

# K-12 Outreach News & Events

## Our Mission

*Lifting up Educators and Students*

January 2024 • Vol. 5 No. 3

**K-12 Outreach** at the University of Alaska Fairbanks is committed to partnerships that support quality education for all of Alaska. We endeavor to do this by:

- Helping to grow our own educators
- Providing individualized support to new teachers

- Supporting educational agencies to recruit quality educators
- Supporting place-based education
- Helping to increase the effectiveness and retention of teachers

**Our programs** include the **Alaska Statewide Mentor Project (ASMP)**, **Alaska Teacher & Personnel (AT&P)**, **Educators Rising Alaska (EdRising AK)**, and **Place-Based Education Curriculum Development**.



## Alaska Statewide Mentor Project & STARR



**T**his October, the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project celebrated 20 years of mentoring new teachers across Alaska. Over 150 people gathered in Anchorage to celebrate the success of this value-added work and to offer continued support of ASMP mentoring. Dozens shared how they stayed in the education profession because of their mentor who supported them.

**S**ince 2004, the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project has trained 157 mentors and served nearly 5,000 first- and second-year teachers in 500 schools in 215 communities across all 54 Alaska school districts.

**T**his year, our cadre of 20 full-release mentors is serving over 200 teachers across the state of Alaska. Our mentors excel at providing embedded, year-long, individualized instructional coaching for those in their first and second years of teaching. This collaborative, non-evaluative support



ASMP Mentor Cheryl Childers brought a spiral pen project out for her ECT Mr. Ackerman's 2nd grade class to use for a science lesson. *Photo: Cheryl Childers.*

leads to a quality teacher in front of every student—our mission. Mentoring leads to improved student achievement, quality of instruction, and teacher retention.

**M**entors are dedicated to supporting teachers in creating safe, engaging learning environments in their classrooms.

We place a continual emphasis on integrating Alaska's Cultural Standards into Alaska Content standards so that students are centered, honored, engaged, and successful. We use a framework of teaching and coaching cycles to dig into lesson planning, analyze student learning, and develop reflective educators. Our 20 years of mentoring have validated our model, and we are excited to continue this work.

**A**s districts struggle to fill teaching positions, ASMP continues to innovate ways to increase teacher retention and quality. Another reason to celebrate: We learned last week that our U.S. Department of Education grant

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was funded to expand ASMP services to teachers who are new to the state and from overseas!

**W**hile grant-funded projects help us study the effectiveness of different aspects of mentoring, we still need sustainable support from Educational stakeholders across the state. Share the ASMP story and how important this program is to teacher retention,

quality of instruction, and student achievement.

**I**f you see any of the ASMP mentors (look for the bright blue vest!) in your schools, airports, or in your communities, say "Hi"...we would love to talk with you and share more about our work!

For more information contact **Sue McIntosh**:  
[suemcintosh.asmp@gmail.com](mailto:suemcintosh.asmp@gmail.com) or visit our website:  
<https://www.alaska.edu/asmp/>



## Alaska Teacher & Personnel

**A**laska Teachers & Personnel is pleased to announce the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Convening on February 29th, sponsored by AT&P and Alaska DEED. This partnership offers a professional learning day that is open to all school districts and will focus on the elements the Governor's Teacher Retention and Recruitment Working Group (TRR) identified as areas of need. District participants will have the opportunity to learn more about the findings of the study and its implementation thus far. Members can discuss TRR stories and those unique to your district. This is a free event and is being held in conjunction with the AT&P Spring Teacher Job Fair.

**T**he AT&P Spring Teacher Job Fair will be held the following day, March 1st, at the Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage Alaska. Watch our website for details.



AT&P had a table at the Arizona State Job Fair on Oct 18th, which followed another job fair at the University of Arizona.  
*Photo: Toni McFadden.*

**F**all recruiting travel is wrapping up. AT&P staff have attended 17 events in 10 states across the country to

introduce and promote the idea of teaching in Alaska. Engaging with teachers in person across the country helps potential candidates learn and understand some of the wonderful opportunities in Alaska's schools. At a time when the teaching profession is experiencing difficulties enticing people into the education, we are hopeful that these recruiting efforts offer a unique window into the joys of teaching in Alaska.

**W**e continue to advertise more widely across the nation, with radio advertisements, banners, and digital signage in airports and our usual advertisements in any education related printed media.



**Anchorage job fair** at the Captain Cook on June 30th. *Photo: Putt Clark.*

**A**s always, our staff are here to serve our districts with their recruiting needs. Please reach out to our staff if you have comments, suggestions, or needs. We are here for you!

You may also visit our website for more information:  
[www.alaskateacher.org](http://www.alaskateacher.org)





# Educators Rising Alaska

**E**ducators Rising had a strong start to the 2023 year. Our Introduction workshop was attended in-person and virtually by many folks, half of whom are new to the EdRising community and starting chapters.

**W**e're expanding dual enrollment options with the Schools of Education. Now there are multiple courses to choose from in Education or Early Childhood education. Some of the courses start in January 2024, so please sign up!

**N**ew courses:

- Increase Student Choice: each course has a different focus allowing students to zero in on what interests them.
- Increase options for Teacher Leaders: some of the schools will partner with a Teacher Leader at your school to deliver the course.
- Increase delivery methods: While all are online, some of the schools will send AV equipment to have your class participate synchronously with an instructor at the campus.
- Increase pathways for EdRising: While EdRising still offers Course 1 & 2 as a dual enrollment option, now there are 3 different avenues for students to complete an EdRising pathway with Dual Enrollment

**I**ntroductory videos and contact information for the different dual enrollment courses are located on our website: [www.alaska.edu/educatorsrising/dual-enrollment](http://www.alaska.edu/educatorsrising/dual-enrollment). This expansion is one way EdRising is growing to serve the needs of students across Alaska.

**E**dRising Alaska has 5 Student Officers for the 2023-24 school year. We are happy to announce Gunther Polzin from Palmer High School, Ellen Redington from Joe Redington Sr. Jr/Sr High School, Morgan Carlson-Kelly from Nikolaevsk School, Blaine Paje from Tukurngailnguq School, and Martin Olson from Mt. Edgecumbe High School.

**T**o start off their term, Officers attended the Associations of Alaska School Board's (AASB) Youth Leadership Institute event in Anchorage in November.



**2023-24 State Officers** at the AASB Youth Leadership Institute with their Teacher Leaders, November, in Anchorage. From left to right: Teacher Leader Sisa Paje, Officer Morgan Carlson-Kelly (Anchor Point), Officer Ellen Redington (Wasilla), Teacher Leader Emanuela Pokryfki, Officer Gunther Polzin (Palmer), Officer Martin Olson (Sitka), Teacher Leader Nestor Wilkinson, and Officer Blaine Paje (Stebbins). *Photo: Courtesy of Emanuela Pokryfki.*

**A**ASB provides an awesome opportunity for students to learn leadership skills, be empowered to speak about what's going on in their school and community, and meet other student leaders around the state.

**T**he officers are working with the EdRising team to create the theme and logo for the State Leadership Conference (SLC) in February, where they will help host and lead the event.

**T**he upcoming State Leadership Conference will be held in Juneau at UAS, February 22nd - 23rd. There will be 10 competitions offered virtually on February 12th - 13th. Check the website for our featured speakers and conference specifics as the New Year arrives.

**M**ark the dates on your calendar to attend. We look forward to seeing you.

For more information visit our website: [www.alaska.edu/educatorsrising/](http://www.alaska.edu/educatorsrising/)





# Place-based Education

Place-based education is integral to K-12 Outreach. It is “the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other concepts across the curriculum.”<sup>1</sup> It can best be understood as a way of connecting curriculum and content to community. When educators use place-based teaching strategies, students become engaged in learning. For more than a decade K-12 Outreach has received a

variety of grants, the most recent TASK (Teacher Ambassadors Sharing Knowledge), highlighted the need to connect curriculum to communities for Alaskan and Hawaiian students. Place-based teaching connects a student’s background and experiences to learning. To use place-based work in your classroom, school, or district, visit [www.alaska.edu/k12outreach/placebased\\_education](http://www.alaska.edu/k12outreach/placebased_education) to access our science curriculum.

K-12 Outreach continues to use place-based and culturally responsive pedagogy in its work with educators throughout Alaska. These research-based methods and strategies honor culture, values, and norms of communities across Alaska, while informing teachers of the rich history where they work. Some lessons require front-end research into the content—this is where elders and locals can enrich the content while helping to engage students and inform teachers new to the area. Other lessons are as simple as switching out curricular animals such as a seal in place of a manatee.

Place-based education is not new, it is simply quality teaching. I was a senior in high school when a teacher from New York City filled a year-long position in our small farming community in eastern Washington. After getting to know his students and new community, he used Monopoly money to teach the Stock Market in his economics class. He had us follow farming commodities such as wheat, barley, and rye. He directed and helped the high school students produce a play that followed a farming theme. He oversaw a district speech contest where he helped students select content that reflected their personal interest. He listened, learned, studied, and researched his new community. He asked questions of local farmers. He used what he learned to teach. He embraced the local ways of knowing. He KNEW his students and gave them choices that were connected to the land, the geography, and history. Place-based education at its best!

— Janice Littlebear, PhD  
Cultural Advocacy Lead, ASMP



2nd Graders sew mittens in an Utqiaġvik classroom, learning traditional sewing methods. Photo: Mentor Hal Neace

<sup>1</sup> Sobel, D. (2005). Place-Based Education: Connecting Classrooms & Communities. 2nd ed. Great Barrington, MA, Orion Society.

## Donating to K-12

Contributions may be made in support of the K-12 Outreach Program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks online at: <https://engage.alaska.edu/> Please note the K-12 Outreach Program (20419) when prompted for gift designation. Checks may also be mailed to:

UAF Development  
c/o UA Foundation  
P.O. Box 755080

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