

# ***Alaska Native K-12 Education Indicators***

## ***Executive Summary***

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***This document contains pages i through viii of the report.  
Please visit <http://www.firstalaskans.org>  
for a full copy of the report.***

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## Introduction

This executive summary to the *Alaska Native K-12 Education Indicators* provides statewide summary information on thirteen priority topics that are covered in substantially greater detail in the body of the main report document. The main report also includes detail on all topics by Alaska Native geographic region and is supplemented by a statistical appendix with further support data.

## Population

For the Census 2000, 17.2 percent of the Alaska population identified themselves as Alaska Native alone or in combination with some other race. Alaska Natives number 107,682 out of a total population of 626,932. Compared to their proportion of the overall population, Alaska Natives represent a significantly higher percentage of Alaska's school age children (23.0 percent) and an even higher percentage of Alaska children enrolled in school (23.7 percent). The Alaska Native community has a significantly higher stake in the performance of Alaska's schools. Over one-third (34.3 percent) of Alaska Natives are of school age, compared to one-fourth (25.6 percent) of the overall Alaska population.

## School Inventory

There were 502 schools statewide, including correspondence schools, in the 2002-2003 school year. School enrollment was greatest in the Cook Inlet region with 175 schools and 73,675 students. The Doyon region followed in second place with 82 schools and 24,073 students, and the Sealaska region rounded out the top three spots with 69 schools and 13,425 students. Total enrollment for the year was 134,364 which includes Native enrollment of 31,873.

**Number of Schools and Enrollment for 2002-2003 School Year**

Alaska Native Region	Number of Schools	Total Enrollment
<i>Ahtna</i>	12	1,000
<i>Aleut</i>	14	888
<i>Arctic Slope</i>	10	2,115
<i>Bering Straits</i>	19	2,497
<i>Bristol Bay</i>	28	1,976
<i>Calista</i>	55	7,173
<i>Chugach</i>	9	1,555
<i>Cook Inlet</i>	175	73,675
<i>Doyon</i>	82	24,073
<i>Koniag</i>	14	2,754
<i>NANA</i>	13	2,172
<i>Sealaska</i>	69	13,425
<b>Statewide Totals</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>134,364</b>

## Educators

There are 52 school districts in the state with one superintendent for each, 344 principals statewide, and 8,325 teachers for the 2002-2003 school year including part-time and substitute teachers. Alaska Natives represent less than five (4.6) percent of the total educators in the state, or 401 Alaska Natives out of 8,721 total educators. This compares to Alaska Native student enrollment of 23.7 percent of the state total.

Alaska Native representation includes 5.8 percent of superintendents, 3.8 percent of principals, and 4.6 percent of teachers.

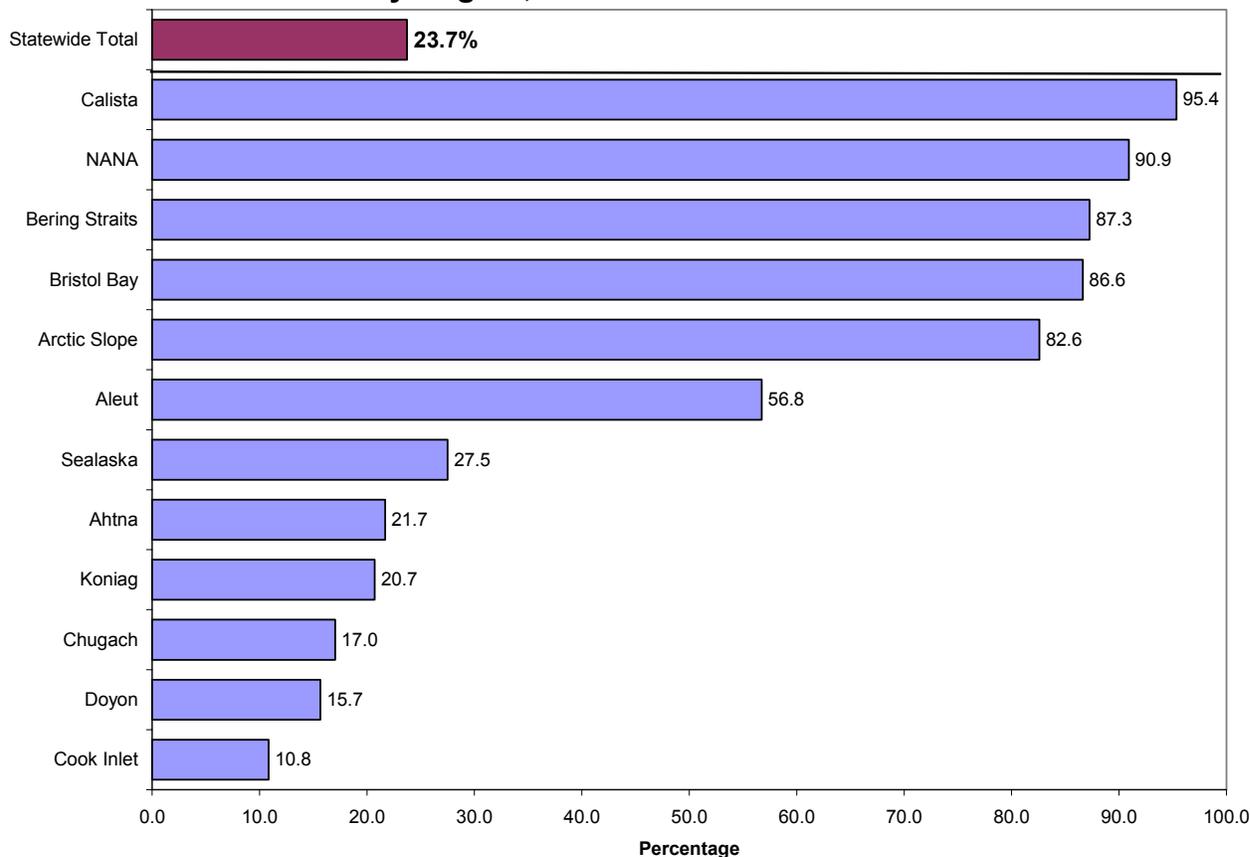
There is little difference in the average salary levels of Alaska Native education professionals when compared to the statewide averages for superintendents, principals, and teachers.

## Enrollment

There were 31,873 Alaska Native students enrolled out of a statewide total of 134,364 students for the 2002-2003 school year, representing 23.7 percent of the total student population.

Schools located in the Arctic Slope, Bering Straits, Bristol Bay, Calista, and NANA geographic regions have Native student enrollment percentages of greater than 80 percent. The Aleut region also has a majority of Native enrollment (57 percent). Schools located in the Cook Inlet region have the greatest number of Alaska Native students with 7,985 students, followed by the Calista region with 6,840 students.

## Alaska Native Student Enrollment as Percent of Total Enrollment By Region, 2002-2003 School Year



*Source:* State of Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, 2002-2003 school year. Native students are displayed as a percent of total students.

## Student/Teacher Ratios

The average statewide student/teacher ratio is 15.4 students to one teacher. (Correspondence and Cyber school students are not included in this average.)

Schools located in the Cook Inlet region have a student/teacher ratio of 16.7:1 – greater than the statewide average. The Doyon region’s student/teacher ratio is the same as the statewide average (15.4:1). The Cook Inlet and Doyon regions include the large urban concentrations of Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Arctic Slope (ratio of 10:1), Aleut (10.5:1), and Bristol Bay (10.9:1) have the lowest student/teacher ratios in the state.

## Education Attainment

Alaska Natives are gaining in education attainment, as evidenced by a comparison by the University of Minnesota of 1990 and 2000 census information. Comparing 2000 to 1990, a higher percentage of Alaska Natives hold college degrees (4 percent versus 3 percent), attended some college (14 percent versus 12 percent), and

graduated from high school (42 percent versus 38 percent). Fewer Alaska Natives (8 percent versus 4 percent) have no schooling.

## Adequate Yearly Progress

Holding schools accountable for the performance of all students is a cornerstone of the No Child Left Behind Act. Standardized test results, participation in the testing, and graduation rates form the basis for measuring Adequate Yearly Progress. The goal is to bring all students to academic proficiency by the school year 2013-2014. The test scores used for determining AYP are the Alaska Benchmark Exams for grades 3, 6, and 8; the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam at grade 10; and the CAT-6 (TerraNova) tests in grades 4, 5, 7, and 9.

Schools not meeting AYP goals for the first time are called Level 1 schools, the second time they are called Level 2 schools and so on to Level 4. Different consequences apply to schools that receive federal Title I funding; however, all Level 1 schools need to inform parents about their AYP status, and develop and implement a plan for improvement.

There are 31 ways to measure whether a school is making Adequate Yearly Progress. Schools must have 95 percent of the student enrollment complete the reading, writing, and math portions of the test (three measures), each of nine ethnic and socioeconomic groups must be proficient on the reading, writing, and math exams (27 measures), and the final measure of AYP is graduation rates for schools including 12<sup>th</sup> grade. All other schools are measured using attendance rates. Performance on reading, writing, and math assessments are the main indicators of meeting AYP. In addition, 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduation rates or attendance standards must be met. Schools with student proficiency in all subjects and socioeconomic groups can still fail to meet AYP if less than 95 percent of the students took the exam.

For the 2002-2003 school year, 205 of the 488 school statewide met all the AYP targets while 283 schools did not meet AYP targets. A few schools have yet to complete their reports.

Regions with the highest proportion of schools making the AYP list are – in order of performance – Ahtna, Aleut, Koniag, Sealaska, Chugach, and Bristol Bay. In all of these regions at least one-half of all schools made the AYP list.

Regions with the lowest proportion of schools making the AYP list – in order of performance – are Calista, Arctic Slope, NANA, Bering Straits, Doyon, and Cook Inlet.

## Dropout Rates

A dropout is defined by Alaska Department of Education and Early Development as a student who was enrolled in the school at some time during the school year and left the school at some time during that same school year. School year is defined as the 12-month period beginning with July 1 and ending June 30. In this case, the school year is the 2001-2002 school year (the most recent year of complete data available). Reporting, calculating, and interpreting dropout rates are subject to error and should be viewed with some caution when reported at the regional and school

district level. GED students, for instance are counted as dropouts because it is not a regular diploma by definition provided by the National Center for Education Statistics, part of the U.S. Department of Education. Students who miss an excessive number of days from classes may be counted as dropouts if the school makes the judgment that the number of days missed has affected the student's ability to finish assignments for that school year.

The statewide dropout rate, a combined rate for all students enrolled in 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades for the 2001-2002 school year, was 5.6 percent. There were 61,336 students enrolled in grades 7 through 12 and 3,424 of them dropped out. Alaska Natives have a higher dropout rate than all other students as a group: 8.8 percent compared to 4.7 percent. There were 13,402 Alaska Native students enrolled in grades 7 through 12 and 1,178 of them dropped out. For all other ethnicities, there were 47,934 students enrolled in grades 7 through 12 and 2,246 of them dropped out.

Alaska Natives comprise 22 percent of the enrollment in grades 7 through 12, yet represent 25.6 percent of the students who drop out of school during this time. Dropout rates are highest in the Calista, Ahtna, Cook Inlet, and Doyon regions and lowest in the Aleut, Bristol Bay, Chugach, and Koniag regions.

## Attendance Rates

The statewide average attendance rate for all students was 92.9 percent for the school year 2001-2002. Koniag, Doyon, Ahtna, and Chugach region schools had the highest attendance rate at 93.5 percent and above. NANA, Arctic Slope, Bering Straits, and Calista had the lowest rates – between 87.6 and 90.6 percent.

DEED measures Alaska attendance rates by taking the sum of all days present for all students in a school for the year and dividing this by the sum of all days present and all days absent for all students in a school for the year. This allows the school to account for enrollments and dropouts that occur during the school year. Attendance rate information was only collected at the school level up until the 2002-2003 school year. The information is not available by ethnicity and is not yet available for the 2002-2003 school year.

## Graduation Rates

The graduation rate information for the school year 2002-2003 is not yet available. In the school year 2001-2002, Alaska Native students graduated at a slightly lower rate (81.0 percent) than all other students, who graduated at a rate of 84.6 percent. Just this year, the DEED went to a cohort method where they will have to incorporate four years of information. This may be a problem when data is finally released because historical information does not include all subgroups.

The current method used by DEED for calculating graduation rates results in some statistical difficulties when rates are expressed by region and school. Readers are cautioned that the results may not match what is commonly perceived as graduation rates. With this caution, the past method of calculating graduation rates (until 2002-2003) was to divide the number of graduates (regular diploma recipients) by the number of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students that were enrolled on the last day of school. Students

receiving Certificates of Attendance are not counted as graduates but are counted in the denominator if they were enrolled on the last day.

## Special Education Students

For the 2002-2003 school year, there were 18,129 students with disabilities enrolled statewide. Thirty percent (5,433) of students with disabilities are Alaska Native, according to the Department of Education and Early Development. Statewide, 13.5 percent of all students are considered as having disabilities: 17.0 percent of Alaska Native students and 9.5 percent of all non-Native students.

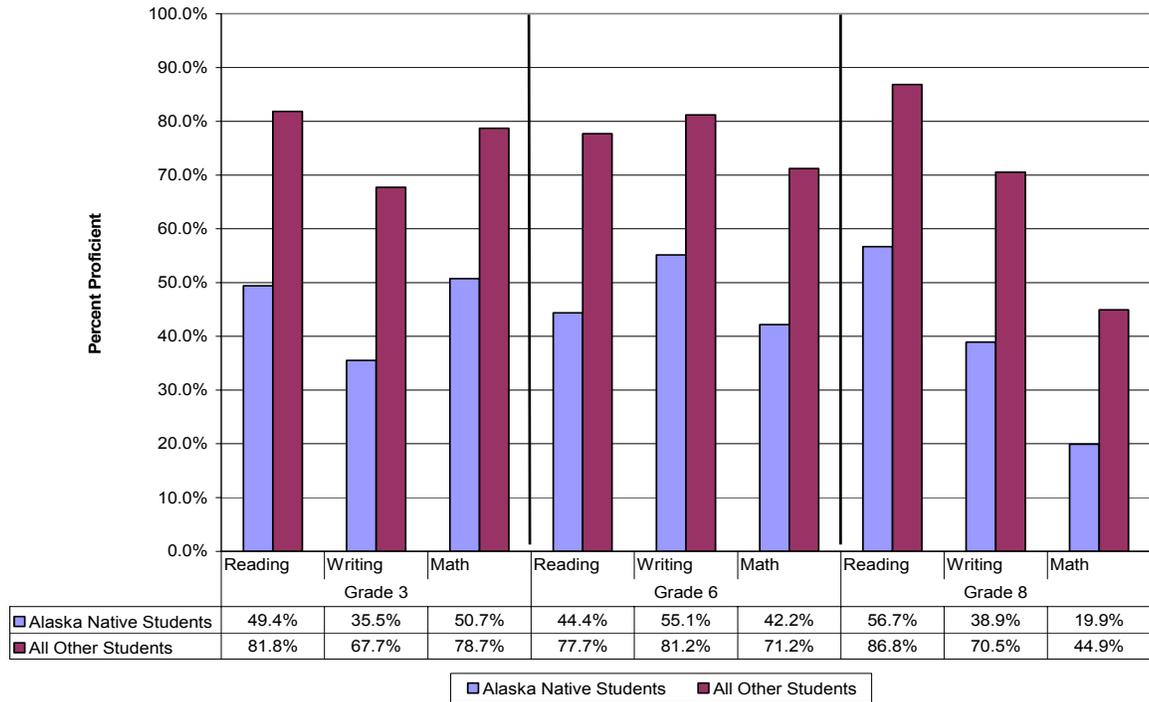
Regions with the highest percentages of students classified with a disability were Ahtna, Koniag, Cook Inlet, Bristol Bay, and Chugach with rates of 14.3 to 17.1 percent. Regions with the lowest percentages of students classified with disabilities were NANA, Arctic Slope, Doyon, Calista, and Aleut with percentages from 10.2 to 12.8 percent of all enrolled students.

## Benchmarks

The Alaska Benchmark Examinations measure whether students are achieving statewide academic standards in reading, writing, and math. Benchmark assessments results are not published when less than five students are tested at a grade level or two or fewer students are reported in an individual cell. (An example of an individual cell is the grade 3 students taking the reading exam.) Percentages reported are based on the total number of students tested, not the number of students enrolled in the grade. See the Appendix for a complete list of districts with reportable subjects by grade and the total number of students tested.

For the school year of 2002-2003, Alaska set a starting point of 64.03 percent of students who must show proficiency in the language arts: reading and writing. The state is combining students' scores on reading and writing tests to create one language arts score. The math target is 54.86 percent of students who must show proficiency. Statewide, significantly lower percentages of Alaska Native students were proficient in each of the three subjects and at each of the three grade levels when compared to all other students.

## Statewide School Benchmark Results 2002-2003 School Year



Source State of Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

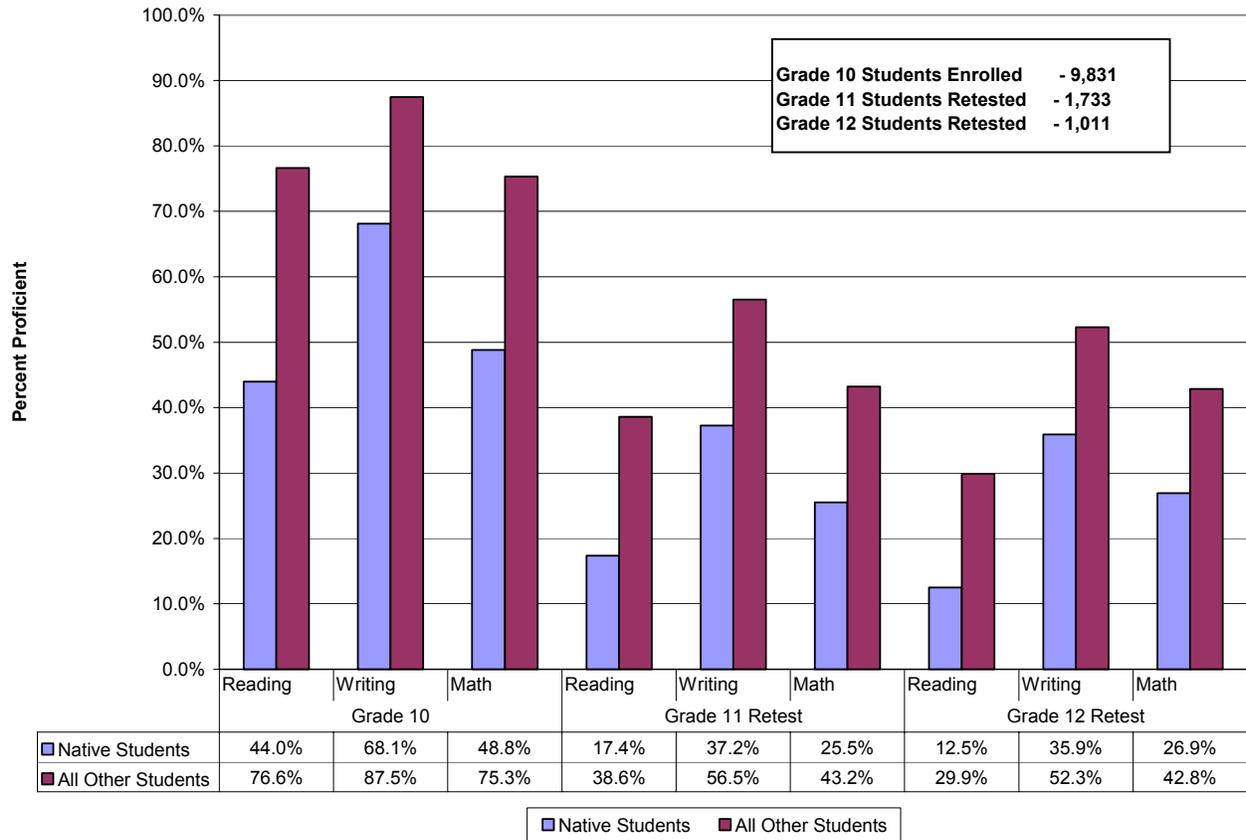
## High School Graduation Qualifying Exam

Students take the Alaska Benchmark Examinations in three different grades during their public school careers. The Benchmark Examinations are designed to tell parents and educators if their children are making sufficient progress toward passing the high school exam, which also tests students in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Students are required to pass the Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Examination in order to receive a high school diploma. Students can begin taking the exam in their sophomore year and are eligible to retake the exams as juniors and seniors for unpassed portions of the exam. Students are offered retests in both the spring and fall of their junior and senior years. Those who do not pass the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination will be denied a diploma and will receive instead a certificate of attendance.

Statewide, significantly lower percentages of Alaska Native students were proficient in each of the three subjects and at each of the grade levels when compared to all other students.

## Statewide High School Qualifying Exam Proficiency Results 2002-2003 School Year



Source: State of Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.