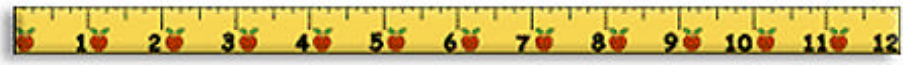
Alaska Department of Education
& Early Development

Report Card to the Public

A Summary of Statistics from Alaska's Public Schools



School Year
2000- 2001

Acknowledgements
The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development greatly appreciates the cooperation and support of Alaska's 53 school districts, Mt. Edgecumbe High School, and Alyeska Central School for assisting with the collection of information that provides the basis for this report.

This publication is available through the Department of Education & Early Development, 801 W. 10th Street, Suite 200, Juneau, AK 99801-1894; or through the Internet at: www.eed.state.ak.us/stats/

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Tony Knowles

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This *Report Card to the Public, a Summary of Statistics from Alaska's Public Schools*, is published in accordance with Alaska Statute 14.03.120 for the school year 2000-2001. It reports on the status of public education to the people of Alaska. It is also a source of information for Alaska's educational policy makers, including legislators, Governor Knowles, the State Board of Education & Early Development, and local boards of education.

Under state law, each school district is required to report to its community information about the school district's plans and performance. This publication is a summary of those reports. For the first time, the *Report Card* has been expanded to include school-level data for every school in the state.

This publication is organized around the four-key elements of the *Alaska Quality Schools Initiative*, the Knowles Administration's systemic school improvement plan:

- High Student Academic Standards and Assessments
- Quality Professional Standards
- Family, School, Community & Business Network
- School Excellence Standards

The progress of the six-year-old *Alaska Quality Schools Initiative* is impressive. This is because many individuals, school districts, educators, businesses, and other organizations have worked tirelessly to advance its elements. They are making the initiative a success.

The initiative has proven to be an excellent blueprint for revitalizing our education system and fulfilling our promise to young people for a brighter future. Our goal is no less than this: that **every student** achieves academically at the highest levels and is guided by outstanding teachers in quality schools—no exceptions.

We have reasons to celebrate the many successes in our schools. Together, we can move forward to make our schools even better.

Sincerely,

Shirley J. Holloway

Shirley J. Holloway, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education & Early Development

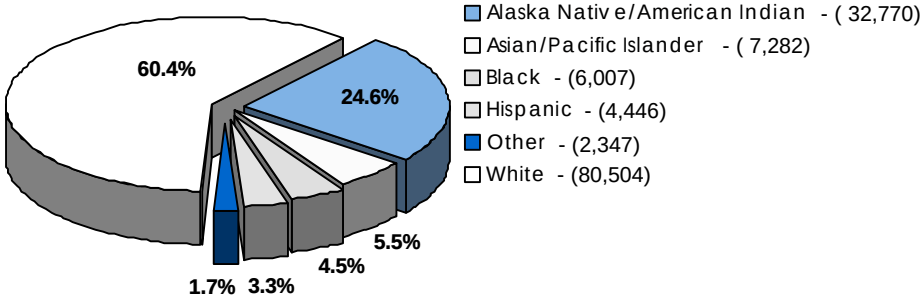
Alaska Education at a Glance

Statewide Profile

School District Square Miles	685,175
State Population	626,932
Median Family Income	$66,874
State Unemployment Rate	6.3%
Number of School Districts	53
Regional Educational Attendance Areas (REAAs)	19
City/Borough Districts	34
Funding Communities	267
Public Schools Pre-Elementary to Grade 12	493
State-Operated Schools	2
Charter Schools	18
Correspondence Schools	24
K-12 Student Populations in Average Daily Membership (ADM)	132,256
Change in ADM from 00-01	0.4%
School-Age Low-Income Children	35,490
Percentage of Adults 25 and Older with H.S. Diploma	92.8%
18-24 year olds with H.S. Diploma	80.7%
Number of High School Graduates 2001	6,812

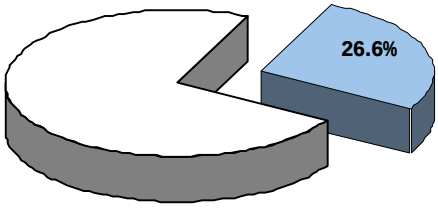
Total Statewide Enrollment by Ethnicity

As of October 1, 2000, *Includes all districts, Alyeska Central School and Mt. Edgecumbe*



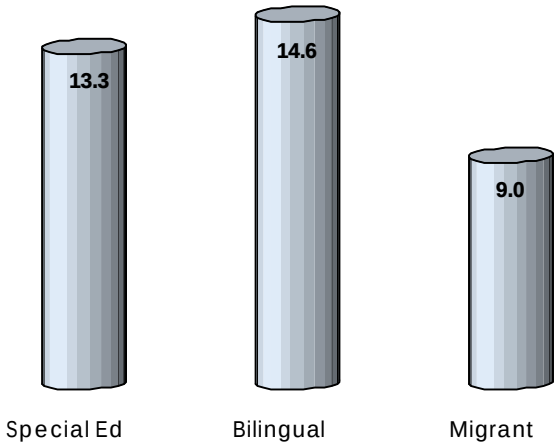
School-Age Children in Low-Income Families

Percentage of October 1, 2000 Enrollment



Supplemental Program Participation

Percentage of October 1, 2000 Enrollment



Alaska Quality Schools Initiative

Education goals have been developed on the state and district levels to provide ongoing and ultimate measures of student achievement. The *Alaska Quality Schools Initiative* aims to improve the performance of Alaska's schools and the skills of Alaska's children.

The *Initiative* has four parts:

High Student Academic Standards and Assessments

- State supports school districts by developing content and performance standards in reading, writing, and mathematics.
- School districts adopt standards in reading, writing, and mathematics.
- State supports school districts by developing a comprehensive system of student assessment that includes developmental profiles for entering kindergarten and 1st grade students, Alaska Benchmark Examinations at the 3rd, 6th, and 8th grades, and the Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Examination.

Quality Professional Standards

- University teacher preparation programs are based on standards of the State Board of Education & Early Development and standards of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.
- Teachers and administrators are licensed based on standards.
- School districts base teacher and administrator evaluations on standards.
- Ongoing professional development is directly linked to improving student achievement in a results-based education system built on academic standards, assessment, and accountability.

Family, School, Community & Business Network

- Communities develop partnerships to ensure that schools are safe and respectful places to learn.
- Parents are active partners who have clear roles in results-based schools.
- State supports school districts in implementing parent/family involvement programs.
- State promotes partnerships between schools, professional education associations, businesses, community groups, and government.

School Excellence Standards

- Accreditation of schools is based on state standards.
- School improvement planning is based on school standards.
- Schools get technical assistance from distinguished schools and educators.

This publication is organized around each part of the initiative and indicators of progress toward student, professional, and school standards. Progress for each part is discussed on the following pages.

High Student Academic Standards and Assessments

Content and Performance Standards

In 1993, Alaskans began developing higher standards and accountability for their public school system. As the cornerstone of this effort, the Department of Education & Early Development developed academic standards and associated key elements in 12 content areas: English/ language arts, mathematics, science, history, geography, government and citizenship, skills for a healthy life, arts, world languages, technology, employability, and library/information literacy. Also, in place, are cultural standards.

The content standards present students and teachers with a clear and challenging target; focus energy and resources on student achievement; and provide a tool for judging students' learning achievements and school performance.

During the late 1990s, performance standards were completed that translate the content standards into more concise expectations for student achievement. Developed in reading, writing, and mathematics, the performance standards detail the specific level of achievement expected of students at ages 7, 10, 14, and 18.

Comprehensive System of Student Assessment

State law requires a comprehensive system of student assessments including a developmental profile for students entering kindergarten or 1st 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 2004.

Implementing a statewide, comprehensive system to assess the skills and knowledge of Alaska's students is a primary activity of the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development. It is a major component of the Governor's and Commissioner of Education & Early Development's *Alaska Quality Schools Initiative*. Such a system would measure student achievement in relation to adopted state standards; provide valid, reliable information to policy makers; guide decision-making; and improve instruction.

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.

In 1997, the legislature passed a law requiring every high school student to pass a qualifying examination as a requisite to receiving a diploma. The following year, a law requiring examinations at earlier grades was also passed. The department has completed a three-year test development cycle to assess student performance on the performance standards in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Alaska regulation 4 AAC 06.710 requires all students in grades 4 and 7 to be assessed in reading, language arts, and mathematics, using a standardized test. Information from this assessment, aggregated to a statewide profile, provides parents, educators, policy makers, and the community-at-large with a picture of how Alaska's students compare with their peers nationwide. The California Achievement Test, Fifth Edition, is administered annually to all students in grades 4 and 7.

The High School Graduation Qualifying Examination and Benchmark Examinations at grades 3, 6, and 8 were administered for the first time in March of 2000.

2001 Benchmark Examinations

Benchmark examinations were administered for the first time in March of 2000. The State Board of Education & Early Development set the proficiency level for each grade. These proficiency levels are Advanced; Proficient; Below Proficient; and, Not Proficient. Proficiency is defined as the sum of students who scored at the Advanced and Proficient levels on the Benchmark exams. Table 1 illustrates the percentage of students who have met the proficiency levels in the two administrations of the benchmarks, spring 2000 and 2001, the October 1 enrollment, and the participation rate in the assessments. With only two administrations, there is not sufficient data to see trends emerging.

Table 1
2000-2001 and 1999-2000 Benchmark Exam Performance

Grade 3

Subject	Test Year	Advanced/Proficient Count	Advanced/Proficient Percentage[1]	Below/Not Proficient Count	Below/Not Proficient Percentage[1]	October 1 Enrollment	Participation Rate[2]
READING	2000	7,220	72.5%	2,740	27.5%	10,706	93.0%
	2001	7,065	71.2%	2,855	28.8%	10,700	92.7%
WRITING	2000	4,851	48.8%	5,084	51.2%	10,706	92.8%
	2001	5,302	53.5%	4,617	46.5%	10,700	92.7%
MATHEMATICS	2000	6,453	65.0%	3,478	35.0%	10,706	92.8%
	2001	6,550	66.3%	3,326	33.7%	10,700	92.3%

Grade 6

Subject	Test Year	Advanced/Proficient Count	Advanced/Proficient Percentage[1]	Below/Not Proficient Count	Below/Not Proficient Percentage[1]	October 1 Enrollment	Participation Rate[2]
READING	2000	6,958	69.9%	3,001	30.1%	10,574	94.2%
	2001	6,912	69.4%	3,043	30.6%	10,623	93.7%
WRITING	2000	7,180	72.2%	2,760	27.8%	10,574	94.0%
	2001	7,265	73.0%	2,687	27.0%	10,623	93.7%
MATHEMATICS	2000	6,161	62.2%	3,752	37.8%	10,574	93.7%
	2001	6,241	62.9%	3,681	37.1%	10,623	93.4%

Grade 8

Subject	Test Year	Advanced/Proficient Count	Advanced/Proficient Percentage[1]	Below/Not Proficient Count	Below/Not Proficient Percentage[1]	October 1 Enrollment	Participation Rate[2]
READING	2000	7,993	83.2%	1,613	16.8%	10,575	90.8%
	2001	7,824	82.5%	1,660	17.5%	10,377	91.4%
WRITING	2000	6,479	67.5%	3,125	32.5%	10,575	90.8%
	2001	6,420	67.9%	3,040	32.1%	10,377	91.2%
MATHEMATICS	2000	3,724	39.0%	5,815	61.0%	10,575	90.2%
	2001	3,711	39.5%	5,675	60.5%	10,377	90.5%

1 Percent Proficient and Percent Not Proficient rates only include students that participated in the exams.

2 Participation rate is calculated by dividing the total count of students tested by the October 1, 2000 enrollment.

2001 High School Graduation Qualifying Examination

The High School Graduation Qualifying Examination (HSGQE) was administered for the first time in March of 2000. The State Board of Education & Early Development set the proficiency level for the exam. The exam is offered in October and March of each school year to provide additional opportunities for high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors to take the exam. Table 2 illustrates the HSGQE results comparing the Grade 10 students (Class of 2002) in the spring of 2000 to the 10th grade students in the spring of 2001 (Class of 2003).

Table 2
2000-2001 and 1999-2000 HSGQE Performance

READING

Test Date	Number Proficient	Percent Proficient[1]	Number Not Proficient	Percent Not Proficient[1]	October 1 Enrollment	Participation Rate[2]
Spring 2000	6,178	74.6%	2,098	25.4%	10,217	81.0%
Spring 2001	5,469	65.9%	2,831	34.1%	10,110	82.1%

WRITING

Test Date	Number Proficient	Percent Proficient[1]	Number Not Proficient	Percent Not Proficient[1]	October 1 Enrollment	Participation Rate[2]
Spring 2000	3,924	47.6%	4,319	52.4%	10,217	80.7%
Spring 2001	4,039	46.6%	4,625	53.4%	10,110	85.7%

MATHEMATICS

Test Date	Number Proficient	Percent Proficient[1]	Number Not Proficient	Percent Not Proficient[1]	October 1 Enrollment	Participation Rate[2]
Spring 2000	2,717	33.3%	5,454	66.7%	10,217	80.0%
Spring 2001	3,807	44.0%	4,852	56.0%	10,110	85.6%

1 Percent Proficient and Percent Not Proficient rates only include students that participated in the exams.

2 Participation rate is calculated by dividing the total count of students tested by the October 1, 2000, enrollment.

During the 2001 legislative session, there was significant discussion about what our students are being tested on and how well they are being asked to perform in these areas in order to receive a high school diploma. The legislature was very clear in passing SB 133, Chapter 94, SLA 2001, that the competency exam is to measure the "minimum competency in essential skills" for all high school graduates.

In the spring of 2001 the commissioner convened a committee of approximately 45 educators to work with the department and the department's test contractor, CTB McGraw-Hill, in refocusing the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam on essential skills. Subcommittees in each of the content areas, reading, writing, and mathematics, reviewed test items that could potentially be used to measure essential skills. Based upon the committee's work specifications for new versions of the HSGQE were developed. In the spring of 2002, we will administer a new refocused version of the HSGQE. The refocused version will contain questions measuring the minimum competencies of essential skills. Because of the significant changes to the test new cut scores will be determined in the summer of 2002.

The delay of the high stakes consequences of the HSGQE until the spring of 2004, while continuing to administer the Benchmark exams in grades 3, 6, and 8 as well as the revised and refocused HSGQE, will give us the tools and the time needed to be sure the standards reflect what Alaskans think is important, the test is a good measure and students are adequately prepared. The additional time will assure that all students, including those with learning disabilities and those in highly mobile families who move in and out of our schools, will have had a reasonable opportunity to learn what is tested.

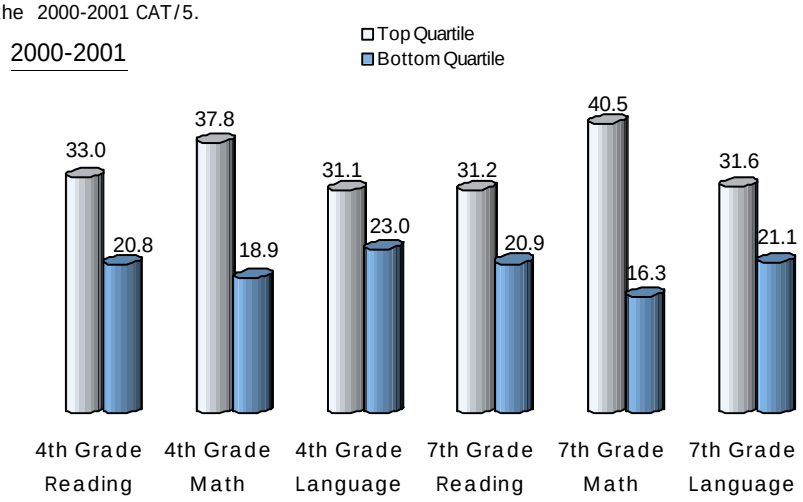
2001 CAT/5 Quartile Results

In standardized tests, the scoring distribution is usually divided into four equal parts (quartiles), with the scores of 25 percent of the normal population falling within each of the quartiles. In reporting student achievement, states frequently present the proportion of students scoring within each quartile. *A common interpretation of these data is that if less than 25 percent of a particular tested population of students score in the lowest quartile, and more than 25 percent score in the top quartile, the educational entity is doing a good job of educating its students.*

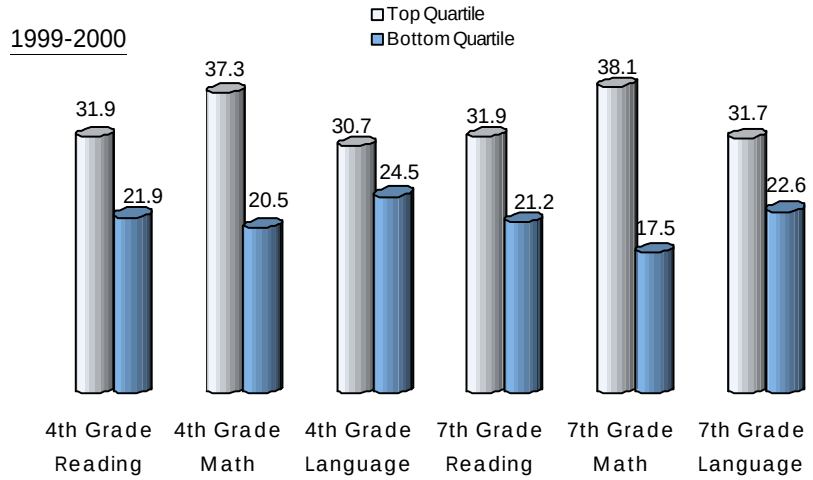
Table 3 shows the percentage of Alaska students in grades 4 and 7 whose scores fell within the first and fourth (or top and bottom) quartiles on the CAT/5. Percentages are shown for reading, language, and mathematics for the current and prior school years.

Table 3
2000-2001 and 1999-2000 Quartile Performance

Percentage of Alaska Students in Grades 4 and 7 Scoring Within the First and Fourth Quartiles* on the 2000-2001 CAT/5.



Percentage of Alaska Students in Grades 4 and 7 Scoring Within the First and Fourth Quartiles* on the 1999-2000 CAT/5.



**Top quartile range: 76th-99th percentile; Bottom quartile range: 1st-25th percentile.*

When the 2000-2001 school year is compared to the previous school year, there is a uniform trend of improvement in all subject areas for grade 4. In all three subject areas, the percent of students in Alaska in the top quartile increased while the number of students in the bottom quartile decreased.

The grade 7 results in comparison showed a slight decrease in the top quartile for both reading and language. Although the grade 7 students showed a significant increase in the top quartile for math. The percentage of students in the bottom quartile decreased for all three subject areas.

Other Student Performance Indicators

During the 2000-2001 school year, significant numbers of Alaska students voluntarily participated in other assessment programs which allow comparison of Alaska students with students nationwide.

SAT

The SAT is a voluntary assessment used by colleges and universities to predict how well students will succeed in college. Across the United States, 45 percent of graduating seniors took the SAT. In Alaska, 51 percent of seniors took the SAT in 2001.

Even though a greater percentage of Alaskans took the SAT than their national counterparts, Alaska's seniors continued to outscore the national average. In school year 2000-2001, Alaskans averaged 514 on the verbal portion of the test, compared to 506 for the national average. Alaskans scored 510 on the math portion compared to 510 for the national average. Table 4 compares state and national scores for the past three years.

American College Test (ACT)

The ACT assesses student knowledge and skills in four areas: English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. ACT reports individual scores in each area, along with a composite score. The figure in Table 5 shows the scores achieved by Alaska seniors in each content area compared with seniors nationwide.

Table 4
SAT Verbal and Math - All Graduating Seniors

A three-year comparison of average SAT verbal and math scores and percentage of high school graduates taking the test compared with national averages.

Year	Alaska Verbal	Naional Verbal	Math	National Math	% of Alaska Grads taking SAT	% of National Grads taking SAT
2001	514	506	510	514	51.0	45.0
2000	519	505	515	514	50.0	44.0
1999	516	505	514	511	50.0	43.0

Table 4A
SAT Verbal and Math - Only Public School Graduating Seniors

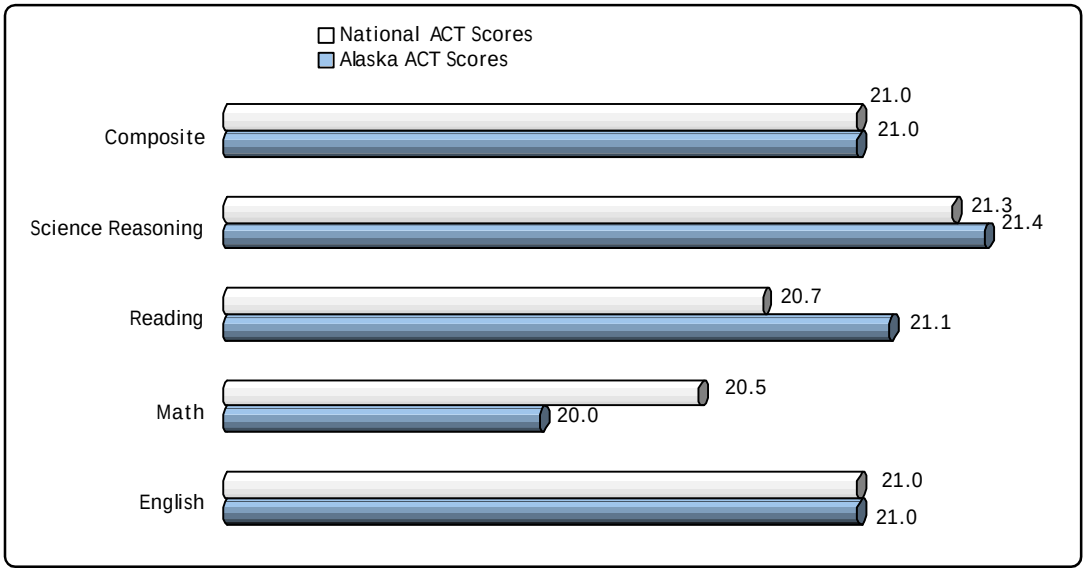
A three-year comparison of average SAT verbal and math scores and percentage of high school graduates taking the test compared with national averages.

Year	Alaska Verbal	Naional Verbal	Math	National Math	% of Alaska Grads taking SAT	% of National Grads taking SAT
2001	514	502	511	510	47.0	38.0

Alaska graduates taking the ACT in 2000 achieved slightly above the national averages in three content areas assessed: math, reading, and science reasoning. In English, Alaska graduates scored slightly below the national average. The Alaska composite score, a weighted average of the four content scores, was slightly above the national average composite score.

Data from the ACT continues to reflect the high positive relationship that exists between taking a challenging high school curriculum and high ACT scores. For example, the Alaska seniors who reported taking a "core program" — defined by ACT as "a typical college preparatory program" composed of four or more years of English and three or more years of mathematics, social studies, and natural sciences — achieved an average composite score of 24.0.

Table 5
Comparison of 2001 Alaska and National Act Scores



High School Completion

Alaska school districts establish local high school graduation requirements that meet or exceed the state regulatory standards. Students are awarded high school credit on the basis of a passing grade for a course of study prescribed by the local school board. In the case of special education students precluded from taking regular course offerings, a certificate of attendance is awarded.

In order to graduate, Alaska students must have earned at least 21 units of credit and completed at least the following:

- language arts – 4 units of credit
- social studies – 3 units of credit
- mathematics – 2 units of credit
- science – 2 units of credit
- health/physical education – 1 unit of credit
- remaining required credits as specified by the local school board.

Many districts require more credits than the state minimum.

In 2001, some 6,812 graduates were awarded a regular high school diploma and 17 were given a certificate of completion.

Table 6
2000-2001 Graduates by Ethnicity

Percentage of 12th grade enrollment represents the total 12th grade enrollment by ethnicity divided by October 1, 2000 enrollment in 12th grade.

Ethnicity	Percentage of 12th Grade Enrollment	2001 Graduates
Alaska Native/American Indian	19.5	18.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.2	6.3
Black	3.9	3.6
Hispanic	2.9	2.5
Other	2.5	0.2
White	65.1	68.6

Quality Professional Standards

Standards for Teachers and Administrators

Alaska standards for teachers were adopted in 1994 and amended in 1997. Administrator standards were adopted in 1997. Teacher preparation program review, institutional recommendations for certification, and district evaluation plans are all based on these standards.

Standards for Teacher Preparation

Beginning in 1998, colleges and universities were required to attest, on the Institutional Recommendation Form for Alaska Certification, that their program graduates meet or exceed either national or Alaska professional standards.

Beginning 2006, Alaska's teacher preparation institutions must meet or exceed the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards as well as Alaska professional standards. NCATE standards are the only national standards for teacher preparation.

Alaska is one of 44 NCATE partnership states. Our partnership is based on review using both the unit standards developed by NCATE and the program standards developed by the national professional education associations.

Certification and Endorsements

Beginning in 1998, new candidates for teacher certification in Alaska were required to demonstrate basic competency in reading, writing, and math by passing the Praxis I Academic Skills Assessments.

The State Board of Education & Early Development adopted a regulation in 1999 allowing Alaska certificated teachers to earn additional content area endorsements in three ways: by completing an approved educational program in a content area; by earning a doctorate, master's, major, or minor in a content area; or by passing the Praxis II tests in the following areas: English; math; general science; French; and German.

An Advanced Teacher certificate became available for those who choose to earn National Board Certification. Subsidies of $1,000 were made available for ten Alaska teachers during the 2000-2001 school year toward the $2,000 National Board application fee. Qualifying scores for the Praxis II tests for English, math, and general science were adopted in 1999.

Evaluation of Educators

In 1997, local school boards were required to develop and adopt a certificated employee evaluation system for all teachers and administrators, except superintendents. The department's Professional Evaluation Handbook provided guidance for developing staff evaluation plans based on Alaska's professional standards for educators.

Educator Supply and Demand

Even as Alaska raised its standards for educators, the state, the region, and the nation began to experience educator shortages that are projected to get worse.

The demand for educators in Alaska continues to exceed supply. For 2000-2001, Alaska Teacher Placement (ATP) had requests from school districts that could not be filled in the following areas: special education, speech pathology and school psychology. Thirty-six UAA students are teaching under special education waivers. The demand for educators rose steeply in 1997, from 972 to 1,330, and was stable for three years. The demand decreased in 2000 to 1,079 new hires.

Another factor affecting teacher supply was that, except for the introduction of tiered systems paying less to new hires and the restriction of new hires' experience on the salary scales, salaries have changed little since 1994. When adjusted for cost of living, Alaska salaries continue to fall in relation to those of other states.

A third supply factor was that Alaska institutions prepare only a small percentage of the teachers needed to fill positions available in the state. In historically hard-to-fill categories like special education, the University of Alaska has produced teachers for only about 16 percent of the number of vacancies. The University of Alaska placed 25 special education teachers in 2000. This was an increase for over 56 percent from 1999.

In response to supply and demand concerns, an increasing number of districts planned to do individual recruitment outside the state, in addition to contracting with ATP to do out-of-state recruiting.

Table 7
2000 ATP Registrants
and State Demand

Endorsement Area	Number ATP Registrants	Filled Positions		2000 Vacancies
		Rural	Urban	
Superintendent	109	2	11	13
Asst. Superintendent		3	5	8
Principal		6	45	51
Asst. Principal		4	12	16
Teacher Principal		9	13.5	22.5
Art	19	4.5	1.0	5.5
Bilingual/Bicultural	0	3.5	2.2	5.4
Business Education	8	2	3	5
Computer Science	12	2.5	11	13.5
Counselor	40	11.8	26	37.8
Early Childhood	15	15	23.75	38.75
Elementary (K-6)	310	89	161.5	250.5
English	101	24.5	46.36	70.86
Foreign Language*	38	9	2.83	11.83
Generalist	25	4.5	96.76	101.26
Gifted/Talented	0	7.85	6.3	14.15
Health	17	1.5	0.2	1.7
Home Economics	2	1	2	3
Industrial Arts	24	1.5	14.89	16.39
Library	11	6	6	12
Math	70	15.5	22.2	37.7
Media	0	0	0	0
Middle School (7-8)	16	4	15.5	19.5
Music	19	13	7.1	20.1
Physical Education	39	6	6	12
Occupational Therapy	0	3.2	2	5.2
School Psych.	10	5	6	11
Reading	21	13.1	11.07	24.17
Science	141	17.5	22.5	40
Social Studies	108	11	14.21	25.21
Special Education	125	68	93	161
Speech Pathology	3	8	7	15
Other	37	21	28.07	49.07
TOTAL		**393.45**	**724.94**	**1118.39**

*Foreign Language vacancies are divided up into the specific language areas.

Family, School, Community & Business Network

The *Alaska Quality Schools Initiative* encourages collaborations at the local and state levels among parents, schools, professional education associations, businesses, community groups, and government to improve the academic achievement of students. Since 1996, the Department of Education & Early Development, the Alaska PTA, the Association of Alaska School Boards, and NEA Alaska have been assisting school districts and communities in developing more collaborative relationships. This partnership is being expanded to include staff from the department representing safe and drug free schools and the Division of Early Development, the Alaska Family Partnership program, a business representative, and an Alaska Native educator.

Partner activities include the following:

- training on the National Parent Involvement Standards which are based on research by Dr. Joyce Epstein on effective family involvement;
- dissemination of information on effective models for family involvement;
- reporting of family involvement activities using a self-assessment by districts as part of the district report card;
- involving parents and community representatives in school decision-making through their participation in the development of state content, performance, school-to-work, and opportunity to learn standards;
- training parents, community members, and school staff to understand and use best practices in family and community involvement, and including making appropriate educational decisions; and
- conducting the first in a series of regional conferences on traditional child rearing practices to identify culturally appropriate practices.

School Excellence Standards

A public or private elementary or secondary school in Alaska may demonstrate the attainment of the standards by conducting a self-study using a format prescribed by the department; or providing evidence of accreditation by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges to the department.

The adopted standards for schools are:

(1) classroom and instructional strategies support and promote student learning focused on the attainment of high standards by all students; a school demonstrates this standard by giving evidence that it bases curriculum, instruction, and assessment on clear student standards and objectives; has established student standards that are meaningful, agreed upon, and emphasize the importance of learning; assesses student performance in multiple ways; and holds high expectations for the achievement of all students;

(2) a climate of high expectations exists not only for students, but also for all staff, and high expectations are communicated to everyone in the community the school serves, with incentives, recognition, and rewards in place to promote excellence;

(3) school time is used for learning;

(4) fair discipline practices and policies are established, communicated, and consistently enforced;

(5) the school environment is supportive and physically safe;

(6) appropriate technology is used to apply academic skills to simulate real life, workplace situations in addition to performing research and exploration;

(7) all staff are involved in ongoing and continuous staff development that focuses on school improvement goals and student performance standards;

(8) strong leadership that uses established research to guide the instructional program is in evidence;

(9) resources are focused on established student standards and school improvement efforts to guide the instructional program;

(10) the decision-making process for school plans and goals includes everyone in the community the school serves;

(11) programs and support are provided to help high needs students achieve school success;

(12) the school goals and staff behavior promote equity and respect for diversity among students, teachers, administrators, families, and community members of different socio-economic status and cultural background;

(13) that non-English-speaking and limited-English-proficient students are provided with a strong academic core program that supports the students' first language; and

(14) partnerships and collaboration are established between the school and parents, families, businesses, and other community members; a school demonstrates this standard by giving evidence that

- (a) various types of involvement promote a variety of opportunities for school, families, and community to work together;
- (b) collaboration between the school and agencies, businesses, and the community supports special programs for high needs students and families; and
- (c) staff and school procedures promote community connections and cross-cultural communications with parents and families.

Information on accreditation by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges may be obtained from Stowell Johnstone, Executive Secretary, Alaska Committee of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, P.O. Box 230067, Anchorage, AK 99523-0067 or directly from the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, 1910 University Drive, Boise, Idaho 83725-1060.

2001 Accreditation Status

The decision to seek accreditation is a local school board option. Since the 1970s, the State Board of Education & Early Development has delegated accreditation to the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NASC). Accreditation by NASC is a two-step process for school improvement, consisting of an annual report which details continuous growth, and a full-scale self-evaluation and third party verification of the total education program every six years.

Table 8
Summary of
Schools Accredited

Summary of Schools Accredited by Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (Adopted in December, 1999)

Elementary	9
Middle	13
High School	43
K-12	87
Special Purpose Schools	8
Supplemental Education Program	3
Total Accredited in Alaska	**163**
Public Schools	**152**
Private Schools	**11**

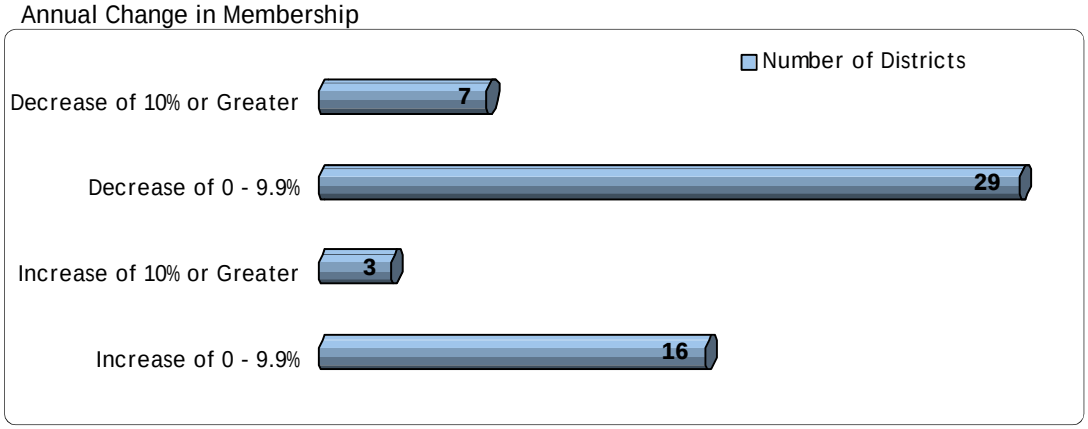
Voluntary school accreditation has resulted in 28 percent of Alaska's public schools seeking accreditation status. The majority of accredited schools serve a K-12 grade span. Generally, Regional Education Attendance Areas (REAAs) have a greater percentage of accredited schools. City and Borough school districts typically accredit their high schools and some middle schools; few accredit their elementary schools.

Thirty-eight school districts plus the Department of Education & Early Development have one or more accredited schools.

Annual Change in Membership

The average daily membership for 2000-2001 represented a 0.4 percent increase over the previous year. Thirty-two districts experienced no change or a decrease in this period. The most significant reductions were in Pelican, Aleutian Region, and Tanana School Disricts, at -31.6 percent, -21.0 percent, and -13.7 percent, respectively. Enrollments in 19 districts were higher than the previous year, with three districts experiencing increases greater than ten percent, including Nenana with 81.9 percent and Craig with 22.8 percent.

Table 9
Annual Change in Membership

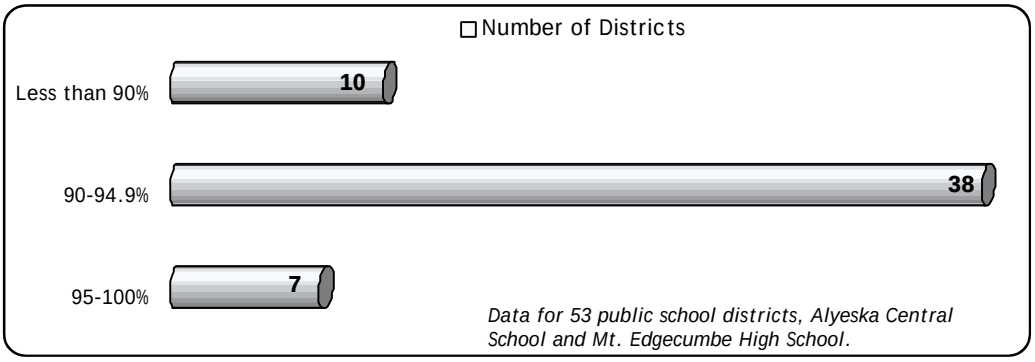


Attendance Rate

The amount of time students are present at school and actively engaged in learning relates directly to academic performance. The relationship between school attendance and student performance is well documented in national research.

Ten districts have attendance rates less than 90 percent, and seven districts reported attendance rates at or above 95 percent. Over the last five years, the statewide average attendance rate has remained at about 93 percent.

Table 10
Attendance Rate



Annual Dropout Rate for Grades 7-12

Dropout rates answer the question, "What percentage of students dropped out of grades seven through twelve?" Students transferring to another school or alternative program that meets standard credit requirements are not considered dropouts. As defined by the National Center for Education Statistics, a student who leaves the district to obtain a GED is a dropout.

Of 60,153 students enrolled in grades seven through twelve, 3,704 students dropped out during the 2000-2001 school year. The statewide dropout rate rose from 5.1 percent in 1999-2000 to 6.2 percent in 2000-2001. This was the second year that we reported dropout data using a newly defined timeline. These dropout numbers represent children dropping out between July 1, 2000, and June 30, 2001. Fourteen districts had dropout rates greater than six percent. Table 11 profiles dropouts by ethnicity.

Table 11
Dropouts by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Grades 7-12 Percentage of Total Enrollment	Grades 7-12 Percentage of Total Dropouts
Alaska Native/Native American	22.8	34.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	5.6	2.9
Black	4.1	4.2
Hispanic	3.0	4.9
Other	1.4	1.5
White	63.1	51.6

Definitions & Methodology

Accreditation. Indicates whether or not a school was accredited for 1999-2000.

Attendance Rate. Computed by taking the aggregate daily attendance during the regular school year and dividing by the aggregate daily membership for the school year, expressed as a percentage.

> **Aggregate daily attendance.** The sum of the days present of all students when school is in session during the school year.
>
> **Aggregate daily membership.** The sum of the days present and absent of all students when school is in session during the school year.

Average Volunteer Hours Per Week. The average number of volunteer hours a week spent in the school by parents and other members of the community.

Community Members Commenting. The number of community persons commenting to school or district personnel.

Dropout. A student who was enrolled in the district at some time during the school year and whose enrollment terminated. Dropouts do not include graduates, transfers to public or private schools, or transfers to state- or district-approved education programs. Students with absences due to suspension, illness, or medical conditions are not reported as dropouts.

Dropout Rate. Computed by dividing the number of dropouts in the current school year by the number of students enrolled in grades 7-12 on October 1 of the current school year. School year is defined as the 12-month period beginning with July 1 and ending June 30.

Enrollment Change. The annual percent of enrollment change is computed by taking the difference between the October 1 enrollment from the reporting school year and the October 1 enrollment from the previous school year and then dividing by the October 1 enrollment from the previous year, expressed as a percentage.

Enrollment Change Due to Transfers. Computed by subtracting from one the quotient derived by dividing the number of students enrolled at least 170 days in the school by the total number of students enrolled at least one day in the school.

Graduation Rate. Computed by counting the number of graduates receiving a regular diploma by June 30, and dividing that number by the sum of the 12th grade membership on the last day of school, the number of mid-year graduates, and the number of summer graduates.

High School Graduate. The number of students that receive a regular diploma during the school year.

Parents Commenting. The number of parents commenting to school or district personnel.

Parent Survey Return Rate. Computed by counting the number of surveys returned by parents, and dividing that number by the number of parents eligible to be surveyed, expressed as a percentage.

Retention Rate. Computed by taking the number of students being retained on the last day of school and dividing by the membership on the last day of the school year, expressed as a percentage. The data is based on the combined number of retained students in grades kindergarten through grade 8 as of the last day of school.

School/Business Partnerships. The number of school/business or interagency partnerships operating under written agreement.

Students Commenting. The number of students commenting to school or district personnel.

Student Survey Return Rate. Computed by counting the number of surveys returned by students, and dividing that number by the number of students eligible to be surveyed, expressed as a percentage.

Statewide Assessments

HSGQE. The results for the spring 2000 High School Graduation Qualifying Exam. The state standards-based exam was required for students enrolled in the 10th grade.

Proficient. The number of students who scored at or above the cut (or passing) score.

% Proficient. The percentage of students who scored at or above the cut (or passing) score. Computed by counting the number of students receiving a passing score and dividing that number by the number of students participating in the test.

Not Proficient. The number who scored below the cut (or passing) score.

% Not Proficient. The percentage of students who scored below the cut (or passing) score. Computed by counting the number of students not receiving a passing score and dividing that number by the number of students participating in the test.

Benchmark Exams. The results for the spring 2000 state standards-based assessments for grades 3, 6, and 8. Results are broken out into the following four proficiency categories:

Advanced. Indicates mastery of the performance standards at a level above proficient.

Proficient. Indicates mastery of the performance standards sufficient to lead a successful adult life.

Below Proficient. Indicates mastery of some performance standards but not enough to be proficient.

Not Proficient. Indicates little mastery of the performance standards.

CAT/5 Exams. California Achievement Test, version 5. The results of the norm-referenced achievement tests administered during the 1999-2000 school year for grades 4 and 7 include:

Top Quartile. The percentage of students tested who are in the top quartile.

Bottom Quartile. The percentage of students tested who are in the bottom quartile.

In a normal distribution, 25 percent of the scores fall into each quartile.

Percentile Rank. The national percentile of the mean normal curve equivalent.