

ALASKA'S *Education* CHALLENGE

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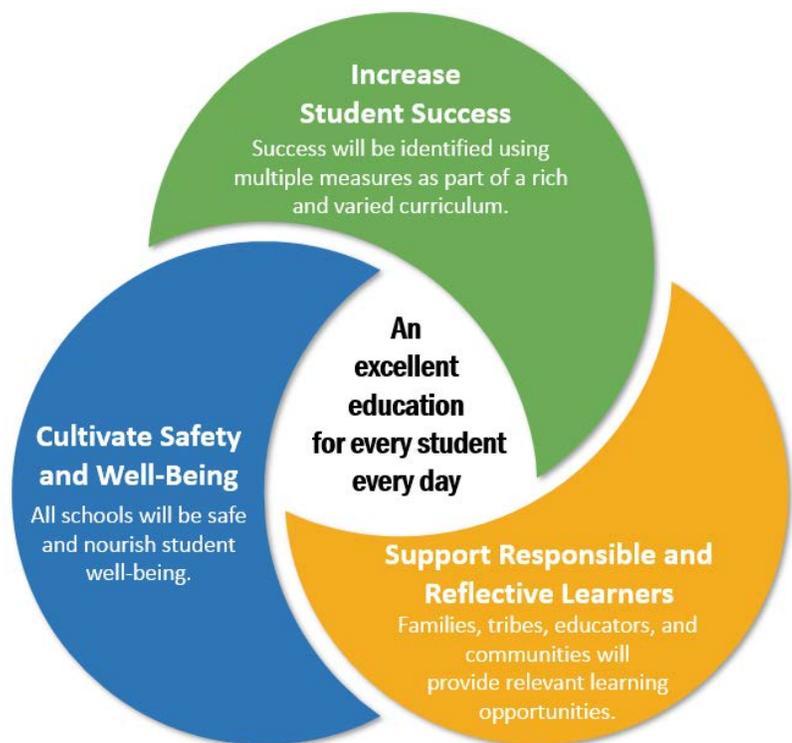
What is our vision for the future of Alaska's youth?

Either we are satisfied with how well our current system works for ALL students and do nothing to improve it, or we will be dissatisfied and commit to something better for ALL students.

Alaska's Education Challenge is an opportunity to inspire Alaskans to work together for an excellent education for every student.

This will happen by:

1. Increasing Student Success
 - Success will be identified using multiple measures as part of a rich and varied curriculum
2. Cultivating Safety and Well-Being
 - All schools will be safe and nourish student well-being
3. Supporting Responsible and Reflective Learners
 - Families, tribes, educators, and communities will provide relevant learning opportunities.



Why?

Three unique circumstances prompted this effort:

1. The need to focus attention on Alaska's fiscal challenges;
2. The need to improve Alaska's national ranking in student achievement; and
3. The need for a shared vision for closing the achievement gap.

Statistics

- Alaska has ranked in the bottom tier of our country in student achievement and graduation rate for far too many years. (Alaska ranked 49th out of 52 jurisdictions in grade 4 reading, 2015 NAEP results)
- One out of every six Alaskan students is ready for kindergarten as shown by consistently demonstrating 13 early learning goals. (ADP results)
- Last school year the statewide teacher turnover rate was one out of every eight teachers.
- Over one quarter of our students are chronically absent from school.

Highlights

- Nearly 1,400 Alaskans in 109 communities provided over 18,000 comments and ideas for how to face the challenges inherent in our education system.
- Approximately 100 Alaskans were selected to have a conversation about our education system as members of five committees organized around the State Board of Education's five strategic priorities for public education. These committee members represented the broader community of education stakeholders and included educators, legislators, parents, tribal members, business leaders, and students. Their charge was to rethink our education system in a collective manner to identify solutions and promising practices.
- The five committees came up with 13 recommendations to improve our public education system. The State Board of Education accepted all 13 recommendations.
- **Through the 13 recommendations and the work invested in Alaska's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan, required under the new federal education law, three common commitments to Alaska's students emerged:**
 1. **Increase Student Success;**
 2. **Cultivate Safety and Well-Being; and**
 3. **Support Responsible and Reflective Learners.**

Next Steps

How will the three commitments be kept?

- DEED has begun conversations with educators to determine how the three commitments will be kept in each local community. Work has begun with local school boards to align their strategic plans and priorities with the three commitments.
- DEED has partnered with the Association of Alaska School Boards to message the commitments to local school board members.
- The NEA-Alaska Delegate Assembly unanimously adopted the three commitments and charged their leadership with sharing the commitments with all teachers in Alaska.
- Tribal leaders and organizations have committed to providing partnership to schools and communities in transforming the educational system in Alaska.
- The Alaska Council of School Administrators is working to identify how the 13 recommendations will correlate to current effective practices.

How will the recommendations be implemented?

- DEED has partnered with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), a nationwide education organization that supports state leadership, in order to:
 - establish the role of DEED and other partners in moving the recommendations forward;
 - develop a collaborative implementation approach for the 13 recommendations; and
 - implement performance management routines for reviewing and driving implementation progress.
- DEED has begun conversations with education partners to determine how to best apply the recommendations in each local community, where the appropriate authority and responsibility exists with Alaska's families.

How will progress be measured?

- DEED is working to develop a robust reporting system based on the accountability system and requirements of the new federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The reporting system will address academics and correlate to both statewide and local goals developed through the Alaska's Education Challenge recommendations and ESSA plans.