



UNIVERSITY of ALASKA

Many Traditions One Alaska

Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools

2014 Update

Introduction

AS 14.40.190(b) stipulates that the University of Alaska Board of Regents present to the Alaska State Legislature a report that “describes the efforts of the university to attract, train, and retain qualified public school teachers,” including “an outline of the university's current and future plans to close the gap between known teacher employment vacancies in the state and the number of state residents who complete teacher training.” This report is required on a biennial basis, no later than day 30 of the regular session. This brief is an interim report, to keep the legislature apprised of the latest data on teacher supply and demand and the University of Alaska's current efforts to meet the teaching workforce needs of Alaska's schools.

Data on UA Teacher Education Graduates and Placement

The three tables below update key information from the 2013 report: how many new teachers graduate from the University of Alaska system each year; how many graduate with counseling, professional development and administrative certifications each year; and how many graduate from special education programs.

Table 1 shows the number of graduates from UA education programs of various types. The number of initial teacher preparation graduates fluctuates, but showed a small upward trend of 1.8% per year from 2006 to 2013. In contrast, the number of newly certified principals increased at just under 9% per year, and the number of those receiving other professional education degrees and certificates increased at over 13% per year over the same time period.

Table 1. University of Alaska Education Program Graduates, 2005-06 to 2012-13								
	AY06	AY07	AY08	AY09	AY10	AY11	AY12	AY13
Teachers	180	236	174	234	200	231	245	210
Counselors	29	28	30	30	32	19	34	29
Principals	42	62	61	39	51	90	80	75
Other	89	109	124	110	135	143	168	183
Total*	340	435	389	413	418	483	527	497

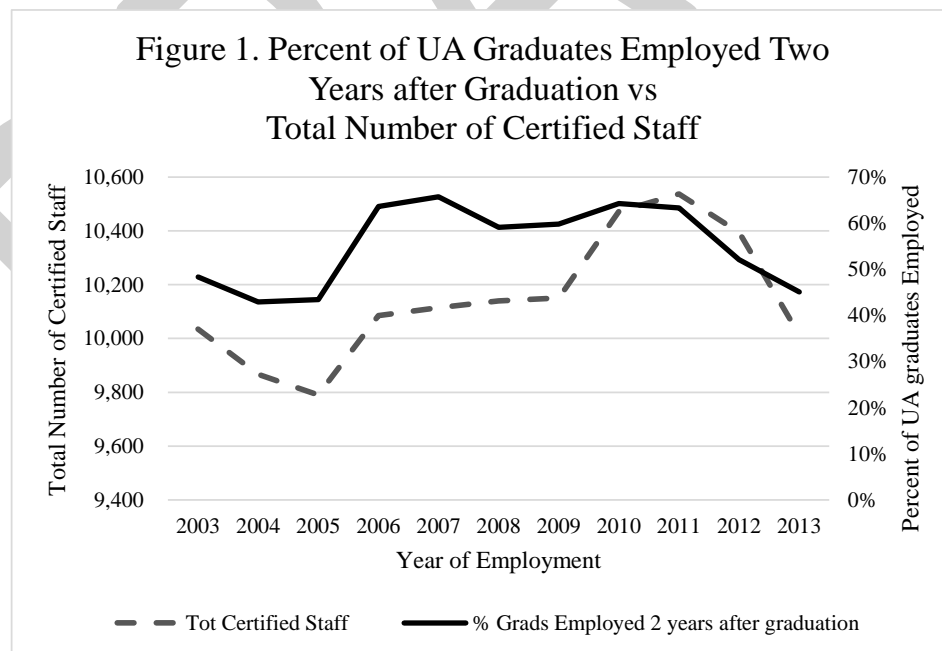
*Totals include double counting of some graduates with multiple degrees or certificates in the same year

Some of the growth in ‘Other’ professional degrees and certificates is driven by the increase in special education endorsements. As Table 2 (next page) shows, most of these were earned by teachers adding new endorsements to their licenses, but a steadily growing number were new teachers entering the profession as special education teachers. With the addition of new special education programs at UAS and UAF, and expansion of programs at UAA, the total number of new special education teachers more than tripled from 2006 to 2013.

Table 2. University of Alaska Special Education Program Graduates, 2005-06 to 2012-13								
	AY06	AY07	AY08	AY09	AY10	AY11	AY12	AY13
Initial certificate	0	4	2	5	7	13	14	22
Endorsement	30	33	37	54	53	59	70	77
Special Ed Total	30	37	39	59	60	72	84	99

Table 3 looks at placement, two years later, of new teachers graduating from the University of Alaska. We looked at how many of the new teachers who graduated each year were working in Alaska public schools two years later (48 % of 2001 graduates were working in Alaska public schools in 2003, and so on). We were able to track about 85 % of the graduates for each year. The numbers range broadly, from 43 % to 66 %. In looking for why this might be, we found that the total number of certified staff (e.g., teachers, administrators, librarians, and counselors) employed in Alaska schools has changed in a similar pattern (Figure 1). Statistically, about two-thirds of the variation in the percentage of graduates employed in schools can be explained by the changing total certified staff levels.

Table 3. Percent University of Alaska Initial Education Program Graduates working in Alaska Public Schools Two Years after Graduation											
Yr Graduated	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Yr Employed	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
% in AK Schools	48%	43%	43%	64%	66%	59%	60%	64%	63%	52%	45%



University of Alaska initiatives to meet the need for more teachers in rural Alaska

In the last eight years, the University of Alaska has graduated 139 new Alaska Native teachers (see Table 4). During the same period there has been a steady increase in the other category which includes principals, counselors, master teachers and additional endorsements. In recognition of the challenges in preparing more indigenous and rural educators, all of the University of Alaska universities have created new initiatives aimed at graduating more rural and indigenous teachers and providing advanced professional development in critical areas for indigenous teachers already in Alaska's schools.

Table 4: Alaska Native Education Program Graduates by Year									
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Initial Teacher Cert	18	16	13	23	17	19	20	13	139
Other	9	11	7	15	17	15	21	29	111
Total	27	27	20	36	34	34	41	42	236

The following are highlights of a few of these efforts.

The University of Alaska Anchorage College of Education

The UAA College of Education is creating the Center for Alaska Native Education and Pedagogy. This center aims to graduate more Alaska Native teachers for rural schools, develop Native language and ANCSA curriculum, and create a teacher certification/endorsement in the Alaska Native languages. The Center's web site will serve as a repository of curriculum relevant to Alaska Native education.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks School of Education

The UAF School of Education (SoE) has developed an Elementary Education Partnership with the Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD). There are approximately 53 Yup'ik or Cup'iq kindergarten, first or second grade associate teachers (aka para-professionals) who do not have a bachelor's degree or teaching certificate. The LKSD School Board now requires all associate teachers to complete a minimum of nine credits per year that apply to the requirements for licensure as an elementary teacher. The SoE has developed a system to support individualized academic advising for each of them, and to guide decisions on course offerings to make sure all of the students are accommodated.

The University of Alaska Southeast School of Education

The Village Teacher Grant is a four-year pilot project of the UAS School of Education. It provides advanced education to Alaska Native educators around Reading and Mathematics, which are high needs areas for rural Alaska Native students. Students who are accepted into the program receive funding that covers tuition, fees and books associated with their M.Ed. program. Village Teacher students receive individualized support and mentoring from project staff and Native organizations, and continuing support upon graduation. More information on this project is available at: <http://www.uas.alaska.edu/education/start.html>

UAA, UAF and UAS Collaborative Endeavors

The UAA, UAF and UAS college and schools of education are collaborating on several initiatives to strengthen in-state teacher preparation. One of the most significant efforts is the development of a place-based, distance-delivered teacher education program for para-

professional educators in rural Alaska. The three universities will offer para-professionals across the state a cohort model program with a common set of requirements. The degree offerings will be differentiated by university; for example, students interested in an early childhood degree will seek a degree from UAA, and those wanting a secondary math degree will enroll at UAF, while those seeking a BA in special education will go through UAS. The three institutions will work with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development to identify para-professionals who might be interested in this opportunity, and will reach out directly to those educators.

The Future Educators of Alaska (FEA) is a collaborative effort involving the University of Alaska, the Department of Education and Early Development (EED), and Alaska public schools. In the spring of 2011 representatives from the Schools and College of Education, UA Alaska Teacher Placement, and Alaska public schools met to discuss dual credit options for high school students interested in a teaching career. This initial meeting resulted in the design of a 4 module Introduction to Education course that was piloted during the 2012/13 school year. This course is offered this year through the Alaska Learning Network (now housed at the UAS School of Education) with an incentive allowing students who complete the course with a C or better to keep the tablet pc given them for use during the course. Seventy-four high school juniors and seniors from 10 rural districts are working with teachers on-site and a UA adjunct online in a year-long virtual environment that requires them to explore issues in education, tutor younger students and design instructional experiences. Initial reports indicate that many of these students are planning on a career in education and several have already applied for and been accepted into UA for the 2014 spring semester.