

State of Alaska FY2002 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Education and Early Development
Executive Administration
Budget Request Unit

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BRU Mission

To support the development of lifelong learners.

BRU Services Provided

This BRU provides leadership and support to divisions and programs within the Department of Education & Early Development.

BRU Goals and Strategies

1. To have culturally and developmentally appropriate high quality early care and education programs that improve the well being of young children statewide in which children, families, and communities are active partners.
 - Strengthen family connections between the program and home.
 - Prepare parents to recognize the opportunities and responsibilities they have for the care and learning of their children.
 - Increase community involvement and promote cooperative services for young children and their families.
 - Provide professional development to improve the knowledge and skills of providers of early care and education programs by requiring that they be held to high standards.
 - Develop rigorous, standards-based licensing programs for early care and education providers.
 - Develop incentives for providers to become licensed.
2. To have clear, rigorous, credible standards and assessments.
 - Provide state standards for student performance in reading, writing, and mathematics.
 - Provide assistance to school districts in aligning curriculum to state standards.
 - Provide a developmental profile for each child entering kindergarten or first grade.
 - Provide standards-based assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics at grades 3, 6, and 8.
 - Provide norm-referenced testing in grades 4 and 8.
 - Provide the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination.
3. To have a credible system of academic and fiscal accountability for students, professionals, schools and districts.
 - Award Quality Schools Grants so schools and communities can determine local solutions to improve student learning such as summer school, individual tutoring, lower class size, special classes, and before and after school programs.
 - Develop school designations based on student performance and other measures.
 - Provide support to schools and assistance in developing school improvement plans.
 - Establish criteria for consistent allocation of instructional costs and uniform reporting of school district financial data.
4. To have highly qualified school professionals who have met rigorous and credible standards and assessments.
 - Provide rigorous educator standards by which school districts will evaluate professionals.
 - Develop and administer a standards-based licensure system for educators.
 - Provide professional development opportunities for standards-based instruction.
 - Encourage local school boards to adopt culturally responsive educator standards.
5. To have schools in which students, staff, families and communities are active partners in learning.
 - Promote research-based family involvement models and community orientations.
 - Promote and support school-based Family Involvement Centers.
 - Encourage and support business and school partnerships.
6. To have an adequate and secure source of funding for schools.

- Secure adequate funding to develop and maintain an accountable system of high quality public schools.
- Secure adequate funding to meet school districts school construction and major maintenance needs.
- Analyze differences in the costs of operating schools taking into consideration school size and location.
- Analyze and recommend better business practices to local school boards of education and superintendents.

Key BRU Issues for FY2001 – 2002

QUALITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE www.eed.state.ak.us/qschools/

The Quality Schools Initiative (QSI) is designed to increase the quality of public education. The QSI is based on high student academic standards and assessment, safe and respectful schools and communities, quality professional standards, and school excellence based on standards.

All Alaskan schools have adopted state-mandated academic standards in reading, writing, and mathematics. Schools will test each child early and often in these subjects throughout their school careers to make sure they are on target to meet the standards. Schools are required to test students at the 3rd, 6th, and 8th grades. If they are falling behind, schools will provide special help to children so they can catch up. The state assessment system also includes norm-referenced tests so we know how our students perform compared to national rankings. The final part of the comprehensive student assessment system is the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination. This assessment system will give the state and communities solid information to hold schools and communities accountable for the academic achievement of children. Each year, all schools will report certain information to their communities and state about their progress.

High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE)

Alaska's education reform movement is on the right track. We are raising academic standards, seeking new resources and demanding accountability. The single, largest issue for FY2002 is the timing of the high-stakes consequences of the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam for the students graduating in the spring of 2002.

With two administrations of the HSGQE, it is clear that the state will be denying diplomas to thousands of next year's seniors unless the exam's effective date is adjusted. More than 5,000 of next year's seniors, from every corner of Alaska, are not on track to get a diploma. Three-quarters of them have passed the reading portion of the exam, about half have passed writing but just one-third have passed math. Even with additional opportunities to take the exam, a large percentage of these students still won't pass all three sections by May 2002. Denying diplomas to this group of students is especially unfair because they haven't had the new sequence of benchmark testing and extra assistance to help them meet the new standards. Also, although significant progress has been made in aligning curriculum to state standards, some schools have only recently aligned what they're teaching with the standards being tested.

The State Board of Education and Early Development has recommended that the HSGQE be given and reported on transcripts but the effective date of the high stakes consequences of the exam be targeted for 2006. This will give us the time needed to be sure the standards reflect what Alaskans think is important, the test is a good measure and students are adequately prepared. The additional time will assure that all students, including those with learning disabilities and those in highly mobile families who move in and out of our schools, will have had a reasonable opportunity to learn what's tested.

Postponing the high stakes consequences of the exit exam while continuing to administer the test along with the benchmarks exams given in grades 3, 6 and 8 will give us the tools to determine if our students are learning the standards, if they need extra help, or, if they've already mastered the basics, to provide them additional challenges. The Governor will be introducing legislation this session to move the high stakes consequences of the exit exam until 2006 while still reporting the test results in the intervening years.

Quality Schools Grants

The Quality Schools Grant is part of the state's public school funding program to help students meet higher academic standards in reading, writing, and mathematics. Student achievement needs to be measured against rigorous standards in these areas at appropriate age levels. The Quality Schools Grants provide resources to schools and school districts to develop intervention plans and programs for students at risk of not meeting these standards. If a student is not making adequate progress, swift and intensive intervention is needed to get the student back on track.

Although the Governor requested a statutory increase of the Quality Schools Grant from \$16 to \$52 per adjusted Average Daily Membership in FY2001, the legislature only included one-time funding for what it called learning opportunity grants. Improvement in student performance requires a continuous commitment to providing the resources to ensure that all students meet high academic standards. The governor believes that this funding should be continued as a minimum in the FY2002 budget.

Increase Instructional Time

Another critical component of ensuring that all students meet high academic standards is to ensure that direct instruction is delivered by highly qualified, well trained education professionals and that students have more time on task. School districts must have the capacity to ensure that all students meet these standards. Participants at the Alaska Education Summit 2000 unanimously recommended that changes be made to the school year to provide more time for direct instruction and professional development and that schools should be given the resources to accomplish this.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

There is a nationwide shortage of education professionals that is making it increasingly difficult for Alaska school districts to attract and retain highly qualified teachers. Even with the most optimistic projections, Alaska's university system will only be able to supply a quarter of our teachers over the next five to ten years. Given that three-quarters of our teaching work force will need to come from outside of Alaska, we must be able to compete with other states who are offering a number of incentives to new teachers including signing bonuses and housing allowances.

The State Board of Education and Early Development is considering an incentive package that includes lowering fees for teacher certification and renewal, paying for national board certification, reciprocity with other states, assisting with mentorship programs for new educators, and teaching certificates suitable for framing and display in classrooms. In addition, the board is considering financial incentives including a loan forgiveness or a loan assumption program.

PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING PROGRAM

The governor's budget fully funds the FY2002 public school foundation program. Although the state aid required under the current school funding formula would decrease by \$10.5 million in FY2002 due to increases in required local effort and federal impact aid, this is not the time to reduce the state support of education. Schools need resources to help students meet higher academic standards in reading, writing, and mathematics and to be held accountable for their students performance. The governor's budget maintains the FY2001 level of funding that includes \$6.2 million in one-time grants approved by the legislature.

The governor has appointed an Education Funding Task Force that will make specific recommendations to him and the State Board of Education and Early Development by February 1, 2001. The task force will consider ideas stemming from the recent Education Summit and other forums that include allowing districts to increase student instruction time by extending the number of days in the school year and increasing the amount of the Quality Schools Grants. The task force recommendations will help develop a five-year financing plan for providing school districts with the resources to ensure that all our students are meeting high academic standards. The February time frame will allow the task force recommendations to be incorporated into legislation or budget proposals to be considered by the upcoming legislature.

The public school funding program passed by the legislature in 1998, substantially changed how funding is allocated among school districts in Alaska. As part of the new funding mechanism, the legislature included a requirement that the department provide the legislature with a series of reports by January 15, 2001 including:

- A comparison of the per school funding in the new formula to the use of funding communities in the old funding formula including a thorough review of educational adequacy in the schools of Alaska; and
- Proposed adjustments to the district cost factors.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT www.eed.state.ak.us/EarlyDev/

The combination of early development and education programs in the 1999 departmental merger legislation recognized the importance of assuring every child the best possible start in life by creating a comprehensive system of early care and learning in Alaska.

Research has clearly shown that early development and learning creates the foundation for later achievement. Approximately 60% of Alaska's preschool-age children have working parents. The great majority of children receive

some or most of their care outside of their homes by the time they are three years old. Access to quality child care and preschool programs that provide safe, healthy developmental and learning experiences is essential for a child's readiness for school and capacity for further learning. The department is working to ensure that quality childcare and preschool programs are available for Alaska's children.

The governor's FY2002 budget proposes increases in state and federal funding for expansion of early childhood programs, improving quality of childcare services and preschool programs through professional development and training, increasing parent involvement, and improving and increasing access to licensed child care facilities.

Major BRU Accomplishments for FY2000

- Conducted first administration of the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam and Benchmark Assessments in March 2000.
- Implemented procedures for test security and administration.
- Finalized regulations for implementation of the comprehensive system of student assessments.
- Determined the qualifying proficient score in each of the core subject areas for the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam and Benchmark Assessments.
- Reported the results of the first administration of the HSGQE and Benchmark Assessments to students, parents, schools, school districts and the public.
- Planned a second statewide Education Summit for September 2000 for school districts and the public to consider the results from the first administration of the Benchmark Assessments and determine what additional efforts will be necessary to ensure that students have the opportunity to learn and meet the standards prior to graduation.
- Developed and disseminated informational materials for the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam and the Benchmark Assessments.
- Provided childcare assistance in over 30 Alaskan communities through local non-profit or municipal program administrators.
- Supported employment of eligible low-income families by subsidizing childcare costs for approximately 5,400 children per month on a sliding ability-to-pay scale.

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BRU Financial Summary by Component

All dollars in thousands

	FY2000 Actuals				FY2001 Authorized				FY2002 Governor			
	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds
Formula Expenditures None.												
Non-Formula Expenditures												
State Board of Education	0.0	0.0	121.1	121.1	0.0	0.0	145.0	145.0	0.0	0.0	144.6	144.6
Commissioner's Office	171.7	0.0	324.9	496.6	128.3	0.1	351.2	479.6	127.6	0.0	333.2	460.8
Administrative Services	718.9	0.0	361.3	1,080.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Information Services	356.2	40.2	225.7	622.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
District Support Services	921.8	0.0	0.0	921.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Educational Facilities Support	0.0	0.0	486.0	486.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Donated Commodities	0.0	198.3	17.7	216.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Totals	2,168.6	238.5	1,536.7	3,943.8	128.3	0.1	496.2	624.6	127.6	0.0	477.8	605.4

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Proposed Changes in Levels of Service for FY2002

There are no proposed changes in levels of service for FY2002.

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Summary of BRU Budget Changes by Component

From FY2001 Authorized to FY2002 Governor

All dollars in thousands

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2001 Authorized	128.3	0.1	496.2	624.6
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-State Board of Education	0.0	0.0	-0.4	-0.4
-Commissioner's Office	-0.7	-0.1	-18.0	-18.8
FY2002 Governor	127.6	0.0	477.8	605.4