

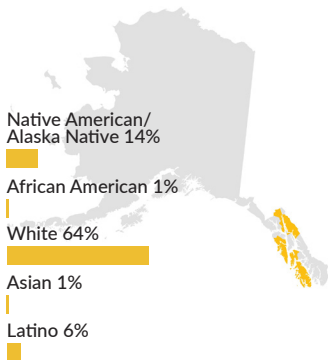


STEPS AK

Southeast Alaska

STEPS AK (Supporting Transitions and Educational Promise, Southeast Alaska) serves children and families who reside in seven communities in the hard-to-access "Alaska Panhandle." The Association of Alaska School Boards works in partnership with 18 schools and the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska—as well as over 20 other agencies—to provide an early childhood through postsecondary pipeline of supports. Because of Alaska's history of sociocultural oppression of native people, STEPS AK emphasizes equitable equitable community building, family engagement, and trauma-informed and cultural responsiveness practices.

COMMUNITY COMPOSITION



9%

of STEPS AK residents live below federal poverty level

27%

of STEPS AK households are families with children

\$76,006

average median household income (per year) in STEPS AK

11,156

children live in the neighborhood footprint

4,800

children are enrolled in partner schools

22 18
partner agencies partner schools

PROGRAM IN ACTION

ACADEMIC CHALLENGES

Kindergartener Development

13%

of kindergarteners are ready for school

Academic Proficiency Math

25%

of students are proficient in math

Academic Proficiency ELA

35%

are proficient in English language arts

Chronic Absenteeism

18%

of students are chronically absent from school

High School Graduation

80%

of students graduate on time

Source for academic challenges: 2017 grantee application for funding

SELECT STRATEGIES

- Parents as Teachers
- Tlingit and Haida language and family activities
- *Helping Little Kids Succeed—Alaskan Style*
- Inquiry-based learning (e.g., STEAM, STEM, Place-Based)
- Summer culture and academic programs
- Homework tutors
- Reading mentors
- Summer culture and academic programs
- Homework tutors
- Trauma-informed practices
- Tlingit and Haida navigators (wraparound services)
- School climate strategies
- The CRESEL Project to promote culturally responsive embedded social and emotional learning
- Youth engagement and leadership
- Summer STEM
- Early college experience and credit recovery

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Following a training on creating a culturally responsive school environment, which STEPS AK staff gave to 250 teachers and administrators, the participants applied what they learned to opening the school year. For example, one partner school welcomed families to a new-student orientation night by using Tlingit language greetings and by asking parents to share where they are from and, in one word, a lesson or value that they learned as a child that continues to be important for them. The words, which included "work," "compassion," "service," and "respect," were posted at the school's entrance as a reminder of the very important role that families play in shaping their child's educational experience and that schools and families are in an equal two-way partnership.