

NCLB Making a Difference in Alaska



- Between 2002 and 2004 (latest data available):
 - The Hispanic-white achievement gap in third-grade mathematics narrowed by five percentage points
 - The Alaska Native-white achievement gap in third-grade reading narrowed by three percentage points
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(*Alaska Report Card*)
- “The Anchorage School District is being nationally recognized for higher-than-average reading and math scores. Anchorage is one of three cities nationwide to outperform the rest of their respective states in standardized reading and math scores.... Albuquerque, New Mexico and San Francisco, California, rounded out the top three cities for above-average standardized test scores.” (KTUU-TV Anchorage, 3/29/05)
- “A serving of SPRITE or COLA might help jump-start struggling students and improve student learning throughout the district, say Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District officials. SPRITE and COLA are summer school programs aimed at students in kindergarten through second grade who are at risk of academic failure.... SPRITE serves students who struggle with early reading skills but who don’t qualify for special education.... Though it’s a summer program, SPRITE began in April with a series of Saturday sessions. Some 369 students throughout the district are participating. Teachers work with groups of about six to eight students to develop individual lesson plans. The lessons, though, will be delivered by parents over the summer.... COLA includes special education students and will teach both reading and math skills.... Unspent federal funds, which the district was required to set aside to cover the cost of transportation for students who chose to leave a failing school and attend a passing school within the district, as mandated by No Child Left Behind, will cover the cost of SPRITE.” (*Anchorage Daily News*, 5/4/05)
- “Twenty-two experienced Alaska teachers left classrooms this year to travel to rural communities to provide full-time support to about 370 first- and second-year teachers. As the mentoring program wraps up its first year, participants said that it’s keeping new teachers in classrooms and that cutting the high teacher turnover will help kids. Education Commissioner Roger Sampson said it’s already working: Every school year, about 15 new teachers leave Alaska at winter break and never come back, he said. ‘This year, that number was zero. That’s pretty compelling evidence.’ Nationally, about half of teachers new to the industry leave the profession in five years or less. ... Alaska has about 750 first- or second-year teachers each year. Teachers in the program get weekly or daily contact with mentors by phone or e-mail, plus once-a-month visits. ... Thirty-one Alaska school districts participated in the program this year, and more want to come on board, Sampson said. He said the program will grow modestly next year and continue to be funded by grants and federal dollars.” (*Anchorage Daily News*, 5/23/05)