

VITAL SIGNS

ALASKA

Business leaders in Alaska cannot find the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) talent they need to stay competitive. Students' lagging performance in K-12 is a critical reason why. The good news is that the nation's most effective STEM education programs can help turn the tide.

Alaska students have made little progress in math over the past decade. Not enough have the chance to learn rich and challenging content to prepare them for college and careers, and most of the state's eighth graders don't have teachers with an undergraduate major in math, though the state fares better when it comes to science teachers.

ALASKA NEEDS MORE STEM TALENT

STEM fields are growing in Alaska

Between 2017 and 2027:

STEM jobs will grow

Non-STEM jobs will grow

8%

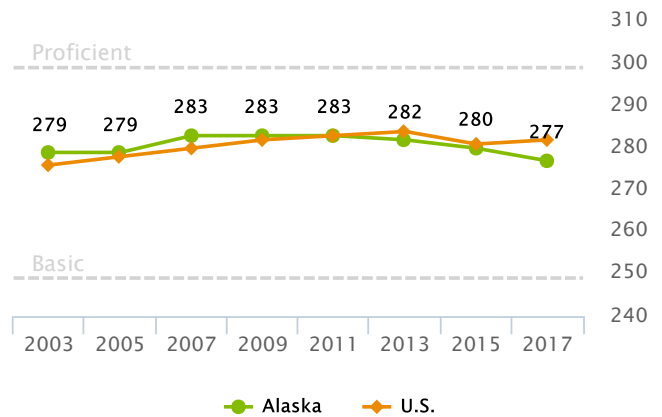
4%

THE ALASKA STEM SKILLS SHORTAGE STARTS EARLY

Performance in math has been flat

Alaska has made minimal progress in math.

Trends in 8th grade math scores, 2003-2017

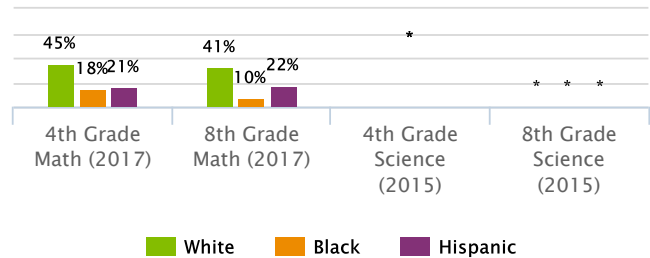


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, 2003-2017

Students of color lag farthest behind

Closing achievement gaps must remain a priority.

Percentage of Alaska students at or above proficient, by race/ethnicity



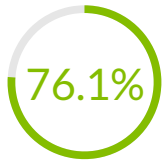
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, 2015-2017

*Data not available or reporting requirements not met.

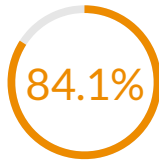
The state must plug the gaps in the STEM pipeline

The Alaska STEM pipeline loses young people at every level of the education system. Low graduation rates from high school and college narrow the pipeline of students who can gain advanced STEM skills. Of those students who do graduate, few get a post-secondary degree in STEM.

What percentage of high school students graduate? (2014-2015)



Alaska

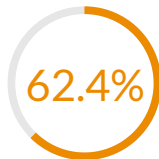


United States

Of high school graduates who enter a 4-year degree program, what percentage graduate? (2012-2013)

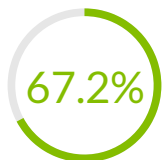


Alaska

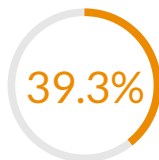


United States

Of high school graduates who enter a 2-year associate's degrees program, what percentage graduate? (2012-2013)



Alaska

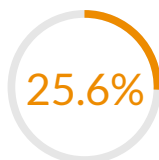


United States

What percentage of certificates and degrees is in STEM fields? (2014-2015)



Alaska



United States

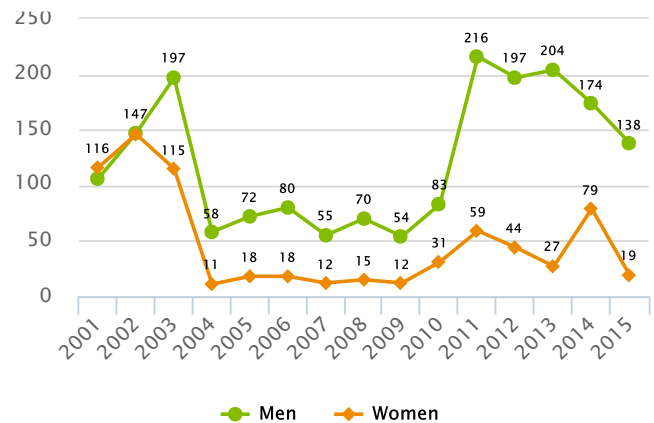
TAP ALASKA'S FEMALE AND MINORITY TALENT

Together, females and minorities make up more than half of Alaska's population, yet they are much less likely to earn STEM degrees or become STEM professionals. Closing these gaps can pay big dividends in the state.

Women have lost ground in computing

The available talent in computer science would rise dramatically if the state simply closed the gender gap in these subjects.

Number of computing degrees/certificates in Alaska

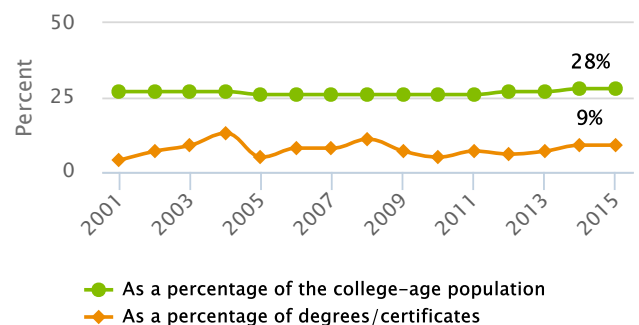


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, 2001-2015

People of color have gained little ground in engineering degrees

It is critical to prepare and inspire many more students of color to pursue STEM subjects such as computer science and engineering.

Underrepresented minorities in Alaska earning engineering degrees/certificates



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, 2001-2015

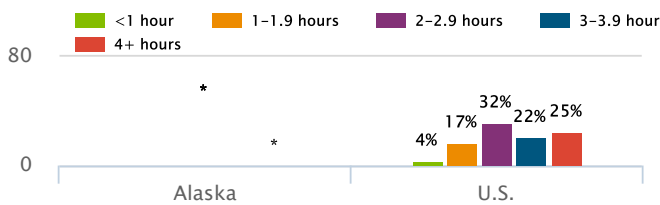
*Data not available or reporting requirements not met.

GIVE ALASKA STUDENTS ACCESS TO BETTER STEM LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Lack of access to such opportunities severely limits young people's college and career prospects.

The state should make more time for elementary science

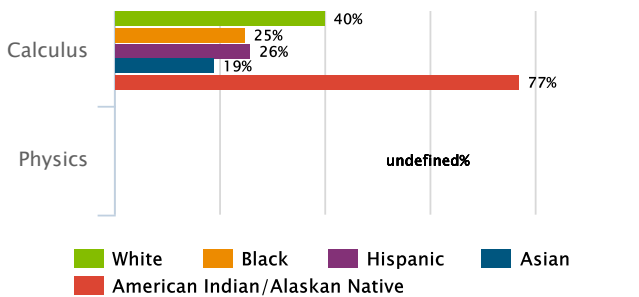
Hours per week spent on science, grades 1-4, 2015



The state should improve access to advanced courses

Many students lack access to such courses.

Students in Alaska high schools that do not offer challenging math and science courses, 2013/14



Success in Advanced Placement courses can put more students on a path to STEM careers.

Of the high school graduating class of 2015 in Alaska:

	Took AP Math Exam	Scored 3+ on AP Math Exam
All Students	12%	8%
White	14%	9%
Black	6%	3%
Hispanic	6%	4%
Asian	17%	10%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3%	1%

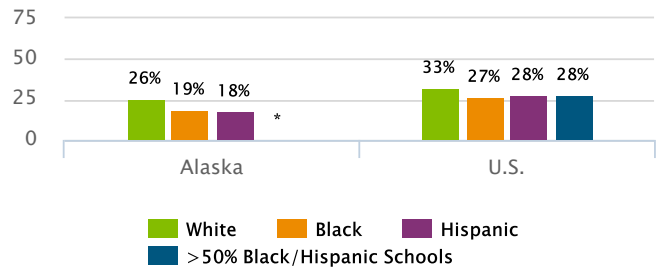


DEVELOP AND RETAIN TALENTED STEM TEACHERS IN ALASKA

Research shows that teachers' content knowledge and teaching experience can affect student performance

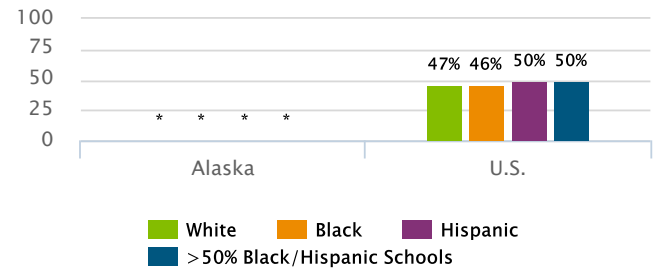
Boost teachers' content knowledge

Eighth-graders whose math teachers have an undergraduate major in math, 2017



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education 2017

Eighth-graders whose science teachers have an undergraduate major in science, 2015

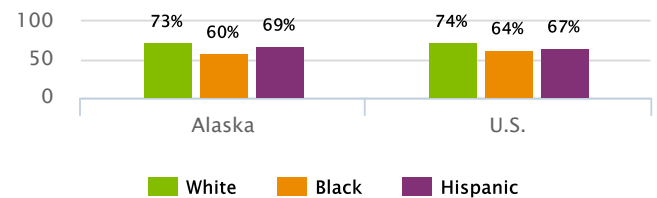


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education 2015

Retain excellent teachers

Minority students are least likely to have experienced teachers

Eighth-graders whose math teachers have 6+ years of experience teaching their subject



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education 2017

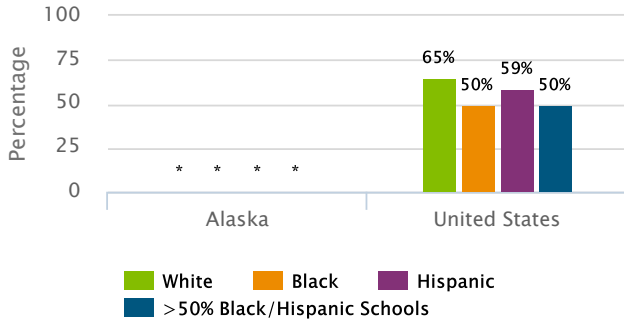
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GIVE ALASKA SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS THE RESOURCES THEY NEED

Teachers in Alaska need better resources, facilities, and teaching materials to succeed.

Too many teachers lack the tools of their trade

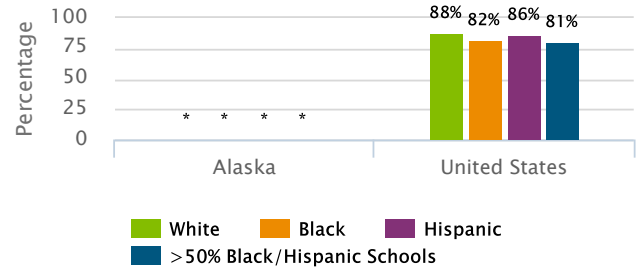
Eighth-graders whose science teachers say they have all or most of the resources they need, 2015



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, 2015

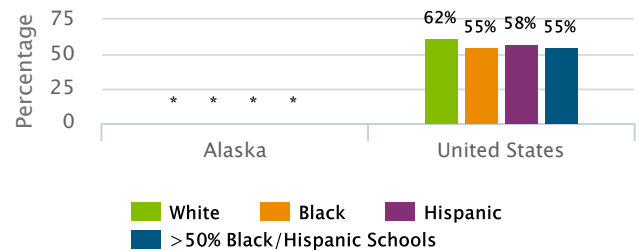
The state should improve access to science supplies

Eighth-graders whose schools have science labs, 2015



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, 2015

Eighth-graders whose schools report that supplies or materials for science labs are available "to a large extent," 2015



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, 2015

*Data not available or reporting requirements not met.

For the complete state report, methodology, and sources, see vitalsigns.ecs.org (vitalsigns.ecs.org)

Education Commission of the States serves as a partner to state policymakers by providing personalized support and helping education leaders come together and learn from one another. Through our programs and services, policymakers gain the insight and experience needed to create effective education policy.



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