

# Teacher Retention and Recruitment Action Plan

Prepared for the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development

Prepared by Dr. Barbara L. Adams  
Adams Analytic Solutions LLC



April 2021

# Teacher Retention and Recruitment Action Plan

The Teacher Retention and Recruitment Action Plan is the culminating product of the Alaska Governor's Working Group on Teacher Retention and Recruitment (TRR). The purpose of the TRR Working Group, established in May 2020, was to review the root causes of Alaska's teacher retention and recruitment issues and propose solutions to better attract and retain great teachers. Understanding that great teachers form the foundation of a great educational program, the TRR Working Group was tasked with problem-solving this aspect of the system to ensure Alaska can provide an excellent education for every student every day.

The TRR Action Plan begins by situating the importance of the task with which the Working Group has been charged: reviewing the causes of Alaska's teacher retention and recruitment challenges with the goal of identifying a way forward to begin addressing them. The Working Group's general approach and the background issues are first described, followed by a summary of the research results. This summary succinctly links the six essential areas of the proposed recommendations to the existing and new research identified by the Working Group. The balance of the TRR Action Plan consists of specific recommendations which are borne out of identifying these six essential areas to address the recruitment and retention struggles, followed by a preliminary implementation plan which proposes how to begin taking action quickly. Finally, the Plan's summary relates the findings of this work to several other reports that demonstrate the importance and urgency of taking action on these issues.

Recommendations in this TRR Action Plan stem from existing research in the field as well as new research conducted by this Working Group. The new research included the **TRR Survey**, which gathered preference rankings from a sample of people who held active Alaska-certificated teacher licenses, and the **Qualitative Supplemental Study** (QSS) containing written comments from survey participants, interviews with educators who had left the state and/or profession and focus groups with district recruiters. The 30-member TRR Working Group encompassed the full spectrum of stakeholders representing Alaska regionally (many districts and schools in an array of rural and urban settings); professionally (teacher, administrator, student, school board members); by experience (early career to long-term experience); by grades within the system (Pre-K, K-12, higher education); and by various components of the system (current and retired educators, support organizations, and policy makers).

The TRR Action Plan proposes practical, professional, and policy recommendations for the Governor and Commissioner of the Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) through research-based methods involving represented stakeholder groups. Evidence from the current TRR research is connected to each action recommendation. A representative sample of educators provided data through the TRR Survey while targeted audiences were approached for the QSS intentionally to round out the picture. Details of the research can be found in Appendix A.

## General Approach and Background

The magnitude of the collective issue around teacher retention and recruitment demands an exceptional response. The efforts undertaken by the TRR Working Group pay homage to all the good research that preceded its convening while adding to that body of knowledge. The recommendations are grounded in this effort and provide a starting place for continued work to improve our system.

Since all items used in the research have previously been demonstrated to be valuable, those other items are not meant to be discarded by these recommendations. Rather these recommendations seek to build upon what is already in place to create an educational system in the state that works for all our students. Together these recommendations address educators' desire to be treated as professionals with the associated financial respect, workplace respect, and social respect.

Alaska had about 500 schools grouped into 54 school districts that employed about 7750 certificated teachers during the 2020-2021 school year. Approximately two-thirds of those teachers were employed by the five largest urban districts, whereas a little less than half of the schools were in urban districts<sup>1</sup>. Local control of districts is a key principle in Alaska and governance takes on several different structures depending on location.

## Summary of Research Results

Results from the Teacher Retention and Recruitment (TRR) Survey and the Qualitative Supplemental Study (QSS) illuminated **six essential areas** to address in the short-term and long-term actions. Although listed in order stemming from the research, the numbers do not represent importance or order in the plan and are used primarily for ease of referencing. Further, there are some overlaps among the essential areas as articulated when appropriate.

1. Strengthening working conditions
2. Developing leadership
3. Restructuring retirement options
4. Enhancing recruitment efforts and opportunities
5. Creating paraprofessional pathways
6. Streamlining certification and recertification

These essential areas provide a balanced approach, including an equal focus on both teacher recruitment and teacher retention, designed to support growth and positive change for the Alaska educational system. Figure 1 organizes the essential areas by recruitment and retention, although many of the specific recommendations outlined below support both efforts.

*Figure 1: Essential areas of the TRR Action Plan providing a balanced approach to retention and recruitment.*



<sup>1</sup>Calculated from numbers provided directly by DEED on November 8, 2020 and publicly accessible data on DEED website: [https://education.alaska.gov/alaskan\\_schools/public](https://education.alaska.gov/alaskan_schools/public).

To ground the Action Plan recommendations in the results, Table 1 demonstrates the alignment between various components of the research and the six essential areas. The top 10 items identified through the results of the TRR Survey can be grouped into three summary topics of research results: financial, working conditions, and support and professionalism. Of the 40 items included on the TRR survey for Personal Importance items, the 10 items shown in Table 1 had the highest rankings and preference scores. In addition, the Solution Influence items from the TRR Survey that fall in the top 15 are listed next to the related Personal Importance Items. Rankings are shown in parentheses. Lastly, the top 5 QSS themes that align with the topics and items are shown in brackets. Appendix A contains detailed descriptions of the research and results. Summary results can be found on the DEED website: [education.alaska.gov/trr](http://education.alaska.gov/trr).

*Table 1: Alignment of TRR Survey and QSS results organized into general topics to address through the Action Plan.*

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Personal Importance Items (rank)</b>	<b>Solution Influence Items (rank) [QSS theme]</b>
Financial	salary (1)	competitive salary (1) enhanced salary schedule (2) retention incentives (4) opportunities for salary advancement (5) opportunity to earn bonuses (12) signing bonus (15) [conditions] [incentives]
	retirement benefits (4)	defined benefit retirement system (3) contributing into social security (7) hybrid retirement, personal, state investments (8) portability of my retirement savings (9) control of my retirement savings (11) [benefits] [conditions]
	good healthcare benefits (5)	improved healthcare (6) [benefits] [conditions]
Working Conditions	positive workplace conditions (2)	creating or strengthening webs of support (10) streamlined recertification requirements (13) creating a statewide, seamless, supported induction model (14) [leadership] [conditions]
	personal connections with students (3)	
	positive school culture (6)	
Support and Professionalism	manageable workload (7)	creating or strengthening webs of support (10) creating a statewide, seamless, supported induction model (14) streamlined recertification requirements (13) connects to financial area [leadership] [conditions] [technology]
	being treated as a professional (8)	
	quality support from principal(s) (9)	
	quality support from district administration (10)	

## Recommendations

Recommendations are first presented for Essential Areas 1-6 to address the areas with highest support determined through this research. Second, implementation factors are presented, including potential players and timeframes for actions. The implementation table, Table 2, proposes suggestions while also recognizing the interconnectedness of the items within the education system and within the larger systems of community, statewide government, and federal government. Finally, the TRR Action Plan closes with a summary of connections to existing frameworks demonstrating its integrative nature and proactive approach to supporting growth and positive change for the Alaska education system.

Although salary topped the survey results, the working group recognizes that Alaska must first address its current fiscal situation. This plan provides recommendations that aim to address and improve upon other important factors to educators. Once the state addresses its current fiscal situation, a discussion around teacher salaries may be considered by education stakeholders, policymakers, and local communities. Recent ISER studies concerning Alaska’s salary competitiveness identify standings within the state with cost-of-living adjustments<sup>2</sup>, situate salary in terms of several factors affecting educators<sup>3</sup>, and provide context in terms of recruitment costs<sup>4</sup>.

### Essential Area 1: Strengthening working conditions

Recommendations under this first essential area address many items from the research results focused on retention while also touching recruitment. While salary was ranked highest in the survey results, several major non-financial opportunities were also identified. Engaging in these opportunities will provide statewide direction, improve communication, and support overarching alignment across the system.

1. Develop a committee to create an Educator Induction Program framework to share with districts.
  - Connect existing programs to form a seamless and supported model while adding needed pieces. Existing programs include, in part, the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project under the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF); the Alaska School Leadership Academy and the Aspiring Superintendent Program, both conducted through Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA); current district mentoring programs that may exist (Anchorage School District, Lower Kuskokwim School District, and Bering Strait School District); programs offered through the union organizations of NEA-Alaska and ESSA; and others that support the system.
  - Ensure districts can tailor the framework to fit their goals, needs, and objectives.
  - Connect this induction program to a new framework designed to strengthen webs of support on an ongoing basis, such as a new hire walkthrough process, teaching support, community support, and leadership support.
  - The committee should be composed of practicing teachers and administrators from across the state with intentional representation across various teacher demographics such as school location (urban, rural, road, remote); ethnicity, including BIPOC; gender including LGBTQ+ representation; years of experience; and roles in the education system.
  - Create programs that address different topics throughout the year, such as
    - starting the new year,
    - understanding benefits and options,
    - retirement/financial planning (see EA 3.2),
    - creating a positive workplace environment and school culture, and
    - connecting with the community.
  - Build flexibility into the induction program that allows districts to include site-specific training that satisfies the Alaska studies and Alaska multicultural requirements.

---

<sup>2</sup>Hirshberg, D., Berman, M., DeFeo, D. J., & Hill, A. (2015). *Salary & benefits schedule and teacher tenure study*. Anchorage, AK: University of Alaska Anchorage Center for Alaska Education Policy Research.

<sup>3</sup>DeFeo, D. J., Hirshberg, D., & Hill, A. (2016). It's more than just dollars: Problematizing salary as the sole mechanism for recruiting and retaining teachers in rural Alaska. In *Wellness & healing: Indigenous innovation & Alaska Native Research. Proceedings from the Alaska Native Studies Conference 2016*. Anchorage, AK.

<sup>4</sup>DeFeo, D. J., Tran, T. C., Hirshberg, D., Cope, D., & Cravez, P. (2017). *The cost of teacher turnover in Alaska*. Anchorage, AK: University of Alaska Anchorage Center for Alaska Education Policy Research.

2. Identify methods to measure working conditions that support making data-driven improvements and share those options with districts. This can be conducted as a stand-alone action or as a component of the Organizational Health System suggested under Developing Leadership below.
  - Compile a vendor list of those who measure working conditions for districts to choose from.
  - Offer funds to support DEED paying for vendors.
  - Support districts in making choices that fit their needs.
  - DEED hold districts accountable for engaging in the process of measuring working conditions.
3. Develop a variety of example strategies for districts to support additional financial opportunities.
  - Restructured salary schedules.
  - Bonuses for additional certificates like national board certification.
  - Bonuses for longevity, signing, and retention.
  - Repeal statute limiting experience credit for teachers coming in from out of state (AS 14.20.220). This would allow districts more freedom to determine compensation.
  - Policy suggestion of creating a legislative education funding committee/study to address flat funding and forward funding investigating how to keep up with salary and inflation and national wages.

## Essential Area 2: Developing leadership

Recommendations under this essential area address many of the non-financial items from the research results as well and strongly support recommendations under the first essential area. Even when items do not require funding, there are always possible costs to implementing new programs. The extra time to train, to implement, to learn new things, and teacher burnout must be considered when integrating these new components into the system. Movement needs to be made in parallel for both the first and second essential areas to improve. One necessary component to strengthening working conditions is developing leadership to ensure the recommendations under Essential Area 1 are carried out properly.

1. Create an Organizational Health System for superintendents to assess the health of their district and to then offer supporting strategies to address the identified areas of need.
  - Use methods identified under Essential Area 1, Recommendation 2, that provide districts with the skills and processes needed to deeply assess their system.
  - Provide additional support to engage in data-driven decision-making by understanding issues and identifying possible solutions.
  - DEED develop accountability measures to ensure districts are engaging in the process.
  - Build from and use existing examples such as AASB's School Climate and Connectedness Survey and the Team Optimizing Project (TOP)<sup>5</sup>.
2. Increase professional support for mentoring new administrators.
  - Identify funding streams such as Title II funds to ensure utilization at state level.
  - Use research-based methods to ensure professional support is grounded in what works.
  - Connect this mentoring to the full induction program recommended in Essential Area 1, Recommendation 1 above.

---

<sup>5</sup>Ethics Disclosure: The Working Group facilitator has also contracted directly with school districts to offer TOP services. Including TOP here is not for personal gain, rather it is to demonstrate that such projects exist and support recommendations that stemmed from the Educator Quality and Quantity work concluded in 2015. (See Covey, Adams & Wohlforth (2015) citation in Summary.)

- Create or strengthen webs of support for leadership development throughout the state around topics such as new hire walkthrough process, teaching support, community support, and leadership support.
  - Identify and utilize statewide expertise to ensure consistency across the state and not overburden districts.
3. Develop and adopt processes for teachers to contribute to principal evaluation to strengthen leadership.
- Implement processes to ensure that those most engaged with principals provide a high level of feedback regarding their leadership assessment. Incorporate research assessment processes that provide for confidential methods of communication.

### Essential Area 3: Restructuring retirement options

Recommendations under Essential Area 3 are specific to reviewing the Tier III Teachers' Retirement System (TRS). It is about investigating how to balance risk and benefit while considering the reality of our modern workforce and the trends surrounding new educators entering the workforce.

1. Establish a Retirement Task Force to identify multiple methods to restructure TRS Tier III.
  - Conduct a study to identify multiple options to restructure Tier III retirement, including hybrid plans to determine possible options for the state.
  - Aim to submit recommendations to the legislative session starting January 2022. To make this goal, establish the Retirement Task Force now to complete work in time to make policy recommendations early in 2022.
  - Consider simplifying medical coverage benefits in retirement and aim for retention model. For example, in a tiered system for medical benefits full medical benefits would be covered by the state after 25 years of service, and retirees with less than 25 years of service would share the cost with the state.
  - Address methods to incentivize teachers to stay beyond the first five years.
  - Include practitioners from district human resource departments, superintendents, and school board members who are active with teacher retirement issues in the task force composition.
2. Develop and offer financial literacy education through extended benefits training.
  - Conduct a study to determine current practices and offerings and identify which groups need additional support.
  - Provide better education for Tier III educators about how to fully leverage their retirement.
    - Develop an easily accessible and understandable training for employees, provide it frequently, and encourage regular participation.
    - Include a personalized approach to an individual's goals, time horizon, and financial situation, including investment options and strategies.
    - Ensure teachers learn about non-qualified and tax-free options for investing outside of the defined contribution system (i.e., 457 Plan and other non-qualified investments outside of state offerings).
  - Build financial literacy training into the Induction Model recommended in EA 1.1 above.

### Essential Area 4: Enhancing recruitment efforts and opportunities

Recommendations for Essential Area 4 target the current teacher shortage situation while recognizing recruitment has multiple components: attracting educators to work in Alaska, attracting people into the

education workforce, statewide efforts, and policy efforts. Efforts must focus not just on hiring educators but securing quality educators for all districts, not just the districts who have the resources to pursue alternative pathways on their own.

1. Conduct an Independent Recruitment Audit to review the current teacher recruitment practices in Alaska. This audit shall result in recommendations to the Commissioner and Board of Education regarding future practices of teacher recruitment.
  - Create a statewide advisory committee to guide the independent audit review.
  - Include practitioners from district human resource departments, superintendents, principals, teachers, school board members, and other professionals who are active with teacher and administrator recruiting in the committee composition.
  - Include these specific areas in the independent audit review.
    - Recruitment support needed by districts.
    - A single application system used by all districts.
    - Funding for statewide recruiting services (for example, contracting with national recruiting agencies, enhancement of electronic media, creation of multimedia presentations, development or update of an Alaska teacher recruitment website, and travel to universities and job fairs).
    - An enhanced website location for districts to post vacancies to include listings such as substitute needs and student teaching opportunities.
    - District or state responsibilities for recruitment and coordinating efforts.
    - Dedicated budget for staff needs within teacher recruitment.
    - Accountability and oversight.
  - A review of the current recruitment practices of the Alaska Teacher Placement (ATP) should be performed within the independent audit review, not by ATP.
    - Assess funding, institutional location, personnel, marketing strategies, recruitment research, effectiveness, and oversight.
  - Ensure all alternate certification programs as means of recruitment are included in the independent audit review.
    - Assess funding, institutional location, personnel, effectiveness, and oversight.
2. Develop a Statewide Recruitment Task Force to propose specific solutions and funding.
  - Adopt financial options to support people moving into the education profession.
    - Explore payment to student teachers to compensate for job loss, like what is currently done in Wyoming.
    - Explore tuition fee waivers for students entering the profession.
    - Connect with Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) on possible options, such as loan forgiveness.
  - Create and use statewide exit interviews to strengthen recruiting efforts.
  - Investigate innovative means to target the population that comes to Alaska for other reasons and who may already have degrees to try to recruit them into the profession.
  - Include practitioners from district human resource departments, superintendents, principals, teachers, school board members, and other professionals who are active with teacher and administrator recruiting in the task force. These may or may not be the same as the advisory committee for the audit outlined above.
  - Scale current programs effectively implemented in Alaska districts (i.e., Lake and Peninsula School District tutoring to teaching model) to the statewide level.
    - Compile a list developed across districts of effective programs or strategies.



- Develop implementation plans for districts to adopt programs that work well in other districts.
  - Ensure funding plans are contained within implementation plans and shared.
3. Restructure Alaska Teacher Placement (ATP) services concurrently with the audit to maximize potential statewide recruitment as soon as possible.
    - Form a comprehensive advisory committee to support new and innovative activities.
    - Include practitioners from district human resource departments, superintendents, principals, teachers, school board members, and other professionals who are active with teacher and administrator recruiting in the committee composition. This committee may or may not be the same as the advisory committee for the audit or the statewide task force.
    - Facilitate sharing of lists of graduates with Alaska recruiters.
    - Develop partnerships with colleges of education throughout the United States.
    - Learn from headhunting companies what practices are working currently to fill teaching positions quickly, even in hard to fill content areas.
    - Encourage UA to push for education majors, tuition waivers, and scholarships.
    - Evaluate funding and personnel to maximize support for requested and necessary activities.
    - Enhance and redesign massive marketing strategies and implement aggressively and quickly.
  4. Support expansion of the grow-your-own models already in place.
    - Compile a list of grow-your-own models currently active, such as Educators Rising, Alaska Indigenous Teachers Initiatives at UAF, and Preparing Indigenous Teachers & Administrators for Alaska's Schools (PITAAS) at UAS.
    - Identify what is working and what is not with each.
    - Gather data to measure these efforts and understand their implications and impact.
    - Include efforts that focus on teachers becoming administrators.
    - Define pathways and share across communities and districts to aggressively recruit and increase participation in these grow-your-own programs.
  5. Consider models of Alternative Certification Pathways and determine which ones to adopt.
    - Build awareness of current alternative pathways to teacher preparation within Alaska, such as the special education waiver and Type M certification.
    - Consider AHEC model that we currently use for Rural Health and Health Workforce and implement this with teaching (<https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-health/departments/ACRHHW/>).
    - Obtain credit for life-experience for skills competency through University of Alaska.
    - Intentionally recruit BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of color) participants to increase representation among staff equivalent to representation across student population.
    - Address training and cohorts using a consortium of small districts to ensure higher participation, sharing of resources, and quality of program. This could be done for content, child behavior and psychology, or pedagogy.
    - Support non-traditional applicants gaining pedagogical knowledge using external options such as this online program currently used by 15 states (<https://www.americanboard.org/>).
    - Develop a pathway for Alternative Certification for those with a BS or BA who want to teach.
      - Create a non-traditional route outside the university system.
      - Ensure this certification is competency based, with an evaluation method to test.
      - Allow forgiveness of some required courses.
      - Ensure pathway has an appropriate level of rigor.

- Consider examples from other states and adopt models that can work in Alaska.
  - Education Commission of the States, Mitigating Teacher Shortages: Alternative Teacher Certification: <https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Mitigating-Teacher-Shortages-Alternative-Certification.pdf>
  - Inventory of Alternative Pathways in Other States: <https://www.nctq.org/yearbook/customReport?reportId=1830>
  - Idaho District and Mentor Recommendation for Non-Traditional Completers: <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/cert-psc/cert/apply/files/non-trad/District-Charter-and-Mentor-Recommendation-for-Non-traditional-Completers.pdf>

### Essential Area 5: Creating paraprofessional pathways

Recommendations under this essential area could also be considered under Essential Area 4 and are strategically listed independently to emphasize this specific recruitment tool. The recommendations here for creating paraprofessional pathways build on existing models already used in Alaska as well as some models currently working well in other states. Further, this essential area recognizes that there are many positive aspects in having local individuals seen as teachers.

1. Create a tiered pathway or career ladder for paraprofessionals.
  - Create opportunities organized into a pathway for current teacher aides with well-defined standards and appropriate level of responsibilities. Include a list of coursework to align programs.
  - Consider the grant-funded initiative Sustaining Indigenous Local Knowledge, Arts, and Teaching (SILKAT) model as a current effective model previously a partnership between UAF and Bering Straits School District.
  - Intentionally recruit local BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of color) residents to increase representation among staff equivalent to representation across student population.
  - Consider a model from New York where a series of professional development steps lead to a professional status that is one step below full certification. This professional status would have legal security so that districts could use the professional status paraprofessional in lieu of a certified teacher.  
<https://www.nysut.org/~media/files/nysut/resources/2014/october/teachingassistantprofessionalpathway01.pdf?la=en>
2. Identify and share additional resources that would assist districts and the University of Alaska in the development of Alaska alternative programs for paraprofessionals.
  - Allow all district to have the same access to the same courses, including more professional development opportunities for in-service teachers and paraprofessionals.
  - Consider having a teacher of record that oversees paraprofessionals.
  - Formalize the relationship between an elevated paraprofessional role and a teacher of record.
  - Consider roadblocks such as cost as individuals move through the system, moving from paraprofessional to teacher, and praxis exam. Consider additional implications such as impact on number of teachers, increased responsibility and compensation, and modifications to the system to accommodate properly such as collective bargaining agreements.

## Essential Area 6: Streamlining certification and recertification

The final essential area for recommendations targets issues that could be addressed quickly to support professionalism of educators while streamlining paperwork and requirements that may be overburdensome, unattractive, and not truly supportive of quality measures.

1. Modernize process by creating an online certification system that is more automated and less paper.
  - Extend number of years for each certificate before requiring recertification.
2. Offer reciprocity among states with no conditions.
  - Remove the approved program verification for individuals holding a valid regular, out-of-state teaching certificate.
  - Honor teacher certification and content areas if certificated in another state as policy.
  - Approve alternatives to testing requirements that allow for district specific certification.
  - Endorse alternatives to testing requirements for basic competency. Note that the state of Washington has an example that could be modified to fit Alaska.  
<https://www.pesb.wa.gov/preparation-programs/standards/assessments/basic-skills-assessment-west-b>
  - Allow out-of-state experience to be substituted for the basic competency exam requirement (for example, waive competency exam for three years of experience).
  - Remove the fee requirement for first certificate for military spouses.
3. Allow alternative methods to satisfy the Alaska studies and multicultural coursework.
  - Support Alaska history and culture classes reflecting the region of the school or district.
  - Consider possibilities such as eLearning modules, online courses, district induction programs, and training offered by Tribal Governments and Native Corporations.
  - Work with regional Native Corporations in the development of history and culture training specific to the regions of Alaska.
  - Require inclusion of trauma-engaged practices in the courses.
  - Allow educators three years to satisfy the Alaska history and culture coursework requirement, extended from two years.

## Implementation

To ensure implementation of the TRR Action Plan, Table 2 proposes (a) the organization to initiate the action, (b) when it should be initiated, and (c) the general outcome anticipated for the recommendation. General dates help to articulate the short-term and long-term nature of each recommendation. In some cases, it is obvious which recommendations fall under policy, practical, and professional and in other cases it may be left to the committee or task force to make that determination.

The table proposes suggestions while also recognizing the interconnectedness of the items within the education system and within the larger systems of community, statewide government, and federal government. By no means should an organization or partner be left out of the engagement of implementation if they are not listed in Table 2. This table provides a **starting point** for who should initiate so that the necessary work begins. If another organization can start the work, communication is suggested to align efforts and not work against each other. The more all systems within the state begin to work collectively and strategically the better the system can serve the needs of the students.

DEED will need additional resources to implement and provide oversight of these recommendations. DEED’s role also includes keeping a common vision across the districts and education entities that will provide unity and equal resources throughout the state. Personnel to support the task forces, committees, convenings, and work must be obtained and prioritized in addition to the current staff at the department if we expect change to happen statewide.

Table 2: Proposed implementation next steps for each of the 18 recommendations.

Recommendation	Proposed Lead	Proposed Start	Proposed Outcome
<b>STRENGTHENING WORKING CONDITIONS</b>			
1.1 Induction program	DEED develop committee	Fall 2021	framework tailored to each district complete by May 2022
1.2 Measure	DEED compile list	Fall 2021	districts adopt ways to measure working conditions by Fall 2022
1.3 Financial opportunities	DEED create or contract services	Summer 2021	share example strategies document with districts at AASB & ASA Fall 2021 conferences
<b>DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP</b>			
2.1 Organizational health	DEED identify subcommittee from 1.1	Fall 2021	districts adopt new system to pilot Fall 2022
2.2 Mentoring	DEED partner with ACSA, UA, AASB, SERRC, CEE, NEA-AK, and others to develop and implement	Fall 2021	webs of support connected to induction framework, communication structures in place, ongoing development by Fall 2023
2.3 Principal assessment	DEED create or contract services, AASSP, AAESP	Summer 2021	share example processes document with districts at AASB, ASA & Principals Fall 2021 conferences
<b>RESTRUCTURING RETIREMENT OPTIONS</b>			
3.1 Task force	Governor and Legislature identify members, contract for study	April 2021	complete study and create bill to introduce in Jan. 2022 legislative session, aim to adopt for new hiring for school year 22-23
3.2 Financial literacy	DEED create or contract services; NEA-AK create or contract services	Summer 2021	enhanced presentation for Tier III content, sessions, participation rolled out in Fall 2021, include ACSA/ALASBO in training
<b>ENHANCING RECRUITMENT EFFORTS AND OPPORTUNITIES</b>			
4.1 Independent audit	DEED contract services	Summer 2021	audit report provides recommendations by Dec. 2021
4.2 Task force	DEED identify subcommittee from 1.1	Fall 2021	complete study and create plan for statewide recruitment support by Dec 2021
4.3 ATP	UA with DEED, Governor, Legislature	Summer 2021	ongoing work with new and innovative activities at least each spring
4.4 Grow-your-own	UA with DEED, Governor, Legislature	Fall 2021	share list, recruitment resources and strategies, and success measures, continue ongoing development of programs annually
4.5 Alternative certification	DEED identify subcommittee from 1.1	Fall 2021	complete study and create plan for policy adoption by Summer 2022
<b>CREATING PARAPROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS</b>			
5.1 Career ladder	DEED contract services in partnership with UA	Fall 2021	develop a pilot study to implement new career ladder and measure success starting in Fall 2022
5.2 Resources	UA, ACSA, DEED form committee	Summer 2021	complete plan in Summer 2021 to share with districts starting Fall 2021
<b>STREAMLINING CERTIFICATION AND RECERTIFICATION</b>			
6.1 Modernize the certification system	DEED, State Board of Education address policy	Fall 2021	new system ready by Spring 2022; policy changes by Feb. 2022
6.2 Reciprocity across all states	DEED, State Board of Education, Legislature	Spring 2022	create bill to introduce in Jan. 2022 legislative session
6.3 AK history and culture coursework	DEED, State Board of Education address policy	Fall 2021	policy changes complete by Spring 2022 for new courses to be offered in Fall 2022

## Summary

In summary, these recommendations emphasize the need for continued work and collaboration to move recommendations from ideas to action. Many of the recommendations contained in here intentionally require further committees, task forces, or convenings. The TRR Action Plan should be an ongoing, collaborative, and agile process, not a once in 10-year committee and report.

Looking back two decades at the Teacher Shortage Report,<sup>6</sup> progress has been made on only six of the 40 items identified there as problems contributing to Alaska's teacher shortage.

- Lack of mentoring/administrative guidance.
- Lack of professional development opportunities.
- High cost of coming to job fairs in Alaska.
- Lack of paid in-service opportunities for new teachers – professional and cultural.
- Schools without sufficient resources – textbooks, supplies, copy machines, etc.
- Condition of school buildings (size, disrepair).

Of the 52 proposed solutions in that report, five have been implemented and continue to serve the needs of the state. Those include mentoring programs, using retired teachers, improved professional development opportunities, distance learning, and offering a lifetime teaching certificate. In fact, of the six problems and five solutions from this report, most fell low on the new TRR Survey priority, most likely since they are supported and implemented effectively in the state at this time.

More recently, two additional statewide endeavors provide insights around how to ensure these recommendations make a positive difference for Alaska's education system. From the Education Quality and Quantity (EQQ) results, implementation should include ensuring that all projects have measurable outcomes, weave cultural relevance throughout, and use a systemic approach to address the education system holistically.<sup>7</sup> Insights from the Moore V. Alaska Settlement Evaluation<sup>8</sup> also support a systemic approach, the need for oversight, the importance of communication across districts, departments, and organizations, and the value of DEED support.

Lastly, the TRR Action Plan dovetails beautifully with the framework provided by Alaska's Education Challenge.<sup>9</sup> The focus on teachers and administrators in the TRR Action Plan as a major component of the education system supports their role in increasing student success and cultivating safety and well-being. Further, the focus of the recommendations to continue ongoing work through collaboration, partnerships, and committees open the forum for supporting responsible and reflective learners. The TRR action Plan should be seen as a proactive engagement strategy to fulfill the vision presented in Alaska's Education Challenge to ensure an excellent education for every student every day.

---

<sup>6</sup>Bunde, C. (2001). Committee Report on the Statewide Teacher Shortage: House special committee on education. Juneau, AK.

<sup>7</sup>Covey, J., Adams, B. L., & Wohlforth, C. (2015). *Educator Quality and Quantity* (Rep.). Anchorage, AK: CEEAC.

<sup>8</sup>Pierson, A., Fantz, T., Lewis, K., & Speth, T. (2018). *Moore v. Alaska settlement evaluation: Early learning, teacher retention, and high school graduation qualifying exam remediation programs*. Portland, OR: Education Northwest.

<sup>9</sup>Department of Education & Early Learning (2018). *Alaska Department of Education and Early Development Strategic Plan: Meeting Alaska's Education Challenge Together*. DEED.