

The big changes from our former math standards are: Students will focus on fewer topics in a year but learn them in depth, study major topics over several years, and pursue a balance of practical application, understanding, and procedural skill and fluency.

Measuring Progress

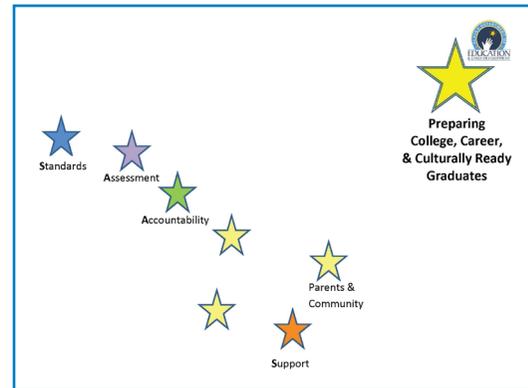
With new standards will come more rigorous and more authentic assessments in spring 2015. Students will use critical and creative thinking to read challenging texts, express answers in writing, solve multiple-step problems, and fill in fewer multiple-choice bubbles.

Because we have raised the bar, and because schools are still learning how to address the new standards, fewer students will score at the proficient level initially. This doesn't mean our students, teachers, or schools are failing.

The assessments are not pass/fail. They help schools identify students who need support. The year 2015 will become a new baseline for a new goal: understanding which students need support to become academically ready for careers and postsecondary education.

What You Can Do

One of the ways each of us can support Alaska's students—as they work hard to meet these standards—is to speak out on the value of higher expectations and the need for language skills and math skills in the workplace.



Parent Guides to Alaska's standards are at:

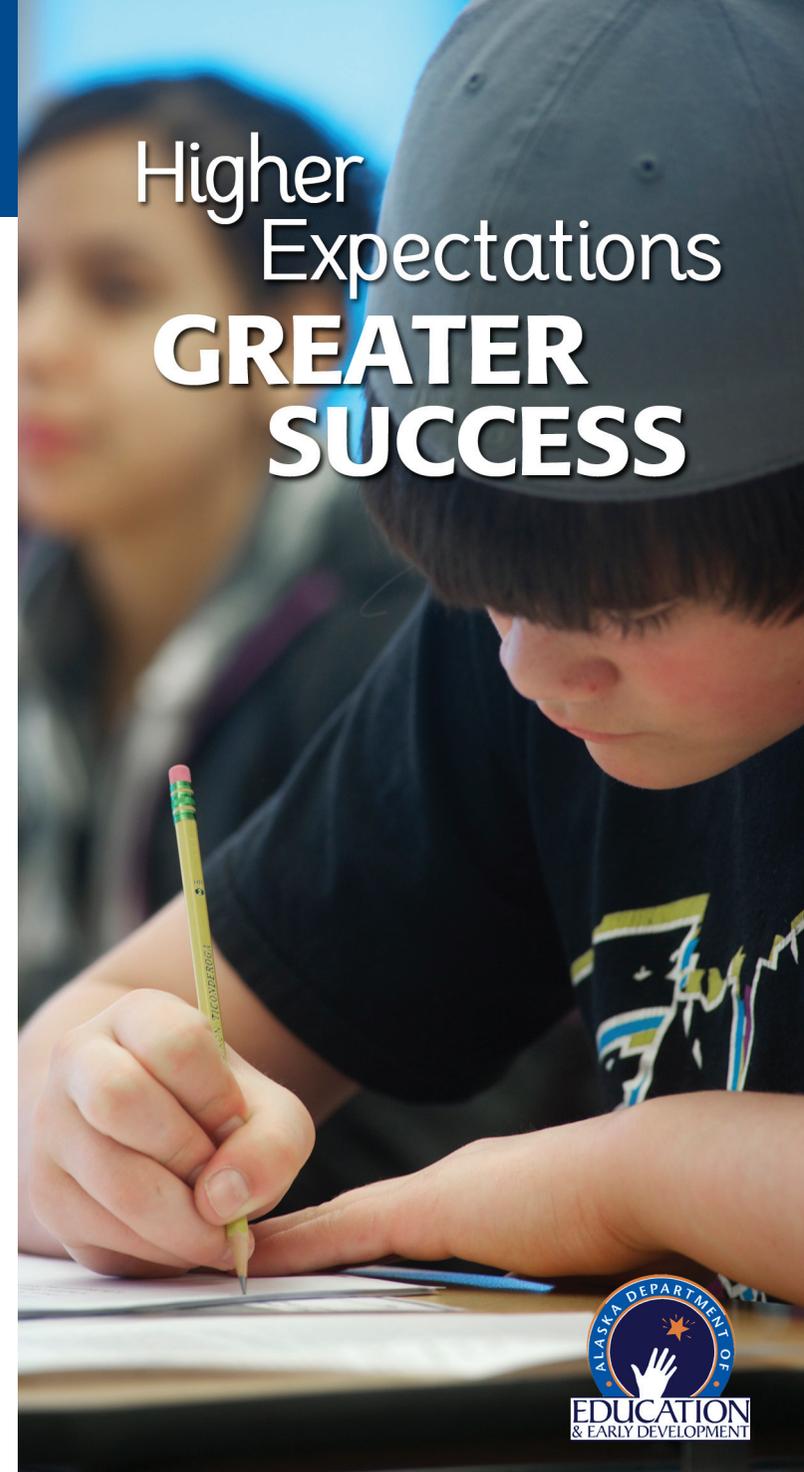
<http://education.alaska.gov/akparentscommunity/>



<http://education.alaska.gov>

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Higher Expectations GREATER SUCCESS



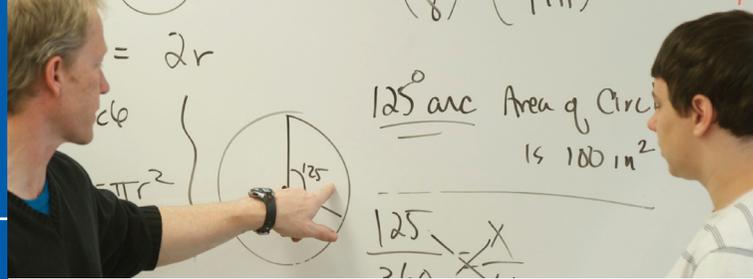
Alaska's Academic Standards and the Economy



Why We Need to Raise the Bar

Formal education prepares students to use their talents in the economy. Unfortunately, the evidence is that Alaska has fallen short.

- The Fordham Institute, a conservative-leaning education nonprofit, gave Alaska's previous academic standards an "F" in language arts and a "D" in math. (Fordham Institute)
- The University of Alaska requires at least half of its incoming freshmen to take remedial (high school-level) courses in English and/or math. (UA in Review 2013) About a third of Alaska Scholars—students who placed in the top 10% of their high school graduating class—need remediation. (UA Performance Report April 2013)
- Only about a third of freshmen seeking an occupational certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree from the University of Alaska complete their program within six years of starting. (UA in Review 2013)
- One-third of Alaska students score at the proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a rigorous test in reading and math given to fourth-graders and eighth-graders in each state. (National Center for Educational Statistics)
- One-fifth of Alaskans who want to enter the military can't pass the written exam. (The Education Trust)



Why Business and Industry Should Care

In June 2010, the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce estimated the levels of education needed to fill job openings through 2018.

The report said 62% of job openings in Alaska will require some sort of postsecondary education. Forty-seven percent will require an associate degree or higher.

But only 34% of Alaskans age 25-64 hold a two-year or four-year degree, according to U.S. Census Bureau figures from 2011. The figure is 32% for Alaskans age 25 to 34.

Alaskan employers fill their openings partly with employees from outside the state. In 2011, 20% of workers in Alaska were nonresidents, collectively making \$2 billion, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development reported.

Some of these nonresidents, of course, were seasonal workers. However, the professional, scientific, and technical services sector reported a 22% nonresident workforce. Skilled construction fields reported nonresident rates from 13% to 34%.

Our goal is that Alaska graduates be able to fill Alaska's jobs.

Raising the Bar

Alaska's public schools now have higher expectations in English and math achievement for their students. Our goal is to graduate high school students academically ready to enter jobs, the military, career-training, and college.

In June 2012, after a two-year in-state process, the State Board of Education & Early Development approved new standards in English language arts and mathematics for students from kindergarten through high school. They are Alaska's first standards to cover all the grade levels. As such, they are founded on the ideal of well-prepared graduates. The new standards were vetted by the University of Alaska.

What's more, they are Alaska's first language arts standards to promote students' ability to read, write, and speak about informational topics in subjects such as science, social studies, and technical fields. The standards continue to value literature and students' creative writing.

The language arts standards expect students to perform research, read texts with attention to detail, write with correct grammar and punctuation, make oral presentations, use technology, and collaborate with other students.

The big changes from our former language arts standards are: Students will build knowledge through texts rich in content, base arguments on evidence from the text, and regularly read complex texts.

The math standards expect students to know math facts, solve problems, apply math in real-world situations, and understand mathematical concepts. Students who are proficient in math by grade 7 will be ready for algebra in grade 8.