

McDowell Group produced this profile largely by compiling data from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. Special data runs from the Department were requested. These data were then compiled, analyzed, and formatted to produce tables and graphics. Population estimates and GED attainment data were provided by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Education attainment is based on 1990 and 2000 Census data provided by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Data Limitations

There are several limitations in producing and interpreting these educational indicators.

Releasable Data

Due to confidentiality issues, some population data are not available. McDowell Group obtained U.S. Census Bureau information from Census 2000 for the demographics portion of this report. The Census Bureau sample survey files were administered to about one in six households throughout the U.S. In small population regions, the Census Bureau attempted to reach half of the population. The data contained in these files are from the long form and contain information down to the community or Census designated place, as well as ethnicity for income, housing, and education levels. From these files, the McDowell Group selected population, age, and gender information for Alaska residents who reported ethnicity of Alaska Native, alone or in combination with some other race. Since these are sample files, the data are not always complete. In addition, for communities or Census designated places with less than 50 individuals, the Census Bureau does not publicly release some information.

Geographic Boundaries

ANCSA Regional Corporation boundaries and school district boundaries do not follow the same geographic lines. For instance, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough crosses boundaries with three different Regional Corporations: Cook Inlet Region, Doyon, and Ahtna. In addition, it should not be assumed that Native students are necessarily shareholders in the Regional Corporation where their school is located.

To sort out the boundary and shareholder location issues, the following methodology was used to determine Regional Corporation educational indicators for purposes of this study:

- If a school district boundary included more than one Regional Corporation geographic area, the educational indicators were included with the Regional Corporation that had the greater number of Alaska Native residents. Adjustments are as follows:
 - o Alaska Gateway Schools data is included with Doyon Ltd., even though part of the school district is included in Ahtna Regional Corporation land.
 - o Iditarod Schools data is included with Doyon, even though part of the school district is included in Calista Corporation land.
 - o Kenai Peninsula Borough Schools data is included with Cook Inlet Region Inc., even though part of the school district is included in Chugach Alaska Corporation land.
 - o Tanana Schools data is included with Doyon, even though part of the school district is included in Cook Inlet Region land.
 - o Denali Borough Schools data is included with Ahtna Corporation, even though part of the school district is included in Doyon land.
 - o Lake and Peninsula Borough Schools data are included with Bristol Bay Native Corporation, even though part of the school district is included in Koniag Corporation land.
- School District data are presented at the Regional Corporation geographic area level. Individuals living or attending school in geographic regions outside of their home Regional Corporations are included in the Regional Corporation data where they were recorded as students. These data are not an assessment of the Regional Corporation shareholders but an assessment of the Native population within a particular geographic area.
- Mt. Edgecumbe High School in Sitka was not included in the Sealaska geographic region but listed separately in this report.
- Alyeska Central School was not included in the Sealaska geographic region but listed separately in this report.

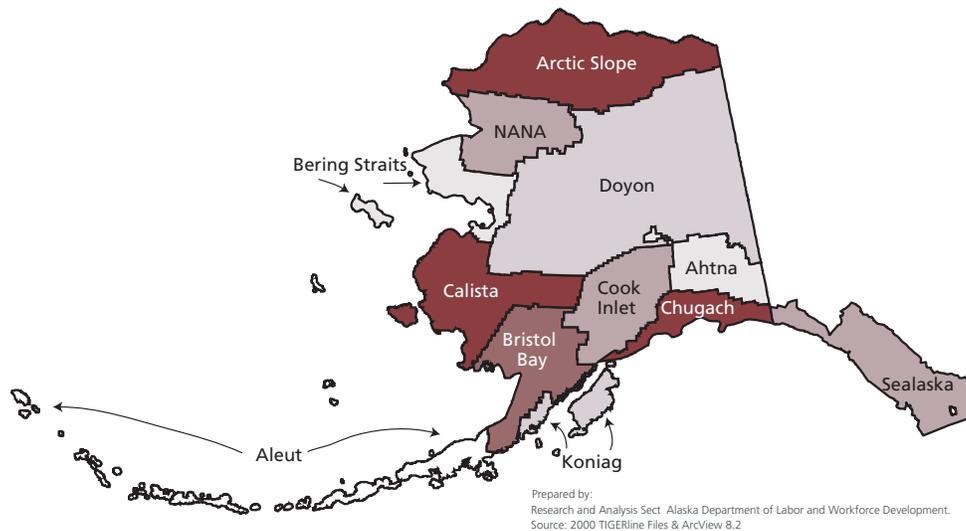
Table 1 contains a list of school districts included in each Alaska Native region.

Table 1
School Districts by Alaska Native Region

Alaska Native Region	School District(s) Included
<i>Ahtna</i>	Copper River Schools
	Denali Borough Schools
<i>Aleut</i>	Aleutian Region Schools
	Aleutians East Borough Schools
	Pribilof Schools
	Unalaska City Schools
<i>Arctic Slope</i>	North Slope Borough Schools
<i>Bering Straits</i>	Bering Strait Schools
	Nome City Schools
<i>Bristol Bay</i>	Bristol Bay Borough Schools
	Dillingham City Schools
	Lake & Peninsula Borough Schools
	Southwest Region Schools
<i>Calista</i>	Kashunamiut Schools
	Kuspuk School District
	Lower Kuskokwim Schools
	Lower Yukon Schools
	Saint Mary's Schools
	Yupit Schools
<i>Chugach</i>	Chugach Schools
	Cordova City Schools
	Valdez City Schools
<i>Cook Inlet</i>	Anchorage Schools
	Kenai Peninsula Borough Schools
	Mat-Su Borough Schools
<i>Doyon</i>	Alaska Gateway Schools
	Delta/Greely Schools
	Fairbanks North Star Borough Schools
	Galena City Schools
	Iditarod Area Schools
	Nenana City Schools
	Tanana Schools
	Yukon Flats Schools
	Yukon/Koyukuk Schools
<i>Koniag</i>	Kodiak Island Borough Schools
<i>NANA</i>	Northwest Arctic Borough Schools
<i>Sealaska</i>	Annette Island Schools
	Chatham Schools
	Craig City Schools
	Haines Borough Schools
	Hoonah City Schools
	Hydaburg City Schools
	Juneau Borough Schools
	Kake City Schools
	Ketchikan Gateway Borough Schools
	Klawock City Schools
	Pelican City Schools
	Petersburg City Schools
	Sitka Borough Schools
	Skagway City Schools
	Southeast Island Schools
	Wrangell Public Schools
<i>Mt. Edgecumbe High School</i>	
<i>Alyeska Central School</i>	

The figure below is a map of Alaska showing the Native Regional Corporation geographic boundaries.

Figure 1
Map of Alaska Native Regions



Information Source and Definition of Indicators

Population

Population data used in this report are based on US Census 2000 data for the ethnicity, age, and gender evaluation. Population estimates for 2003 were obtained from the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. 2003 population estimates are calculated only for the aggregate; sub-group detail is not available.

School Inventory

The number of public schools is provided by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. Private schools are not required to report to the State. Therefore, private school inventory is provided voluntarily by the individual schools and does not represent a full count of all private schools in Alaska. Data for the 2003-2004 school year were compared to 2002-2003 school year data.

School Enrollment

Public school enrollment displayed in this report is the count of students enrolled on October 1, 2003 for the 2003-2004 school year. This form of measurement is used for official enrollment by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. Therefore, if students leave a school after October 1, 2003, the enrollment figure for that school year would not reflect their departure. Data for the 2003-2004 school year were compared to 2002-2003 school year data.

“Student with Disabilities” Enrollment

“Student with Disabilities” is defined in AS 14.30.350 and includes all children who fall under or are eligible for an individualized education program in AS 14.30.278. Data from the 2003-2004 school year were compared to 2002-2003 school year data.

Average Daily Attendance Rates

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development measures Alaska attendance rates by taking the total daily attendance during the regular school year and dividing this by the total daily membership for the school year. The total daily attendance is the sum of the days present for all students when school is in session during the school year; the total daily membership is the sum of the days present and absent for all students when school is in session during the school year (in-service days are not included.) A student is considered present if physically present at the school or engaged in a school-sanctioned activity (such as a school basketball tournament), even if the activity is away from the school.

Data from the 2003-2004 school year were compared to 2002-2003 and 2001-2002 school year data. The information is not available by ethnicity.

Educators

Information on superintendents, principals, and teachers for the 2003-2004 school year was provided by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. The number of teachers includes the following job classifications: teacher, visiting teacher, head teacher, and remedial specialist. It also includes part-time, full-time and substitute teachers. Educator information included gender, salaries, and ethnicities. Data from the 2003-2004 school year were compared to 2002-2003 school year data.

Student/Teacher Ratios

Student/teacher ratios were calculated using enrollment numbers on October 1, 2003, subtracting correspondence and cyber school student enrollment, and then dividing this number by the number of full-time equivalent educators for each region. Student/teacher ratios may be used by districts in making staffing and funding allocations.

These rates are not to be confused with classroom size. Statistics on classroom size are not maintained by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

Educator Turnover

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development provided educator turnover data and indicated where changes in educator job classifications and school sites occurred. Educator turnover occurs when a superintendent, principal or teacher changes his or her job classification (for instance, a teacher becomes a principal) and/or leaves the school where he or she worked from the 2002-2003 school year to the 2003-2004 school year. For instance, if a principal leaves an elementary school in Fairbanks and goes to another elementary school in Fairbanks, this would be considered a turnover. Additionally, using this definition, a new position in the 2003-2004 school year would also be considered a turnover. The category of “teacher” includes those people employed under the job classifications of teacher, head teacher, visiting teacher, or remedial specialist.

Further analysis was conducted for combined turnover of superintendents and principals, and for teacher turnover.

Education Attainment

The University of Minnesota created a database, using Census 1990 and 2000 data samples of the American population over 13 federal censuses, called the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS). These data are obtained from responses to the Census question of “What is the highest degree or level of school this person has completed?” for persons completing the Census long form. The sample sizes for the data set are small for Alaska Natives.

Adequate Yearly Progress

The test scores used for determining Adequate Yearly Progress (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 6. 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. See Appendix A for a complete list of sanctions.

There are 31 ways to measure whether a school is making Adequate Yearly Progress. Students at the school as a whole level and within nine subgroups must participate in assessments. A student participates once he or she has a valid test score on the reading, writing, or mathematics test (10 reasons). The school as a whole and each of the nine subgroups must be proficient on the writing/reading tests (10 reasons). The school as a whole and each of the nine subgroups must be proficient on the

mathematics test (10 reasons). The final measure of AYP is graduation rates for schools that go to the 12th grade. For those schools not offering 12th grade, attendance rates are measured.

For a school, a district, or the state public school system to satisfy the requirements for participation in assessments, at least 95 percent of the students (and 95 percent of the students in each subgroup category of more than 20 students, such as economically disadvantaged or students with disabilities) who were enrolled on the first day of testing in grades 3-10 must participate in a state assessment in that year. However, if a school has 40 or fewer students, or a subgroup category has more than 20 but no more than 40 students enrolled in grades 3-10, the requirements for participation are satisfied if no more than two students from that school or subgroup do not participate in a state assessment. A student participates in a state assessment if the student receives a valid test score on one of the required state assessments. Additionally, students that are enrolled for the Full Academic Year are included for performance and within the subgroups only if they meet the minimum “n” count, which is 20, or 40 for students with disabilities or limited English proficiency.

“Safe harbor” is another way for a school to show it is making progress toward the statewide AYP goals. In general, safe harbor means a school can still make AYP if it reduces the percent of students who score below proficient on exams by 10 percent from the previous year. For example, if a school is 70 percent not proficient, it would need to make a 7 percent improvement to be designated safe harbor. If the school does not exceed 10 percent, the Department of Education and Early Development runs a 75 percent confidence interval to see if enough improvement was made to reach safe harbor. There are other conditions needed to achieve the safe harbor provision: if a group reaches safe harbor according to test scores, it must also meet or exceed the “Other” Indicator as a subgroup. If a group does not meet the 95 percent participation rate, it can average the past two years to see if it achieves over 95 percent.

Because of the safe harbor provision and Department of Education and Early Development changes made in the methods for calculating AYP assessment between the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 school years, the increase in the number of schools meeting AYP may not necessarily be the result of improved school performance, but rather may be a reflection of a statistical adjustment.

Data from the 2003-2004 school year for AYP results were compared to 2002-2003 school year data.

Benchmark Examinations

Students take the Alaska Benchmark Examinations in three different grades: Grade 3, 6, and 8. The Alaska Benchmark Examinations measure whether students are achieving statewide academic standards in reading, writing, and math. Benchmark assessment results are not published when fewer 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 on the number of students enrolled in the grade.

For the school year of 2003-2004, Alaska set a target point of 64.03 percent of students showing proficiency in the language arts: reading and writing. Proficiency levels for grade and subject are established by the Department of Education and Early Development through a state-wide committee evaluation process. 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 showing proficiency. For the 2004-2005 school year, the measure for language arts proficiency will increase to 70.03 percent; and the measure for math proficiency will increase to 62.38 percent.

Data from the 2003-2004 school year benchmark examinations were compared to 2002-2003 school year data. The two years may not be directly comparable, given that some data were not made available during the 2002-2003 school year because one or more individual students may have been identified. Other variables may include opening and closing of schools within regions and varying student populations for Grades 3, 6, and 8.

See Appendix B for more information on benchmark performance standards.

High School Graduation Qualifying Examinations

Students are required to pass the Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Examination in order to receive high school diplomas. Students can begin taking the exam in their sophomore year and are eligible to retake the exam as juniors and seniors for un-passed portions (4 AAC 06.755). 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 diplomas and will receive instead Certificates of Achievement. As stated in 4 AAC 06.771, if these students would like diplomas instead of their Certificates of Achievement, they can continue to take the High School Graduation Qualifying Examinations after finishing school. There is no age limitation or limit to the number of times they can take the tests.

Data on High School Graduation Qualifying Examinations for the year 2003-2004 were provided by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. These data were compared to the 2002-2003 school year.

High School Graduation Rates

A graduate is defined as a student who has received a regular diploma from a state- or district-approved education program, as evidenced by receipt of a secondary school diploma from school authorities. Any student who receives a diploma under a waiver from the competency examination required in AS 14.03.075 (a), as specified by the state board, is considered to be a graduate. This does not include an individual who receives a Certificate of Achievement.

The No Child Left Behind Act requires the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development to adopt a cohort method for determining high school graduation rates. For those schools that serve 12th grade students, the Adequate Yearly Progress evaluation includes a graduation rate requirement of 55.58 percent.

Beginning in the 2002-2003 school year, the Department switched to a cohort method rather than a single-year event, as used in the past, to calculate graduation rates. Prior to the 2002-2003 school year, the graduation rate was calculated by dividing the number of graduates by the enrollment in grade 12 on the last day of school. This indicator was self-reported by school districts because the Department did not collect enrollment data on the last day of school for verification.

The new cohort method measures the relative percent of students that graduate from high school in four years. For the 2003-2004 school year graduation rate indicator, the cohort includes all students starting high school (Grade 9) in the 2000-2001 school year through their scheduled graduation four years later in the 2003-2004 school year.

The graduation rate formula used by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development is:

$$\frac{\text{Number of Graduates (2003-2004)}}{\text{Number of Graduates (2003-2004)} + \text{Number of Continuing 12th Grade Students (2003-2004)} + \text{Number of 12th Grade Drop-outs (2003-2004)} + \text{Number of 11th Grade Drop-outs (2002-2003)} + \text{Number of 10th Grade Drop-outs (2001-2002)} + \text{Number of 9th Grade Drop-outs (2000-2001)}}$$

Continuing 12th Grade students include those students not graduating in their 12th year but who remain enrolled in school to complete course work toward their graduations in the following year(s).

It is important to note that there are some limitations with this new methodology. For instance, a student who graduates in five years rather than four years would be counted in the next cohort of students. A student who graduates in three years instead of four would be counted in the prior cohort. Additionally, in the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 school years, student-level information was submitted with anonymous information that could not be linked directly to specific students. Therefore, the Department had no way to check for duplication or to see that the ethnic codes are valid for those two school years.

The graduation rate data are most reliable at the district and school levels. The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development verifies graduation rates with schools and school districts for Adequate Yearly Progress purposes, but this information is not verified to the level of reporting by ethnicity. The Department also verifies the student-level data; then the school district agrees with the calculation during the review process. Student-level data are reviewed and verified, by student, for those schools making Adequate Yearly Progress through Safe Harbor.

Data on high school graduation rates for the year 2003-2004 were provided by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. No comparisons were made to previous graduation rates because of the shift to the cohort methodology.

Drop-out Rates

A drop-out is defined by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development as a student who was enrolled in the district at some time during the school year and whose enrollment terminated. This does not include an individual who: graduated from high school or completed a state- or district-approved education program, as evidenced by receipt of formal recognition from school authorities; transferred to another public school, private school or state- or district-approved education program; is temporarily absent due to suspension; is absent due to illness or medical conditions; or has died.

The Alaska Department of Education uses the OASIS database system to identify students who have re-enrolled in another school district within the state. This system has been used since 1995. Students transferring within the state system are not counted as drop-outs.

Drop-out rates do not directly correspond to high school graduation rates because graduation rates use a cohort method of calculation (over the past four years), rather than a single-year event, and do not include 7th and 8th grades. Reporting, calculating, and interpreting drop-out rates are subject to error and should be viewed with some caution, when reported at the regional and school district levels.

Students are considered drop-outs if they leave school, whether or not they pursue GEDs. Because school districts do not issue GEDs, there is no way for the districts to verify if a student has obtained a GED. The GED program is currently administered by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. If the districts were allowed to issue GEDs, the National Center for Education Statistics, part of the U.S. Department of Education, would allow GED recipients to be counted as high school graduates if they left regular school to enroll in, and were issued, GEDs in a district-run GED program.

A district may issue an administrative drop for a student who has a minimum of ten unexcused consecutive absences. This student is considered a drop-out in this situation unless he or she re-enrolls in another public or private school.

Data on drop-outs for the year 2003-2004 were provided by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. These data were compared to the 2001-2002 school year. At the time of publication, 2002-2003 data broken out by ethnicity were not available from the Department.

GED Diploma Attainment

General Educational Development (GED) Diploma data for September 1, 2003-August 31, 2004 were provided by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. This information included gender, age group, and ethnicity of the GED test takers and recipients, as well as the location where the test was administered.

In addition to these methodological definitions, a glossary of terms used throughout this report can be found in the forward section of this report.