

Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education Alaska Student Loan Corporation

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Alaska Commission on
Postsecondary Education

Alaska Student
Loan Corporation

The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, funded by the Alaska Student Loan Corporation, promotes access to and success in education and career training beyond high school. The Commission provides:

- ◆ programs creating early awareness of the importance of preparing for higher education success
- ◆ education planning tools and resources
- ◆ advocacy and support for postsecondary participation in Alaska
- ◆ financial aid for college and career training
- ◆ education consumer protection through institutional authorization and complaint investigation

While primarily distributed electronically, *ACPE Update* is available in paper format upon request.

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APS Outcomes Report

Evidence of Student Impacts

Ask a researcher what makes their workday exciting and you're likely to get an answer like *more data!* Data is powerful and, these days, seems to be everywhere. It's kept on everything from how long we watch TV, to what groceries we buy, to how many text messages we send.

Alaska's leaders have a growing interest in understanding what, if any, impacts state-supported initiatives and strategies have on the well-being and success of state citizens. It is no surprise then, that in 2010, when establishing the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS), they called for an annual report on the statewide scholarship. An examination, year over year, of the behavior of APS recipients both in their educational programs and ultimately the workforce, is anticipated to provide meaningful indicators of what factors are the most important for student success and progress.

The APS Outcomes Report, annually presented to the Legislature, the Governor, and the people of the state, represents an unprecedented multi-agency collaboration between the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE), Department of Education & Early Development (EED), Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) and the University of Alaska (UA). The report contains information about the financial assistance provided to students meeting the educational performance requirements to become APS eligible (meeting certain standardized testing, rigorous curricula and GPA thresholds). Relevant outcomes data are contributed by each of the four partner agencies. EED receives eligibility determinations from each of the 53 school districts and the state-run Mt. Edgecombe High School. Additional socioeconomic, demographic and postsecondary education enrollment data for all Alaska public high school graduates is provided by ACPE.

ACPE shares APS eligibility information with UA, where the vast majority of APS recipients attend, and the university, through its Statewide Institutional Research & Analysis section (IRA) produces student enrollment and performance data which facilitate comparisons between APS-eligible and non-eligible student populations.



This year's report begins the slow process of accumulating data over time with the expectation that some performance patterns will emerge and provide a basis for determining if the APS, as currently designed and administered, is delivering on the intended objective: to inspire Alaska's student to push themselves academically in areas that correlate to success in college and career training.

Examples of report content include eligibility and scholarship usage by gender, ethnicity, school district and region of the state. This information creates transparency around the issue of access and use of the APS. With this knowledge, stakeholders can make informed decisions about where success, as measured by students' APS eligibility, may or may not be found and further support and refine those programs resulting in student success.

Elsewhere in the report are UA data regarding the extent to which APS recipients enroll in remedial courses at the postsecondary level and comparing their patterns to that of non-recipient student peers. New in the 2013 APS Outcomes Report are early looks at employment as well as APS recipient persistence and success in their educational programs. These latter components, student persistence and success, will be more fully measured in future years' reports as additional school terms elapse.

The Commission looks forward to continuing its cooperative data collection and analysis with its partners—DEED, DOLWD and UA; together we will strive to provide insight that will 1) reveal to what extent the Alaska Performance Scholarship delivers on its objectives; and, 2) enable policymakers and stakeholders to make data-driven decisions relative to the future shape and structure of the statewide scholarship.



Find the 2013 APS Outcomes Report at:

http://acpe.alaska.gov/DATA-REPORTS/Reports/APS_Outcomes_Report.aspx

ANSWERS - Alaska's P-20W SLDS



Most of us, particularly when we are interested in a topic, are looking for Answers. With that in mind the team developing Alaska's new cross-sector Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) have adopted **Alaska Navigator: Statewide Workforce and Education-Related Statistics (ANSWERS)** as the system name. ANSWERS is being designed to provide Alaska stakeholders with relevant and timely information, currently unavailable without linked data, to assess, evaluate and improve the state's education and career development pipeline.

Following the award in July 2012 of a three-year \$4 million grant from the Institute of Education Sciences of the US Department of Education, four partner agencies - the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE), the Department of Education and Early Development (EED), the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD), and the University of Alaska (UA) – are jointly working to develop ANSWERS as an impactful and sustainable state resource. Alaska anticipates contributing over \$1 million to the development of the secure longitudinal data system that links K-12 students, teachers, college/career students and workforce/industry data together to better understand the education to workforce cycle.

A central goal of the ANSWERS project is to illuminate student transitions and performance in postsecondary education, and produce information about Alaska's return on investment in workforce and intervention strategies and initiatives. By widely disseminating this to stakeholders, educators, administrators and policymakers, information about successful strategies can be applied to inform both policy and practice.

Information that will not be in ANSWERS includes personally identifiable information, such as Social Security Numbers, names, or dates of birth. These will be removed before data is loaded to the longitudinal database and aggregate data will be available in accordance with privacy protection suppression rules.

ANSWERS will provide reports, dashboards, and other information products designed to provide the right information to the right people in the right formats, to be used in decision and policy making.

A set of key policy questions that rely on linked education and workforce data was developed by the project's partner agencies with input from education and workforce representatives. As part of the project's planning phase, Alaska contracted with a national SLDS expert to validate these questions with ANSWERS stakeholders. The most important takeaway from interactions with individuals from all sectors involved is the strong interest and enthusiasm for the project and the information ANSWERS will offer.

Stakeholders also emphasized the need to focus questions on trends, rather than simple numbers, and to look at cohorts over time. For them, the most meaningful analyses are to be found in key subgroups and in local or regional clusters; and use cross-sector data, even when the outcome may be primarily focused on one sector. This type of data is most likely to inform action that achieves results. Examples may include:

How many and which Alaska students are progressing through an education program/system to achieve college, workforce and life readiness?

What are the migration rates and outcomes for Alaskans attending postsecondary programs outside of Alaska and subsequently returning to Alaska?

Of those Alaskans who participated in and exited Alaska secondary or postsecondary institutions without credentials, how many are within X number of semesters to completion and what are their employment statuses and incomes?

Of those Alaskans who receive education services from Alaska secondary and postsecondary institutions, how many remain in the state and contribute to the economy?

What is the impact of financial aid on college access and success?



How effective are specific interventions and strategies to increase the rate at which students/citizens, particularly those from low-income families, progress through an education program/system to achieve college, workforce, and life readiness?

How do Alaska's postsecondary institutions' educational programs align with Alaska's current and anticipated workforce needs?

What is the private/public return on private/public investment in education?

How does Alaska attract and retain teachers?

So who benefits from ANSWERS? With the information that will be made available, educators and policy makers will be able to direct resources to target the most impactful and successful programs for students. Additionally, information will be available to the public, including students and parents, to help them make decisions about which programs of study to choose, which institution to attend, and which occupations to pursue.

Teachers will be able to receive feedback about how their students (or students within their school/district/region) perform, compared to students in other areas. They will also be able to get data on how students receiving certain interventions perform over time, compared to those who don't, or those who receive different interventions. Workforce development can benefit by gaining information about how education impacts employment. ANSWERS training will be available to various stakeholder groups including educators, researchers, policy makers, and the public to enhance the value and utility of the system.

Inter-agency partnerships are essential to ANSWERS' success and will ensure the system meets all applicable security, data privacy and other compliance requirements and is sustainable over time. A key consideration in the system design and development is cost-effective maintenance and system sustainability.

Currently seven months into year one of the project, the multi-agency project team is on schedule and has developed a strong collaborative relationship. If the past seven months are an indicator of future success, ANSWERS will be operational and ready to deliver valuable outcomes data to policy makers, practitioners, and other Alaskans by early 2015.

Commission Meetings Scheduled

Tuesday, April 2, 2013 - Juneau

Thursday, July 25, 2013 - Anchorage

Thursday, October 24, 2013 - Anchorage

Thursday, January 9, 2014 - Anchorage