

# State Board of Education Alaska Education Challenge Review

Alaska Department of Education and Early Development  
Deena Bishop, Ed.D., Commissioner  
December 3, 2025



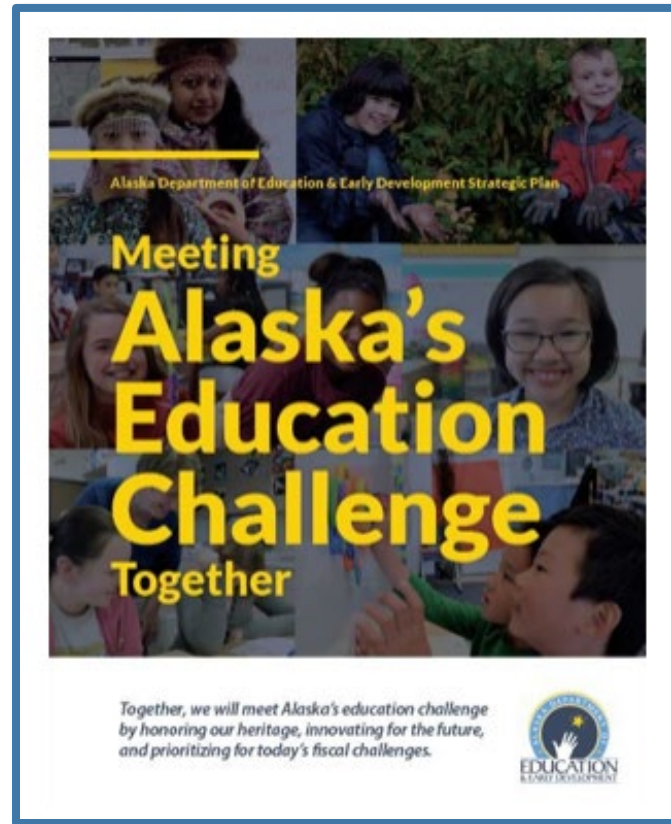
# Presentation Agenda

- Mission, Vision, and Purpose
- Alaska's Education Challenge Overview
- Background and Timeline
- Progress Highlights | Strategic Priorities
  - 1 | Support All Students to Read at Grade Level by the End of Third Grade
  - 2 | Career, Technical, and Culturally Relevant Education
  - 3 | Close the Achievement Gap by Ensuring Equitable Educational Rigor and Resources
  - 4 | Prepare, Attract, and Retain Effective Education Professionals
  - 5 | Improve the Safety and Well-Being of Students through School, Family, and Community Partnerships
- Building on Progress Toward Educational Excellence
- Next Steps for Strategic Goal Development

# Mission, Vision, and Purpose

| Mission   | Vision  | Purpose   |
|---|---|---|
| An excellent education for every student every day. | All students will succeed in their education and work, shape worthwhile and satisfying lives for themselves, exemplify the best values of society, and be effective in improving the character and quality of the world about them.<br>- Alaska Statute 14.03.015 | DEED exists to provide <b>information, resources, and leadership</b> to support an excellent education for every student every day. |

# Alaska's Education Challenge



## Five Shared Strategic Priorities:

1. Support all students to read at grade level by the end of third grade.
2. Increase career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs.
3. Close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable educational rigor and resources.
4. Prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals.
5. Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships with families, communities, and tribes.

# Alaska's Education Challenge Background & Timeline



**SEPTEMBER 2016**

The State Board of Education and Early Development, in collaboration with Commissioner Dr. Michael Johnson, established five strategic priorities aimed at improving public education for all students in Alaska.



**FEBRUARY 2017**

DEED released a public survey to gather input from Alaskans on priorities for public education reform. Nearly 1,400 Alaskans in 109 communities submitted over 18,000 ideas for topics to be considered during Alaska's Education Challenge



**OCTOBER 2017**

The State Board held a work session to review and discuss the 13 recommendations developed by the AEC committees.



Governor Bill Walker, in his State of the State address, emphasized the need to improve public education in Alaska, which led to the formal launch of the Alaska's Education Challenge (AEC).

**JANUARY 2017**



Commissioner Johnson and the State Board formally kicked off Alaska's Education Challenge. Nearly 100 Alaskans from diverse backgrounds convened to develop recommendations aligned with the five strategic priorities.

**APRIL 2017**



The State Board approved the Alaska's Education Challenge Report to Governor Walker.

**DECEMBER 2017**

# Strategic Priority 1

*Support ALL students to read at grade level by the end of third grade.*

## What Progress Looks Like by 2025

- K–3 reading measures submitted to the department will show positive trends.
- The number of students in grades 3–5 who are proficient on the statewide English language arts assessment will double.
- The number of students in grades 3–5 who are proficient on the statewide math assessment will double, since research suggests that reading ability is one of the best predictors of strong math skills.
- Student absenteeism rates will be reduced by at least 20 percent.

# Strategic Priority 1

*Support ALL students to read at grade level by the end of third grade.*

## Progress Highlights



**Passage of the Alaska Reads Act (2022):** Established a statewide framework to ensure every student reads proficiently by the end of third grade.



**Implementation of Key Components:** District Reading Improvement Plans (DRIPs) in all districts, the Department Reading Program (DRP) for intensive support to the lowest-performing schools, and Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIPs) to engage families in literacy progress.



**Statewide K–3 Literacy Screening:** Implemented mCLASS with DIBELS 8th Edition statewide, providing consistent, reliable data across all districts.



**Professional Learning Expansion:** Trained more than 1,200 educators annually through the Science of Reading Symposium and expanded statewide access to LETRS, UFLI, Keys to Literacy, and asynchronous VLC courses.



**Evidence-Based Instructional Materials:** Launched the Alaska Vendor Guide, featuring vetted curricula and high-dosage tutoring providers aligned with the science of reading.

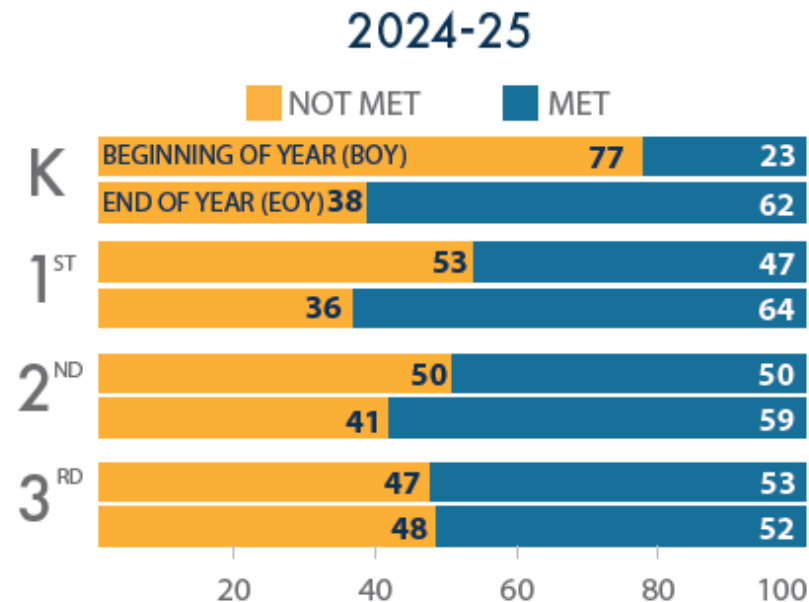
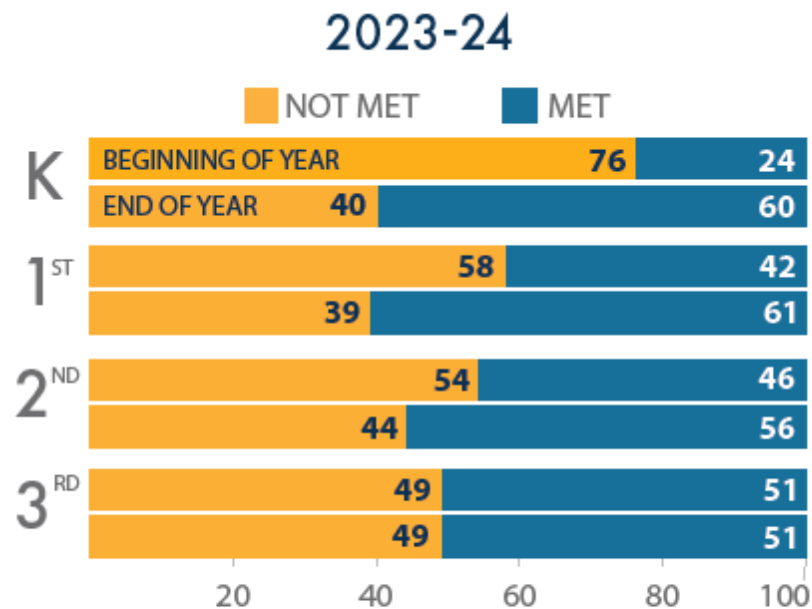
# Strategic Priority 1

*Support ALL students to read at grade level by the end of third grade.*



## Early Indicators of Success under the Alaska Reads Act

### Alaska Grade Level Skill Achievement



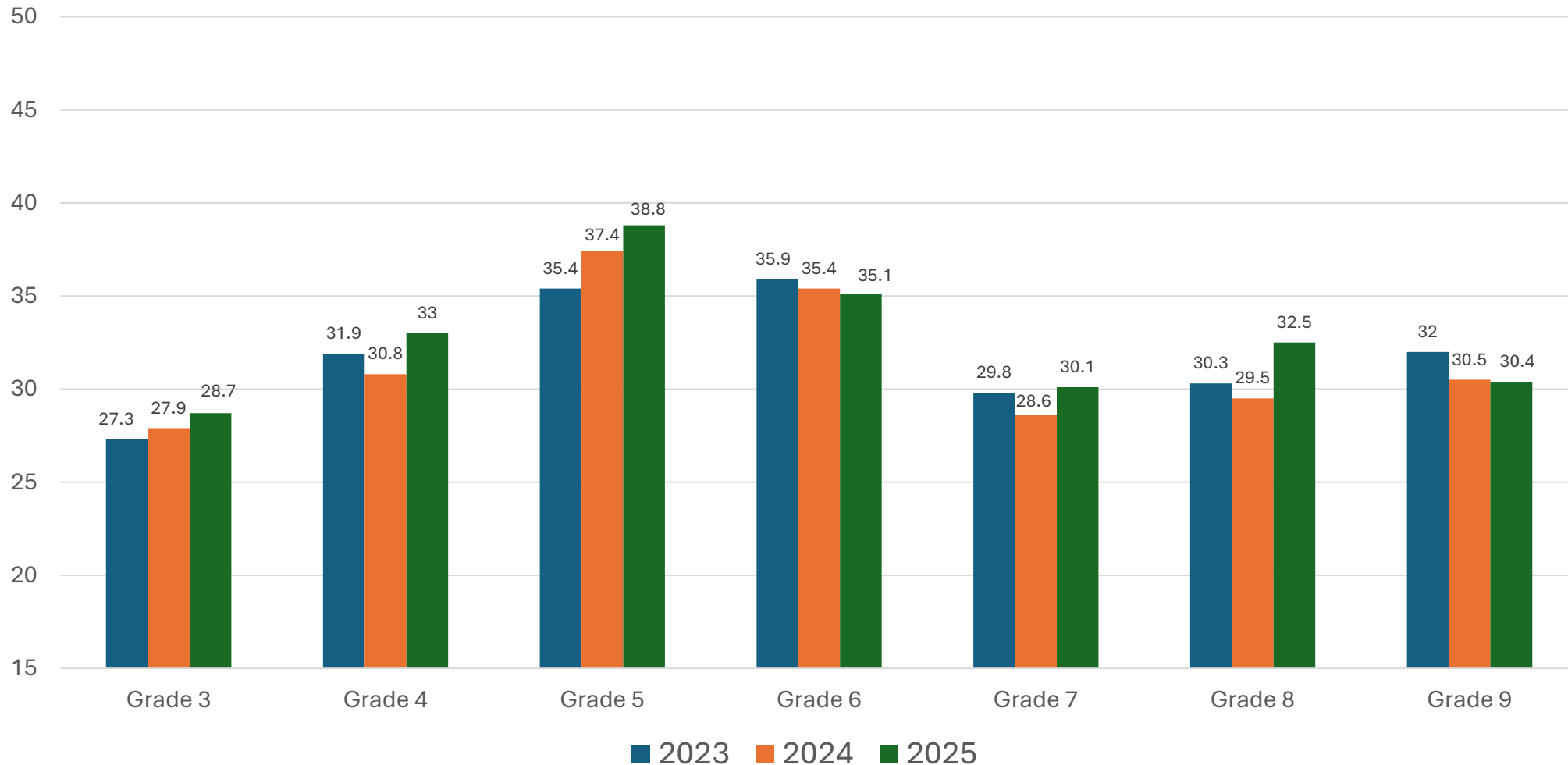
Source: Data from the mCLASS® DIBELS® 8th Edition Early Literacy Screener, Alaska and national user bases, prepared by Amplify Education, Inc., using beginning- and end-of-year results, June 2025.



# Strategic Priority 1

*Support ALL students to read at grade level by the end of third grade.*

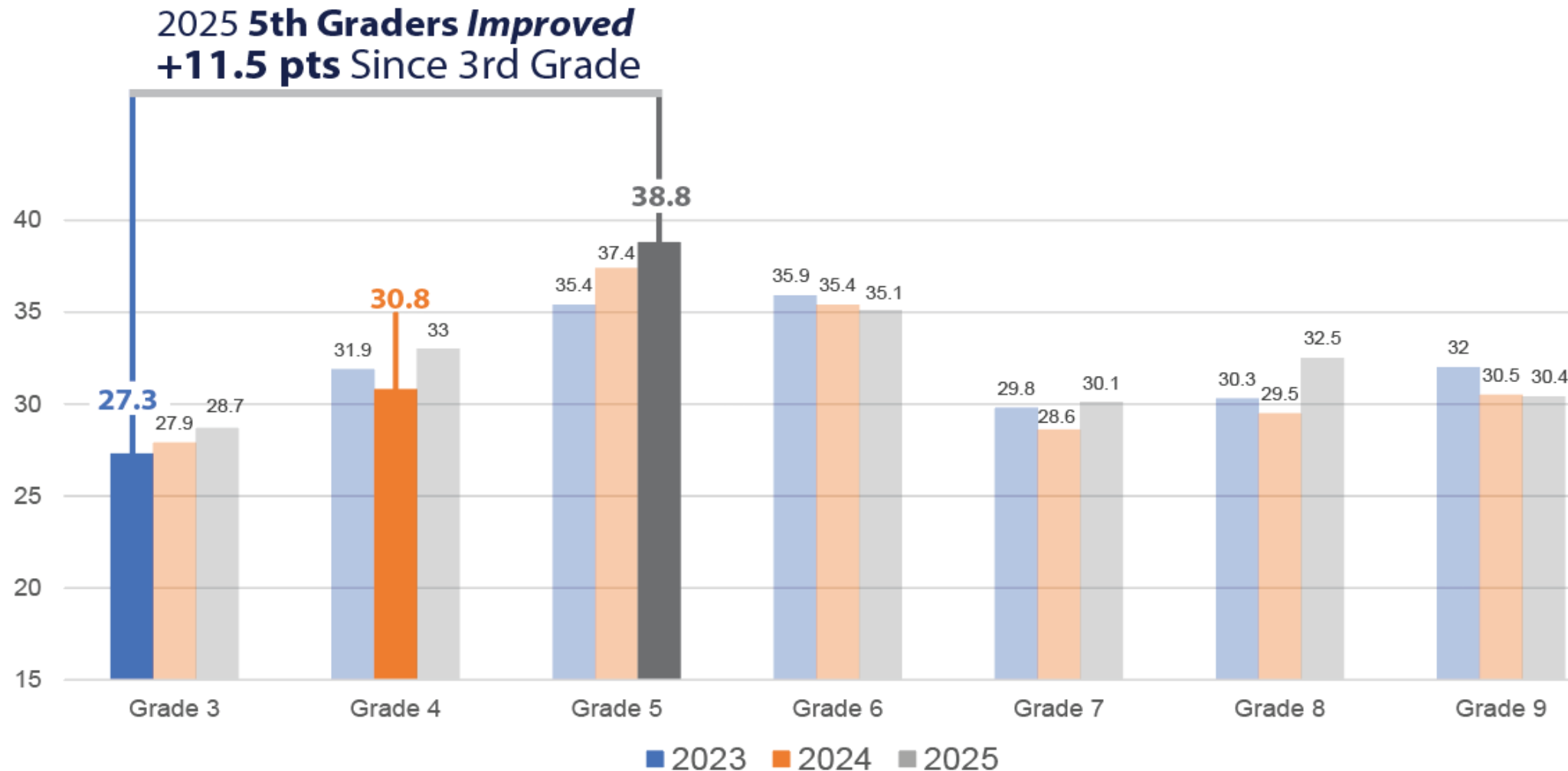
## 3-Year Trends | ELA % Students Proficient/Advanced



# Strategic Priority 1

*Support ALL students to read at grade level by the end of third grade.*

## 3-Year Trends | ELA % Students Proficient/Advanced



## Strategic Priority 2

*Increase career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs.*

### What Progress Looks Like by 2025

- The number of students who, upon graduation, have earned dual credit, obtained an industry certification, or completed Advanced Placement coursework will increase by at least 15 percent.
- The overall four-year graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
- The overall five-year graduation rate will increase to at least 93 percent.
- The number of students participating in CTE Programs of Study will increase by at least 20 percent.

## Strategic Priority 2

*Increase career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs.*

### Progress Highlights

CTE

**Expansion of CTE Programs:** Awarded new CTE Program of Study (CTEP) grants in 2024 to strengthen district offerings and develop pathways in high-demand industries.



**Collaboration and Partnerships:** Supported statewide collaboration through two annual CTE conferences, regional consortia such as the Bristol Bay Regional CTE Consortium (BBRCTE), and partnerships with DOLWD, the University of Alaska, and industry leaders.



**Student Leadership and Engagement:** Reestablished and expanded Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) and launched annual SBOE CTE Recognition Awards to highlight exemplary programs statewide.



**Career Guide Demonstration Project:** Partnered with DOLWD, BBRCTE, Sealaska Heritage Institute, and rootEd Alliance to expand career advising and postsecondary planning for rural and remote students.

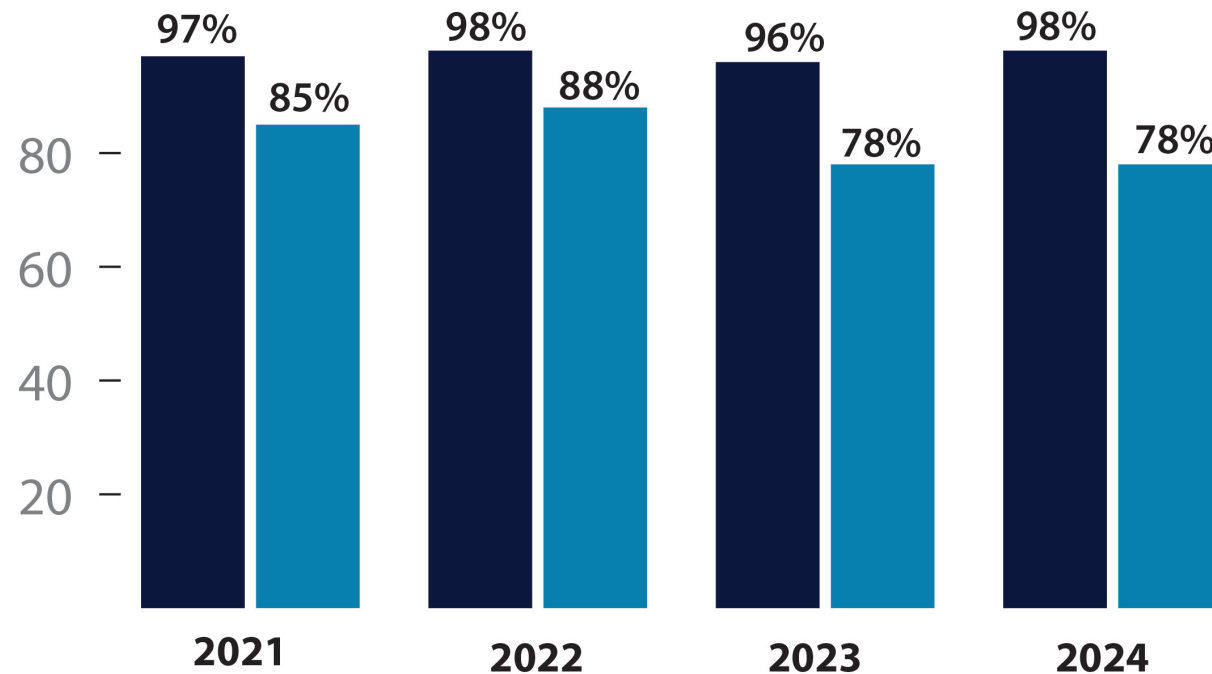


**Policy and Legislative Progress:** Enacted HB 148 (2024), expanding Alaska Performance Scholarship eligibility to include CTE coursework and strengthening access to career-focused pathways.

## Strategic Priority 2

*Increase career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs.*

### Alaska Graduation Rate Compared to Students who “Concentrated” in a Perkins CTE Program



## Strategic Priority 3

*Close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable educational rigor and resources.*

### What Progress Looks Like by 2025

- The current performance gaps in English language arts and math for all student subgroups will be reduced by at least 45 percent.
- The current gaps in graduation rates for all student subgroups will be reduced by at least 50 percent.
- The proficiency rate for English learner students will increase to at least 65 percent.
- The number of students in each subgroup who are required to take remedial classes upon entering college will be reduced by at least 50 percent.

## Strategic Priority 3

*Close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable educational rigor and resources.*

### Progress Highlights



**Standards and Instructional Support:** Expanded access to evidence-based strategies and materials across all content areas, including new standards in social studies and ongoing literacy initiatives from pre-K through grade 12.



**Science of Reading Implementation:** Extended Alaska Reads Act literacy structures to pre-K through grade three, supported by statewide Science of Reading training and literacy screeners for all K–5 students.



**Attendance and Engagement:** Launched the *Strive for 5 – Attend School All Week* statewide campaign to reduce chronic absenteeism and implemented Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) programs in 14 districts and 46 schools.

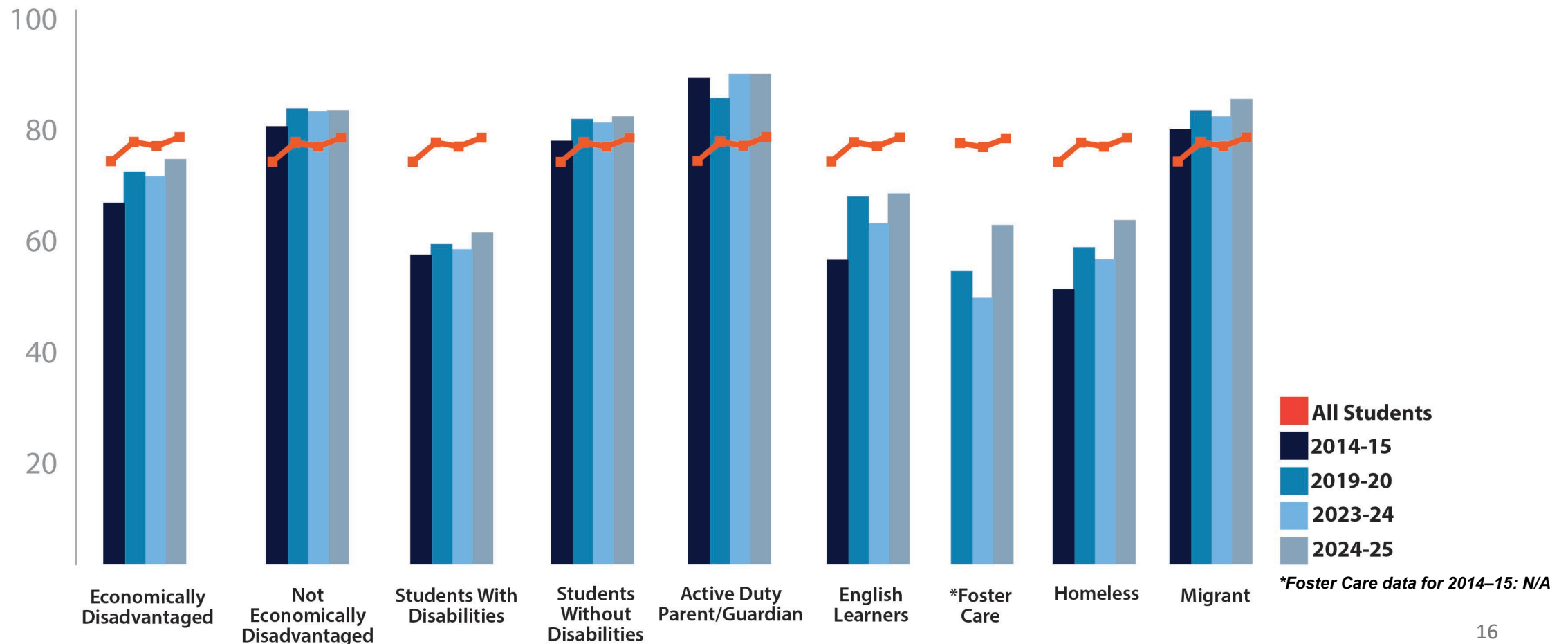


**State–Tribal Partnerships and Culturally Relevant Education:** Advanced Tribal Compacting legislation and partnerships with five pilot tribes to promote culturally relevant governance and learning strategies.

# Strategic Priority 3

*Close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable educational rigor and resources.*

## Closing the Achievement Gap | Graduation Rates | Student Programs/Support





## Strategic Priority 4

*Prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals.*

### What Progress Looks Like by 2025



Of new teachers in Alaska will have completed their teacher preparation program through an Alaska University.



Of educators new to Alaska or the profession will participate in a cohort-based induction program with culturally responsive and trauma-informed training, and mentor support.

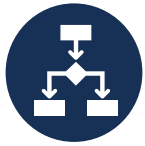


Of Alaska school districts will experience less than 15 annual educator turnover (including within-district moves).

# Strategic Priority 4

*Prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals.*

## Progress Highlights



**Grow-Your-Own Pathways:** Established the Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Pathway (T-RAP) and Principal Registered Apprenticeship Pathway (P-RAP) to expand CTE-aligned, earn-while-you-learn routes into the profession and grow Alaska's homegrown educator workforce.



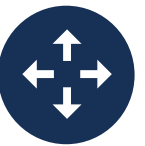
**Educators Rising Expansion:** Increased participation in Educators Rising from 96 students in 2017–18 to 189 students in 2024–25, supporting district-based programs that introduce high school students to education careers and align with university teacher preparation pathways.



**Teacher Retention and Recruitment (TRR) Initiative:** Launched by the Governor of Alaska in 2020 to strengthen the state's educator workforce, the TRR Action Plan (2021) and Playbook (2023) outline coordinated strategies across stakeholder groups, supported by ongoing statewide outreach and engagement.



**Certification Modernization:** Modernized Alaska's electronic teacher certification system, reducing processing times and enhancing customer service for educators and districts through streamlined online workflows and transparent application tracking.

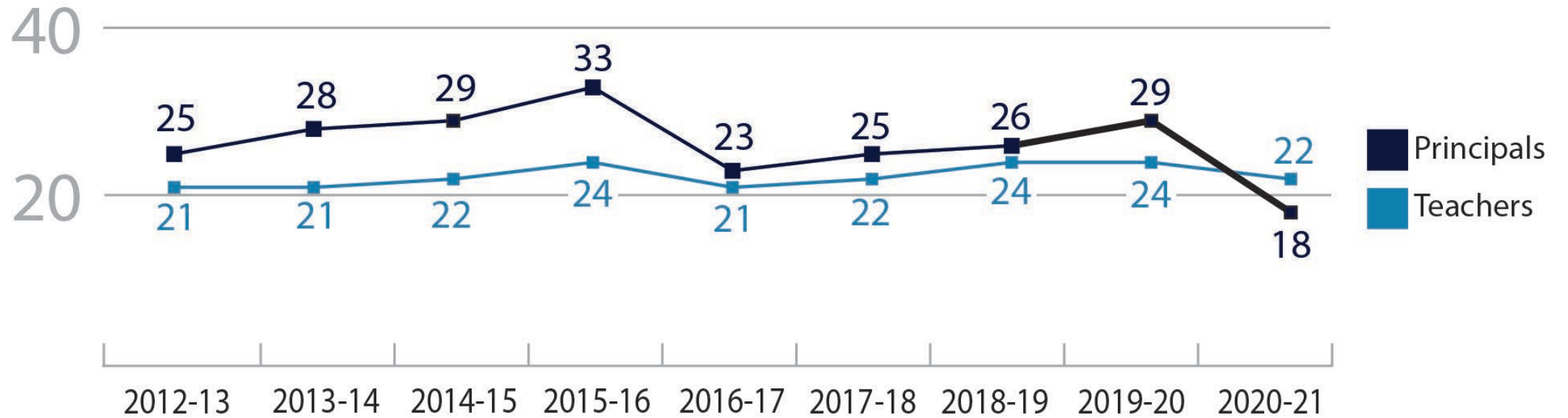


**Regulatory Alignment and SBOE Action:** Since 2017, the State Board of Education has approved 23 regulation changes that expanded alternative certification routes, established new certificates and endorsements, aligned teacher assessments and reciprocity provisions, and streamlined certification processes to strengthen Alaska's educator workforce.

## Strategic Priority 4

*Prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals.*

### Alaska Teacher Turnover & Data Trends



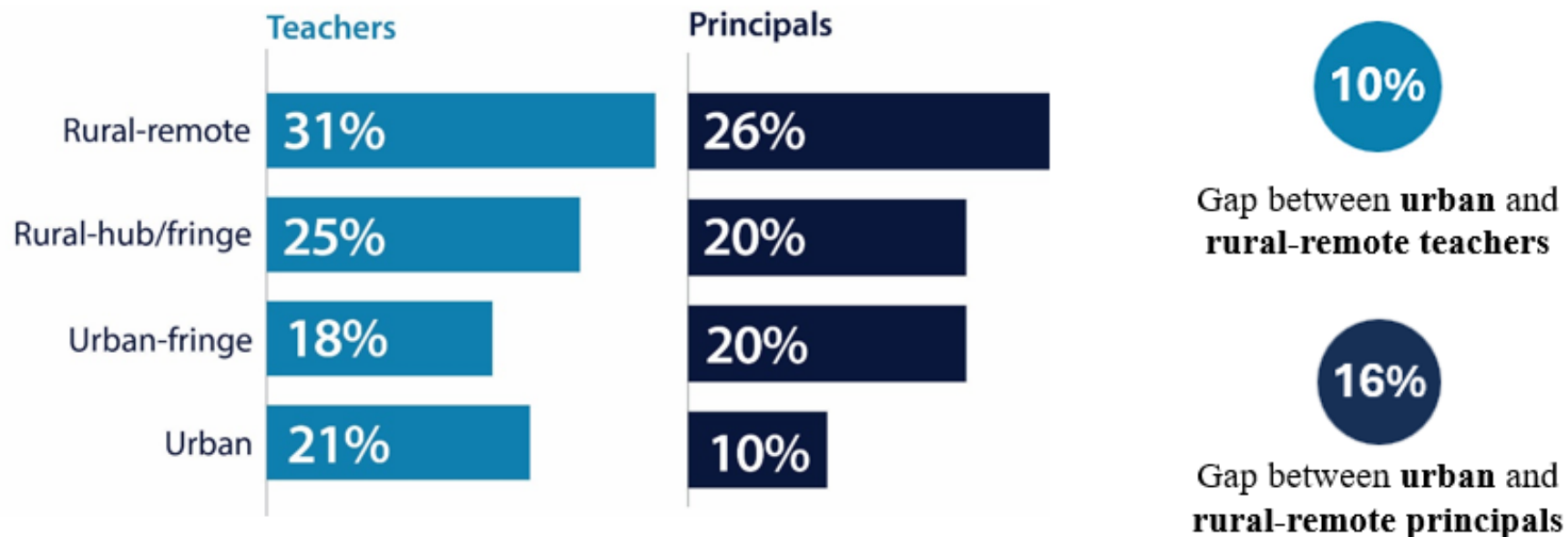
# Strategic Priority 4

*Prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals.*

## Alaska Teacher Turnover & Data Trends

### 2020-21 Annual Turnover Rates | *Percentage*

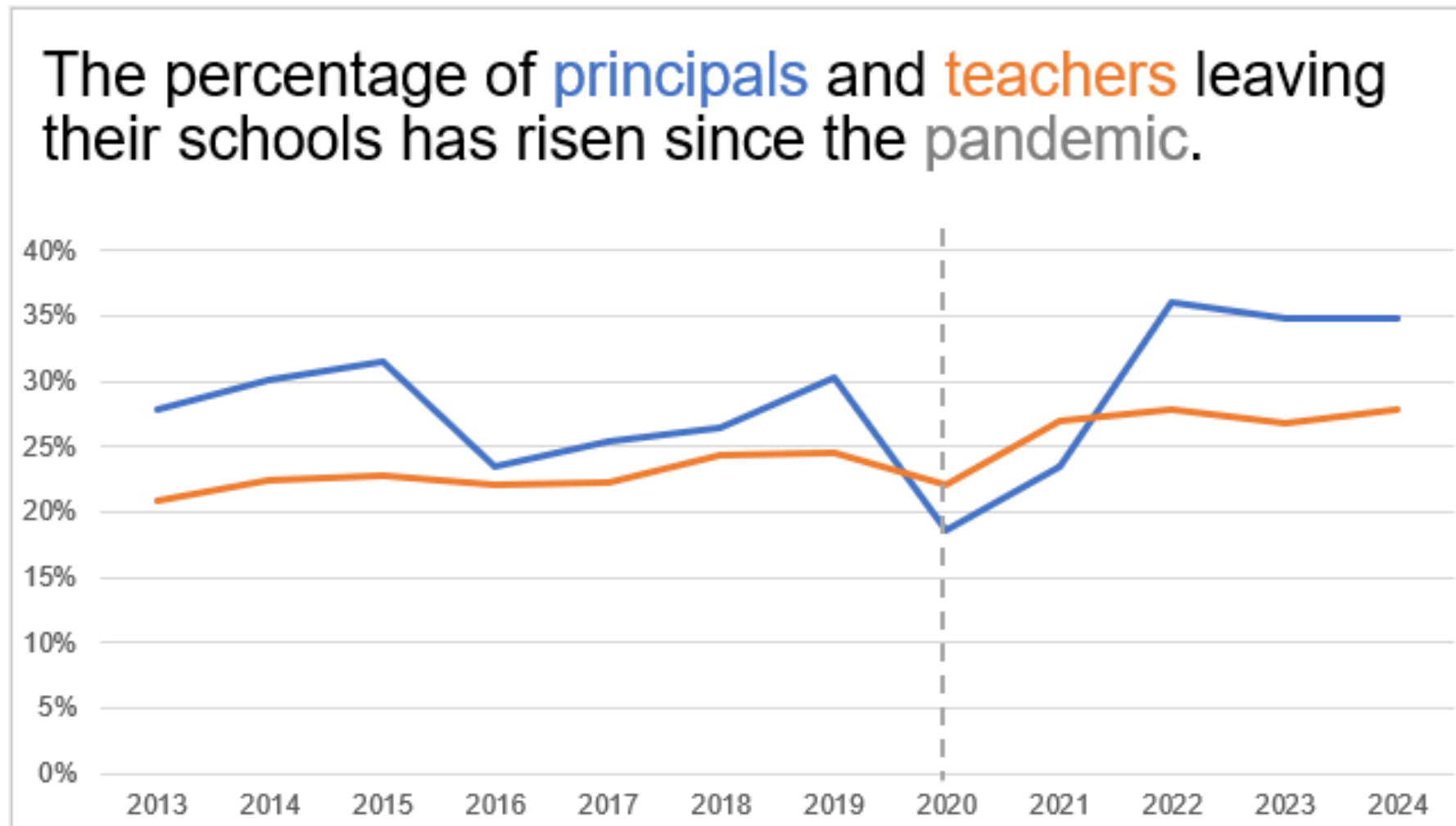
*Rural schools have a much higher teacher and principal turnover than urban-fringe schools.*



## Strategic Priority 4

*Prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals.*

### ISER Updated Principal and Teacher Turnover Data



## Strategic Priority 5

*Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships with families, communities and tribes.*

### What Progress Looks Like by 2025

- The number of students who report on the 2025 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) that they did not go to school on one or more of the last 30 days because they felt unsafe will decrease by 35 percent.
- The number of students suspended from school for non-violent and non-safety-related incidents in a given school year will decrease by at least 15 percent.

# Strategic Priority 5

*Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships with families, communities and tribes.*

## Progress Highlights



**Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS):** Expanded PBIS implementation to 45 schools in 14 districts, promoting positive school climate and behavior. DEED also supports Anchorage School District's rollout using Title IV-A funds, with 45 ASD schools now participating.



**Trauma-Engaged Schools and Practices:** Continued statewide training and coaching to help schools implement the Transforming Schools: A Framework for Trauma-Engaged Practice in Alaska. Nearly 15,000 copies have been distributed, and an online Trauma Toolkit provides ongoing professional learning and resources for school teams.



**Attendance Initiative:** Launched the Strive for 5 – Attend School All Week campaign to address chronic absenteeism through coordinated outreach, data sharing, and district-level resources that emphasize consistent attendance as critical to academic success.

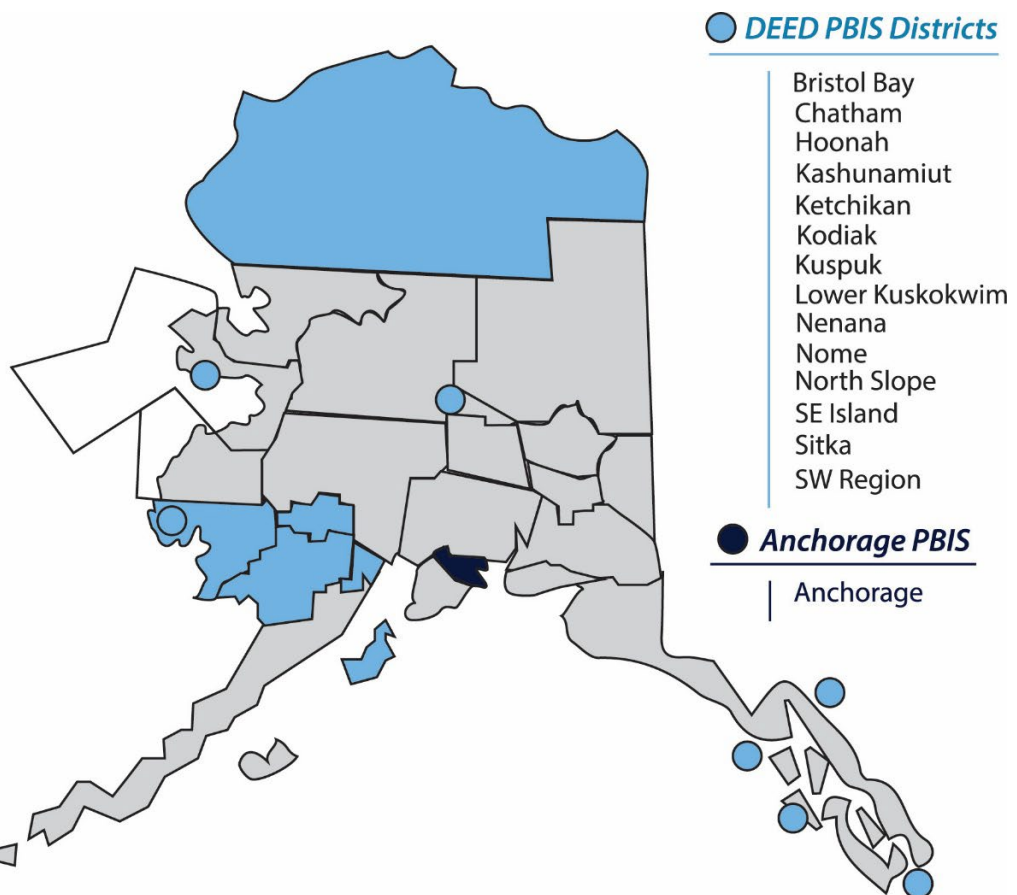


**Protecting the Learning Environment:** The SBOE adopted a 2024 resolution encouraging districts to limit student cell phone use, followed by passage of HB 57 (2025), which restricts device use during instructional hours to reduce distractions, support student engagement, and protect focused learning environments.

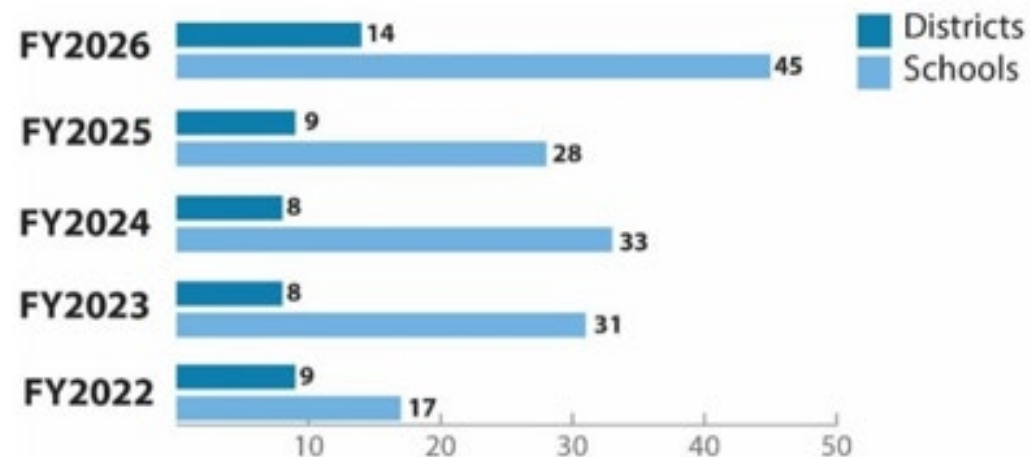
# Strategic Priority 5

*Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships with families, communities and tribes.*

## DEED Supported Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports



**# of Districts Participating in DEED/PBIS**  
*By Fiscal Year*





# Building on Progress Toward Educational Excellence

- Progress has been made toward the Alaska Education Challenge goals, but continued effort is needed to ensure every student reads proficiently, graduates prepared, and is supported by a strong, stable educator workforce.
- Maintain the five strategic priorities of the AEC as the framework for continued statewide improvement.
- Through the SBOE standing committees, develop specific, measurable goals aligned to these priorities to guide DEED's strategic direction, strengthen accountability, and align fiscal and human resources.

# Board Discussion



Questions, comments, or direction from members regarding the Alaska Education Challenge review and next steps.

# Contact Information

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# Stay Connected

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- Our website: [education.alaska.gov](http://education.alaska.gov)
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