

Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force

Recommendation Proposed by Gary Wilken

August 1-2, 2007

Other Issues – Teacher Preparation

Issue Summary: “The State of Alaska experiences about 1,100 teaching vacancies each year and in-state teacher training programs produce only about 220 graduates per year.” (Alaska Teacher Placement, University of Alaska, *Finding and Keeping Teachers in Alaska – 2006 Supply and Demand Fact Sheet*)

Recommendation: The Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force supports a formal legislative requirement that the University of Alaska prepare and submit an annual report, entitled *Alaska’s University for Alaska’s Schools*, to the Alaska State Legislature that highlights the efforts of the university to attract, train, and retain qualified public education teachers.

The annual report shall outline the University of Alaska’s past, current, and future plans to close the gap between known teacher vacancies and the number of in-state trained Alaskans. In addition, the report shall include the university’s short-term plan as well as a five year long-term strategy, with accompanied budgets. The report shall be approved by the University of Alaska Board of Regents and presented by the Board of Regents to the legislature at a joint meeting of the House and Senate Health, Education, and Social Services Committees and the House and Senate Finance Committees.

Discussion: At the present time the number of teacher vacancies far out pace the number of Alaskans trained to be public school teachers. But our state-wide university and other training institutions must continue to whittle away at this unfortunate gap.

The Alaska State Legislature and the University of Alaska need to work in partnership to ensure our 53 school districts have the best teachers possible, preferably Alaska trained teachers. An annual report offered by the University will be the beginning of a meaningful dialogue between these two institutions.

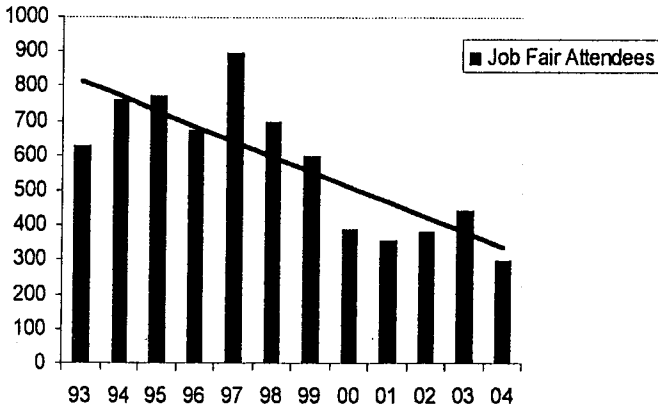


Back-up for UA Teacher Preparation Report

Finding and Keeping Teachers in Alaska

2006 Supply and Demand Fact Sheet from Alaska Teacher Placement

Declining Applicants, 1993 to 2004

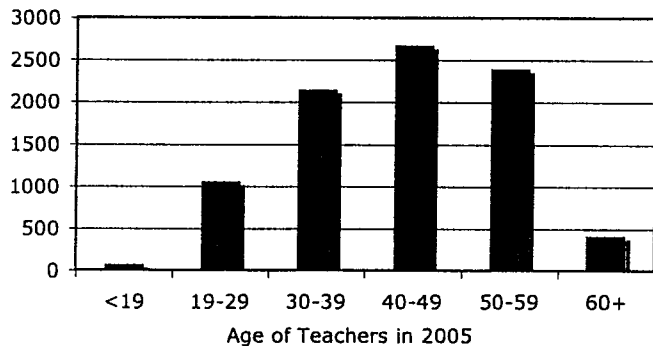


The following information, unless otherwise cited, is from the preliminary Alaska Teacher Supply and Demand 2005 Update, prepared by the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of Alaska, Anchorage.

- Over the past eight years Alaska Teacher Placement (ATP) has seen a steady and dramatic decline in the number of qualified educators attending the Alaska Educator Job Fair.
- Once Alaska attracted over 900 educators to apply for jobs at the Alaska Educator Job Fair, now less than 300 are expected to attend.

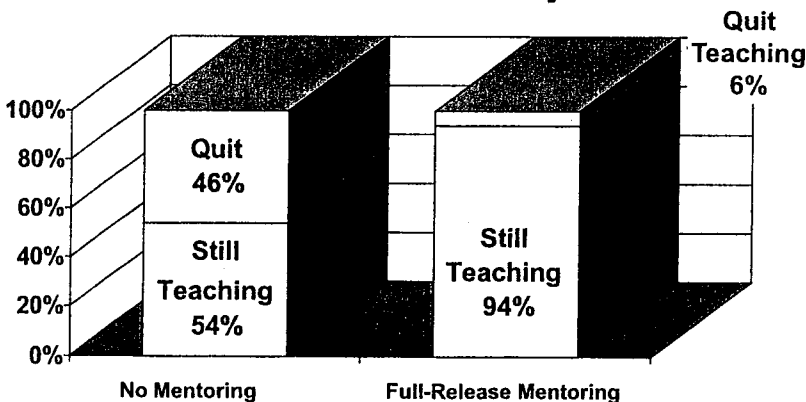
- The supply of teachers is declining, and the number of teachers that are of retirement ages is increasing.
- New teacher retirement plans are creating a disincentive for experienced teachers from other states to move to Alaska.
- Alaska experiences about 1,100 teaching vacancies each year, and in-state teacher training programs producing only about 220 graduates per year.

The Aging Teaching Force, 2005



Mentoring Keeps New Teachers Teaching

Teacher Turnover after 5 years



Strong & St. John, A Study of the Effects of a Full-Release Mentoring Program on Long-Term Teacher Commitment, 2002.

- National research has shown that a major factor driving teacher shortages is turnover. Almost half of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years.
- As the chart at the left shows, new teachers who receive mentoring through a structured, full release model (like that of the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project) keep teaching.
- Business experts estimate that every "lost" employee costs an organization from 1/2 to 2-1/2 times the employees annual salary. This figure does not include the educational costs for students.
- Mentoring is not only a way to keep teachers teaching, but it is also a valuable recruitment tool that attracts the best quality teachers to Alaska.