 24 |
| Hydaburg | 51 | 8 | 20 | 5 | 60 | 10 | 27 | 11 |
| Iditarod Area | 53 | 38 | 44 | 41 | 53 | 44 | 44 | 32 |
| Juneau | 79 | 408 | 73 | 409 | 90 | 457 | 87 | 437 |
| Kake | 64 | 11 | 66 | 12 | 76 | 21 | 67 | 9 |
| Kashunamiut | 45 | 22 | 24 | 21 | 50 | 22 | 31 | 16 |
| Kenai Peninsula | 78 | 725 | 78 | 793 | 89 | 774 | 81 | 875 |
| Ketchikan | 85 | 184 | 80 | 185 | 85 | 203 | 100 | 156 |
| Klawock | 61 | 23 | 31 | 13 | 92 | 13 | 50 | 16 |
| Kodiak Island | 64 | 237 | 75 | 221 | 80 | 184 | 77 | 213 |
| Kuspuk | 48 | 33 | 30 | 34 | 34 | 38 | 47 | 32 |
| Lake & Peninsula | 46 | 41 | 35 | 37 | 69 | 39 | 41 | 22 |
| Lower Kuskokwim | 37 | 246 | 27 | 255 | 45 | 225 | 47 | 176 |
| Lower Yukon | 29 | 171 | 24 | 149 | 36 | 117 | 35 | 74 |
| Mat-Su | 80 | 973 | 78 | 952 | 88 | 1033 | 73 | 1129 |
| Mt. Edgecumbe | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 76 | 90 |
| Nenana | 86 | 57 | 82 | 44 | 83 | 47 | 40 | 78 |
| Nome | 55 | 71 | 55 | 47 | 78 | 52 | 77 | 39 |
| North Slope | 50 | 185 | 40 | 130 | 58 | 149 | 49 | 120 |
| Northwest Arctic | 41 | 197 | 25 | 191 | 42 | 144 | 32 | 108 |
| Pelican | 80 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 100 | [illegible] | 100 | 3 |
| Petersburg | 88 | 51 | 88 | 61 | 91 | 65 | 100 | 60 |
| Pribilof | 54 | 13 | 78 | 9 | 74 | 19 | 80 | 10 |
| Saint Mary's | 27 | 15 | 50 | 12 | 66 | 9 | 56 | 9 |
| Sitka | 81 | 115 | 75 | 131 | 88 | 108 | 76 | 120 |
| Skagway | 89 | 9 | 100 | 7 | 100 | 6 | 100 | 11 |
| Southeast Island | 89 | 17 | 70 | 20 | 78 | 18 | 85 | 27 |
| Southwest Region | 27 | 62 | 24 | 67 | 42 | 50 | 26 | 42 |
| Tanana | 75 | 8 | 29 | 7 | 66 | 3 | 88 | 8 |
| Unalaska | 95 | 19 | 73 | 26 | 91 | 23 | 100 | 20 |
| Valdez | 84 | 56 | 62 | 76 | 92 | 82 | 100 | 48 |
| Wrangell | 89 | 34 | 86 | 43 | 88 | 49 | 100 | 27 |
| Yakutat | 100 | 11 | 77 | 9 | 100 | 10 | 69 | 16 |
| Yukon Flats | 37 | 27 | 22 | 23 | 53 | 15 | 44 | 18 |
| Yukon/Koyukuk | 40 | 35 | 41 | 44 | 63 | 40 | 50 | 24 |
| Yupiit | 11 | 36 | 3 | 29 | 19 | 22 | 12 | 26 |

## Year 2000 Alaska State Assessment Results - WRITING

| | Spring 2000 | | | | | | Spring+Fall 2000 | Oct. 1, 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| District | Grade 3 % Prof./Adv. | Grade 3 Tested | Grade 6 % Prof./Adv. | Grade 6 Tested | Grade 8 % Prof./Adv. | Grade 8 Tested | High School % Passed | Grade 11 Enrollment |
| Alaska Gateway | 44 | 45 | 48 | 40 | 43 | 40 | 34 | 32 |
| Aleutian Region | 0 | 7 | 40 | 5 | 43 | 7 | 25 | 4 |
| Aleutians East | 28 | 29 | 61 | 23 | 58 | 26 | 31 | 26 |
| Alyeska Central | 53 | 15 | 89 | 18 | 73 | 33 | 14 | 110 |
| Anchorage | 53 | 3809 | 76 | 3864 | 74 | 3542 | 58 | 3303 |
| Annette Island | 38 | 24 | 58 | 26 | 49 | 31 | 36 | 22 |
| Bering Strait | 28 | 126 | 39 | 145 | 26 | 113 | 26 | 84 |
| Bristol Bay | 19 | 16 | 71 | 21 | 90 | 20 | 83 | 18 |
| Chatham | 38 | 21 | 63 | 22 | 32 | 22 | 50 | 12 |
| Chugach | 75 | 12 | 66 | 9 | 71 | 14 | 50 | 10 |
| Copper River | 61 | 54 | 63 | 52 | 76 | 59 | 55 | 55 |
| Cordova | 75 | 35 | 88 | 41 | 69 | 36 | 67 | 24 |
| Craig | 40 | 35 | 80 | 30 | 65 | 20 | 47 | 38 |
| Delta/Greely | 52 | 42 | 73 | 75 | 74 | 64 | 31 | 59 |
| Denali | 46 | 24 | 79 | 29 | 75 | 31 | 63 | 27 |
| Dillingham | 33 | 42 | 46 | 48 | 56 | 40 | 54 | 37 |
| Fairbanks | 58 | 1228 | 81 | 1142 | 72 | 1189 | 61 | 943 |
| Galena | 49 | 195 | 79 | 196 | 75 | 177 | 42 | 186 |
| Haines | 78 | 23 | 84 | 32 | 48 | 29 | 54 | 35 |
| Hoonah | 27 | 11 | 40 | 20 | 40 | 10 | 54 | 24 |
| Hydaburg | 25 | 8 | 25 | 4 | 30 | 10 | 0 | 11 |
| Iditarod Area | 23 | 38 | 51 | 41 | 48 | 44 | 25 | 32 |
| Juneau | 52 | 408 | 73 | 409 | 71 | 460 | 62 | 437 |
| Kake | 27 | 11 | 75 | 12 | 43 | 21 | 33 | 9 |
| Kashunamiut | 40 | 25 | 43 | 21 | 17 | 23 | 6 | 16 |
| Kenai Peninsula | 51 | 723 | 79 | 794 | 70 | 772 | 54 | 875 |
| Ketchikan | 53 | 185 | 80 | 183 | 61 | 199 | 71 | 156 |
| Klawock | 34 | 23 | 23 | 13 | 78 | 14 | 25 | 16 |
| Kodiak Island | 45 | 236 | 77 | 223 | 63 | 182 | 53 | 213 |
| Kuspuk | 30 | 33 | 32 | 35 | 21 | 38 | 28 | 32 |
| Lake & Peninsula | 20 | 41 | 38 | 37 | 44 | 39 | 27 | 22 |
| Lower Kuskokwim | 23 | 249 | 35 | 255 | 33 | 227 | 34 | 176 |
| Lower Yukon | 21 | 172 | 33 | 149 | 24 | 121 | 15 | 74 |
| Mat-Su | 50 | 974 | 80 | 952 | 72 | 1029 | 50 | 1129 |
| Mt. Edgecumbe | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 62 | 90 |
| Nenana | 51 | 61 | 87 | 47 | 68 | 47 | 28 | 78 |
| Nome | 28 | 70 | 58 | 48 | 56 | 53 | 26 | 39 |
| North Slope | 32 | 184 | 51 | 130 | 47 | 130 | 28 | 120 |
| Northwest Arctic | 29 | 192 | 32 | 186 | 29 | 144 | 13 | 108 |
| Pelican | 20 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 100 | 3 | 67 | 3 |
| Petersburg | 56 | 52 | 90 | 61 | 76 | 64 | 80 | 60 |
| Pribilof | 46 | 13 | 67 | 9 | 58 | 19 | 70 | 10 |
| Saint Mary's | 7 | 15 | 54 | 13 | 44 | 9 | 22 | 9 |
| Sitka | 55 | 115 | 77 | 130 | 75 | 109 | 55 | 120 |
| Skagway | 66 | 9 | 100 | 7 | 100 | 6 | 91 | 11 |
| Southeast Island | 59 | 17 | 70 | 20 | 61 | 18 | 59 | 27 |
| Southwest Region | 12 | 60 | 31 | 67 | 25 | 52 | 12 | 42 |
| Tanana | 25 | 8 | 29 | 7 | 33 | 3 | 50 | 8 |
| Unalaska | 37 | 19 | 82 | 27 | 82 | 22 | 100 | 20 |
| Valdez | 63 | 56 | 78 | 76 | 81 | 82 | 88 | 48 |
| Wrangell | 47 | 34 | 84 | 43 | 86 | 49 | 59 | 27 |
| Yakutat | 55 | 11 | 78 | 9 | 70 | 10 | 38 | 16 |
| Yukon Flats | 12 | 26 | 37 | 22 | 33 | 15 | 17 | 18 |
| Yukon/Koyukuk | 23 | 35 | 43 | 42 | 37 | 43 | 13 | 24 |
| Yupiit | 9 | 34 | 11 | 28 | 14 | 22 | 15 | 26 |