

## ***Focus on the FY2002 Budget:***

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### **Education & Early Development Initiative**

The Knowles/Ulmer Administration's FY2002 budget builds on their commitment to improve schools so children succeed and are well-prepared to enter the work force. Schools would receive additional resources to build on recent initiatives to improve the quality of education, including mandatory standards in the basic skills, fair and timely testing, and assistance for students who need it. The proposed budget also includes increases in state and federal funding to expand access to quality, affordable child care and early learning programs so families are supported while they work and children are cared for in safe, nurturing environments.

#### ***K-12 Education***

##### ***Public School Funding Program***

The governor's budget fully funds the FY2002 public school foundation program and allows for some expansion of support for education. Although state aid 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, including \$6.2 million in one-time grants approved by the legislature last session.

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 add 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 amendments for consideration by the upcoming legislature.

##### ***School Debt Reimbursement: already included in the \$80.6 million needed to maintain existing services***

Approximately \$4.2 million of the \$28.5 million overall increase in state debt obligations that has already been announced is for reimbursement of municipal bonds for approved school construction and major maintenance projects. In FY2002, a total of \$57 million will be needed for the 70% reimbursement of local school debt service that has been approved in previous legislative sessions.

##### ***Right Start/Title I Programs: \$3.2 million federal funds***

Federal funds of \$1.2 million will support a multi-year project to provide extended day kindergarten programs for students who need additional support to reach the developmental and academic levels expected for their success in future grades. Funding will also be used to

place academic intervention coordinators in schools with high percentages of students in need of extended services in kindergarten and other grade levels. Another \$2.0 million in federal aid is expected for Title I and Special Education programs.

***Education Program Quality: \$177,700 state general funds***

The governor's FY2002 budget includes \$177,700 to provide quality assurance for parents and families served through the gifted and talented programs and statewide correspondence study programs.

***Vocational/Technical Training: \$275,000 fee-supported services***

The Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC) in Seward is expanding its fully fee-supported Construction and Maintenance Training Program by \$275,000.

***Early Development***

The governor's FY2002 budget proposes increases in state and federal funding to expand early childhood programs, improve the quality of child care services and preschool programs through professional development and training, increase parent involvement, and both improve and increase parents' access to licensed child care facilities.

***Head Start: \$4.4 million federal and state funds***

To access an anticipated \$3.3 million increase in federal funds available directly to Head Start grantees in Alaska, the governor's budget includes \$662,400 in state general funds that will provide the necessary 20% matching funds. These funds will expand Head Start services to over 325 children in 6 – 8 communities, and increase Alaska's capability to meet federal Head Start program performance requirements.

An additional \$438,000 is anticipated for family wellness/health screenings in all Head Start communities, and \$3.3 million to expand distance delivery course work for early childhood education endorsement programs to meet new federal requirements for Head Start workers. New federal Head Start performance standards require that staff hold a child development associate (CDA) credential and early childhood teachers hold an AA degree.

***Staff Development & Parent Involvement: \$1.1 million state and federal funds***

The FY2002 budget includes a \$1.0 million general fund increase for professional development, parent education, and training opportunities to support parent involvement with their children's literacy, education, and overall health and development. The Department and the University of Alaska will coordinate the development of a comprehensive system for the education and training of early childhood professionals in Alaska. \$100,000 in federal funds is included in EED's budget to create a system for setting standards for these professionals and for establishing a credentialing process. The University of Alaska is planning a bachelor degree program in Early Childhood Development. These education and training programs will support Head Start workers and all of Alaska's early care providers in meeting education and training standards to promote professional development among those who care for and educate young children.

**Child Care Assistance: \$3.4 million welfare block grant and state general funds**

Child care assistance is provided to income eligible families on a sliding fee scale. Many of these families are transitioning from welfare to work in entry-level jobs and need help paying for child care so they can stay in the work force. Other low income working families need access to child care assistance to retain their current employment and keep from going on welfare in the first place. To fully fund the program and eliminate the current wait lists, the FY2002 budget invests \$3 million from welfare reform savings and \$428,000 in state funds.

With success in the welfare to work program, the number of families receiving child care assistance and the number of children served has increased dramatically. In FY2000, an average of 5,392 children were served each month. In FY2001, an estimated 6,250 children will be served monthly, and in FY2002, a projected 7,500 children will need to be served monthly.

**Child Care Access and Licensing: \$1.7 million federal funds**

An increase in federal Child Care Development Funds (CCDF) will provide the resources to ensure the quality of child care through licensing and to take appropriate action when necessary through monitoring and enforcement. Funds will also expand child care capacity through training, and resource and referral services. They will improve child care programs and services by addressing services for infants, toddlers, and children with special needs, increasing health and safety standards in child care facilities, and expanding access to child care in communities where capacity is currently limited.

**Child Care Quality Initiative: \$2.0 million federal funds**

Additional federal funds are anticipated that will improve the quality of child care by providing incentives for registered providers to become licensed and for licensed providers to become accredited. Child care grants will be available to all licensed providers and the grants will increase to approximately \$40 per child/per month once the licensed facilities achieve accreditation. To help ensure children’s safety, background checks will be funded for all workers in child care centers and homes.

**Total for Governor Knowles’ education and early development initiative:**

<b>State general funds*</b>	<b>\$ 2.2 million</b>
<b>Federal funds</b>	<b>10.8 million</b>
<b>Welfare savings and fee support</b>	<b><u>3.3 million</u></b>
	<b>\$16.3 million</b>

**\*does not reduce school aid by the \$10.5 million amount specified in the foundation formula**