Kodiak Island Borough School District
Alaska

Superintendent: Betty Walters
Primary contact: Stewart McDonald, director, state and federal programs and assessments
2,706 students, K-12, rural

District Description
The Kodiak Island Borough School District is located on Kodiak Island, the second largest island in the United States. Most of the students live in the small borough of Kodiak, but others are scattered among seven Alaska Native villages that have their own schools: Akhiok, Chiniak, Karluk, Larsen Bay, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, and Port Lions-Danger Bay. Village populations range from 40 to 250 inhabitants. In one village school, Larsen Bay, enrollment totals 15 students who attend class in a one-room school with all grades. Roads are limited on Kodiak Island, and most of the land is uninhabited wilderness. Some of the villages are accessible only by boat or small plane. In the past three years the U.S. Coast Guard has increased its surveillance activities in the Gulf of Alaska, which has brought many more military families to Kodiak. Salmon fishing and canning are the main industries, and a large logging crew dominates one village. Tourism is increasing.

Almost all the village residents are Alaska Native people known as Alutiiq (Russian-Aleut or “People of the Sea”). Fishing continues to be an important occupation, and although western traditions and technology have changed how people live, the tribes maintain their distinct lifestyles. Each of the villages, except Chiniak, is governed by a federally recognized tribe. The school district works with the tribal organizations.

Key Findings
• The Kodiak Island Borough School District relies heavily on technology to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind because of the vast area encompassed by the district. High school students participate in online classes, teachers can participate in interactive professional development and training, and computer labs are open after school for student use. Parents have received donated computers for students to use at home.

• Although Kodiak still has some teachers who do not meet the NCLB requirements for being highly qualified, 88% of the teachers in 2005-06 have met the requirements, compared with 25% two years ago. (Some teachers left the district, and those who replaced them met the requirements.) The teachers who are not yet highly qualified tend to be teachers in small village schools who teach all grades and subjects, or special education teachers.

• Two Kodiak schools missed the adequate yearly progress target for their graduation rates in 2005. Both schools enroll small numbers of students (15 in one and 32 in the other), which means that one student dropping out could make a significant difference in the percentage of graduates.
Overall Impact of NCLB

The Kodiak Island Borough School District and its schools have seen many changes as a result of NCLB. One such change was the district’s immediate emphasis on technology for improving communication, delivering instruction, training teachers, and doing assessments. Another change involves the district’s continual attempts to make sure teachers meet NCLB qualifications. A third change is the effort to improve student achievement across the district.

The biggest NCLB change, according to Stewart McDonald, new director of federal programs and assessments, is that now school staff clearly recognizes that academic proficiency must be improved. McDonald is very impressed that teachers have improved their understanding of proficiency levels, cut scores on tests, and different types of intervention programs. “Building by building,” he said, “I see teachers sitting down and discussing low-performing students.” McDonald noted that this is happening even in high school, and it didn’t used to be that way. The schools, he explained, are now about a lot more than athletics. “I have seen school groups actually get excited about data analysis,” he said. “Teachers feel empowered when they discover that by changing their instruction, they can improve student performance.”

NCLB and Student Achievement

Kodiak Island schools are quite diverse because of their locations, the grade levels served, their communities, and the number of students enrolled. Overall achievement is high, and most schools have exceeded state proficiency targets for AYP. For example, in Port Lions School (a Title I village school, grades K-12, with 42 students, mostly Alaska Natives), 88% of students met the proficiency level in language arts and 72% in math in 2004-05—well above the state targets of 71.48% in language arts and 57.61% in math.

At North Star Elementary (grades K-6, with 262 students, 60% white, 22% Alaska Native, 10% Asian/Pacific Islander), 84% of students reached proficiency targets in language arts and 74% in math. The percentages of student subgroups reaching proficiency ranged from 66% for Alaska Native students in math to 90% for white students in language arts.

In Main Elementary (a Title I school, grades K-5, with 277 students, mostly Asian/Pacific Islander and Latino, 72% low income), 77% of students met the AYP targets in language arts, and 70% in math. The proficiency percentages for subgroups at this school ranged from 43% for Latino students in math—below the AYP target—to 81% for Asian/Pacific Islander students in language arts.

Kodiak High School is the only high school in the district. Except for a few high school students who attend the village schools, all 9th-12th graders in the district attend this school. The school’s 840 students represent one-third of the district enrollment. In 2004-05, achievement for students as a whole exceeded AYP targets. Of the 449 students in grades 9 and 10, the two high school grades tested in Alaska, 77% met the proficiency targets in language arts and 62% did so in math. The white, Asian/Pacific Islander, Alaska Native, and Latino subgroups also met AYP targets, but three other subgroups—low-income students, students with disabilities, and English language learners—missed AYP targets in both language arts and math in 2004-05. Table 1 shows the achievement gaps among subgroups at Kodiak High from 2004-05 testing.

In other assessments the school uses that do not count for AYP, students in grades 11 and 12 perform better. According to Stewart McDonald, this indicates that teachers are using the results from grades 9 and 10 testing to modify their instruction, which is the goal of a districtwide improvement effort. The available data from testing in grades 7 and 8 show similar achievement gaps, including the tendency of the district’s Latino students to score better in language arts than in math.
Adequate Yearly Progress and School Improvement

DISTRICT AND SCHOOL AYP STATUS

Most Kodiak Island Borough schools have made AYP each year, and all Title I schools have stayed out of school improvement. This is fortunate for the district, because it was recognized in the early days of NCLB that choice would not be possible with island schools that were accessible only by boat or small plane and, during the long winter, only by air. Although one Title I school did not make AYP one year in the past, no Title I school has gone two consecutive years without making AYP.

The school that has had the most difficulty making AYP is a non-Title I school, Kodiak Island High School, which has not made AYP for three consecutive years. Three of the school’s subgroups—low-income students, English language learners, and students with disabilities—missed the proficiency targets in both math and reading in 2005.

Two other non-Title I schools did not make AYP in 2005. Kodiak Middle School did not have a high enough proficiency rate in math for the subgroup of Alaska Native students, and the Kodiak Correspondence School did not make AYP because it fell short of the graduation rate target. For both of the schools, it was their first year not making AYP.

The only Title I school that did not make AYP was Larsen Bay School, a K-12 island school. The school missed the AYP target because of its graduation rate, but this was the first year that the school missed AYP, so there are no consequences for the school.

At times the Alaska Native lifestyle conflicts with the educational expectations of the 21st century and NCLB. For example, one school did not meet its AYP target for graduation because the two seniors in the school went to fish in the spring. They came back in the fall to finish school, but because they did not graduate within four years, the school did not meet its graduation rate target.

DISTRICT AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

Although the Kodiak district has consistently made AYP, and although NCLB sanctions do not apply to non-Title I schools, the district and school staffs are nevertheless making major efforts to improve achievement at Kodiak High School, which has not made adequate yearly progress for three years.

Table 1. Percentage of Students Scoring at Proficient Levels by Subgroup, Kodiak High School—2004-05

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>Language Arts</th>
<th>Math</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>Alaska Native 52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander 49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska Native</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>Low income 43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low income</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>Latino 37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>English language learners 19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language learners</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>Students with disabilities 17%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Kodiak High has initiated a full school review of subgroup achievement. Staff members are
discussing a series of interventions to improve achievement, with special attention to the needs
of lower-achieving subgroups. The school's grading process is also being reviewed to make sure
that content standards are addressed and that teacher expectations for student learning are con-
sistent. The staff plans to implement the interventions they select in 2006-07.

**Testing Issues**

There has been no change in testing in Kodiak Borough. All students from grades 3 through 10
are tested in language arts and math.

**Impact of NCLB on Curriculum and Instruction**

The biggest change in Kodiak's curriculum and instruction has been the development and imple-
mentation of technology in all the schools and at all grade levels. Three years ago, the district began
to boost its technology capabilities for students and staff. It continues to work with the University
of Alaska at Anchorage and rural service providers to create innovative distance learning programs.
More course offerings are available for students, especially in island schools. Telecommunications
capabilities are being expanded into the homes of students with e-mail, voice mail, and Web pages.
Teachers use class Web pages and e-mail for school-to-home communication. Families that did not
have home computers benefited from a program that distributed surplus computers to them, and
they were also provided with instruction on how to use the computer.

At Kodiak High School, students can enroll in multimedia classes. One joint effort with the
community is to produce commercials for local businesses. Another way that technology is being
implemented is through adult learning and literacy. School partnerships have been created with
community members to teach new skills. To improve students' access to computers, some
schools keep their computer labs open after school and in the evenings.

Examples of other curriculum-related efforts to improve achievement can be found at all
Kodiak schools. Old Harbor School has implemented kindergarten literacy assistance through
the Even Start program, and a tutor has been placed at the school through a partnership with
the Kodiak Area Native Association. East Elementary School has initiated a new spelling pro-
gram and extra reading support, including individual growth charts so students can track their
own improvement.

**English Language Learners**

English language learners in Kodiak speak 17 languages, and most are Asian/Pacific Islander. The
number of Tagalog speakers continues to increase, as does the number of Spanish speakers. The
district uses English immersion to help these students acquire and improve their English lan-
guage proficiency.

**Teacher Qualifications, Support, and Professional Development**

**HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS**

Two years ago only 25% of Kodiak teachers met all the NCLB requirements for being "highly
qualified." A year ago that percentage increased to 50%, and in 2005-06 it is 88%. Currently,
29 teachers are not yet highly qualified. Teachers at the village schools are responsible for the
instruction of all grade levels and all subject areas, so to meet NCLB requirements, they would
have to become highly qualified in all subjects they teach. However, better access to online
instruction in high school subjects has made it possible for some village teachers to meet the
qualifications, because students are receiving their main instruction in some upper-level subjects from Internet-based teachers rather than from their classroom teacher. Other problem areas for highly qualified teachers include special education and math, particularly in the middle school.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The isolated locations of the island schools pose challenges to providing all teachers with professional development and training, but district officials hope that with improved capabilities in technology, teachers will be able to improve their teaching and thereby improve student learning. With better telecommunications, teachers and other staff have more opportunities to share information and communicate with one another, and district training sessions are now available in interactive formats that reach all the villages. Teachers can take part in districtwide in-service training, professional development at the school building level, training related to specific programs, and workshops for college credit. Now they can also participate in classroom modeling and mentoring, McDonald explained.

**Paraprofessional Qualifications and Support**

Kodiak has only five paraprofessionals in the Title I schools. One has met NCLB requirements, and the other four are part of a plan to meet the requirements by June 30, 2006.

**Funding and Costs**

In recent years, the Kodiak Island Borough schools have been concerned about diminished state funding. But now that state funding has stabilized, district officials are more concerned about the possibility of local budget cuts for 2006. As for federal funds, the Title I allocation was $27,000 less in 2005-06 than in the previous year, which means that district officials have had to look for creative ways to fund the improvements they are making. For example, by working with Kodiak College and the Borough of Kodiak, the school district has been able to share some of the costs of technology implementation and staff development. The community continues to increase the amount of bandwidth it receives, and the district is working with the state to provide local access to the Internet in the remote villages through E-rate funding.

**Data File—Kodiak Island Borough School District**

- **Location:** Gulf of Alaska
- **Type:** Rural
- **Number of Schools**
  - Total: 15
  - Elementary: 4
  - Middle/junior high: 1
  - High schools: 1
  - Other: 7 K-12 schools, 1 K-10 school, 1 correspondence school
- **Number of Title I schools:** 7
Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total enrollment: 2,706

- White: 45%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 25%
- Alaska Native: 21%
- Latino: 7%
- African American: 1%
- American Indian: 1%

- Low-income students: 46%
- English language learners: 16%
- Students with disabilities: 16%

Teachers

Total number of teachers: 238
Percentage meeting NCLB "highly qualified" requirements: 88%

Paraprofessionals

Total number of Title I instructional paraprofessionals: 5
Percentage meeting NCLB “highly qualified” requirements: 20%

Total Number That Did Not Make AYP Based on 2004-05 Testing

Title I and non-Title I schools that did not make AYP, including those in improvement, restructuring, or corrective action: 4

Number of Title I Schools in Improvement, Restructuring, or Corrective Action

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<th>Based on 2003-04 testing</th>
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Number of Schools Offering Choice and/or SES

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<td>Schools offering choice only:</td>
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