



AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH®

# ALASKA INITIATIVE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMATIVE REPORT

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## Table of Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>I. THE ALASKA INITIATIVE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>II. THE EVALUATION.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>III. CHANGES IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES: A FOCUS ON THE QS2 INITIATIVE.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>A. CHANGES IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>School Climate.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Adult-Youth Relationships.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>B. CHANGES IN YOUTH OUTCOMES .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Social and Emotional Learning .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Youth Risk Behaviors.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Student Academic Engagement and Achievement .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>C. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND YOUTH OUTCOMES.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>D. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON QS2 COMMUNITIES .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>IV. COMMUNITY EXAMPLE: THE PRIBILOF ISLANDS .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>V. COMMUNITY EXAMPLE: DILLINGHAM.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>VI. COMMUNITY EXAMPLE: ANCHORAGE.....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: SEARCH INSTITUTE’S 40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS® .....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: QS2 SCHOOL DISTRICTS.....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CONNECTEDNESS SURVEY ITEMS.....</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CONNECTEDNESS SURVEY SCORES....</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>APPENDIX E: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FACTORS.....</b>	<b>114</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2001, the Association of Alaska School Boards received funding through the No Child Left Behind Act's Alaska Native Education Program to provide technical assistance and support to communities across Alaska to engage adults in creating positive changes to promote the academic progress and overall wellbeing of their young people. The result was the Initiative for Community Engagement (Alaska ICE). In late 2004, AASB engaged the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct a longitudinal evaluation of its Alaska ICE programs. The purpose of this report is to provide an independent evaluation of what Alaska ICE has and has not achieved through its efforts, and to identify best practices that have emerged from this work.<sup>1</sup>

Alaska ICE's goal was to imbed a strength-based approach to supporting youth within formal and informal policies and practices at the state, regional, community, and personal levels. The Alaska ICE model of change is based on the idea that the provision of resources and technical assistance to communities would promote a change in the community environment for youth where the community as a whole (including organizations, schools and individuals) would provide youth with the kinds of supports they need to thrive. To achieve this goal, Alaska ICE supported schools, organizations, and communities through workshops, training, strategic planning, technical assistance, and the provision of informational resources. The Initiative increased its reach through partnership with numerous youth-serving organizations throughout the state of Alaska. Strengthening community collaborations improves a community's ability and drive to support youth. Several communities supported by Alaska ICE created formal or informal networks in which the needs of youth in the community were identified and a coherent strategy was formulated to address those needs.

Overall, communities supported by Alaska ICE adopted policies and practices that were strength-based and supported youth assets. This mostly happened within schools and other youth-serving organizations. Networks and coalitions were a successful vehicle for change in many communities. Community members reported increased support for youth among adults in the community. In many cases, this did not extend as far into the community as some of the respondents would have liked. ICE appears to have had particularly positive impacts for Alaska Native students, who gave increasingly more positive ratings for the level of expectations for them at school, the respectfulness of the climate at their school, and the quality of peer relationships at school. And across school districts that participated in the Alaska ICE QS2 (*Quality Schools/Quality Students*) intervention, Alaska Native students showed substantial increases in proficiency rates across several areas of academic achievement on statewide assessments. Results were more mixed when we aggregated all demographic groups. There were modest improvements in student-reported levels of parent and community involvement in their schools, but overall, youth academic engagement and performance, and social and emotional learning remained relatively unchanged. However a number of individual districts and schools made significant progress in these areas, and there was a statistically significant reduction in the reported incidence of vandalism, fights, and alcohol use among students at school or school events across Alaska ICE-supported communities

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<sup>1</sup> Except where explicitly noted, changes cover 2005-2008.

Change at the community level requires readiness, a strategic approach, capable and motivated community partners, and persistent and ongoing efforts over several years. The support that Alaska ICE has provided to communities resulted in the creation of new strategic partnerships to coordinate efforts among youth-serving agencies, improvements in the level of adult engagement with youth in several (but not all) communities, improvements in school climate for Alaska Native youth, and significant reductions in youth risk behaviors. Ongoing challenges include improving youth academic outcomes.

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

In 2001, the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) received federal funding from the No Child Left Behind Act's Alaska Native Education Program. The funding extended over seven years, and its purpose was to develop and sustain a community engagement and youth development initiative in Alaska – called the Alaska Initiative for Community Engagement (Alaska ICE). In December 2004, the American Institutes for Research (AIR) took on the role of independent evaluator of Alaska ICE programs. The purpose of this report is to provide a summative evaluation of how well Alaska ICE has met its goals for communities and youth, starting from when AIR became involved as an evaluator, and concluding with the end of the 2007-2008 school year.

Alaska ICE staff developed a model of change shown in Figure 1 (page 14). Alaska ICE focused its efforts on changing policies and practices in communities and among youth-serving organizations, and changing the perceptions and behaviors of adults in the community to be more supportive of youth. Alaska ICE also focused its efforts on bringing adults and youth together – formally or informally, in the community and in schools – to foster positive relationships, and to improve adult perceptions of and support for youth, as well as to improve youth perceptions of adults. Rather than taking a “fix the kids” approach, Alaska ICE sought to improve youth outcomes through making the context in which they live more supportive. This evaluation was structured in line with the Alaska ICE approach and theory of change, first looking at whether the environment for youth had changed in communities supported by Alaska ICE, then looking at whether adult support for youth had changed in these communities, and then looking at whether youth outcomes improved in the areas of social and emotional learning, youth risk behaviors, and youth academic engagement and achievement.

### KEY FINDINGS: CHANGES IN THE ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUTH

We examined whether and to what extent changes had taken place in the environment for youth among communities that had been supported by Alaska ICE, with a focus on policies and practices, norms, school climate, and adult-youth relationships.

Key findings are as follows:

- ⇒ Overall, communities supported by Alaska ICE adopted policies and practices that were strength-based and that supported youth assets.
- ⇒ Alaska ICE facilitated the development of networks and coalitions that have been a successful vehicle for change in many communities. Those relationships have been essential to making community engagement and positive youth development initiatives sustainable.
- ⇒ Alaska Native students in school districts receiving support from Alaska ICE reported increasing levels of high expectations for them, and a more respectful school climate.
- ⇒ There were substantial improvements in adult-youth relationships and adult involvement with youth in some communities, but little change (positive or negative) in others.

Below, we elaborate on these key findings in the areas of Policies and Practices, School Climate, and Adult-Youth Relationships.

## **Policies and Practices**

A key goal of Alaska ICE has been to strengthen community collaborations to improve the community's ability and drive to support youth. Several communities have formed formal or informal networks in which the needs of youth in the community are identified and a coherent strategy is formulated to address the needs. These efforts have been the result of both direct Alaska ICE efforts (for example, by providing a paid position for an individual in the community to promote these efforts) and through the creation and support of a youth-development climate in communities where these networks and coalitions can and do come into being. For example, in Anchorage, support from Alaska ICE enabled a United Way-Anchorage Youth Development Coalition partnership to provide training and assistance regarding youth assets and positive youth development to individuals, community organizations, municipal agencies, and youth themselves. This ongoing assistance and coaching resulted in strength-based Anchorage-wide initiatives and numerous program and organizational changes. The community of Sitka established linkages between schools and providers of health services to help youth learn about healthy behaviors. School administrators described informal connections with merchants to help stop underage drinking at times when such behavior tends to spike (e.g., graduation). Other community organizations established relationships with law enforcement to provide strength-based approaches to managing youth issues, such as the creation of youth courts. Respondents from these communities stated that even when these initiatives were not directly initiated through the Alaska ICE work, the presence of Alaska ICE created the conditions in their communities that encouraged other individuals and organizations to take their own steps to support youth. For example, the Pribilof School Board added a student representative on the board and created a student council to increase student involvement in decision making (see more about this community in Chapter IV).

Respondents from several communities<sup>2</sup> described greater adult engagement with youth within the community as a result of support from Alaska ICE. For example, some parents described how their child's school now provides them with information about youth assets and how they can support their child's positive development. School staff have spoken about being more intentional about getting to know youth, especially those young people who do not spontaneously reach out to adults. Youth now have more structured recreational and cultural opportunities available in some communities due to greater community awareness of the benefit of these resources. Often these activities are centered on Alaska Native culture, giving youth a chance to learn about their culture as they spend time with adult community members. However, Alaska ICE staff and community respondents also described the difficulties involved in engaging adults who are not already involved with youth. Often there are a handful of adults in the community who "do everything," and Alaska ICE has helped them learn how to improve the supports that they provide youth. The initiative becomes far more sustainable when adults in the

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<sup>2</sup> Respondents were interviewed in Anchorage, Dillingham, Galena (within the Galena Interior Learning Academy), Sitka, and the Pribilof Islands.

community who were not previously involved in supporting youth begin to step forward and do so, but Alaska ICE staff report that it is also more challenging to achieve this type of community-wide change in attitudes and behaviors.

### **School Climate**

We examined changes in school climate among 15 Alaska school districts that participated in the Alaska ICE QS2 (*Quality Schools/Quality Students*) initiative. See Appendix B for a list of school districts that have participated in QS2, and their dates of participation. We focused on school climate in four areas: high expectations, school safety, respectful climate, and peer climate. Among all QS2 students, high expectations for students, respectful climate, peer climate, and school safety were essentially unchanged. However, among Alaska Native students from QS2 schools, there were statistically significant increases in all of these areas except school safety (which was highly rated to begin with).

The Pribilof community provides an example of how support from Alaska ICE improved school climate in several areas. Pribilof community members reported that teasing and putting others down was just a part of everyday life, and that since it was directed at everyone, there was a shared belief that no harm was done. Through working with Alaska ICE staff to identify areas where youth were not receiving the support they needed from adults in the community, Pribilof community leaders came to the conclusion that perhaps teasing and put-downs were more harmful than they thought. School staff and others in the community began to place an emphasis on mutual respect. By 2008, the district saw substantial improvement in student reports of school safety (including emotional safety), and a much more respectful school climate.

### **Adult-Youth Relationships**

We asked youth across the 15 QS2 districts the extent to which they felt that adults at school cared about them, and the extent to which their families and other community adults were there for them to provide supervision and assistance with homework, and were involved in their school. There were no significant changes in student perceptions of having caring adults at school (that is, feeling that teachers and other adults at school care about them personally, and are people they can go to if they need adult support), parent and community involvement in school, nor in the percentages of students who reported having adult supervision and/or assistance with homework. These patterns were the same for QS2 students overall and among QS2 Alaska Native students in particular. Interviews with Alaska ICE staff, school staff, and community members suggest that in some communities, the initiative is focused on the school (with little spreading out to the community), or is focused on the community (with little connection to the school) in cases where one sector of the community is more ready and willing to make changes than another.

When we looked at three individual communities, results were mixed, with more positive results in the two communities that had longer-lasting youth development initiatives. In the Pribilof Islands and in Anchorage, adults provided an increasing level of support for youth. By 2008, most respondents in each of these communities reported that they saw other adults in their communities taking the initiative to get to know youth better and to provide them with a variety

of supports, such as engaging in cultural activities together. Adults held a very positive view of youth. In the Pribilof communities, youth reported increasing levels of parent and community participation in their school (these figures remained stable in Anchorage). In Dillingham, however, adult support for youth was more stagnant or actually declined.

### **KEY FINDINGS: CHANGES IN YOUTH OUTCOMES**

The Alaska ICE Model of change focuses on immediate (proximal) outcomes (improved school climate, adult perceptions of youth and supportive behavior, improved adult-youth relationships, and increased opportunities for youth) which produce long-term (distal) outcomes, including improved social emotional learning, reduced risky behaviors, and improved academic achievement. Although Alaska ICE efforts have primarily been geared toward changing the environment for youth to promote youth assets, we also examined changes in youth outcomes. These distal changes can take significant amounts of time. For example, youth progress toward graduation or disengagement from school (and dropping out) takes place over several years, so it is important to assess what can be changed during the intervention period.

Key findings from the current evaluation are as follows:

- ⇒ Youth reports of their social and emotional learning remained relatively stable.<sup>3</sup>
- ⇒ There was a statistically significant reduction in the reported incidence of vandalism, fights, and alcohol use among students at school or school events.
- ⇒ Among Alaska Native students, there was also a substantial reduction in their reports of drug use among peers at school or school events.
- ⇒ Alaska Native students in districts receiving support through QS2 made gains in academic achievement that were greater than would be expected based on changes in academic achievement among Alaska Native students statewide, but this impact did not extend to Non-Native Alaskan students in QS2 districts.

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<sup>3</sup> Student SEL has only been measured since 2006, so any changes that took place prior to that time would not have been revealed in this evaluation.

Below, we elaborate on and provide examples for these key findings in the areas of Policies and Practices, School Climate, and Adult-Youth Relationships.

### **Youth Social and Emotional Learning**

Youth social and emotional learning (SEL) has recently started to play a central role in school improvement efforts across several school districts supported by Alaska ICE, although school district staff described their introduction of SEL into everyday classroom life as being in its early stages. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) provides the following definition of SEL: *“SEL is a process for helping children and even adults develop the fundamental skills for life effectiveness. These skills include recognizing and managing our emotions, developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically. They are the skills that allow children to calm themselves when angry, make friends, resolve conflicts respectfully, and make ethical and safe choices.”*<sup>4</sup> Our measure of youth SEL is based on student self-report. This outcome has only been measured since 2006, so any changes that took place prior to that time would not have been revealed in this evaluation. We found that aggregate student self-reports of SEL remained quite stable from 2006 through 2008, and we did not find substantial variability across school districts on this measure.

### **Youth Risk Behaviors**

There was a significant reduction in the reported incidence of vandalism, fights, and alcohol use among students at school or school events from 2006 to 2008. Among Alaska Native students in these QS2 districts, there was also a substantial reduction in their reports of drug use among peers. Some communities, such as Dillingham, saw the rate of some types of youth risk behaviors cut in half. And in Anchorage (which was not part of the QS2 initiative, but has been a long-term partner of Alaska ICE), high school students were less likely to report that they had recently carried a weapon or used drugs than they were just two years ago.

### **Youth Academic Engagement and Achievement**

We examined youth academic engagement in three areas: attendance rates, student reports of having “given up on school,” and dropout rates. Overall, youth academic engagement has remained relatively stable among QS2 students over the past several years. Dropping out of school is the ultimate disengagement from school, and QS2 schools have maintained dropout rates of about 5-6%, which are very similar to the statewide average. These results were not uniform across all participating districts. For example, the community of Dillingham saw its school dropout rate cut almost in half from 2004 to 2008, while other communities saw their dropout rates increase.

We measured academic achievement at the school level based on proficiency rates on statewide exams and high school graduation rates. There was variability among the school districts in their student achievement before and during their involvement with Alaska ICE, but proficiency rates overall remained below the statewide average across the 15 school districts supported through

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted directly from the CASEL website (<http://www.casel.org/basics/definition.php>)

the QS2 initiative. Unfortunately, lower proficiency rates are typical for Alaska's smaller and/or more rural school districts, which include most of the QS2 districts.

## **SUMMARY**

Overall, Alaska ICE has been successful in its aim to help communities improve policies and practices to support youth, improve school climate, and improve adult-youth relationships. Alaska ICE is not a "program" that gives communities a uniform set of exercises or instructions. Communities have different strengths, issues, resources, and levels of readiness, and some are able to achieve desired change more quickly or effectively than others. Time must be taken with each community to ensure that the community formulates its own priorities and takes ownership of its own initiative. Then the process of change requires collaboration, and the commitment to sustain efforts over the extended time needed for community change to take root.

The biggest improvements in youth outcomes were in the area of youth risk behaviors. Some communities saw the level of youth risk behaviors cut in half with their involvement with Alaska ICE. There is a belief in the communities supported by Alaska ICE that improvements will come in youth academic outcomes and in youth SEL – it will just take more time to see the benefits of improved community engagement in these areas. This idea may be correct, because student academic proficiency and SEL both require intentional activities and can require several years to change at a school level.

The remainder of this report presents more detailed findings from this evaluation. Chapter I describes Alaska ICE, including its approach, goals, and initiatives. Chapter II describes the evaluation approach and process. Chapter III examines changes that have occurred in 15 school districts that received community engagement and other support from Alaska ICE and through the QS2 initiative. We then present in-depth evaluations of Alaska ICE initiatives in three very different communities. The Pribilof Island communities are presented in Chapter IV. These are small communities whose residents are almost all Alaska Native. In Chapter V, we present the example of Dillingham, a diverse, mid-sized community that faces numerous social and economic challenges. And in Chapter VI, we present the example of Anchorage – Alaska's largest and most urban community. These three communities all had different needs and cultural contexts, and each presents different lessons on how to initiate and sustain community engagement for the benefit of youth.

## I. THE ALASKA INITIATIVE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*Community engagement is the intentional action of groups and individuals working together to create healthy environments that support the growth and education of children and youth.*

In 2001, the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) received federal funding from the No Child Left Behind Act's Alaska Native Education Program. The funding extended over seven years, and its purpose was to develop and sustain a community engagement and youth development initiative in Alaska – the Alaska Initiative for Community Engagement (Alaska ICE). The purpose of Alaska ICE was to help communities develop and implement a comprehensive approach to supporting youth and preparing them for the future. To this end, Alaska ICE staff provided technical assistance to schools, organizations, and communities through workshops, training, and assistance with strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation. Alaska ICE has a goal to imbed a strength-based approach to supporting youth within policies and practices at the state, regional, and local levels. There is also an emphasis on shared responsibility – the notion that helping youth succeed requires efforts on the part of individuals, families, schools, organizations, policymakers, and communities together. Alaska ICE provides informational resources to organizations and individuals through its publications and website.

Alaska ICE approaches support for youth through the Developmental Assets<sup>®</sup> framework developed by the Search Institute<sup>SM</sup>. The Search Institute identified 40 developmental assets that help youth thrive and grow into healthy adults (see Appendix A for a list of the 40 assets). These assets are focused on relationships, opportunities, and qualities of youth. Extensive research suggests that the more assets a young person has, the more likely he or she is to succeed in their schools and communities. Youth with fewer assets face a substantially higher risk of becoming involved in violence, abusing drugs and alcohol, and having problems in school such as truancy and low academic achievement. The way young people acquire assets is through supportive relationships with adults. Families, communities, schools, faith organizations, and other youth-serving organizations can take concrete steps to increase the number of assets that young people have – thus increasing their chances for a positive future. See the Search Institute's website for more information about developmental assets (<http://www.search-institute.org>).

In the Alaska ICE model of change (see Figure 1, page 14), the idea is that improving the environment for youth can provide youth with more developmental assets, which will lead to better youth outcomes. Alaska ICE focused on improving the environment for youth at three levels: within and among organizations, across the broader community, and at the level of individuals within the community. The purpose of these efforts was to improve adult perceptions of youth, to increase the prevalence of youth-supporting behaviors by community adults, to improve adult-youth relationships, and to increase opportunities for youth to engage positively in their communities. By providing this improved context for youth, Alaska ICE intended to increase youth assets to attain improved youth outcomes in three areas: increased SEL, decreased youth risk behaviors, and improved youth academic engagement and achievement. Therefore, the first part of our evaluation focuses on the extent to which support from Alaska ICE was associated with improvements in policies and practices regarding youth. The second part focuses on changes in the environment for youth in two areas: school climate and adult-youth

relationships. And the third part of our evaluation focuses on the extent to which youth outcomes improved in the three areas of interest. Where possible, we examined findings specifically for Alaska Native youth given the goals of the Native Education Act, which provided funding for Alaska ICE grant.

### *Statewide Efforts*

Alaska ICE staff viewed collaboration and partnerships as key to sustainable change, and the initiative has increased its reach through partnership with numerous youth-serving organizations throughout the state of Alaska. These include the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Spirit of Youth (SOY), the Alaska Teen Media Institute, the Alaska Public Radio Network, Resiliency in Residence Life (RRL), the Anchorage School District/Safe and Drug Free Schools, the Association for the Education of Young Children – Southeast Alaska, the United Way of Anchorage, the Anchorage Youth Development Coalition (AYDC), Assets for Interior Alaska Youth (Fairbanks), and others. These partnerships were formed based on mutual goals of improving support for youth across the state of Alaska. For example, Alaska ICE provided half the funding for a Resiliency/Youth Development Specialist within DHSS to enhance collaboration in the development of statewide policies and practices that improve youth outcomes. With support from Alaska ICE, SOY furthered its efforts to create, promote, and recognize youth involvement in communities. The following section highlights how Alaska ICE has supported and contributed to positive change through the RRL program, and through providing support to Alaska DHSS.

AASB supported the RRL project to provide more supportive housing environments to Alaska youth attending public boarding schools. While some of these boarding schools mainly serve high-achieving youth in college preparatory programs, others serve a large portion of youth in “safe harbor” – that is, youth who are not receiving the supports they need to thrive in their home communities. Through its collaboration with Alaska ICE, RRL received additional resources to provide these boarding schools with professional residential staff, who worked directly with students to increase their engagement in social and academic life at school, with the ultimate goal of increasing student retention and success. Interviews with staff at these boarding schools showed that Alaska ICE support through the RRL program became a very positive and meaningful support for these schools. Public boarding schools serve as a youth’s community while they are away from home. RRL and other school staff believed that by providing residential staff with a youth assets/positive youth development framework and training, providing youth with more opportunities to engage in recreational and cultural activities with adults, and providing supports such as an academic liaison between the residential and academic sectors of the school, youth attending these boarding schools had a more positive experience and better outcomes thanks to Alaska ICE.

Staff from the Alaska DHSS report that Alaska ICE has worked in partnership with DHSS to integrate youth assets/positive youth development into the Department's work in several areas:

**Strategic Planning:** Youth assets/positive youth development principles are incorporated into DHSS strategic plans, program planning logic models, and population-based indicators, *and* program performance measures.

**Public and Professional Education:** Asset-based resources (books, pamphlets, posters, newsletters) have been shared with clients, families, and providers at health fairs and community forums statewide. Media-based campaigns include positive messaging and involving youth in crafting the message.

**Program and Services:** Youth assets/positive youth development principles have been incorporated into several DHSS multi-year grants and contracts. Some RFPs require or strongly encourage youth involvement in developing the proposal or the planning/implementation/evaluation of the project.

**Youth Voice:** Youth participation has increased on state commissions and divisional advisory councils. Internships at state agencies are offered for high school-aged youth.

**Surveillance/ Monitoring:** Youth assets/positive youth development measures were adopted and sustained within the bi-annual statewide youth risk behavior survey. Additional questions comprise a connectedness index, being used by multiple communities.

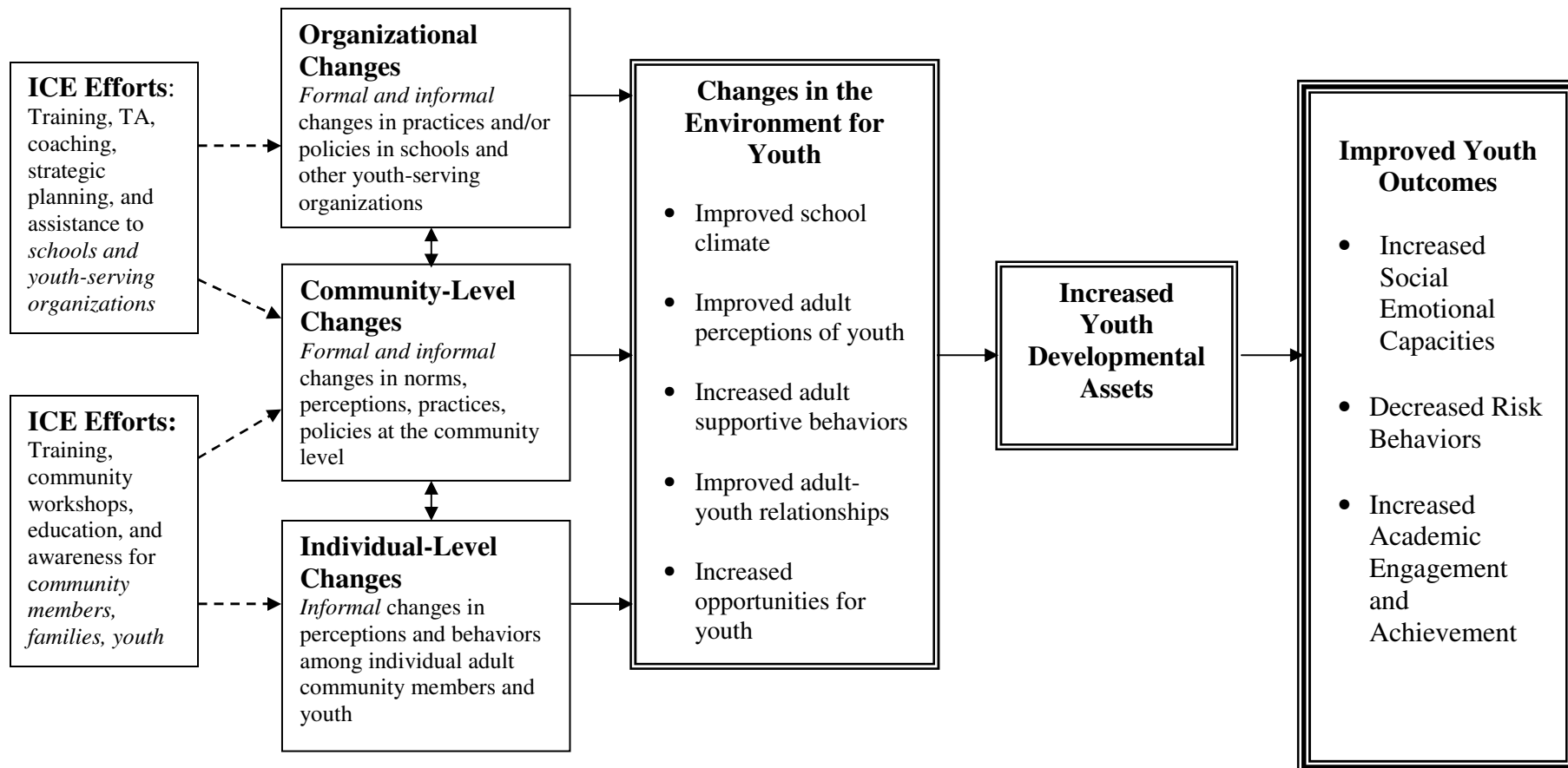
### ***Community-Level Efforts***

In addition to developing and sustaining statewide and regional partnerships and collaborations – both formal and informal – to improve the environment for youth, Alaska ICE has focused substantial effort and resources on working with school districts and their communities to improve supports for young people. Alaska ICE has worked intensively with rural school districts that partnered with AASB in its Quality Schools/Quality Students (QS2) school improvement initiative (see Chapter III for a more detailed description of Alaska ICE efforts in QS2 districts and communities). And Alaska ICE also has worked with the Anchorage School District to help district staff achieve their goal of providing a more comprehensive approach to supporting student SEL (see Chapter VI for a more detailed description of Alaska ICE efforts in the Anchorage community).

In the next chapter, we describe AIR's approach to evaluating Alaska ICE. The evaluation was structured to fit with the model of change shown in Figure 1, with an assessment of whether Alaska ICE has helped communities to provide a more supportive environment for their youth, and whether Alaska ICE-supported communities have been able to achieve the desired outcomes for youth.

Figure 1 Alaska ICE Change Model

**Alaska ICE Change Model – Efforts, Targets and Impacts**  
 (for Individuals, Organizations, and Communities)



## II. THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation was to examine the extent to which communities, organizations, and individuals have adopted policies, practices, and behaviors that support youth, create a positive school and community environment for youth, and increase adult support for youth. It was hypothesized that creating these conditions would lead to better youth connectedness to school, increased student achievement, better youth SEL, and reduced risk behaviors. It was not feasible to evaluate in detail all aspects of Alaska ICE's work, so this evaluation focuses on key components that represent major investments of time and resources, and on key outcomes that are both measurable and a high priority for Alaskans and federal funders.

AIR began its evaluation of Alaska ICE in 2005. Because the evaluation started four years after Alaska ICE was launched, we are limited in our ability to identify a true "baseline" that shows us how community engagement and youth outcomes looked before there was any intervention. Note that there is also no "control" or "comparison" group (what researchers call a counterfactual) that can tell us how things might have changed in these communities in the absence of the intervention, although we are able to compare youth outcomes to statewide data in some cases. Because intervention districts may face different challenges than non-intervention districts, the lack of a counterfactual prevents us from determining with confidence whether positive, null, or negative impacts were due to the intervention.

AIR used a combination of surveys, site visits, and interviews to evaluate the initiative. The surveys consisted of the School Climate and Connectedness Survey (SCCS), and for some communities, the Grading Grownups Survey and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).

AIR worked in collaboration with AASB to develop the SCCS as a part of the Alaska ICE grant. "School climate" refers to the social and environmental factors that contribute to a student's subjective experience of a school. Positive school climate reflects well-managed classrooms and common areas, high and clearly stated expectations concerning individual responsibility, feeling safe at school, and teachers and staff consistently acknowledging all students and fairly addressing their behavior. The survey also asked about parent and community involvement in schools, youth SEL, and youth risk behaviors. Both student and staff versions of the survey have been implemented. The SCCS was pilot tested in a small number of Alaska school districts in 2005, and then administered in increasing numbers of school districts each year since thereafter, so that 4,730 staff and 30,124 students in grades 5-12 from 242 schools across 33 Alaska school districts took part in 2008. Students completed the survey anonymously, stating how much they agreed or disagreed with statements on a five-point Likert scale. For a measure of youth risk behaviors, students indicated how often they personally had witnessed other students engaging in a variety of delinquent behaviors and drug and alcohol use at school or school events within the past 12 months. The SCCS has become a widely used tool for Alaska school districts to gauge whether they are providing a positive school climate for their students, engaging youth and the community in their school, developing youth SEL, and reducing youth risk behaviors. See Appendix C for a list of the SCCS scales included in this report, including the individual survey items that made up each scale.

The Grading Grownups survey was originally developed by the Search Institute and used nationally to assess how much adults in a community agree on what positive supports are important for youth success, and to measure how often adults perform these positive behaviors. The survey is administered anonymously, by telephone. An Alaskan adaptation of Grading Grownups was administered across a number of Alaska communities between 2003 and 2008 by Alaska-based polling organizations (Ivan Moore Research in 2003 and 2008, and the McDowell Group in 2004-2006). Questions were customized to reflect Alaskan culture, and new questions were developed by AIR for the 2008 version to increase our understanding of the level of adult support for youth in communities. Grading Grownups was administered in all 15 of the QS2 communities featured in this report at the start of their partnership with Alaska ICE to help them identify where they needed to improve community engagement. The 2008 Grading Grownups survey administration focused on just the three communities highlighted in Chapters IV–VI of this report, so Grading Grownups results are only presented for those three communities where the survey was administered both near the beginning *and* at the conclusion of the evaluation.

In order to learn more about youth outcomes specifically in the Anchorage community, where there have been multiple partnerships and initiatives supported by Alaska ICE, AIR analyzed data from administrations of the Youth Behavior Risk Survey (YRBS) in Anchorage in 1995, 2005, and 2007. The YRBS was established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to monitor the incidence of behaviors that put youth at elevated risk for poor health and poor social outcomes. The YRBS is administered anonymously to high school students. For more information about the use of the YRBS in Alaska, see the State of Alaska Health and Social Services website (<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/school/YRBS.htm>). For this evaluation, we drew upon several relevant questions from the YRBS. These questions are defined in full in Chapter IX. YRBS data were unavailable for the other communities featured in this report.

AIR initiated site visits to selected communities supported by Alaska ICE. These communities were selected to provide examples of whether/how Alaska ICE was engaging with different types of communities. These communities varied widely in demographics, character, and the issues they faced. These site visits took place each year from 2005 through 2008, with some communities receiving a single visit and others multiple visits. In the course of these site visits, AIR staff spoke with community leaders, school staff, families, students, and others in order to get a comprehensive picture of how the community was engaged with Alaska ICE, and the extent to which the community was benefitting from Alaska ICE support. AIR was unable to visit each of the 15 QS2 communities featured in this report.

AIR drew upon school-level and statewide statistics from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development to examine school attendance, achievement, dropout, and graduation rates. We were not able to obtain student-level data because securing informed consent to release such data for thousands of students was impractical within the scope of this evaluation.

Because the origin of this grant was the Alaska Native Education Act, we disaggregated data to examine results specific to Alaska Native youth whenever this information was available.

The remainder of this report focuses on the evaluation of change in schools and communities supported by Alaska ICE, youth outcomes in these communities, and lessons learned through the initiative. We then present three case studies of communities supported by Alaska ICE.

### III. CHANGES IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES: A FOCUS ON THE QS2 INITIATIVE

For this portion of the evaluation, we focus on Alaska ICE's work in the school districts that participated in AASB's QS2 initiative. QS2 stands for *Quality Schools/Quality Students*. QS2 is AASB's systemic school improvement model, and is based on four quadrants: leadership, programs and staff, community-family-student engagement, and resources. AASB launched the QS2 initiative in 2000, just before the Alaska ICE initiative was created. For the first several years of both initiatives, they operated in somewhat parallel and independent fashion, without systematic coordination or intentional application of both the school improvement and community engagement practices and interventions in the same districts. Beginning in 2003, Alaska ICE applied a significant portion of its efforts and resources to supporting community engagement in the QS2 districts where AASB was supporting school improvement through QS2. This effort stemmed from the belief that positive change, both in terms of school improvement and community engagement, would be more likely, more effective, and more sustainable if these two initiatives were concurrently applied.

Alaska ICE mainly provided support to QS2 school districts in the area of community-family-student engagement. The current evaluation does not look at the other three quadrants of the QS2 initiative. For the purposes of this report, we will call this group of school districts "QS2 districts," with the understanding that we are addressing the community engagement work of Alaska ICE in them, and not the other aspects of QS2 school improvement undertaken by AASB and the districts. QS2 school districts work to increase engagement among families, students, and community members, with the goal of improving student academic achievement (and sometimes other outcomes, such as reducing youth risk behaviors). Based on the belief that improving school climate will improve these youth outcomes, QS2 support from Alaska ICE has focused on improving school climate as well as improving community engagement.

School districts apply to AASB to become QS2 partners, and are accepted based on need, commitment, and capacity for change. As of June 2008, 23 districts had engaged in these QS2 partnerships. QS2 partnerships are designed to (typically) last for three years, during which AASB provides the districts with technical assistance in leadership development, strategic planning, and school improvement, and, through Alaska ICE, provided the larger community with assistance in community engagement. Community engagement is intended to introduce thinking about developmental assets, and engage the community to work together to develop more assets among youth in school, in families, in youth programs, and in the larger community. In schools, asset building is increasingly couched in terms of creating positive school climate and increasing student connectedness to school.

At the start of districts' QS2 partnerships, the communities took part in the Grading Grownups survey to gauge how well adults were doing across multiple areas of adult-youth engagement and support for youth. Students in grades 6 through 12 took the Search Institute's Attitudes and Behaviors survey to measure the presence of developmental assets. Survey results provided a basis for Alaska ICE staff to work with the district and its community (or communities) to develop a community engagement plan that specifically met that community's needs. Alaska

ICE then used a combination of direct technical assistance and funding for personnel and activities within the community to help that community achieve its goals as laid out in the community engagement plan. It should be noted that while there were some common elements applied in every QS2 district, much of the community engagement work depended on each district and community's specific goals and priorities. Annual community engagement plans were required, but each one was tailored to local needs and was intentionally community driven to ensure community buy-in and to increase long-term sustainability.

In the remainder of this chapter, we examine the extent to which the Alaska ICE initiative has achieved its goals through QS2 support for the 15 school districts<sup>5</sup> that became involved with QS2 between 2001 and 2007. These school districts are:

Alaska Gateway	Lower Kuskokwim <sup>6</sup>	Unalaska
Chatham	Petersburg	Wrangell
Delta-Greely	Pribilof	Yukon Flats
Dillingham	Sitka	Yupitit
Ketchikan Gateway	Southeast Island	
Kodiak Island		

Most of these districts had three years as QS2 partners with support for community engagement elements from Alaska ICE. However, in some cases they had slow starts or took a year's hiatus, resulting in some variability in length of participation. (For information about the years each of these districts participated as QS2 districts, please refer to Appendix B.)

Some QS2 school districts encompass a single community, and some encompass many separate communities. In this report, use of the singular "community" may in some cases refer to multiple communities within a school district. Most of the QS2 districts are made up of smaller communities that have significant Alaska Native populations. There is quite a bit of variability within these communities with regard to their accessibility, affluence, and ethnic diversity. Most of these communities are not on Alaska road systems, and must be reached by airplane or boat. Some have very strong commercial economies (such as Unalaska), whereas others are struggling. Some are overwhelmingly Alaska Native in population (such as Lower Kuskokwim, Yupitit, Yukon Flats, and the Pribilof Islands), whereas other communities are more mixed, with Alaska Native students a minority in the school district (such as in Sitka and Kodiak, for example).

Where possible in this QS2 evaluation, we have provided results specifically for Alaska Native youth in these communities.

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<sup>5</sup> The first three pilot QS2 districts that started in 2000 (Denali, Kake and St. Mary's) did not receive community engagement services from Alaska ICE and are thus excluded from this evaluation, and more recent additions (Chugach, Cordova, Kenai, Southwest Regional, and Tanana) had not participated long enough for evaluation.

<sup>6</sup> Only 7 of the district's 23 communities were QS2 partners; this was the first time a partial district participated (Kipnuk, Kongiganak, Newtok, Nightmute Nunapitchuk, Quinhagak, and Toksook Bay).

## A. CHANGES IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We examined changes in community engagement by focusing on two areas among the QS2 school districts: school climate and adult-youth relationships. We were unable to systematically analyze changes in policies and practices in community engagement and support for youth across all 15 of these QS2 communities, but did so in two that are described in more detail later in this report (the Pribilof Islands in Chapter IV and Dillingham in Chapter V).

### School Climate

In this section, we present information about how students in these 15 QS2 districts viewed their school climate from 2006 through 2008. We focused on four key aspects of school climate: expectations for students, school safety, a climate of respect, and peer relationships. Information is presented for QS2 schools overall, as well as for Alaska Native students attending QS2 schools in particular. All of the data presented in this section were obtained through the School Climate and Connectedness Survey (SCCS), which was administered to students in grades 6 through 12. The SCCS was first implemented as a pilot in 2005, but nine of these QS2 districts had started participating in the QS2 initiative before that time. Therefore, data from these earlier years (2005 and 2006) should *not* be regarded as baseline information (i.e., it does not necessarily reflect conditions prior to intervention). The SCCS student response rate was 66% in 2008 based on total student enrollment in grades 6-12 across the 15 QS2 districts, and was consistent with the response rate seen in previous years.

Throughout this section, results are presented in terms of the percentage of students who agreed that the expectations were high for them at school, agreed that their school was safe, agreed that there was a climate of respect in their school, and agreed that relationships among peers in their school were positive. Levels of agreement were based on the following scale scores (using a range of response options from 1 to 5):

- Agree/Strongly Agree = Scale score  $\geq 4.0$
- Agree Some/Disagree Some = Scale score 3.0–3.9
- Disagree/Strongly Disagree = Scale score  $< 3.0$

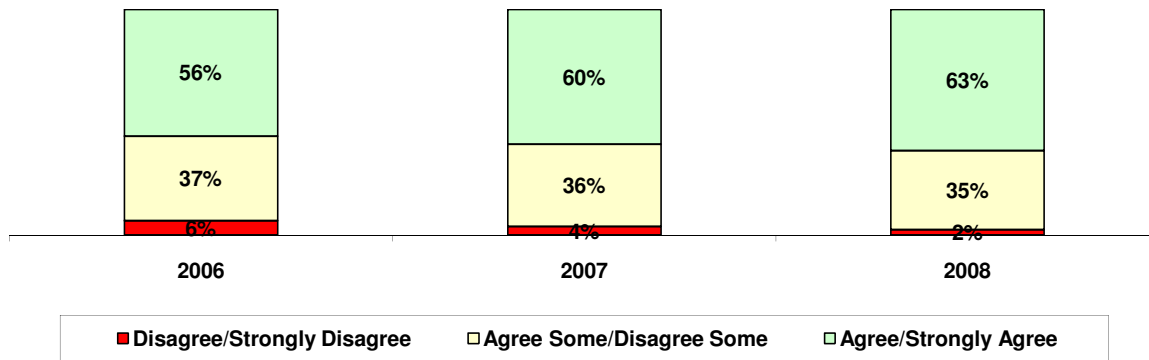
The percentages of students at each scale score level are presented in the bar charts below. Improvement in school climate can be seen when the percentage of students in each category shifts over time so that fewer are in the *disagree* (red) area and/or more are in the *agree* (green) area.

We also present effect sizes to specify the *degree of change* (if any) in SCCS scores from 2006 (or 2007 for Community Involvement) to 2008. Effect sizes are expressed with the *d* statistic, which captures the degree of difference between two means (in this case, the mean score in a prior year compared with the mean score in 2008). The higher the *d* value, the greater the degree of change in mean from one measurement to the next. Effect sizes of  $d = .20$  are considered small and sizes of  $d = .50$  are considered medium, but it is important to keep in mind that even

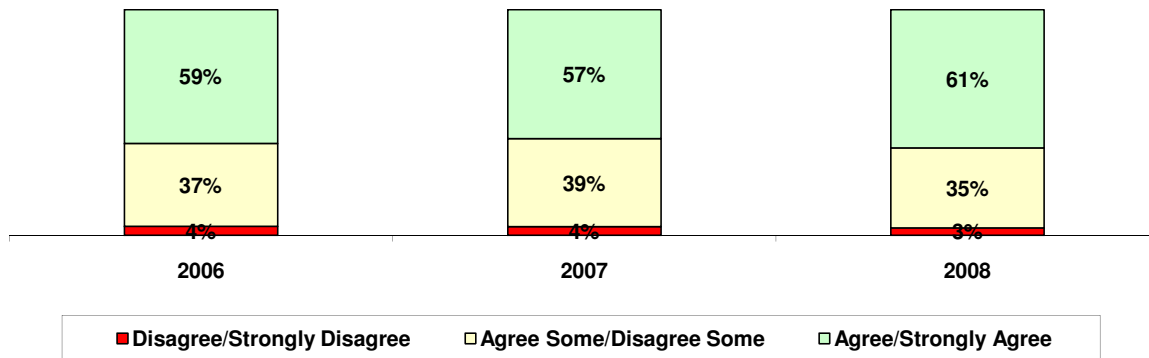
successful interventions in the areas such as education and social change generally only produce small effects.<sup>7</sup> See Appendix C for a list of survey items that made up each of the SCCS scales.

The High Expectations scale reflects students' feelings about how much they were encouraged by school staff and the community to do well in school, and their own expectations of themselves with regard to their school work and their academic future. Note that High Expectations is one of the 40 Search Institute's Developmental Assets (see Appendix A). There was steady improvement in the level of high expectations reported by QS2 school Alaska Native students from 2006 through 2008, with an effect size of  $d = .21$  (Figure 2). Across all ethnic groups, most students from the QS2 schools agreed that there were high expectations for them, and there were no significant effect sizes for changes in average scale scores from 2006 through 2008 (Figure 3). See Appendix D for scale scores.

**Figure 2 High Expectations, QS2 Alaska Native**



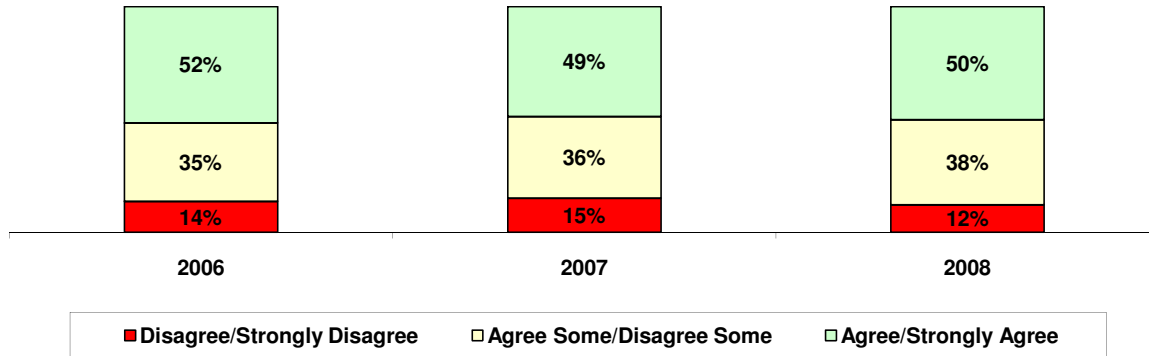
**Figure 3 High Expectations, All QS2**



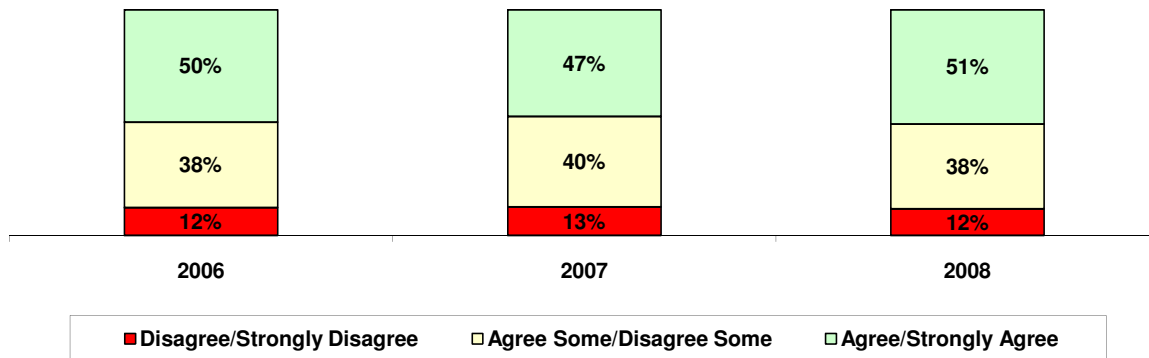
<sup>7</sup> See Valentine, J. C. & Cooper, H. (2003). *Effect size substantive interpretation guidelines: Issues in the interpretation of effect sizes*. Washington, DC: What Works Clearinghouse.

The School Safety scale reflects students' feelings of safety at school, as well as the presence of bullying, crime, and violence at school. School Safety is also one of the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets (see Appendix A). Each year from 2006 to 2008, approximately half of all QS2 students agreed or strongly agreed that their school was safe, while most others agreed some/disagreed some. These figures changed little over time, producing no statistically significant effect sizes for QS2 school Alaska Native students specifically or for QS2 students overall (Figures 4 and 5). See appendix D for scale scores.

**Figure 4 School Safety, QS2 Alaska Native**

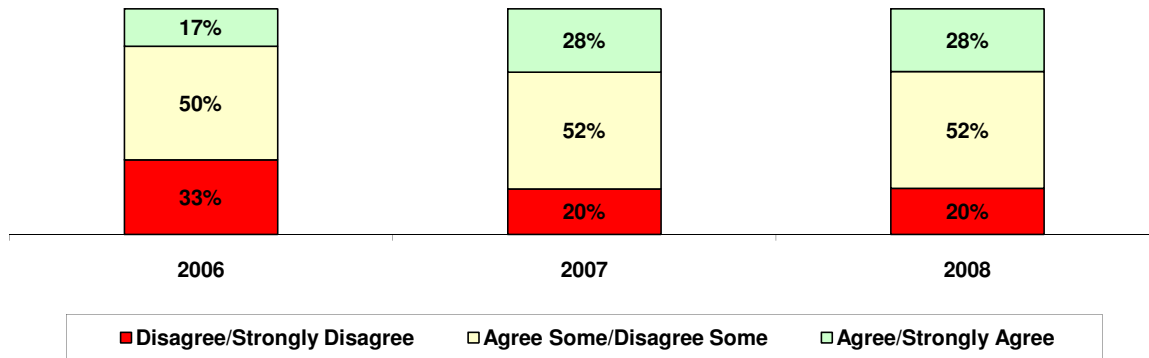


**Figure 5 School Safety, All QS2**

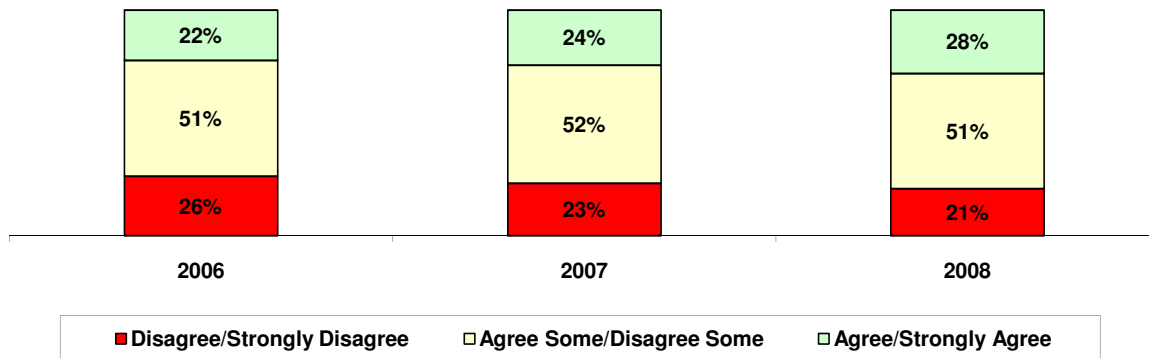


The Respectful Climate scale reflects students’ perceptions about whether teachers are nice to students and treat them with respect, the fairness of school rules, and whether the rules are actually applied in a fair manner. There was steady improvement in student perceptions of a respectful climate from 2006 to 2008 among QS2 Alaska Native students, with an effect size of  $d = .32$  (Figure 6), but these gains were not apparent in the full sample of QS2 students, which included non-Alaskan native students (Figure 7). See Appendix D for scale scores.

**Figure 6 Respectful Climate, QS2 Alaska Native**

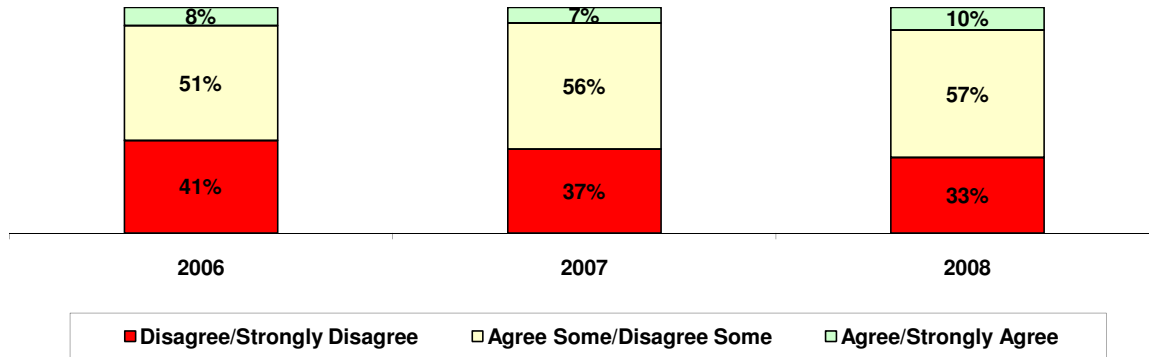


**Figure 7 Respectful Climate, All QS2**

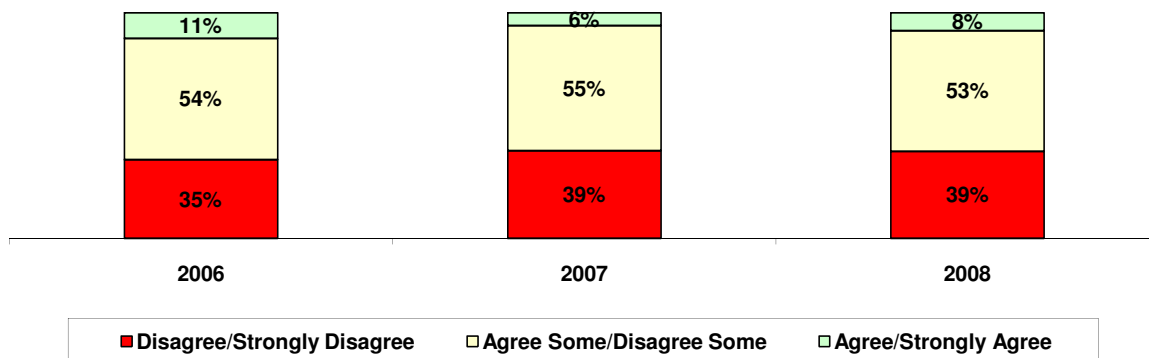


The Peer Climate scale reflects students’ perceptions about whether their peers at school treat them with respect, whether they help one another, and the extent to which teasing and bullying occur at school. Across school districts that have participated in the SCCS, Peer Climate has been one of the lowest-rated scales and seems to have been one of the more difficult areas to change. Peer climate ratings among QS2 Alaska Native students improved markedly from 2006 through 2008, with more students having mixed or neutral feelings and fewer having negative feelings,  $d = .30$  (Figure 8). However, when all QS2 students were included, average ratings of peer climate did not change to any notable degree (Figure 9). See Appendix D for scale scores.

**Figure 8 Peer Climate QS2 Alaska Native**



**Figure 9 Peer Climate All QS2**



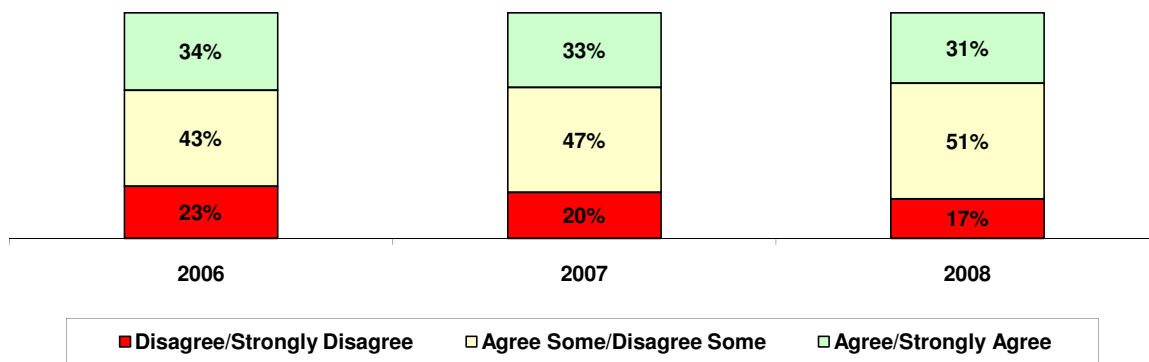
In sum, student perceptions of whether there was a respectful climate at school improved from 2006 to 2008, among Alaska Native students in particular. Perceptions of peer climate became less negative for QS2 Alaska Native students from 2006 to 2008, but did not improve in this way for students overall. Students in QS2 schools felt that there were high expectations for them, and that school was a safe place.

### Adult-Youth Relationships

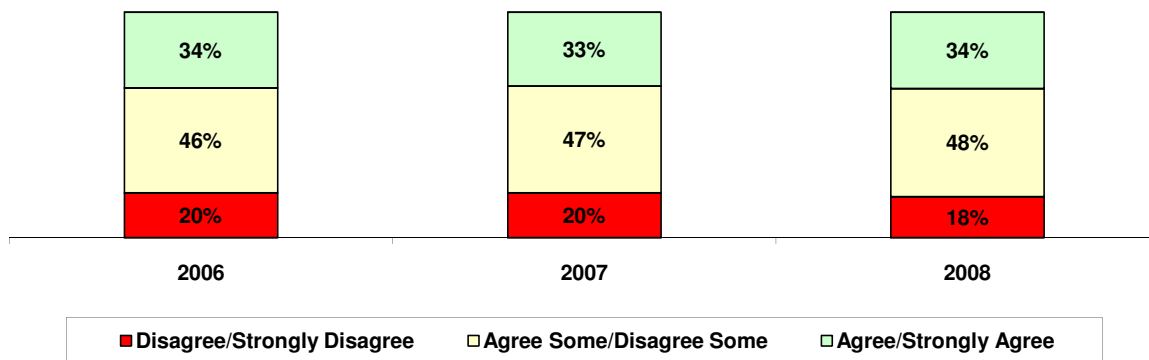
In this section, we present information from QS2 students regarding how supported they felt by adults in their schools and in their communities, as well as the level of involvement that their families and communities had in their schools. Information is presented for QS2 schools overall, as well as for Alaska Native students attending QS2 schools in particular. All of the data presented in this section were obtained through the SCCS.

The Caring Adults scale reflects students’ feelings about whether adults at their school know them, care about them, and are available to talk with and listen to them. The percentage of Alaska Native students who felt the most negative about the presence of caring adults (disagreeing or strongly disagreeing) declined steadily between 2006 and 2008, although there was also a (smaller) decline in the percentage of Alaska Native students who agreed or strongly agreed that there were caring adults at school (Figure 10). There were no statistically significant changes in average scale scores from 2006 to 2008. Among all QS2 students, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of students who felt negative about the presence of caring adults (disagreeing or strongly disagreeing) between 2006 and 2008, but again the effect size was insubstantial (Figure 11). See Appendix D for scale scores.

**Figure 10 Caring Adults, QS2 Alaska Native**

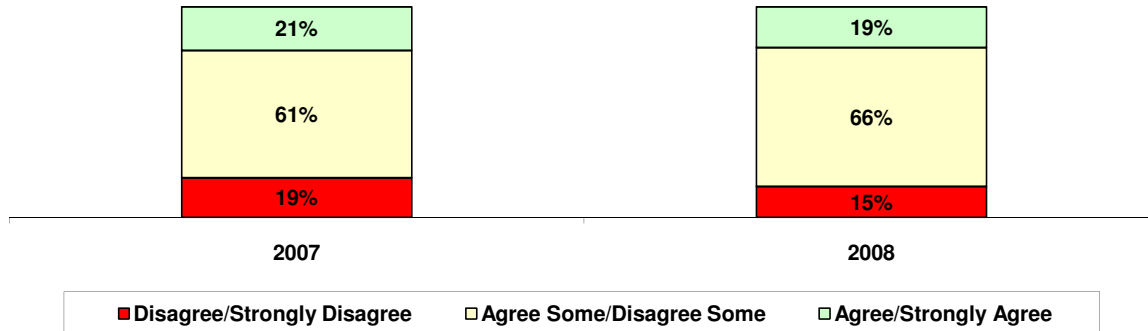


**Figure 11 Caring Adults, All QS2**

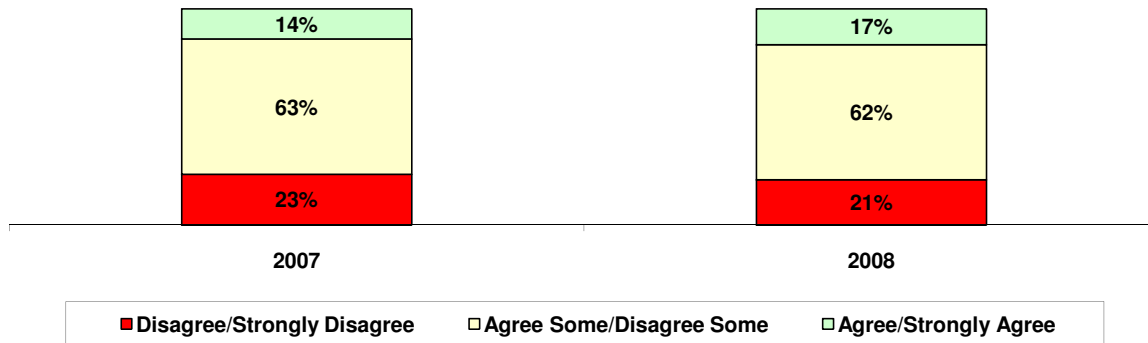


The Parent and Community Involvement scale reflects students' perceptions regarding how much their family and community feels welcome at school and is involved in school activities, and the extent to which students communicate with their families about their school work. This scale was introduced in 2007. From 2007 to 2008, there was a slight increase in the percentage of Alaska Native QS2 students who felt that their parents and community were involved in their school, as well as a slight increase across all QS2 students, but neither of these changes were statistically significant in size (Figures 12 and 13). See Appendix D for scale scores.

**Figure 12 Parent and Community Involvement, QS2 Alaska Native**

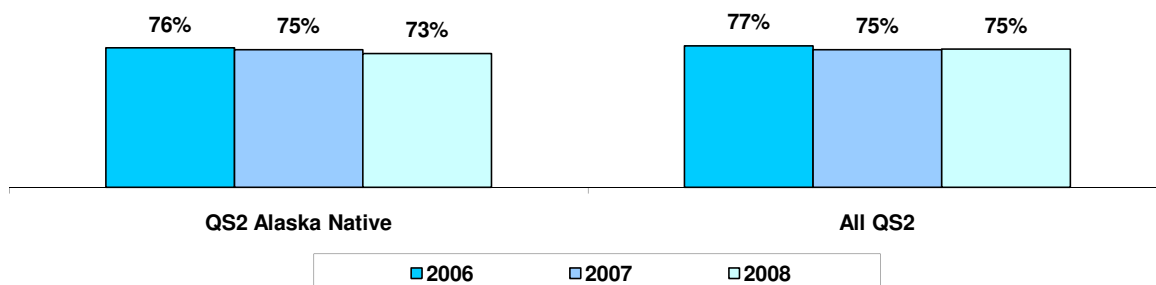


**Figure 13 Parent and Community Involvement, All QS2**



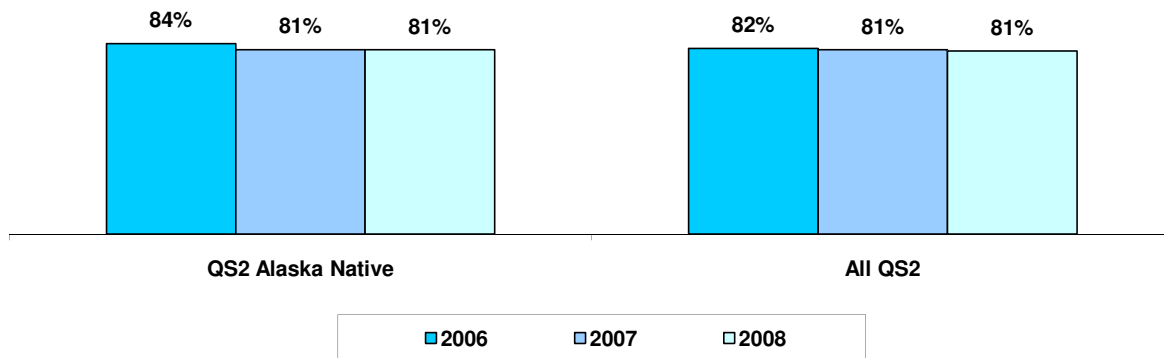
Each year, students were asked on the SCCS, *Is there an adult who really knows how you spend your free time?* The percentages of QS2 students who answered *Yes* each year are presented in Figure 14 below. These percentages changed little from 2006 to 2008 both for QS2 Alaska Native students and across QS2 students overall. Approximately 75% of students reported that they did have this type of adult supervision.

**Figure 14 QS2 Students with Adult Supervision**



Students were also asked, *Do you have someone outside of school who can help you with homework?* The percentages of QS2 students who answered *Yes* each year are presented in Figure 15 below. The pattern of responses was essentially stable from 2006 to 2008 among QS2 Alaska Native students and among QS2 students overall, with roughly 80% of students responding in the affirmative.

**Figure 15 QS2 Students Who Have Help with Homework**



Overall, we found modest improvements in student-reported levels of parent and community involvement in their schools. There were no significant changes in student perceptions of having caring adults at school, or in the percentages of students who reported having adult supervision and/or assistance with homework. These patterns were the same for QS2 students overall and QS2 Alaska Native students in particular.

## B. CHANGES IN YOUTH OUTCOMES

As discussed in Chapter II, we examined youth outcomes in three areas: student SEL, youth risk behaviors, and student academic engagement and achievement. We measured student SEL based on student responses to a series of items on the SCCS. We measured youth risk behaviors via the SCCS by asking students how often they observed their peers engaging in vandalism, fights, alcohol use, or drug use at school or school events within the prior 12 months. Two measures of academic engagement are based on statewide statistics at the school level – attendance rates and dropout rates. Students were also asked individually on the SCCS to what extent they felt like they had given up on school. Measures of student academic achievement were based on school-level proficiency rates on the Alaska Standards Based Assessment (SBA) and High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE). SBA results play a key role for the state in determining whether students are on track academically, and whether a school makes Adequate Yearly Progress under the No Child Left Behind act. Note that the SBA was first introduced across grades in 2005, so earlier results are not available.

In the remainder of this chapter, we present our findings among QS2 schools for each of the three youth outcomes of interest.

## Social and Emotional Learning

This section provides information from QS2 students regarding their perceptions of their SEL. Information on student SEL is presented for Alaska Native students attending QS2 schools, and for QS2 schools overall. All data presented in this section were obtained through the SCCS.

Student ratings of their SEL improved slightly among QS2 Alaska Native students from 2006 to 2008, although this effect was not statistically significant (Figure 16). And responses were essentially unchanged from 2006 to 2008 across the larger student body in QS2 schools (Figure 17). See Appendix D for scale scores.

Figure 16 QS2 Alaska Native Social and Emotional Learning

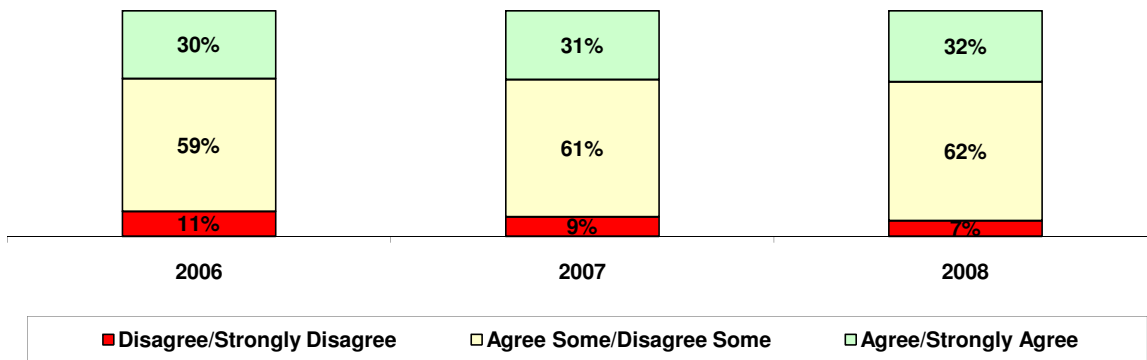
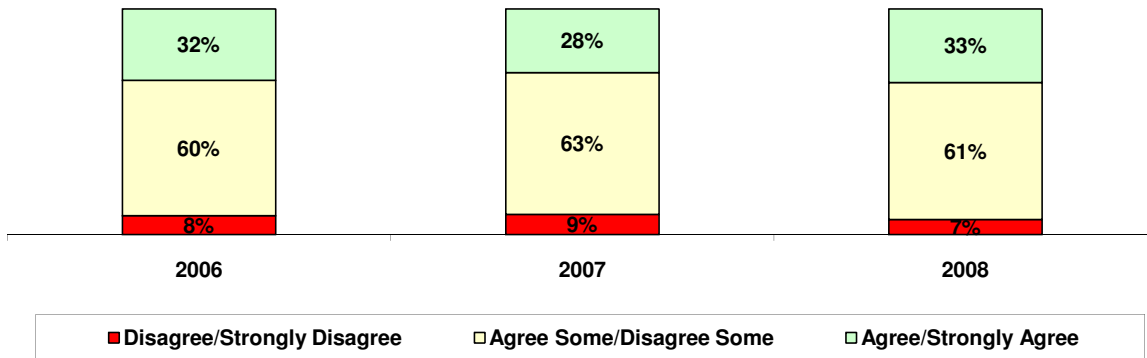


Figure 17 All QS2 Social and Emotional Learning

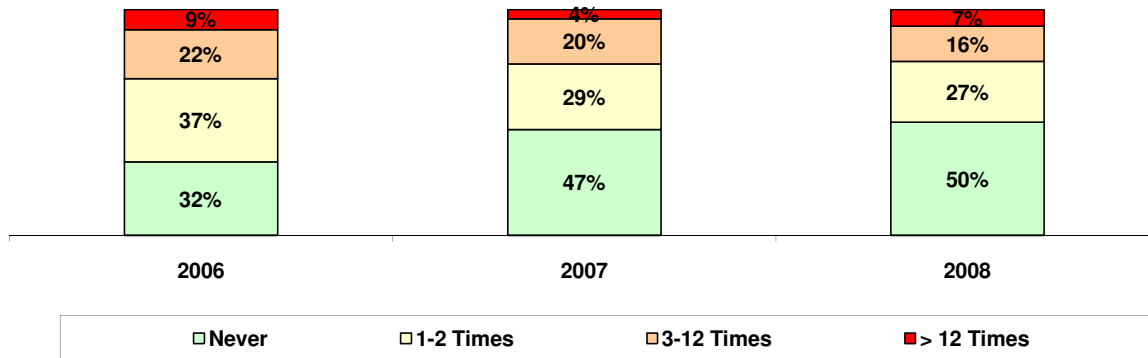


## Youth Risk Behaviors

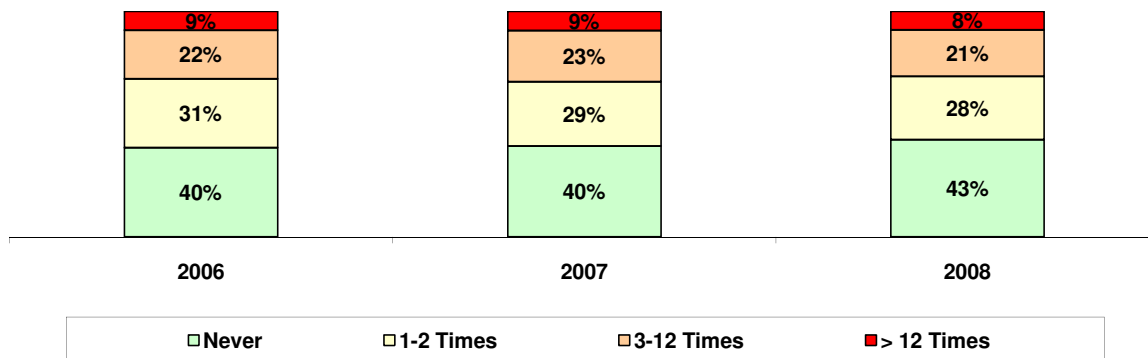
In this section, we present information from QS2 students regarding the frequency of risk behaviors that they observed personally at school or school events in the prior 12 months. We focused on four of the most common youth risk behaviors: vandalism, fighting, alcohol use, and drug use. All of the data presented in this section were obtained through the SCCS. Information on student risk behaviors is presented for QS2 schools overall, as well as for Alaska Native students attending QS2 schools in particular.

There was a decrease in the number of instances of vandalism observed by QS2 Alaska Native students at school or school events from 2006 to 2008, so that by 2008, half had seen none at all within the prior 12 months (effect size .26; see Figure 18). Across all QS students, there was a more modest decrease in the number of instances of vandalism overall, with no statistically significant effect size (Figure 19).

**Figure 18 QS2 Alaska Native Student-Observed Instances of Vandalism among Peers at School or School Events Last 12 Months**

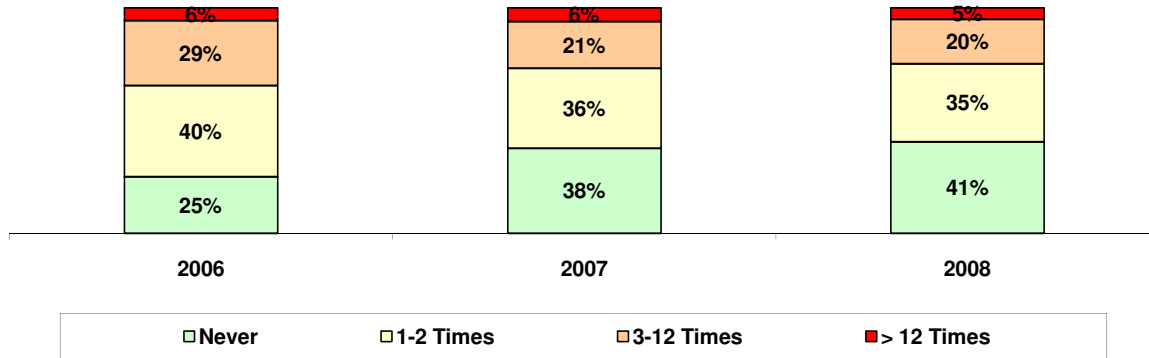


**Figure 19 All QS2 Student-Observed Instances of Vandalism among Peers at School or School Events Last 12 Months**

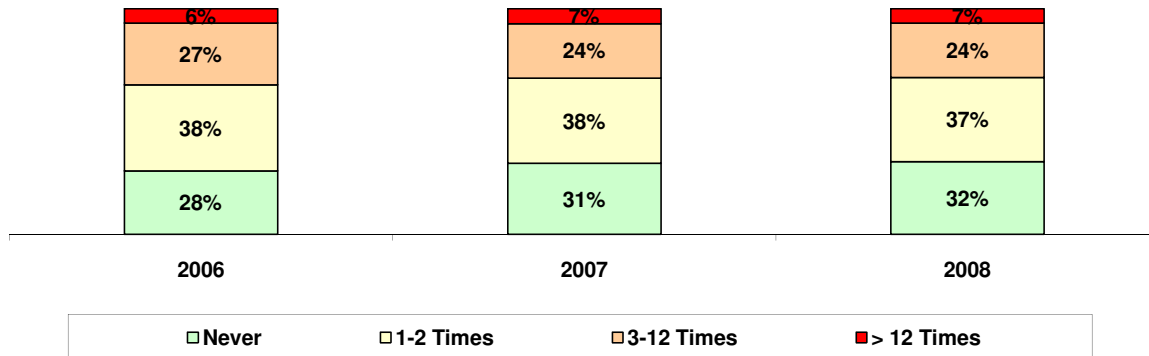


There was a substantial decrease in the number of fights that QS2 Alaska Native students observed at school or school events from 2006 to 2008, with an effect size of .28 (Figure 20). There was no significant decrease in the number of fights observed by QS2 students overall (Figure 21).

**Figure 20 Student-Observed Fights among Peers at School or School Events Last 12 Months, QS2 Alaska Native**

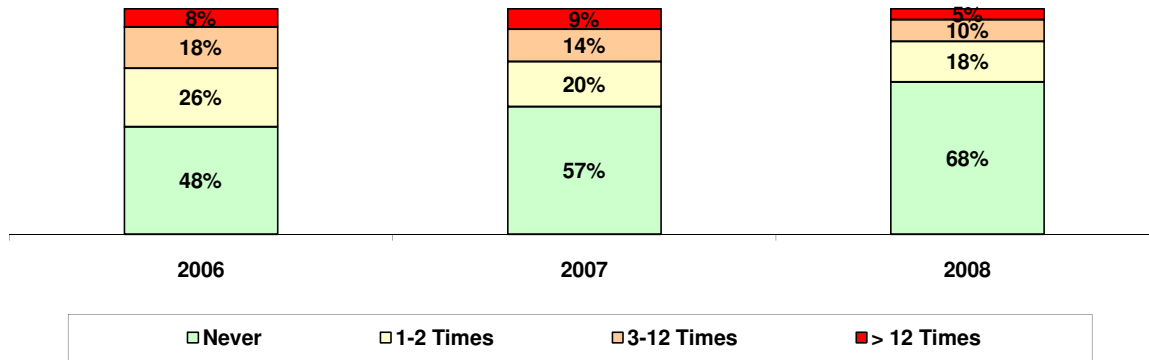


**Figure 21 All QS2 Student-Observed Fights among Peers at School or School Events Last 12 Months**

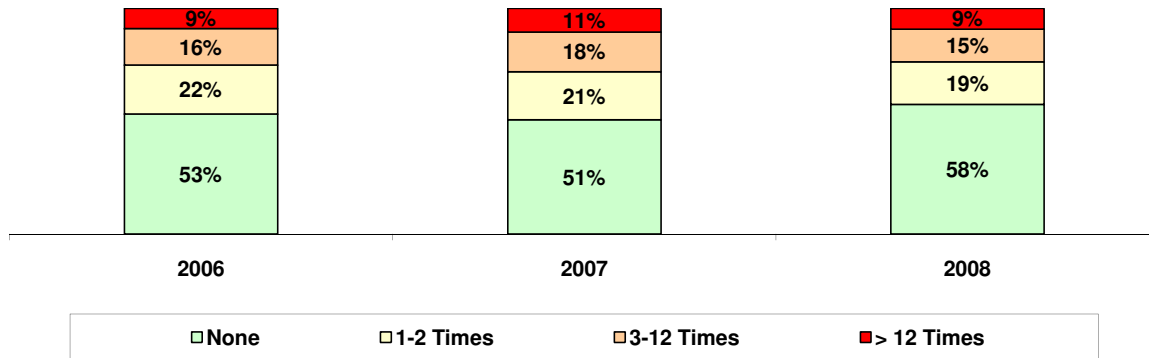


Among QS2 Alaska Native students, there was a consistent and fairly substantial decrease in observed instances of alcohol use among peers at school or school events from 2006 to 2008, (effect size of .36; see Figure 22). Among all QS2 students, there was a slight decrease in the number of instances of observed alcohol use, although progress in this area was not consistent among individual QS2 schools and the overall effect size was insignificant (Figure 23).

**Figure 22 QS2 Alaska Native Student-Observed Instances of Peers Under the Influence of Alcohol at School or School Events Last 12 Months**

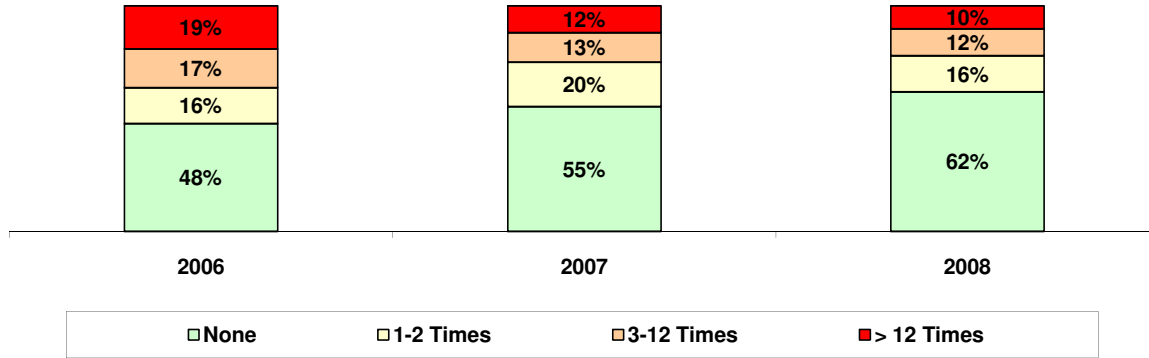


**Figure 23 Student-Observed Instances of Peers Under the Influence of Alcohol at School or School Events Last 12 Months, All QS2**

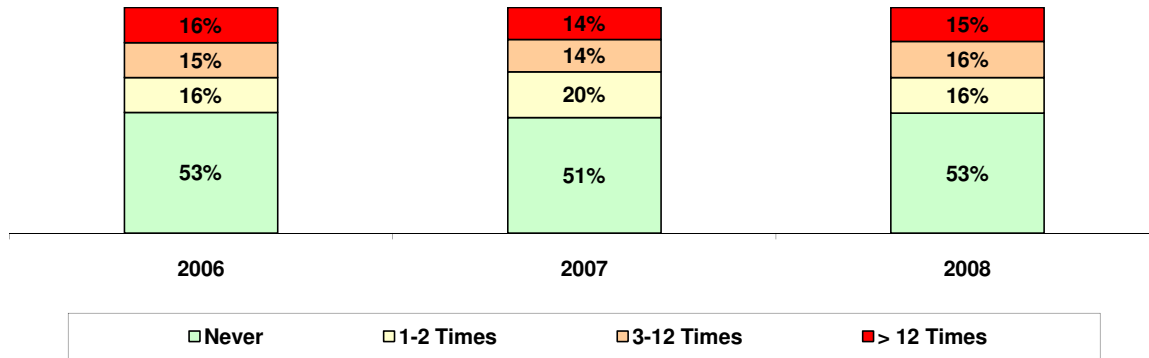


QS2 Alaska Native students reported notable decreases in observed instances of drug use among peers at school or school events from 2006 to 2008, with a small-to-moderate effect size of .32 (Figure 24). However, there was essentially no change in the amount of observed instances of drug use among QS2 students overall (Figure 25).

**Figure 24 QS2 Alaska Native Student-Observed Instances of Peers Under the Influence of Drugs at School or School Events Last 12 Months**



**Figure 25 All QS2 Student-Observed Instances of Peers Under the Influence of Drugs at School or School Events Last 12 Months**

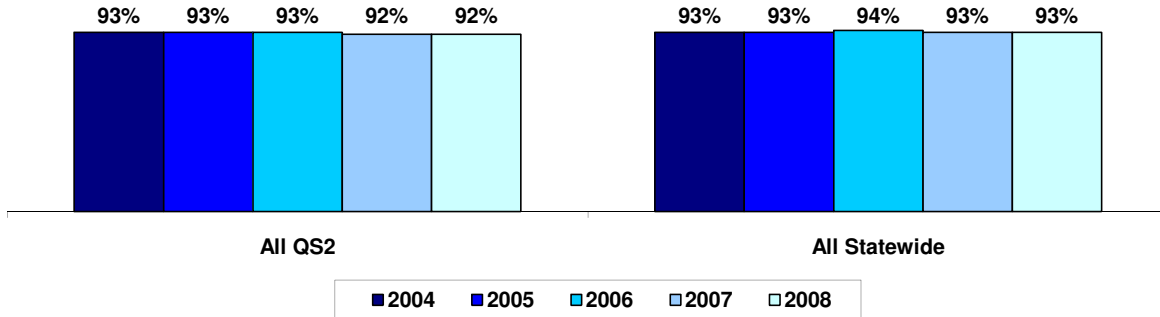


### Student Academic Engagement and Achievement

In this section, we present information regarding youth academic engagement and performance among QS2 school districts over the past several years. We focused on three measures of academic engagement: attendance rates, student reports of whether they had given up on school, and dropout rates. Attendance and dropout rates were obtained from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, and include overall statewide rates as a reference point. Attendance rates cover all grades, whereas dropout rates are based on students in grades 7 through 12 only. Whether students agreed that they had given up on school was based on an individual survey item on the SCCS. Data are presented specifically for Alaska Native students where available.

Average daily student attendance rates for the entire state and specifically for QS2 schools are presented below (Figure 26). QS2 average daily attendance rates were quite stable from 2004 through 2008, and were nearly identical to the statewide average.

Figure 26 QS2 Average Daily Attendance Rates



Each year on the SCCS, students were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, *I have given up on school*. Disagreement is a positive result because it means that the student has *not* given up on school. These results are based on direct frequencies of responses (i.e., percentage of students who checked the response option *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*, and so on).

Between 2006 and 2008, there was a slight (but not statistically significant) decrease in the percentage of QS2 Alaska Native students who had given up on school, but results were stable among QS2 students overall (Figures 27 and 28).

Figure 27 QS2 Alaska Native Percentage Agree "I have given up on school"

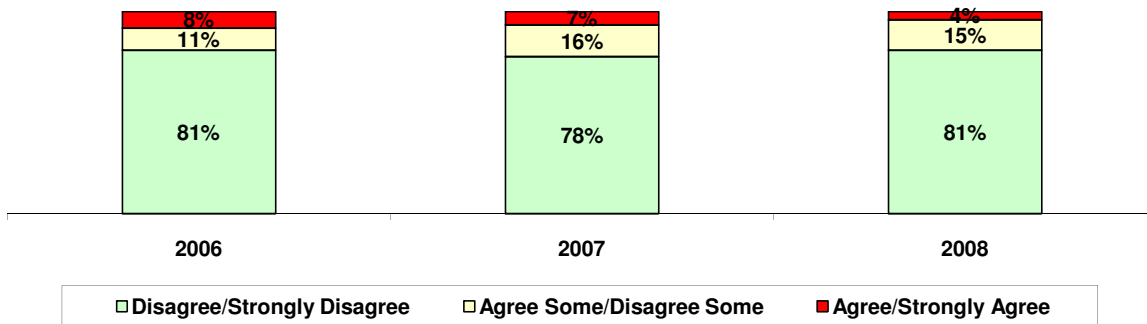
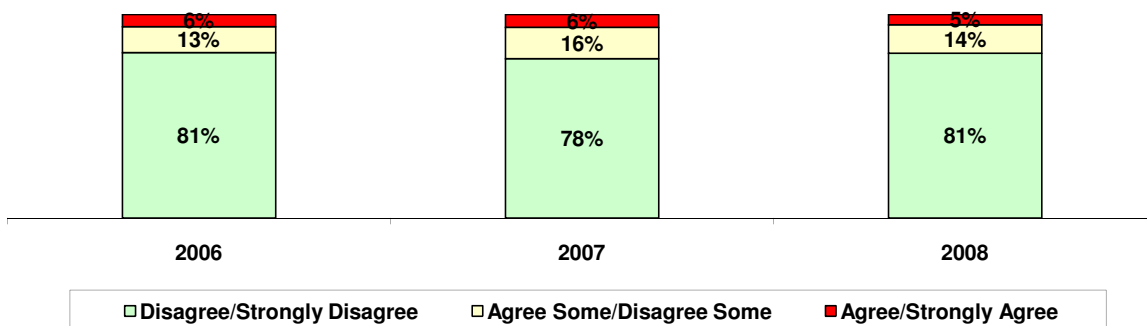
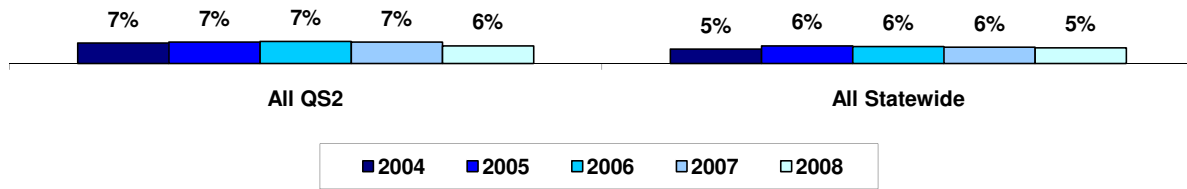


Figure 28 All QS2 Percentage Agree "I have given up on school"



QS2 schools had dropout rates from 2004 through 2008 for grades 7 through 12 that were fairly similar to the statewide average for that time period (Figure 29).

**Figure 29 QS2 School Dropout Rates**

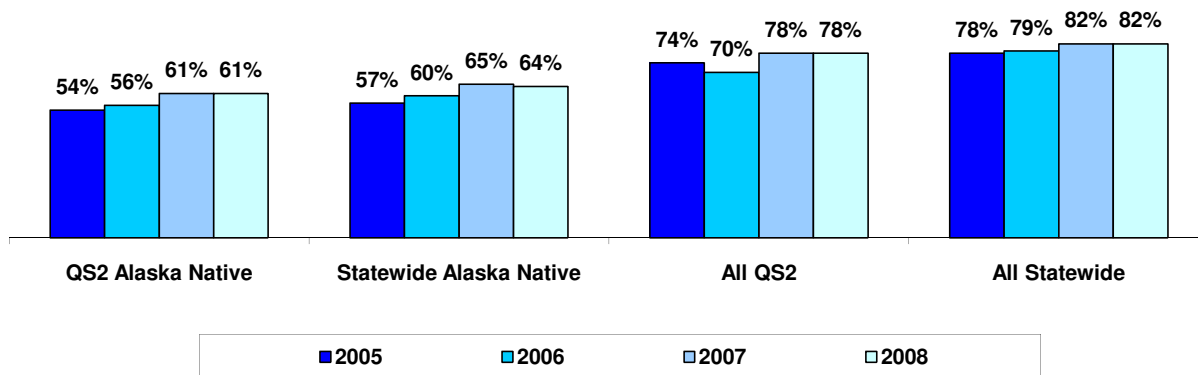


Overall, student academic engagement has remained relatively stable among QS2 students over the past several years. Dropping out of school is the ultimate disengagement from school, and QS2 schools maintained dropout rates that were very similar to the statewide average.

Next, we present information about how students in QS2 schools performed on tests of academic proficiency. As discussed above, we focused on several measures of student academic outcomes: rates of student proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics across both the SBAs and the HSGQEs, and high school graduation rates. Statewide averages are included as a reference point. Exam results are presented below for each subject area among QS2 schools overall and specifically for Alaska Native students attending QS2 schools. High school graduation rates were not available by race.

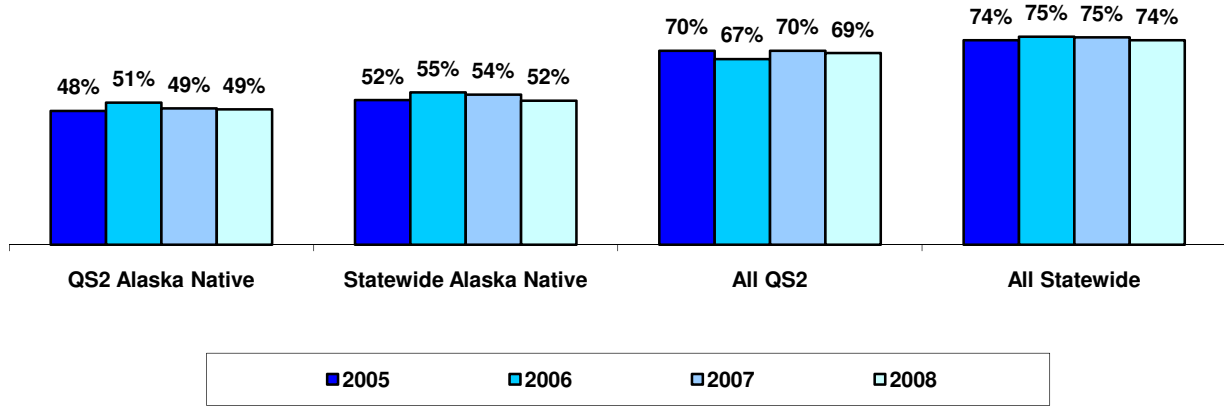
The SBA reading subtest proficiency rate for Alaska Native students increased by seven percentage points from 2005 to 2008, both statewide and specifically among QS2 schools, and increased to a lesser extent among all students statewide and among all QS2 students (Figure 30). The slight gaps between QS2 and statewide proficiency rates were stable from 2005 to 2008.

**Figure 30 QS2 Students Proficient or Above on Alaska SBA: Reading**



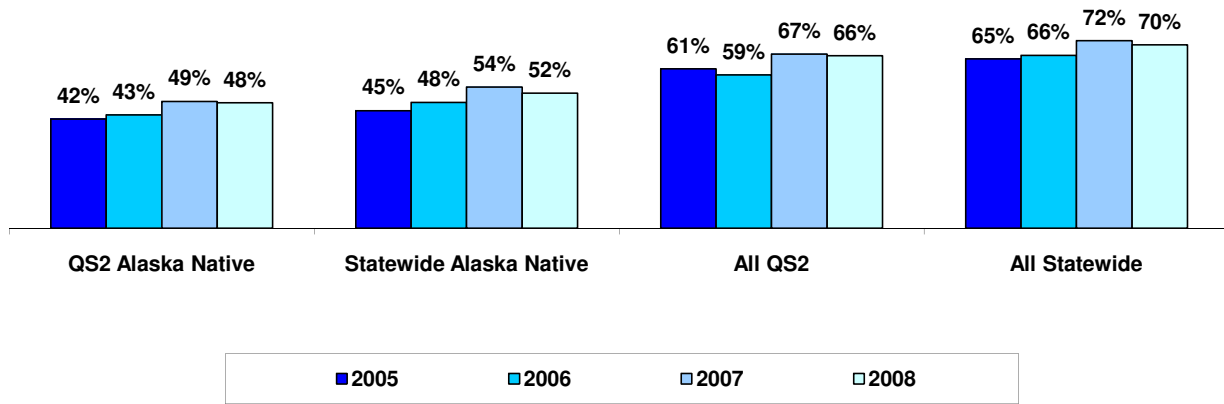
Proficiency rates on the SBA writing subtest were essentially unchanged for all four groups (QS2 Alaska Native, Alaska Native statewide, QS2 all students, and all students statewide) from 2005 to 2008 (Figure 31).

**Figure 31 QS2 Students Proficient or Above on Alaska SBA: Writing**



And on the SBA mathematics subtest, scores for QS2 Alaska Native students increased in line with Alaska Native students across the whole state from 2005 to 2008, and overall QS2 proficiency rates increased in line with statewide improvements (Figure 32).

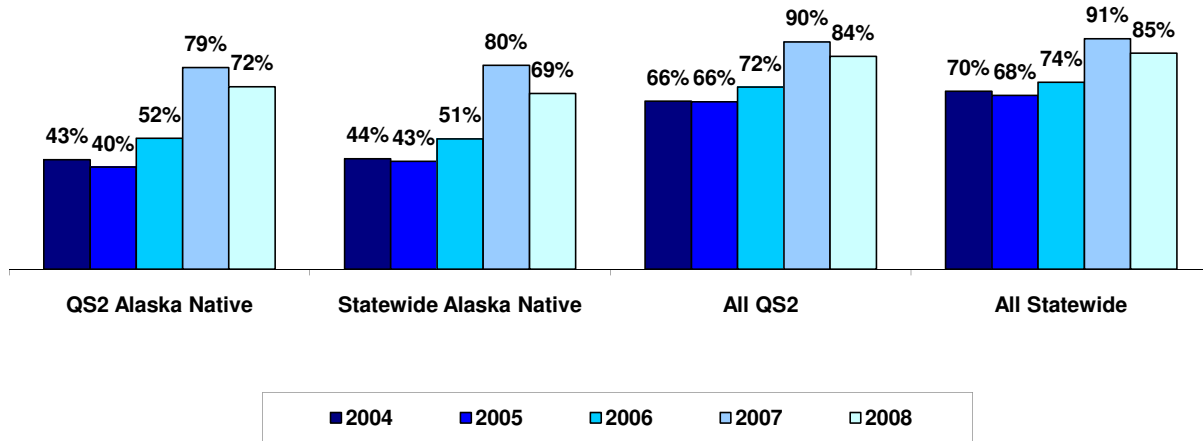
**Figure 32 QS2 Students Proficient or Above on Alaska SBA: Mathematics**



Each student must receive scores of “proficient” or better on all three subtests of the Alaska HSGQE to receive a high school diploma. Students take the exam in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, with the option to repeat the exam if they do not pass. Proficiency rates presented here are based on first-time HSGQE takers. Results are presented below for each subject area among QS2 schools overall and specifically for Alaska Native students attending QS2 schools. The statewide average is included as a reference point.

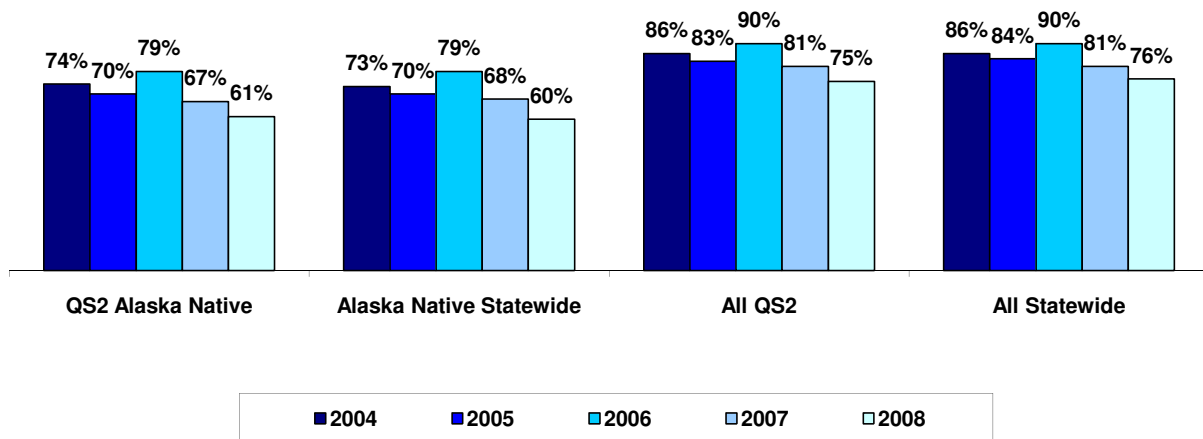
For the HSGQE reading subtest, QS2 Alaska Native students, who had proficiency rates slightly below the Alaska Native statewide average in 2004, made substantial improvements by 2008, surpassing the proficiency rate for Alaska Native students statewide with a substantial gain of 29 percentage points. Among all QS2 students, proficiency rates remained slightly below the statewide average, but QS2 schools also made greater gains in the last two years (Figure 33).

**Figure 33 QS2 Students Proficient or Above on Alaska HSGQE: Reading**



Proficiency rates for the writing subtest of the HSGQE dropped across the state from 2004 to 2008, and QS2 schools followed a similar pattern – both overall and specifically among their Alaska Native students (Figure 34).

**Figure 34 QS2 Students Proficient or Above on Alaska HSGQE: Writing**



The HSGQE mathematics proficiency rate for Alaska Native students increased considerably from 2004 to 2008, both statewide and specifically among QS2 schools. This pattern held true across all ethnic groups (QS2 and statewide) as well (Figure 35).

**Figure 35 QS2 Students Proficient or Above on Alaska HSGQE: Mathematics**

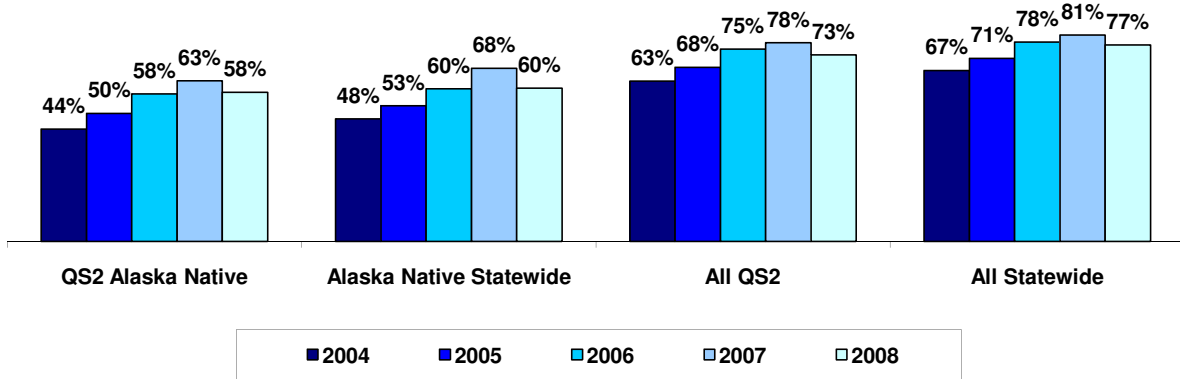
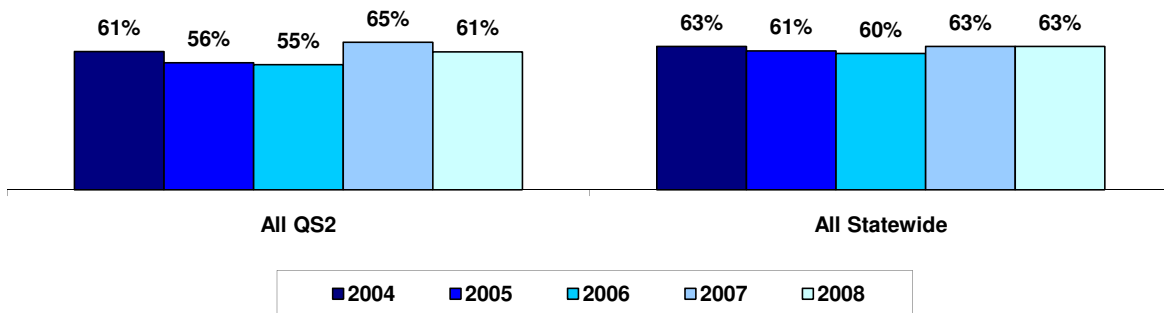


Figure 36 (below) shows high school graduation rates across the state, and specifically among QS2 schools. High school graduation rates improved among QS2 schools, from several percentage points below the state average from 2004 to 2006 to just above the average in 2007, with a dip in 2008. QS2 high school graduation rates increased without a corresponding decrease in the dropout rate until 2008 (see Figure 29 on page 33). This may be due to the different grade spans covered (that is, dropout rates cover grades 7 through 12, but it takes about five years for a seventh grader who does not drop out to reach graduation age).

**Figure 36 QS2 High School Graduation Rates**



In sum, Alaska Native students statewide made gains in their proficiency rates across all three SBA subtests, and made substantial gains in HSGQE reading proficiency rates. There were no unique patterns of change among QS2 students overall relative to statewide trends. Across all ethnic groups, QS2 proficiency rates on the HSGQE and high school graduation rates remained stable relative to the statewide average (graduation rates were not available specifically for Alaska Native students).

In conclusion, we found improvements in several youth outcomes. Youth SEL was relatively stable, with a small improvement among Alaska Native students in QS2 districts. Note that this outcome has only been measured since 2006, so any changes that took place prior to that time would not have been revealed in this evaluation. Academic engagement and achievement was relatively stable from 2004, 2005, or 2006 (depending on the measure) to 2008. While student proficiency rates on statewide exams and high school graduation rates remained below the statewide average, QS2 Alaska Native students made higher than average gains in several areas of proficiency.

A noteworthy accomplishment is the significant reduction in the reported incidence of vandalism, fights, and alcohol use among students at school or school events. Among Alaska Native students in these QS2 districts, there were substantial reductions in their reports of all four types of youth risk behaviors from 2006 to 2008.

**C. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND YOUTH OUTCOMES**

We were interested in learning how, and how much, the aspects of school climate and community support presented above were related to our youth outcomes of interest. In this section, we examine whether youth ratings of their school climate and community support are related to their SEL, risk behaviors among peers at school or school events, and academic engagement and achievement. We were also interested in relationships between youth SEL and youth academic outcomes and risk behaviors. Due to the anonymous nature of the survey, we were unable to examine relationships between individual SCCS scores and information that came from other sources. In those cases (which included attendance rates, dropout rates, SBA and HSGQE proficiency rates, and graduation rates), we used school-level averages and examined relationships at the school level rather than the individual student level.

All of these analyses are based on 2008 data. Our sample included information from all 15 QS2 districts examined in this report. Table 1 below summarizes the areas of significant relationship between factors of interest. Two checkmarks appear where there were statistically significant associations between all factors, and a single checkmark appears where there were statistically significant relationships between only some factors. It is far easier to find statistically significant relationships when comparing data at the student level (via the SCCS) than at the school level (as is the case with academic outcomes) with data on 89 schools and 3,840 students. This is because the more data points that are involved in making a comparison, the easier it is to be confident that observed relationships between factors are real and not just the result of chance. Appendix E provides the statistical details associated with these results.

**Table 1 Significant Relationships Between Factors Among QS2 Schools in 2008**

	School Climate	SEL	Risk Behaviors	Academic Outcomes
School Climate	---	✓✓	✓✓	✓
Community Support	✓✓	✓	✓	✓
SEL*	---	---	✓	✓

- ✓✓ = Significant relationships between all factors
- ✓ = Significant relationships between only some factors

### **School Climate Youth Outcomes**

There were statistically significant relationships between all four aspects of school climate (High Expectations, School Safety, Respectful Climate, and/or Peer Climate) and several youth outcomes. The better a student's ratings for their school climate in each of the four areas, the higher they rated their own SEL, and the fewer the instances of vandalism, fights, alcohol use, and drug use they observed among their peers at school or school events (see Tables 2 and 3, Appendix E).

We found significant relationships between all four aspects of school climate examined here and the academic engagement measures *I have given up on school*. The better a student rated his or her school climate in each of the four areas, the less likely he or she was to report having given up on school. We did not find statistically significant correlations between any of the four aspects of school climate and any of the academic engagement or achievement outcomes at the school level (see Tables 4, 5a, and 5b, Appendix E).

### **Community Support and School Climate**

We compared the SCCS scores for the two aspects of community support examined here (Caring Adults and Parent and Community Involvement) with our four measures of school climate (High Expectations, School Safety, Respectful Climate, and Peer Climate). Because all of these data points are drawn from the SCCS, we were able to compare results at the individual level (for an individual student, how did his or her feelings about the community's involvement relate to feelings about the school climate?). We found statistically significant relationships between all scales. The greater the level of caring adults and parent and community involvement that students reported, the better their experience of school climate (see Table 6, Appendix E).

### **Community Support and Youth Outcomes**

The better a student's ratings for Caring Adults and for Parent and Community Involvement, the higher they rated their own SEL (see Table 7, Appendix E).

The higher a student's ratings for Caring Adults and for Parent and Community Involvement, the fewer the instances of vandalism, fights, alcohol use, and drug use they observed among their peers at school or school events. These relationships were weak (but statistically significant) with regard to student ratings for the presence of caring adults at school, but more robust in the area of parent and community involvement (see Table 8, Appendix E).

We compared SCCS scale scores for two aspects of community support examined here (Caring Adults and Parent and Community Involvement) with our academic engagement and achievement outcomes. The higher the level of community support a student reported, the less likely he or she was to have given up on school. We did not find statistically significant correlations between Caring Adults or Parent and Community Involvement and any other school-level academic engagement or achievement outcomes (see Tables 9, 10a, and 10b, Appendix E).

## **Student Social and Emotional Learning and Youth Outcomes**

The better a student's ratings for their own SEL, the fewer the instances of vandalism, fights, alcohol use, and drug use they reported observing among their peers at school or school events (see Table 11, Appendix E), and the less likely that student was to have given up on school (see Table 12, Appendix E). The higher the students in a school rated their SEL as a group, the higher that school's average daily attendance rate. We did not find any statistically significant correlations between school-level averages for student SEL and school-level dropout rates or academic proficiency rates (see Tables 12, 13a and 13b, Appendix E).

In summary, we found statistically significant relationships between school climate, community support, youth SEL, youth risk behaviors, and some aspects of academic engagement. School climate and community support appeared to be unrelated to student academic achievement when school climate and academic achievement did not change substantially, although the relatively small number of schools assessed may have made it more difficult to detect less robust relationships. Previous analyses that focused on changes from the 2005-2006 school year to the 2006-2007 school year showed that not only were several aspects of school climate related to student achievement, but *positive change* in school climate was related to significant gains in student scores on statewide achievement tests. We were unable to continue our examination of these change relationships through 2008 because student academic achievement flattened out and school climate also changed at a slower rate, making it difficult to assess "change."

We also found that the higher the level of SEL among youth, the better their academic engagement and the lower their reports of risk behaviors among their peers at school or school events. These findings suggest that directing change efforts toward improving school climate and community support for youth can result in improvements in SEL, improvements in some aspects of youth academic engagement, and reductions in youth risk behaviors.

## **D. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON QS2 COMMUNITIES**

In this section, we present a summary of the accomplishments we observed across these 15 districts and their communities, the challenges faced in engaging communities to support youth assets and positive youth development in these communities, and recommendations for best practices when undertaking similar initiatives.

*What has the Alaska ICE initiative helped these communities to accomplish?*

Alaska ICE staff found that supporting school districts through initiatives such as QS2 has been an effective way to get the assets message into communities. These 15 QS2 communities achieved change in several key areas. First, a noteworthy accomplishment is the significant reduction in the reported rates of vandalism, fights, and alcohol use among students at school or school events.

We found modest but consistent gains from 2006 to 2008 in the respectful climate that students experienced at school. Among Alaska Native students from QS2 schools, there were clear increases in their perceptions a respectful school climate and a positive peer climate at school. We found modest improvements in student-reported levels of parent and community involvement in their schools.

Note that we were unable to systematically evaluate how policies and practices that support youth have changed in all 15 of these communities, but anecdotal evidence and discussions with Alaska ICE staff suggest that improvements did occur. Some examples of changes in policies, practices, behaviors, and attitudes reported by Alaska ICE staff include the following:

- One district added a school-community liaison position in an elementary school to reach out to families every time a child missed school to find out what the issue was that kept the child from attending and to offer assistance to the family if needed.
- One rural district partnered with the local Native tribe to foster family and community engagement through offering Native parenting education classes in Yup'ik and English.
- Several districts added student representatives to their school boards and established student councils; some communities created opportunities for youth to participate in community planning.
- Several communities created multi-partner/agency community coordinating entities to better manage, plan, and implement positive youth supports.
- Several communities changed their practices by limiting bingo activities to ensure that adults were available to provide support for children and help with homework.
- Several communities provided after-school programs to help with homework or to provide healthy activities using the assets framework.
- Several districts provided summer activities that fostered positive youth-adult relationships.
- Several districts established school-based mentoring programs to support students.
- A number of rural districts with advisory school boards revitalized them, provided community engagement training, and enlisted those individuals in sustained community engagement efforts.
- Several districts, at the end of their official QS2 term, committed their own funds to continue their local community engagement initiative.

*What have been the challenges to achieving desired change across communities supported by Alaska ICE?*

Alaska ICE staff and community members have identified several challenges to engaging communities and achieving desired change. For one, it is critical that a district/community have some level of readiness and capacity in order to effectively take advantage of the opportunities afforded by QS2 and Alaska ICE. In some QS2 districts, it was necessary to start at a basic level to build readiness and strengthen local capacity to prepare a foundation for effective community engagement. In these cases, a three-year model was too short to produce significant changes. For some districts, they seemed ready to actively move ahead just when their official QS2 term was ending. (There is one case where Alaska ICE continued providing some level of ongoing

support for community engagement and student support past the normal three years, and it appears to have made a difference; see Chapter IV for more details).

Another issue that came up consistently was around buy-in and leadership. For QS2 districts where the goals included both school improvement and community engagement, having the initial buy-in and leadership of the school board, superintendent, and a local Community Engagement Advocate (CEA) was important. The CEA is in a key position to promote, educate, inspire, enlist, lead, model, network, and advocate consistently for community engagement and positive youth development. There was concern among Alaska ICE staff, community leaders, and other community members that when community engagement efforts are being driven by a small number of individuals, they are not necessarily sustainable. Alaska ICE staff have provided examples where a school district has been the driving force for championing assets and community engagement, but then abandons their efforts entirely when they get a new superintendent who is less interested in the idea.

In some communities, there is agreement that youth need resources and support for positive development, but individuals see that as the job of organizations rather than a role they can also take on themselves through everyday interactions with youth. Another challenge arises when communities have not clearly identified what it is they want to achieve, or when they assume that only a brief and small-scale effort will be sufficient to engender lasting community-wide change. And in some school districts, leadership has professed an interest in “community engagement” and pursued QS2 support without being clear about what community engagement really involves.

In sum, it takes time and often extensive planning and efforts to engage communities in understanding what community engagement would look like for them, creating realistic and appropriate planning for change, creating the collaborations needed to extend the effort throughout the community, following through with the initiatives in their plan on a long-term basis, and evaluating outcomes and adjusting plans as needed.

*What best practices should be incorporated when providing support for community engagement?*

Alaska ICE staff identified several best practices that they would recommend to others working on promoting community engagement. The first recommendation is to spend time getting to know the community so that you understand their needs, and so that you can be sure that youth-serving individuals and organizations are at the table early in the initiative if possible. It is critical that the community engagement initiative be community-driven if it is to become sustainable. And it is these collaborative relationships that are built – between individuals and between organizations – that continue after external support has ended.

Second, work with the community to help them identify clear and realistic goals. Part of this process involves ensuring the creation of a shared understanding (for example, what is meant by “respect?”) and a shared definition of success. Another part of this process involves managing expectations and helping the community to create a realistic and sustainable plan. A single event is not going to create large-scale and sustainable change. Rather, persistent and ongoing efforts over several years are necessary.

Third, communities need dedicated people who have time to “do the work” of community engagement. Many times the champions of positive youth development are community leaders who have multiple responsibilities, and it takes someone with time and commitment to keep up efforts day after day.

And fourth, getting buy-in and involvement from multiple organizations and sectors of the community will help ensure that the focus is maintained on achieving the community’s goals in a sustainable manner.

#### **IV. COMMUNITY EXAMPLE: THE PRIBILOF ISLANDS**

The Pribilof Islands are located 750 miles west of Anchorage, 300 miles west of mainland Alaska, and 240 miles north of the Aleutian Islands. The Saint Paul and Saint George Islands are approximately 40 miles apart and host the only two communities in the five-island chain of the Pribilof Islands. Today, approximately 432 people live in Saint Paul, and fewer than 100 people live in Saint George. Both populations are more than 90 percent Alaska Native (Aleut) and have been highly influenced by the Russian Orthodox Church. The federally controlled fur seal industry dominated the economy until 1983. The economy then began to rely on fishing and crabbing. In 1998, both islands’ economies were devastated by the collapse of the Opilio crab populations. Today, most employment is found in government positions, and in the limited commercial fishing opportunities that remain. There is concern within the communities about a lack of employment opportunities for young adults, a declining economy, and the long-term viability of the communities in the face of a shrinking population. The Pribilof School District has two schools – one each on Saint Paul and Saint George. Together the schools served approximately 110 students from pre-kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade as of October 2007, and enrollment is expected to continue to decline. The District’s mission states, *The Pribilof School District, unique in history, location, and Aleut Culture, with the support of parents and community, will provide an educational program based on Alaska Standards which will enable students to become responsible young adults.* It is a common practice in the school district – especially in Saint George – to send high school students to one of Alaska’s public boarding schools on the mainland, where there are more diverse educational opportunities. This community is featured here because Alaska ICE support in combination with community-based efforts were associated with substantial improvement in adult support for youth and youth outcomes in very remote Alaska Native communities that face significant economic challenges.

#### **The Introduction of Alaska ICE**

The Pribilof School District applied to become a QS2 partner in the spring of 2003. In their application, the district identified a need to improve student achievement, improve the “overall wellness” of the communities, and to build “a bridge between the schools and the communities.” It was reported that some families did not feel welcome in the schools, that many were not actively involved in schools or in supporting their students, and that students lacked opportunities for leadership and involvement in the schools and communities. The QS2 application was submitted with the belief that community involvement was the key to better

youth outcomes. The Pribilof communities received QS2 support starting in the 2003-2004 school year. The 2005-06 school year was to have been their final year of QS2 support, but a decision was made to extend Alaska ICE support past the normal three-year QS2 term, based on a sense that additional training, coaching, and (limited) funding would help enhance and solidify the progress the communities had made in reaching their goals.

Pribilof community members identified several areas of support that they received from Alaska ICE that they felt were particularly helpful. These included the provision of several training sessions for school staff, community members, and families in the development of youth assets, assistance from Alaska ICE staff in the development of an SEL curriculum, and the provision of the books *Helping Kids Succeed – Alaskan Style* and *Helping Little Kids Succeed – Alaskan Style* to school staff as well as the community. School staff reported that prior to the Alaska ICE assets trainings, they were generally knowledgeable about the concept of building youth assets, but were looking for ways to implement these concepts. Respondents felt that the assets trainings provided a common framework and language for the schools and the community in their efforts to support youth. There were also ongoing youth leadership training and service opportunities provided to students during this period.

### **Change in the Pribilof Islands Schools and Communities**

Alaska ICE has focused its efforts in the Pribilof communities on helping to support change to improve policies and practices regarding youth, improve school climate, and encourage positive community engagement with youth. As discussed in Chapter II, *school climate* refers to the social and environmental factors that contribute to a student’s subjective experience of a school. Positive school climate reflects well-managed classrooms and common areas, high and clearly stated expectations concerning individual responsibility, feelings of safety at school, and teachers and staff that consistently acknowledge all students and fairly address their behavior.

To learn about changes in policies and practices in communities, we conducted interviews with the Alaska ICE CEAs and other Alaska ICE staff who had been working with the Pribilof communities, and also spoke directly with individuals in these communities through a series of interviews conducted in 2005, 2006, and 2008. The SCCS was used to learn about changes in school climate and changes in adult-youth connections from the perspective of students. See Chapters I and II for more information about the survey, and see Appendix C for a list of SCCS items for scales included in this report. The Grading Grownups Survey was administered in the Pribilof communities in 2004 and 2008 to provide information regarding adult perceptions of Pribilof youth and the frequency with which Pribilof adults reached out to engage with and support youth. See Chapter II for more information about the survey.

### *A. Changes in Policies and Practices*

In this section, we examine the extent to which policies and practices were implemented to support community engagement and positive youth outcomes in the Pribilof communities, describe how change was achieved, and address the challenges in attaining desired results.

Several changes in policies and practices have occurred at the school level since the Pribilof School District began to receive QS2 support. School staff attributed these changes to involvement with Alaska ICE. For example, there was a series of teacher in-services from 2005 through 2008 where school staff examined student reports of how they viewed their school climate as measured by the SCCS. These in-services allowed the Pribilof School District to create a shared understanding and commitment to improving school climate and student SEL. With support, encouragement, and help with networking from Alaska ICE staff, the district was able to coordinate and align another grant (Alaska Education Innovation Network) with its Alaska ICE efforts in the area of SEL, making it possible for district staff to take part in a year-long course entitled *Cultural Practices and Inquiry into Personal Teaching Practice* through the University of Alaska, Anchorage. For the past year, school staff have worked with Alaska ICE educators to review SEL curricula, review Anchorage School District's SEL standards, and pilot SEL lessons in Pribilof schools, adapting them to be culturally responsive for the local communities. Through this collaborative effort, the school district plans to identify an SEL curriculum that best meets the needs of the Pribilof communities.

The school district has made several other changes to its policies and practices since it became involved with Alaska ICE. For example, in response to concerns that students had not been given opportunities to participate in decision-making, the school board added a student representative and a student council was created. During the 2004-05 school year, high school students in Saint George were involved for the first time in community strategic planning. Through the Future Teachers Club, Pribilof middle and high school students have developed and taught lessons about assets to elementary students. In the course of interviews, Pribilof School District staff have commented on how Alaska ICE staff have been a valuable support and resource for them in improving youth assets development. Respondents also expressed a belief that these changes had produced benefits, including an increased feeling of empowerment and of potential to impact change among students.

Alaska ICE has supported or facilitated the development of several new initiatives to improve community engagement and youth outcomes. Two community engagement coordinators were funded by Alaska ICE to co-plan activities and events as part of a Pribilof School District community engagement plan. They were responsible for planning with community stakeholders, organizing events, and reaching out to the community to involve them in the events. Because community members felt that the introduction of a youth assets framework into the community would enhance the work being done in the schools to improve youth outcomes, a new Behavioral Wellness initiative by the Saint Paul Community Health Center adopted the assets framework as the foundation for its work. This initiative has had a focus on providing Pribilof youth with information on physical, mental, and sexual health. In response to other concerns in the community, the Initiative recently introduced special topics for youth regarding the risks associated with tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, and regarding the prevention of unplanned pregnancies.

In the summer of 2007, several community organizations came together under a First Alaskans Institute grant to create a collaborative, sustainable learning community to increase the social and academic success of the youth of Saint Paul Island. This project was designed to provide a series of forums on topics of interest and priority to the community that would directly increase knowledge and awareness of cultural traditions; provide practical information to parents and community adults concerning parenting and education; and increase community collaborations that support youth success and leadership. To do this, high schools students worked with the tribal government to organize forums bringing the community together for discussion.

In summary, the Pribilof communities have seen a significant level of engagement and mobilization at the school and community level to improve policies and practices for youth.

### *B. Changes in School Climate*

In this section, we present information about how students in Pribilof schools viewed their school climate from 2006 through 2008. As discussed above, we are focusing on four aspects of school climate: expectations for students, school safety, a climate of respect, and peer relationships. All of the data presented in this section were obtained through the SCCS. Note that the SCCS was first implemented in 2005, but the Pribilof communities started participating in the QS2 initiative in the 2003-04 school year. Therefore, data from 2005 should not be regarded as baseline information (i.e., they do not reflect the state of affairs prior to intervention).

Throughout this section, results are presented in terms of the percentage of students who agreed that the expectations were high for them at school, agreed that their school was safe, agreed that there was a climate of respect in their school, and agreed that relationships among peers in their school were positive. As described in Chapter II, the SCCS uses a five-point Likert scale for youth to report their perceptions of their school climate. Levels of agreement presented in the charts below are based on the following scale scores:

Agree/Strongly Agree = Scale score  $\geq 4.0$

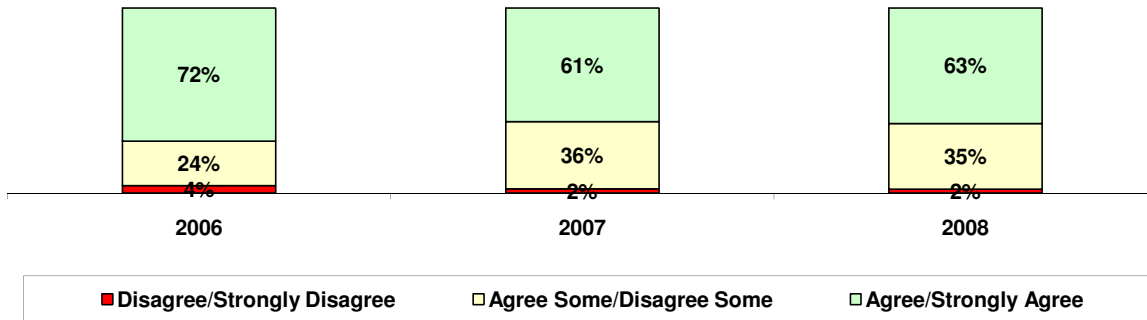
Agree Some/Disagree Some = Scale score 3.0–3.9

Disagree/Strongly Disagree = Scale score  $< 3.0$

Improvement in school climate can be seen when the percentage of students in each category shifts over time so that fewer are in the disagree (red) area and/or more are in the agree (green) area. See Appendix C for a list of survey items that made up this scale, and Appendix D for scale scores. As described in Chapter II, effect sizes presented here specify the *degree of change* (if any) in SCCS scores from earlier years to 2008. Effect sizes are expressed with the *d* statistic, which captures the degree of difference between two means. The higher the *d* value, the greater the degree of change in mean from one measurement to the next. Effect sizes of  $d = .20$  are considered small and sizes of  $d = .50$  are considered medium, but it is important to keep in mind that even successful interventions in the areas such as education and social change generally produce small effects.<sup>8</sup>

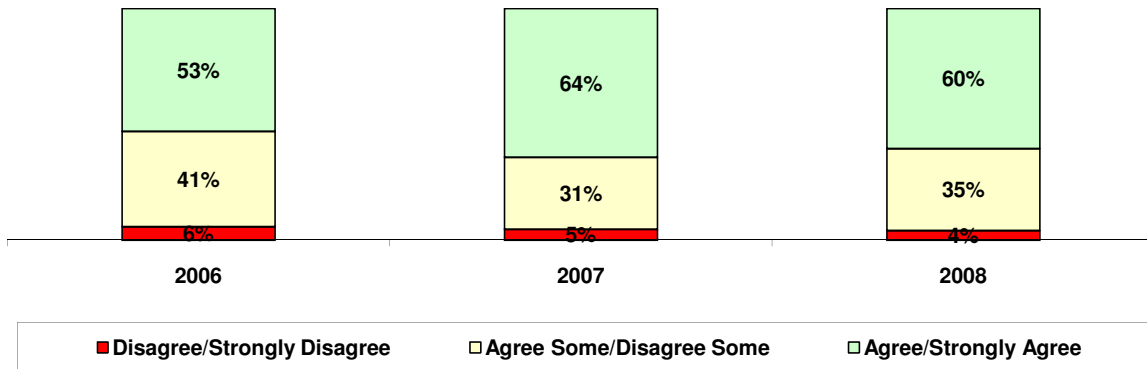
The High Expectations scale reflects students' feelings about how much they are encouraged by school staff and the community to do well in school, and their own expectations of themselves with regard to their schoolwork and their academic futures. Most students from the Pribilof communities agreed that there were high expectations for them, but average scale scores did not change significantly 2006 to 2008 (Figure 37).

**Figure 37 High Expectations, Pribilof Schools**



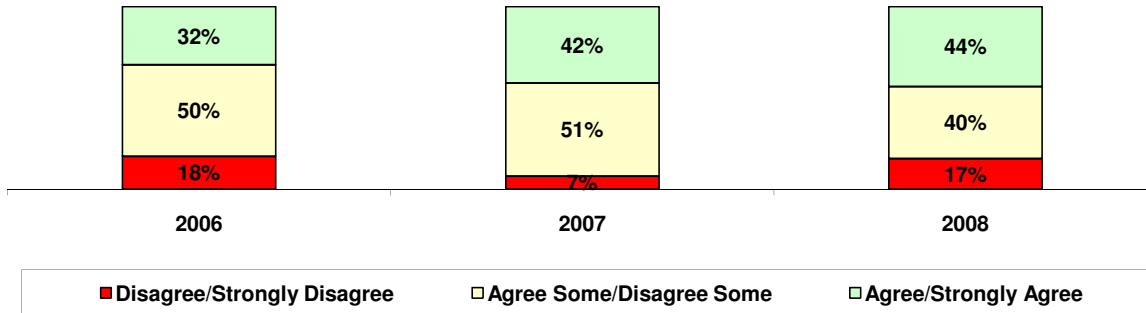
The School Safety scale reflects students' feelings of safety at school, as well as the presence of bullying, crime, and violence at school. Most students attending Pribilof schools agreed that they felt safe from bullying, crime, and violence (Figure 38). The percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe increased noticeably after 2006, with a small but significant effect size of .22.

**Figure 38 School Safety, Pribilof Schools**



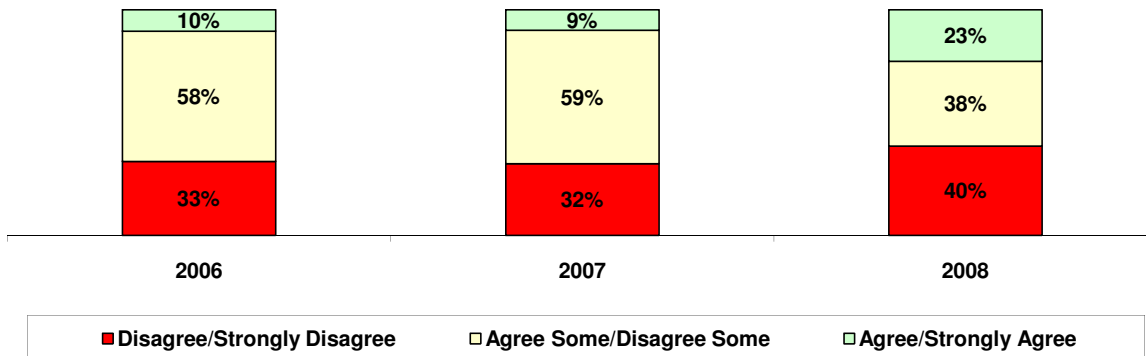
The Respectful Climate scale reflects students’ perceptions about the fairness of school rules and whether their teachers treat them with respect. In 2006, about half of Pribilof students fell into the *agree some/disagree some* category, meaning that they felt that their school climate was respectful in some ways but not in others (Figure 39). By 2008, more students agreed or strongly agreed that their school climate was respectful, although the percentage that disagreed or strongly disagreed that their school climate was respectful remained essentially unchanged. This effect size was small but significant at  $d = .23$ .

**Figure 39 Respectful Climate, Pribilof Schools**



The Peer Climate scale reflects students’ perceptions about whether their peers at school treated them with respect, whether they helped one another, and the extent to which teasing and bullying occurred at school. Across all participating school districts, Peer Climate has been one of the lowest-rated scales and seems to have been one of the more difficult areas to change. Pribilof schools saw the percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed that they had a positive peer climate more than double from 2006 to 2008, although there was also some increase in the percentage of students who disagreed (Figure 40), . Overall change from 2006 to 2008 showed a small-to-moderate effect size of .34.

**Figure 40 Peer Climate, Pribilof Schools**



Community interviews revealed a concerted effort on the part of the community and the schools to address issues of teasing and disrespect among all parts of the population. The old way of thinking was that teasing and putting others down was just a part of everyday life in the Pribilof communities, and that since it was directed at everyone, no harm was done. Now, school staff and others in the community have placed an emphasis on mutual respect, and believe that these issues have improved greatly in the community. As described above in the Policies and Practices

section, Pribilof School District staff have been highly involved in taking steps to implement an SEL curriculum. And through Alaska ICE-supported events, the community as a whole engaged in conversations that increased awareness about the negative impact that teasing and disrespect was having on the community and its youth.

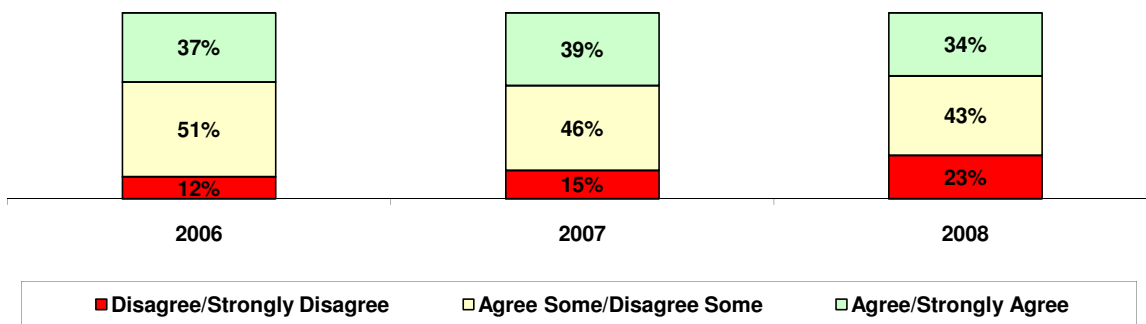
Overall, Pribilof schools have become safer and more respectful places for students. Most Pribilof students continued to feel that there were high expectations for them at school, although this decreased somewhat over the three years. More than twice as many Pribilof students saw their school as free from teasing and bullying in 2008 as did in 2006.

*C. Changes in Adult-Youth Relationships*

In this section, we first present information from Pribilof students regarding how supported they felt by adults in their schools and in their communities, and the level of family and community involvement in their schools. In the second half of this section, we present information from adult community members regarding their feelings about Pribilof youth, and the extent to which they saw other adults in their communities actively engaged with youth in ways that support youth-adult connections, and promote youth SEL and youth character development. The student ratings presented in this section were obtained through the SCCS.

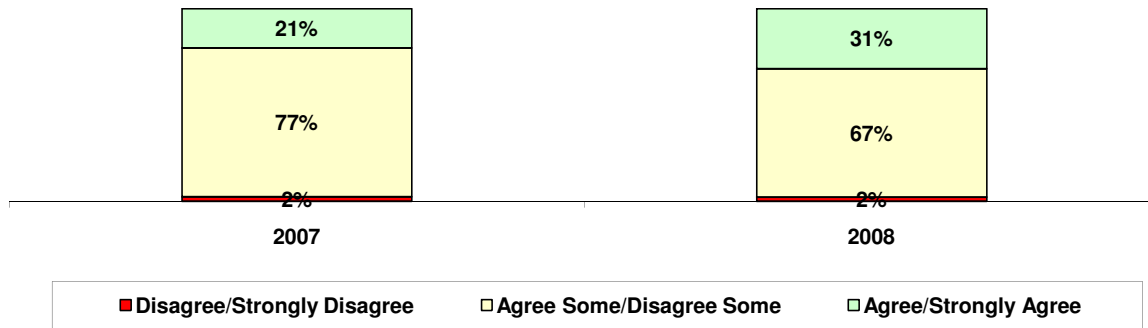
The Caring Adults scale reflects students’ feelings about whether adults at their school knew them, cared about them, and were available to talk with and listen to them. Student perceptions of having caring adults at school decreased from 2006 through 2008, with nearly twice as many students disagreeing that there were caring adults at school in 2008 than in 2006, although the effect size did not reach the level of significance (Figure 41).

**Figure 41 Caring Adults, Pribilof Schools**



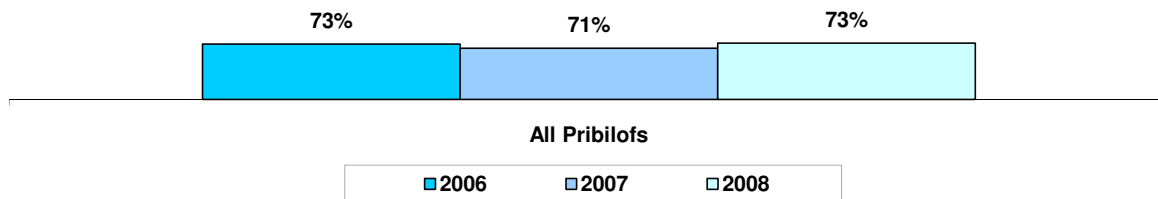
The Parent and Community Involvement scale reflects students' perceptions about how much their family and community felt welcome at school and took part in school activities, and the extent to which students communicated with their families about their schoolwork. In the one year since the scale was first introduced, there was an increase in the percentage of Pribilof students who agreed or strongly agreed that their parents and community were involved in their school (Figure 42), although the effect size was not statistically significant.

**Figure 42 Parent and Community Involvement, Pribilof Schools**



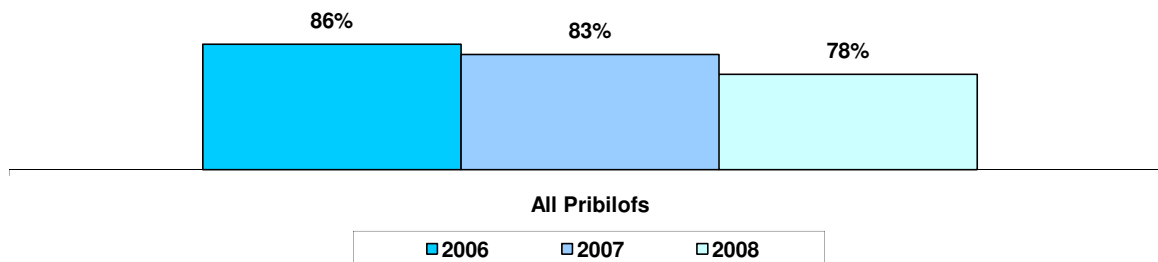
We asked students about the level of concrete support that community adults provided to them. Each year, students were asked on the SCCS, *Is there an adult who really knows how you spend your free time?* The percentages of students who answered *Yes* each year are presented in Figure 43 below. These results were essentially unchanged from 2006 to 2008.

**Figure 43 Students with Adult Supervision, Pribilof Schools**



Each year on the SCCS, students were also asked, *Do you have someone outside of school who can help you with homework?* The percentages of students who answered *Yes* each year are presented in Figure 44. From 2006 to 2008, Pribilof students were less and less likely to report that they had help with homework.

**Figure 44 Students who have Help with Homework, Pribilof Schools**



The Grading Grownups survey was used to obtain information from adult Pribilof community members regarding their feelings about Pribilof youth, and the extent to which they saw other adults in their community actively engaged in supporting youth. Results are presented here for 2004 and 2008 Grading Grownups surveys.

There was a marked increase in the frequency of active support for youth by adult Pribilof community members. As part of the Grading Grownups surveys in 2004 and 2008, adults in the Pribilof communities were asked how often they saw other adults in their communities engaged with youth in ways that promoted adult-youth connections, and supported youth SEL and character development. Figure 45 presents the percentage of Pribilof adults who said that they saw other adults in their communities engaged in the following behaviors to support adult-youth connections often or very often:

- *Have conversations with youth that allow adults and youth to get to know one another (shown as Converse)*
- *Act as a mentor or advisor to youth (shown as Mentor)*
- *Ask youth their opinions about issues that will affect youth (shown as Opinions)*
- *Engage in sports, outdoor, artistic, or cultural activities together with youth (shown as Activities)*

Pribilof adults reported seeing all of these types of adult support for youth more frequently in their communities in 2008 than they had four years previously.

**Figure 45 Pribilof Community Adults Engaging in Activities Often/Very Often that Support Adult-Youth Connections**

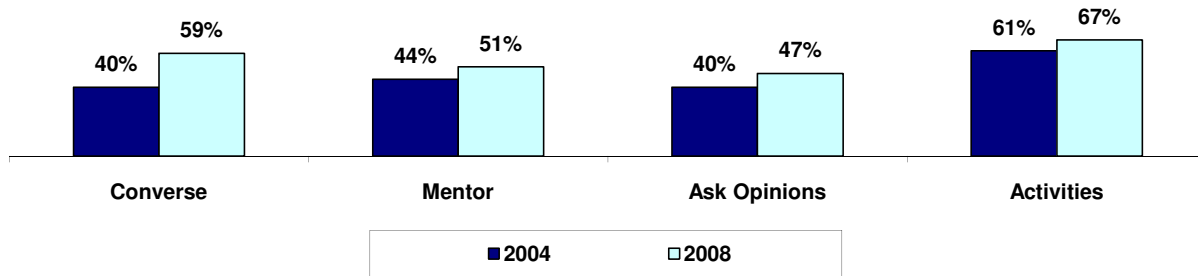


Figure 46 presents the percentage of Pribilof adults who said that they saw other adults in their communities engaged in the following behaviors to support youth SEL often or very often:

- *Help youth think through possible good and bad consequences of their decisions* (shown as *Decisions*)
- *Teach youth values such as respect, honesty, and responsibility* (shown as *Values*)
- *Teach youth respect for all people regardless of race, culture, or religion* (shown as *Respect*)

There were noticeable increases in reported adult behaviors to support youth SEL in the Pribilof communities from 2004 to 2008.

**Figure 46 Pribilof Community Adults Engaging in Activities Often/Very Often that Support Youth Social and Emotional Learning**

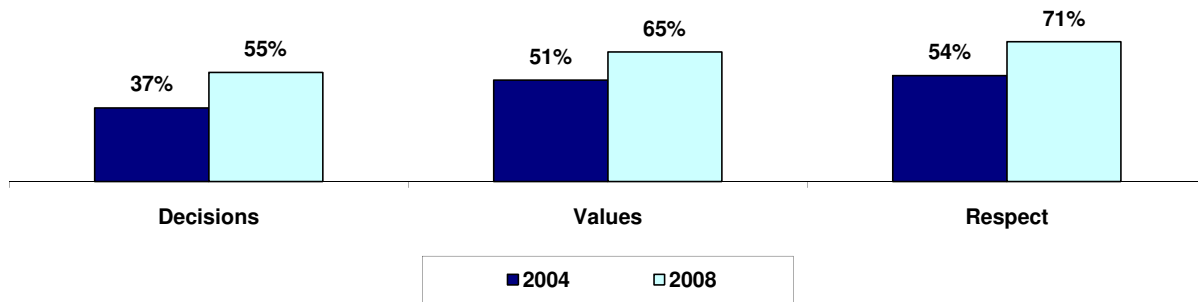
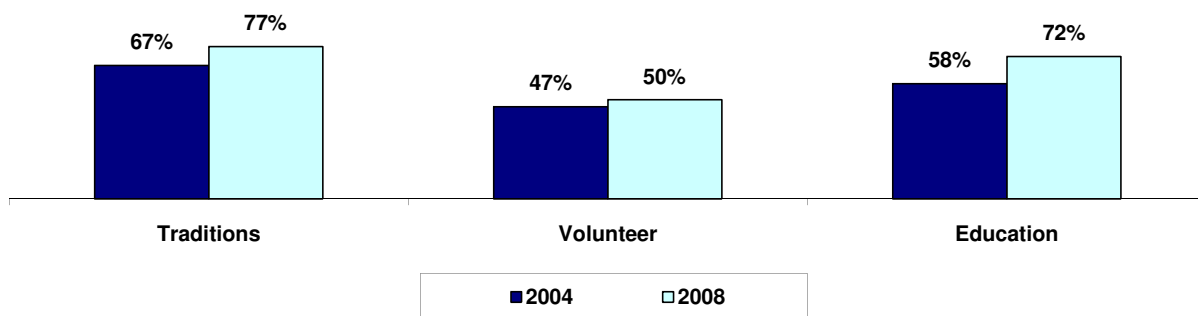


Figure 47 presents the percentage of Pribilof adults who said that they saw other adults in their communities engaged in the following behaviors to support youth character development often or very often:

- *Preserve and pass down traditions and values of their own culture or religion* (shown as *Traditions*)
- *Show youth the importance of helping others by volunteering* (shown as *Volunteer*)
- *Encourage youth to take school seriously and do their best work* (shown as *Education*)

There were increases in reported adult behaviors to support youth character development in all of these ways in the Pribilof communities from 2004 to 2008.

**Figure 47 Pribilof Community Adults Engaging in Activities Often/Very Often that Support Youth Character Development**

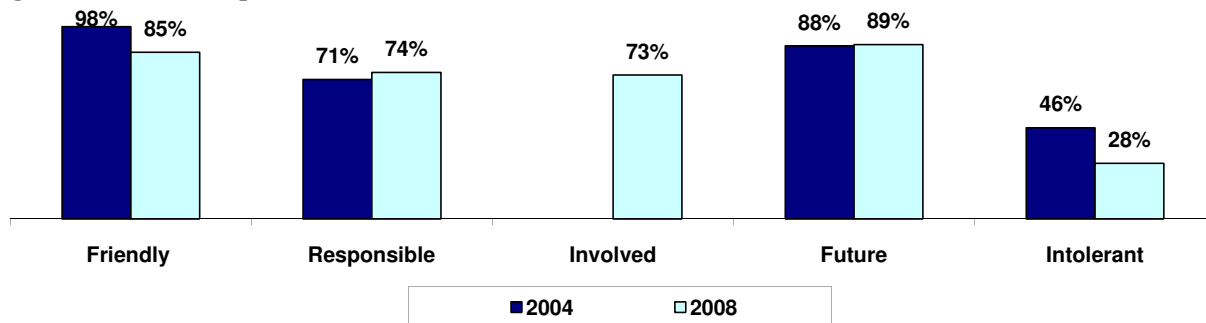


Respondents to the Grading Grownups survey were asked to what extent they agreed with several statements regarding youth in their community (see Figure 48):

- *Teenagers in my community are friendly and helpful toward others* (shown as *Friendly*)
- *Teenagers in my community generally act responsibly* (shown as *Responsible*)
- *Teenagers in my community volunteer, provide services or get involved positively in our community* (shown as *Involved*, which was not asked in 2004)
- *Today's teenagers will make Alaska a better place in the future* (shown as *Future*)
- *Alaskan teenagers are often intolerant of other cultures and races* (shown as *Intolerant*)

A high percentage of Pribilof adults saw youth in their communities as friendly, responsible, and willing to volunteer, and as people who would make Alaska a better place in the future. They also reported viewing youth as less intolerant than they did in 2004.

**Figure 48 Adult Perceptions of Youth**



Interviews revealed a difference in adult levels of support for youth between the two Pribilof communities. Saint Paul made great strides in the provision of constructive activities for youth, and in the engagement of adults as mentors for youth. For example, the community's tribal government introduced an after-school and summer program that educates youth regarding their Alaska Native culture. Community members from Saint George described a lack of involvement in supporting youth, and attributed this in part to the community's history of sending its high school students to public boarding schools off of the island. This practice left adults inexperienced in interacting with adolescents. Staff from both schools stated that they have taken on the role of acting as promoters of youth assets in the community, and see the community slowly buying into the ideas of youth being able to play a positive role in the community, and the need to support for youth assets. According to the Pribilof School District Superintendent,

*Since partnering with QS2/ICE, we have been able to reach out to organizations in the community and community collaborations have increased. We now have entities that are funding programs in the school that the general budget of the district can't afford. Members of these organizations participated in the TOPs [Training of Promoters] training and Strategic Planning Workshops where they were able to see the importance of collaboration for youth to know they are supported. It has also helped provide a starting point for students to give back to the community. We are able to show students how they are supported and that they should give back to the community by volunteering, working with elders [and] participating in community clean-up efforts. (2007)*

Overall, the Pribilof communities saw a marked increase in the past four years in the level of support that adults provided for youth. Youth themselves reported an increase in the level of family and community participation at school from 2007 to 2008. There was not a corresponding increase in youth perceptions of adults in their school and community as caring, nor in the percentage of youth with adult supervision. Youth reported steadily decreasing availability of adults outside of school to help them with homework, although more than three out of four still had this resource in 2008. Adult perceptions of youth remained very positive overall.

Although our purpose here is not to compare communities to one another, it is important to note that by 2008, the level of adult support for youth in the Pribilof communities was far higher than the level typically seen in other communities across Alaska as well as in other parts of the United States. Adult perceptions of youth were exceptionally high, as well.

### **Changes in Youth Outcomes**

As discussed in Chapter II, we are examining youth outcomes in three areas: student SEL, youth risk behaviors, and student academic engagement and achievement. We measured student SEL-based student responses to a series of items on the SCCS. We measured youth risk behaviors via the SCCS by asking students how often they observed their peers engaging in vandalism, fights, alcohol use, and/or drug use at school or school events within the prior 12 months. Measures of student academic engagement were based on statewide statistics at the school level – attendance rates and dropout rates. Students were also asked individually on the SCCS to what extent they feel like they have given up on school. And student academic achievement outcomes were based on school-level proficiency rates on the Alaska Standard Based Assessment (SBA) and High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE). SBA results play a key role for the state in determining whether students are on track academically, and whether a school makes Adequate Yearly Progress under the No Child Left Behind act.

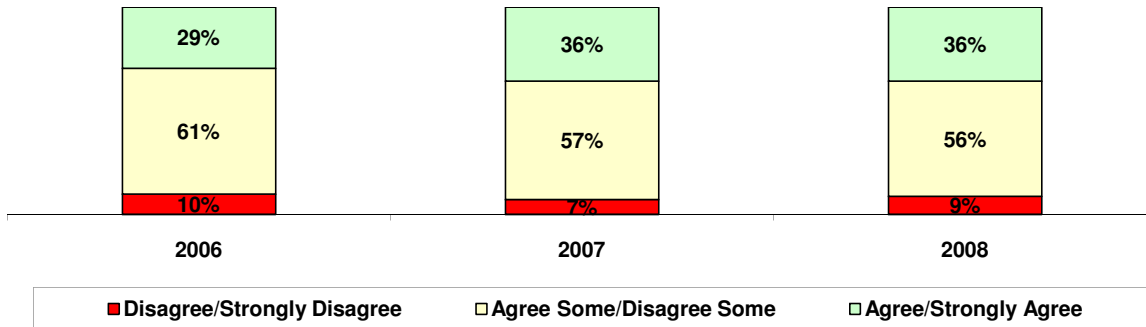
In the remainder of this chapter, we present our findings for youth outcomes in the Pribilof communities in each of the three areas of interest.

*A. Youth Social and Emotional Learning*

In this section, we present information from Pribilof students regarding their SEL. All of the data presented in this section were obtained through the SCCS.

Among Pribilof students, levels of reported SEL improved from 2006 to 2007, then remained at this higher level through 2008 (although the effect size was not statistically significant).

**Figure 49 Student Social and Emotional Learning, Pribilof Schools**



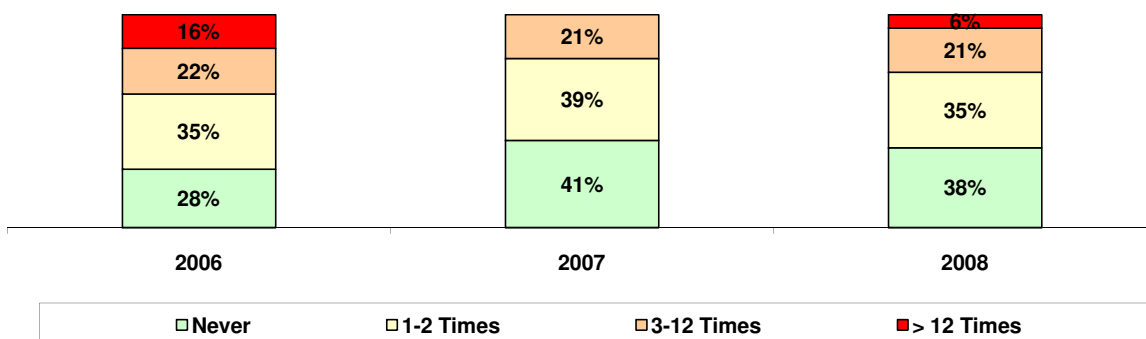
As discussed above, the Pribilof School District began to place a strong emphasis on SEL over the past several years, with school staff becoming more aware of opportunities to support SEL in the classroom. District improvement efforts in this area are ongoing, and additional time will tell whether these changes result in further improvements in student SEL.

*B. Youth Risk Behaviors*

In this section, we present information from Pribilof students regarding the frequency of risk behaviors that they observed among peers at school or school events in the prior 12 months. As described above, we focused on four of the most common youth risk behaviors: vandalism, fighting, alcohol use, and drug use. All of the data presented in this section were obtained through the SCCS.

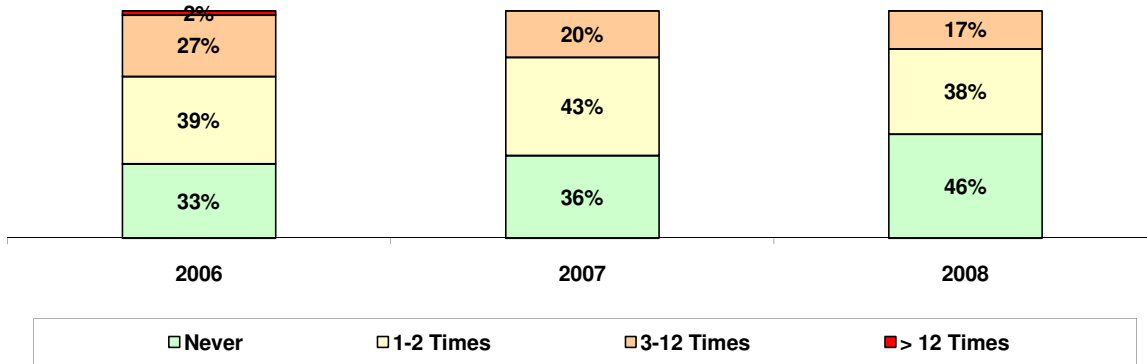
There was a notable decrease in the rates of vandalism that Pribilof students observed at school or school events from 2006 to 2008, with a small-to-moderate effect size of .37 (Figure 50).

**Figure 50 Pribilof Student Observed Instances of Vandalism among Peers at School or School Events Last 12 Months**



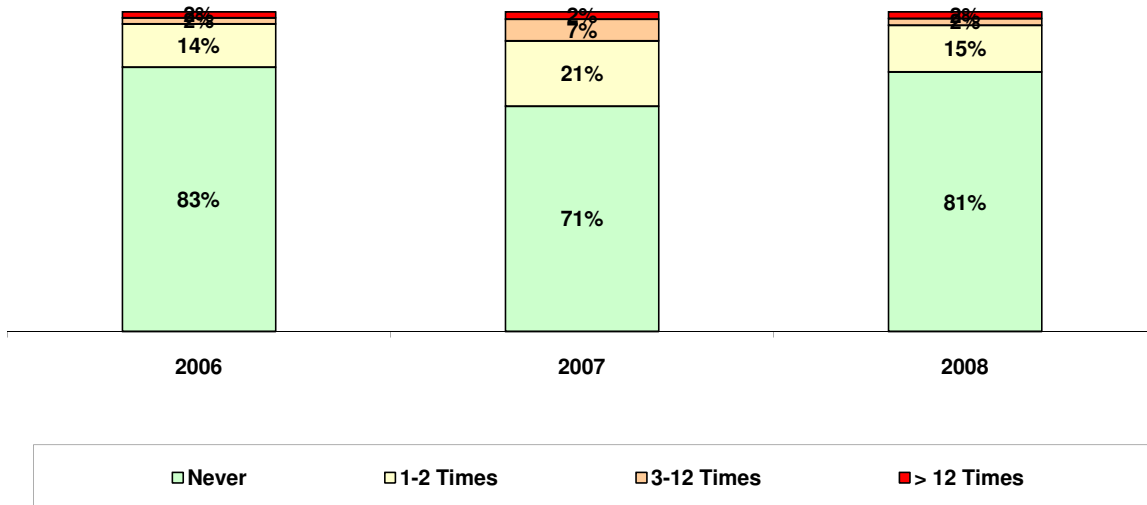
There was also a consistent decrease in the number of fights that Pribilof students observed at school or school events from 2006 to 2008, with a small-to-moderate effect size of .34 (Figure 51).

**Figure 51 Pribilof Student Observed Fights among Peers at School or School Events Last 12 Months**



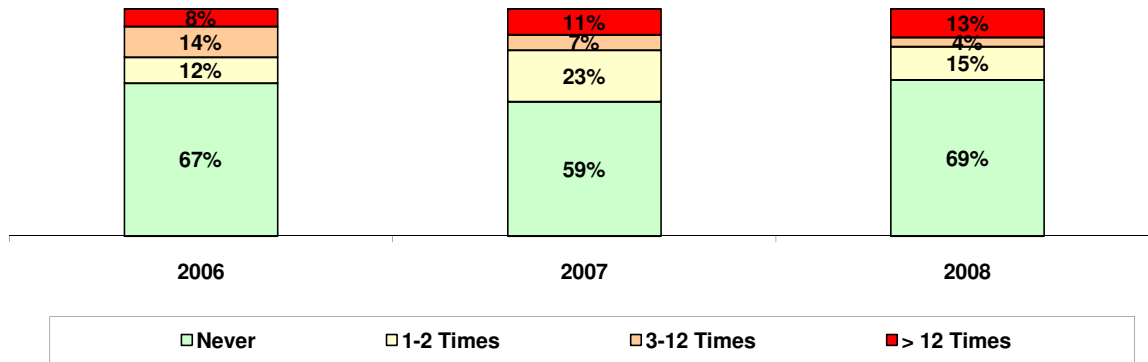
Fewer than one in five Pribilof students observed any alcohol use at school or school events over the past 12 months in 2006 and 2008, although there was a temporary increase in observed alcohol use in 2007. Overall, there was no significant change from 2006 to 2008 (Figure 52).

**Figure 52 Pribilof Student Observed Instances of Peers Under the Influence of Alcohol at School or School Events Last 12 Months**



Student reports of drug use at Pribilof schools or school events were more common than reports of alcohol use, and there were no significant changes from 2006 to 2008 (Figure 53). However, a majority of students still reported that they had not observed any drug use in the past 12 months.

**Figure 53 Pribilof Student Observed Instances of Peers Under the Influence of Drugs at School or School Events Last 12 Months**



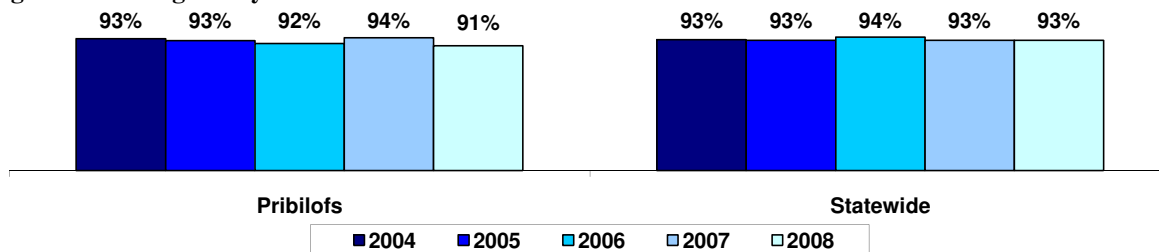
In summary, Pribilof students reported decreasing rates of delinquent behaviors among their peers at school or school events. There was little reported alcohol or drug use among Pribilof students, and the levels of existing substance use did not change significantly from 2006 to 2008. These low rates of alcohol use are especially promising given an ongoing concern expressed within the communities about alcohol use (across the population, not just among youth).

*C. Student Academic Outcomes*

In this section, we present information regarding youth academic engagement and performance among Pribilof students over the past several years. We focused on three measures of academic engagement: attendance rates, student reports of whether they had given up on school, and dropout rates. Attendance and dropout rates were obtained from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, and include overall statewide rates as a reference point. Attendance rates cover all grades, whereas dropout rates are based on students in grades 7 through 12 only. Whether students agreed that they had given up on school was based on an individual survey item on the SCCS.

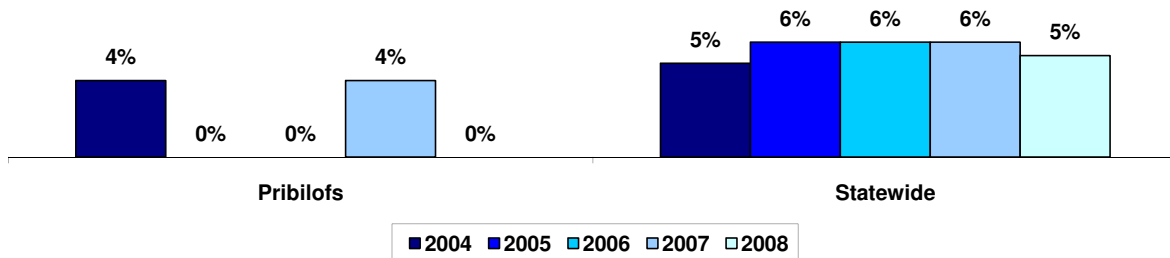
Average daily student attendance rates for the entire state and specifically for Pribilof schools are presented below (Figure 54). Pribilof average daily attendance rates were quite stable from 2004 through 2008, and were nearly identical to the statewide average.

**Figure 54 Average Daily Attendance Rates**



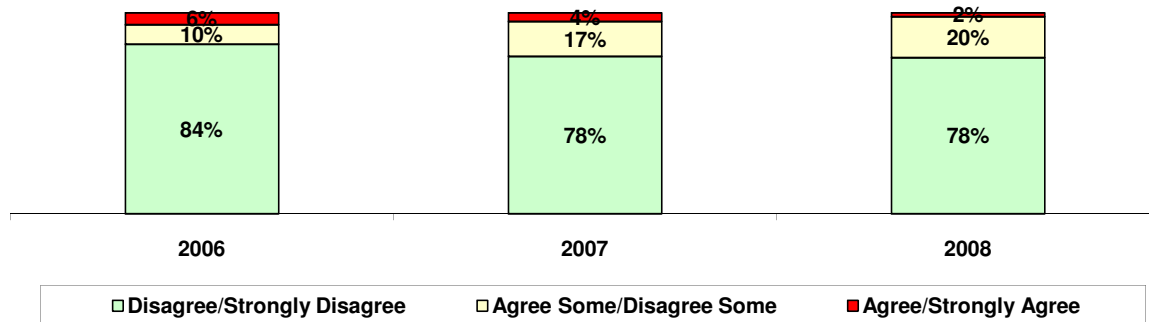
Pribilof schools had dropout rates for grades 7 through 12 that were lower than the statewide average, reaching zero in three out of five years. Due to the small size of the district, it is difficult to detect overall trends in dropout rates (Figure 55).

**Figure 55 School Dropout Rates**



Each year on the SCCS, students were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, *I have given up on school*. Disagreement is a positive result because it means that the student has *not* given up on school. These results are based on direct frequencies of responses (i.e., percentage of students who checked the response option *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* and so on). Results shifted over time so that more Pribilof students had mixed feelings about whether they had given up on school, and fewer had firm positive or negative opinions (Figure 56).

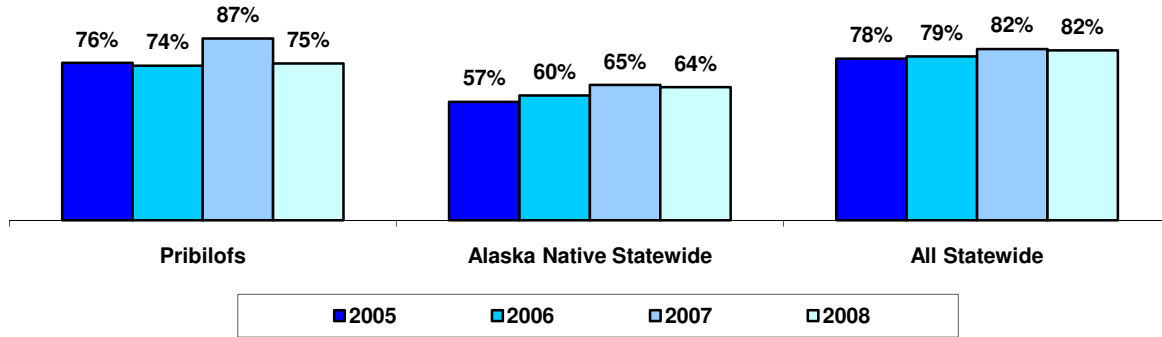
**Figure 56 Percentage Agree "I have given up on school"**



Next, we present information about how students in Pribilof schools fared in terms of academic achievement. We focused on rates of student proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics, and high school graduation rates. Student proficiency was measured in two ways: performance on the Alaska Standards Based Assessments (SBAs), and performance on the Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE). Note that the SBAs were first introduced as such in 2005, so earlier SBA data are unavailable. Results are presented below for each subject area (reading, writing, and mathematics), and the statewide average is included as a reference point.

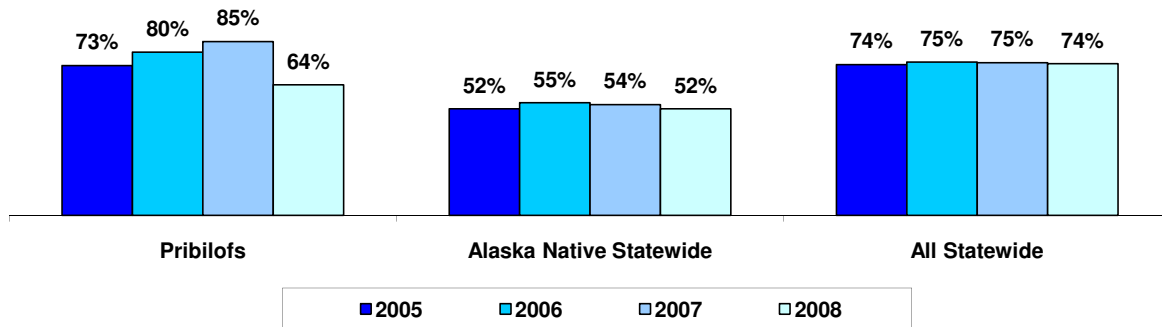
Pribilof students achieved proficiency rates on the SBA reading subtest that were similar to the statewide average each year, and notably higher than what was typical for Alaska Native students statewide (Figure 57).

**Figure 57 Pribilof Proficient or Above on Alaska SBA: Reading**



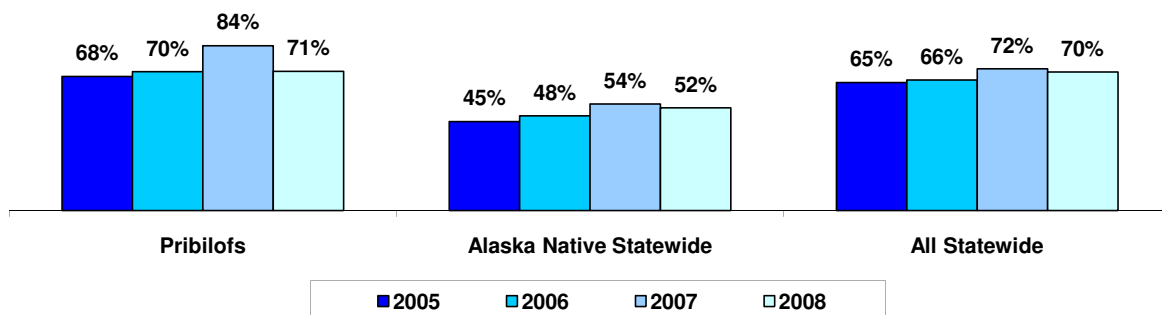
Proficiency rates on the SBA writing subtest decreased across the state from 2005 to 2008, and this also held true for Pribilof schools. However, Pribilof students had higher proficiency rates than the statewide average overall from 2006 through 2008, and significantly higher proficiency rates than the statewide average for Alaska Native students (Figure 58).

**Figure 58 Pribilof Proficient or Above on Alaska SBA: Writing**



Pribilof students achieved proficiency rates on the SBA reading subtest that were similar to the overall statewide average each year, and far above the Alaska Native statewide average. Proficiency rates increased in the Pribilof schools in 2007, but returned to their previous rates in 2008 (Figure 59).

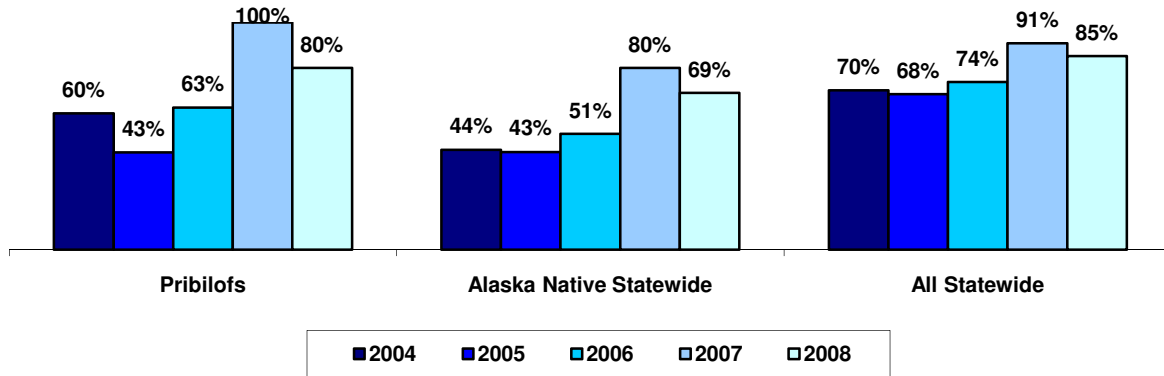
**Figure 59 Pribilof Proficient or Above on Alaska SBA: Mathematics**



Due to the small number of students in the Pribilof School District, proficiency rates on the HSGQE can fluctuate widely based on the performance of just a few students (typically three to 10 per year). The statewide average is included in these results as a reference point.

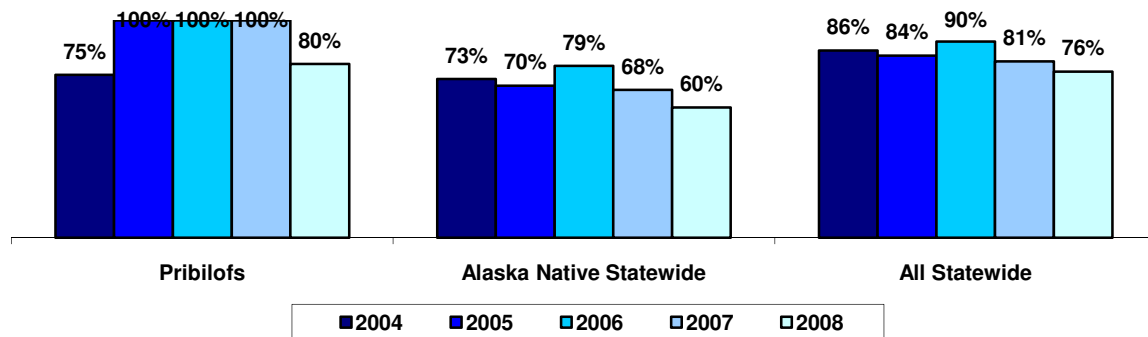
For the HSGQE reading subtest, the proficiency rate among Pribilof students increased by 20 percentage points from 2004 to 2008, versus an increase of 15 points statewide. Note that Alaska Native students statewide also made sizeable gains from 2004 to 2008 (Figure 60).

**Figure 60 Pribilof Proficient on Alaska HSGQE: Reading**



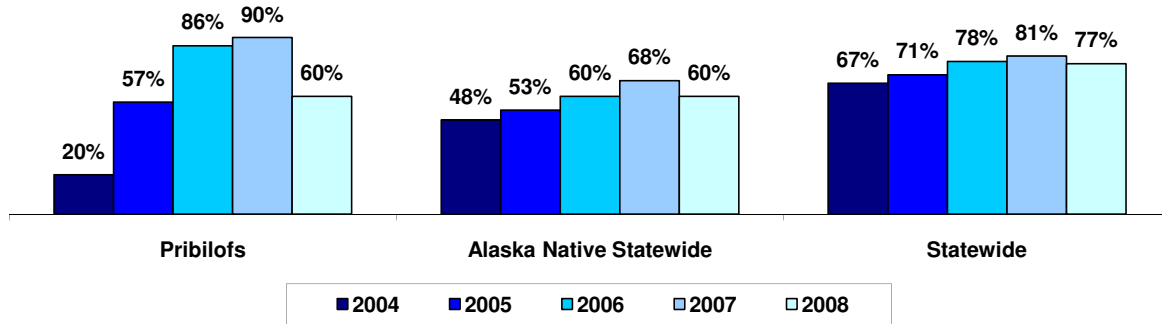
Pribilof students had proficiency rates on the writing subtest that were lower than the statewide average in 2004, but better than the statewide average every year after – including three years at 100% proficiency. After 2004, Pribilof students remained at proficiency rates that were at least 20 percentage points higher than the statewide average for Alaska Native students (Figure 61).

**Figure 61 Pribilof Proficient on Alaska HSGQE: Writing**



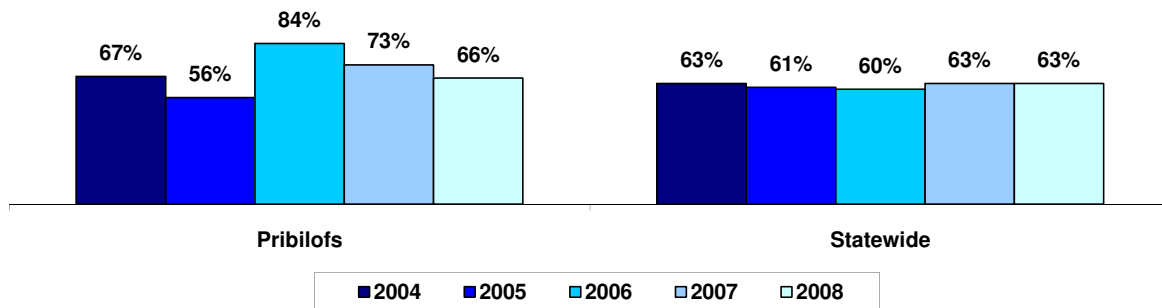
The Pribilof School District has shown substantial improvement in the rate of student proficiency on the HSGQE mathematics subtest over the past several years, although the proficiency rate dropped somewhat in 2008. Even with this recent decrease, three times as many Pribilof students scored in the proficient range in 2008 as had in 2004 (Figure 62).

**Figure 62 Pribilof Proficient on Alaska HSGQE: Mathematics**



Graduation rates for the Pribilof School District were higher than the statewide average in four out of the five years displayed here. Rates improved significantly from 2004 to 2006, but returned to their previous rates by 2008 (Figure 63).

**Figure 63 Pribilof High School Graduation Rates**



To summarize, Pribilof student proficiency rates on the three subtests of the SBA were very similar to the statewide rates and changed in parallel ways from 2005 to 2008, and proficiency rates were consistently higher than the statewide average across Alaska Native students. It is not surprising that Pribilof student proficiency rates on the HSGQE subtests varied widely, due to the small number of students who take the test each year. Performance on the HSGQE mathematics subtest has improved substantially among Pribilof students since 2005. Graduation rates for the district were higher than the statewide average in four of the last five years.

It is important to note that student educational outcomes in the Pribilof School District are remarkably good given that the district has many of the same risk factors for low performance faced by many other rural Alaska Native communities: high turnover among school staff, a school staff that is generally made up of “outsiders” who can be unfamiliar with the community and its culture, an inability to provide teachers that are highly qualified over all subject areas and limited opportunities to offer a diversity of coursework given the very small size of the student population, the exodus of many of the community’s most talented secondary students for greater

educational opportunities elsewhere in the state, and the kind of very visible decline in employment opportunities that could serve a disincentive for the community and its young people to strive academically.

## **Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

In this section, we present a summary of the lessons that have been learned in the course of providing support to these communities, the challenges faced in engaging these communities to support youth assets and positive youth development, the challenges faced in achieving desired change within the community, and recommendations for best practices when undertaking community engagement initiatives in places similar to the Pribilof communities.

### *A. What has the Alaska ICE initiative helped this community to accomplish?*

According to Alaska ICE staff, notable achievements of Alaska ICE efforts in the Pribilof communities have included the growth of student leadership in schools, higher expectations for youth behavior, increased collaboration among community organizations and schools, the creation of a more pleasant school environment, and the strategic alignment of several initiatives to optimize opportunities for school staff to get professional development as a team in the areas of youth SEL and culturally responsive teaching. Alaska ICE staff and community members agreed that the focus on and support for improved youth SEL has been of great benefit to the community. With Alaska ICE support, school staff were able to receive training and technical assistance to help them integrate supports for SEL into Pribilof schools.

Community members have also identified the creation of a more respectful environment, the provision of more opportunities for youth to connect with adults and learn about their Alaska Native heritage, and the focus on youth wellness as areas of successful community engagement that they attribute to support they have received from Alaska ICE. For example, through its work with Alaska ICE staff, community members began to see that the level of teasing and disrespectful comments that were considered “just how we do things” really was harmful to its youth. In turn, Pribilof youth have reported an increasingly safe and respectful environment at school. There have also been marked increases in the level of support that adults in the community provide to youth across several types of activities that encourage adult-youth relationships, youth SEL, and youth character development. And there has been a noticeable increase in the percentage of Pribilof youth who feel that their school is positively engaged with their family and community – an area of concern for the community when they first started receiving support from Alaska ICE.

And finally, the sustained high level of academic achievement in these communities is especially remarkable for a remote Alaska Native community that faces declining economic opportunities, declining school enrollment, and decreasing school funding.

*B. What have been the challenges to achieving desired change in this community?*

The small (and declining) size of the population in the Pribilof communities has presented a challenge in providing support. Alaska ICE staff have stated that the individuals who are most likely to take the lead in promoting youth assets and creating positive change are the same individuals who are already involved in other efforts to support the community. These leaders become overburdened, and it is difficult to engage others in the community to carry out the actual work of developing community engagement. There is also a concern about sustainability when the initiative has been championed by leaders in the community (e.g., school superintendent), but the work of facilitating community engagement and support for youth has been carried out by a small group of individuals. If these leaders and highly involved community members leave the community or can no longer be involved in the initiative, it is uncertain whether there will be others to take their place, and whether the increased levels of collaboration among community organizations and the schools will be sustained.

Both Saint George and Saint Paul have had to contend with increasingly stressful community conditions due to their loss of economic opportunities and accompanying declines in population and school enrollment (and therefore school funding). In this context, it has been challenging for community leaders, school staff, and others to help these communities maintain a positive spirit and engage in planning for a better future for youth.

The community of Saint Paul has embraced the assets message and has made many positive changes to support youth development. Continuing challenges include ensuring the sustainability of efforts in the face of a declining population and declining resources. In Saint George, the community's lack of experience in living with adolescents and lack of family connectedness to the school (where school staff have embraced the message of positive youth development) have made it difficult to gain community interest and support for engagement efforts to support youth.

*C. What best practices should be incorporated when providing support for community engagement in communities like this one?*

Alaska ICE staff identified the provision of data specific to the community as an important “conversation starter” with the communities. Information such as the level of adult activities to support youth and youth perceptions of school climate as reported by Pribilof residents themselves gave the community and the school district a way to focus on what needed to change and to devise effective strategies to initiate change.

Sustained support and guidance from Alaska ICE helped the community maintain a focus on their desired changes in the face of competing concerns, and it took about three years for effective community collaborations to really take root in a sustainable way. AASB's three years of extra support (services such as coaching, professional development, coordination, innovative networking and aligning of several initiatives, mentoring, and limited funding) enabled the schools and communities to sustain progress in the areas of concern they had identified at the beginning. This sustained support, in combination with a committed superintendent, also enabled the school district to institutionalize changes in school climate despite a high level of turnover among school staff.

Alaska ICE staff identified the need to set clear and realistic goals as a cornerstone to working with communities such as this. The community should understand that change will not happen overnight, and that it takes more than small, brief efforts to change community engagement with youth in a systemic and sustainable way. Rather, communities will achieve their goals through clearly identifying what they want to achieve, making ongoing, concerted efforts, and allocating sufficient time and resources for change to occur.

## **V. COMMUNITY EXAMPLE: DILLINGHAM**

The community of Dillingham is located in Southwestern Alaska in Bristol Bay. It lies 360 miles southwest of Anchorage, which is a 75-minute flight. There are no roads entering Dillingham, and only about 15 miles of drivable roads within Dillingham. Dillingham has approximately 2,500 year-round residents, 69% of whom are Alaska Native (Yup'ik). The slogan for this area is "Nature's Front Porch," and it is known as an area of excellent hunting; commercial, subsistence, and recreational fishing; hiking; and kayaking. Dillingham is a "hub" community, providing services and travel connections for smaller villages in southwest Alaska. The economy in Dillingham has been fragile for a number of years, and the rising cost of fuel has further damaged the commercial fishing industry upon which the local economy depends heavily, creating dire circumstances for many families. There have been community-wide concerns about parents with addictions and mental health challenges, and questions about how to help youth make healthy decisions. Dillingham School District currently serves approximately 580 students with one elementary school, one middle school, one high school, and one alternative high school.

### **The Introduction of Alaska ICE**

The Dillingham community applied to become a QS2 partner based on a number of concerns regarding youth in the community, such as substance abuse, delinquent behaviors, poor adult-youth relationships, and low academic performance. Dillingham nominally began receiving QS2 support and Alaska ICE services during the 2003-2004 school year, and ended it with the conclusion of the 2007-2008 school year. There was a one-year hiatus from 2004-2005 when Dillingham was not actively participating in QS2, after several years of upheaval within the district administration (school board and superintendent turnover). When the QS2 partnership restarted in the fall of 2005, the Dillingham Parent Advisory Committee (DPAC) played a key role in determining what initiatives would be most helpful to the community, and believed that the youth developmental assets framework used by Alaska ICE made sense as a focal point for improving youth outcomes. Multiple local projects and efforts used DPAC as their coordinating or steering group, creating de facto collaboration and coordination between these efforts.

The support of Alaska ICE led to a community-level awareness campaign, and subsequent adoption and promotion of the youth assets framework. Youth-friendly businesses in Dillingham were granted the privilege of displaying a poster that recognizes their contribution and includes an assets message, local radio and news media feature information on building youth assets, and there is an asset-themed mural in town created by youth and adults together. Dumpsters all over town feature art and asset messages painted by Dillingham youth. The regional newspaper has featured articles about positive youth development written by the local Dillingham Community

Engagement Advocate (a position funded with Alaska ICE resources). In the course of interviews for this evaluation, community members agreed that most Dillingham residents could explain the idea of youth assets to someone else.

Alaska ICE staff and Dillingham community members alike felt that Dillingham made great strides in the area of support for positive youth development. There were ongoing discussions about how to promote a respectful environment in the community and in the schools. Alaska ICE has worked collaboratively with the Rural Alliance for Teens (RAFT) and other organizations in the community. These collaborations have led to supports for youth such as tutoring, improvement in how law enforcements addresses youth issues, establishment of a youth court, businesses engagement with youth, and the provision of information to youth to help them make healthy choices. Community members and Alaska ICE staff believed that youth substance abuse and delinquent behaviors decreased significantly in the community due to local efforts supported by Alaska ICE and others in the community that were working to improve outcomes for youth.

### **Change in the Dillingham Schools and Community**

Alaska ICE has focused its efforts in Dillingham on helping to support change to improve policies and practices regarding youth, improving school climate, and encouraging positive community engagement with youth.

To learn about changes in policies and practices in communities, we conducted interviews with the Alaska ICE Community Engagement Educators and other Alaska ICE staff who had been working with the Dillingham community, and also spoke directly with individuals in the community through a series of interviews conducted in 2005, 2007, and 2008. The SCCS was used to learn about changes in school climate and changes in adult-youth connections from the perspective of students. See Chapters I and II for more information about the survey, and see Appendix C for a list of SCCS items included in the scales included in this report. The Grading Grownups Survey was administered in Dillingham in 2004 and 2008 to gather information regarding adult perceptions of Dillingham youth, and the frequency with which Dillingham adults reached out to engage with and support youth. See Chapter II for more information about the survey.

#### *A. Changes in Policies and Practices*

In this section, we examine the extent to which policies and practices have been implemented that support community engagement and positive youth outcomes in Dillingham, describe how change has been achieved, and address the challenges involved in achieving desired results.

Alaska ICE staff facilitated a planning meeting involving all youth-supporting organizations in Dillingham, such as the Curyung Tribal Council, the Bristol Bay Native Corporation, law enforcement, youth court, and the local domestic violence shelter. Community members believe that this meeting led to a greater shared focus on and support for positive youth development.

Dillingham community members and Alaska ICE staff reported that several beneficial collaborations have emerged between Alaska ICE and other organizations, such as DPAC and RAFT, Youth Court, and Little League. The local Dillingham Alaska ICE group also teamed up with the Curyung Tribal Council to provide support for a great number of youth activities in Dillingham. These collaborations have led to coordinated efforts to promote the assets message, to provide more opportunities for youth to engage in positive activities, to deal with youth issues in a supportive manner, and to facilitate discussions in the community about creating a climate of respect and support for youth. According to community respondents, it has become a widespread practice in Dillingham to make decisions and plans around the notion of supporting youth assets. The collaborative network of youth-serving organizations in Dillingham that was formed with support from Alaska ICE has led to efforts to sustain the community engagement initiative. When Dillingham's QS2 partnership term ended and Alaska ICE funding for community engagement ended, the Dillingham School District put up some of its own funding to continue the community engagement initiative.

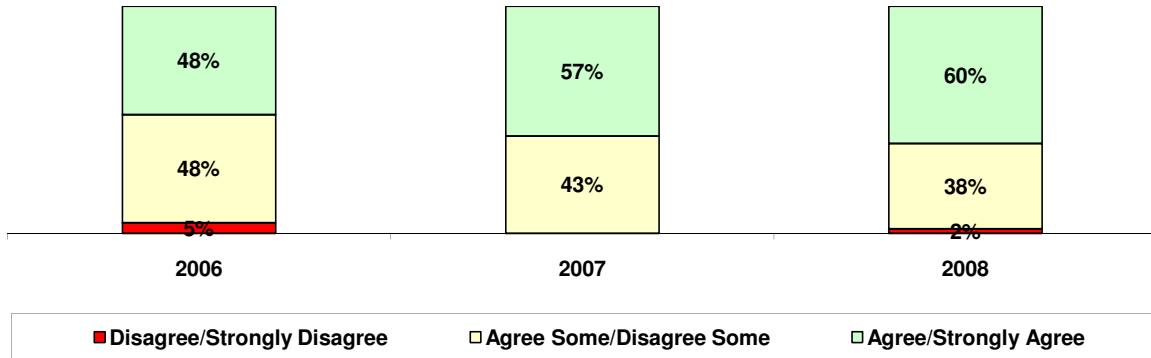
### *B. Changes in School Climate*

In this section, we present information about how students in Dillingham schools viewed their school climate from 2006 through 2008. We focused on four aspects of school climate: expectations for students, school safety, a climate of respect, and peer relationships. Information is presented for Dillingham schools overall, as well as for Alaska Native students attending Dillingham schools in particular. All of the data presented in this section were obtained through the SCCS. Note that the SCCS was first implemented in 2005, but the Dillingham School District nominally started participating in the QS2 initiative in the 2003-04 school year. Therefore, data from 2005 should not be regarded as baseline information (i.e., it does not necessarily reflect the state of affairs prior to intervention).

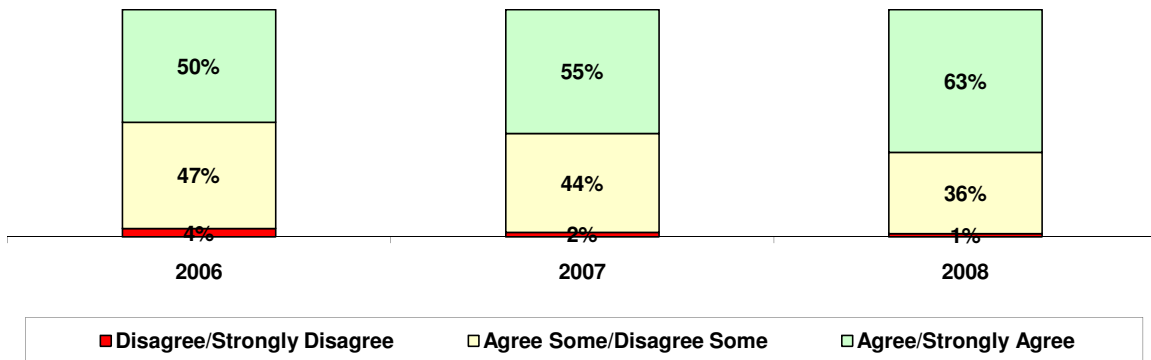
Throughout this section, results are presented in terms of the percentage of students who agreed that the expectations are high for them at school, agreed that their school is safe, agreed that there is a climate of respect in their school, and agreed that relationships among peers in their school are positive. These levels of agreement are based on the following SCCS scale scores: Agree/Strongly Agree = Scale score  $\geq 4.0$ ; Agree Some/Disagree Some = Scale score 3.0–3.9; Disagree/Strongly Disagree = Scale score  $< 3.0$ . The percentages of students that fell into each scale score level are presented in the bar charts below. Improvement in school climate can be seen when the percentage of students in each category shifts over time so that fewer are in the disagree (red) area and/or more are in the agree (green) area. See Appendix C for a list of items that make up each SCCS scale, and Appendix D for scale scores. As described in Chapter II, effect sizes presented here specify the *degree of change* (if any) in SCCS scores from 2006 (or 2007 for Community Involvement) to 2008. Effect sizes are expressed with the *d* statistic, which captures the degree of difference between two means. The higher the *d* value, the greater the degree of change in mean from one measurement to the next. Effect sizes of  $d = .20$  are considered small and sizes of  $d = .50$  are considered medium, but it is important to keep in mind that even successful interventions in the areas such as education and social change generally produce small effects.

The High Expectations scale reflects students' feelings about how much they were encouraged by school staff and the community to do well in school, and their own expectations of themselves with regard to their school work and their academic future. Most students from Dillingham agreed that there were high expectations for them (from others) and that they held high expectations for themselves. This percentage increased noticeably from 2006 through 2008 – both among Alaska Native students (effect size of .22) and across Dillingham students overall (effect size of .21; see Figures 64 and Figure 65).

**Figure 64 High Expectations, Dillingham Alaska Native**

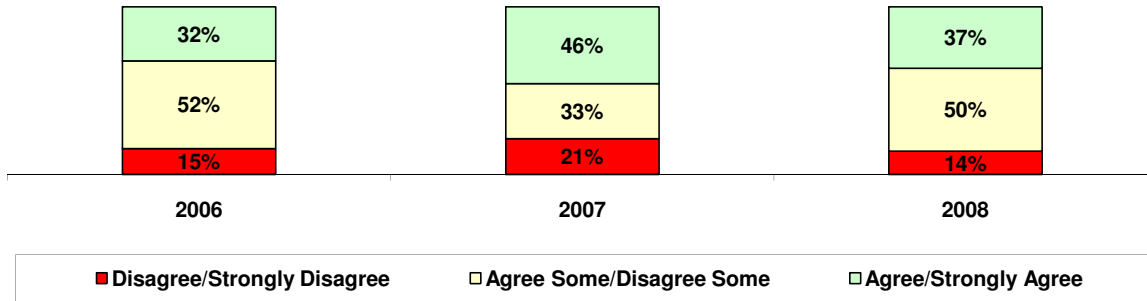


**Figure 65 High Expectations, All Dillingham**

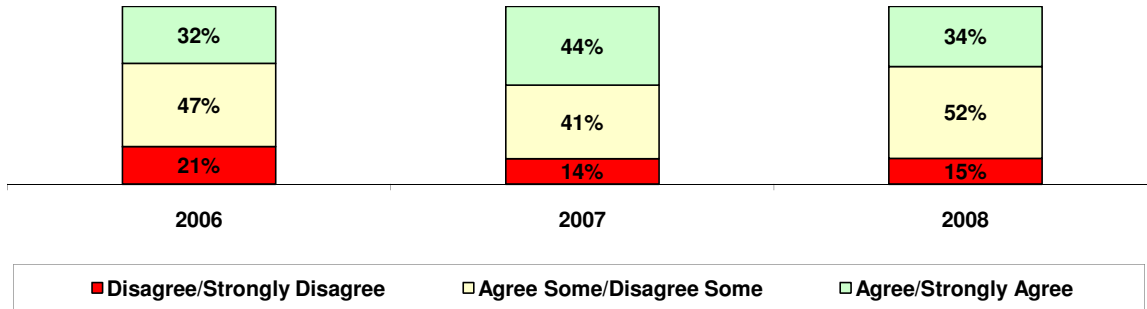


The School Safety scale reflects students' feelings of safety at school, as well as the presence of bullying, crime, and violence at school. There was a mixture of opinions regarding school safety among Dillingham students, both among Alaska Native students in particular and across the district as a whole, and there were no significant changes in average scale scores from 2006 to 2008 (Figures 66 and 67). Only about one in three students agreed or strongly agreed that their school was safe, but there was a slight improvement from 2006 to 2008.

**Figure 66 School Safety, Dillingham Alaska Native**

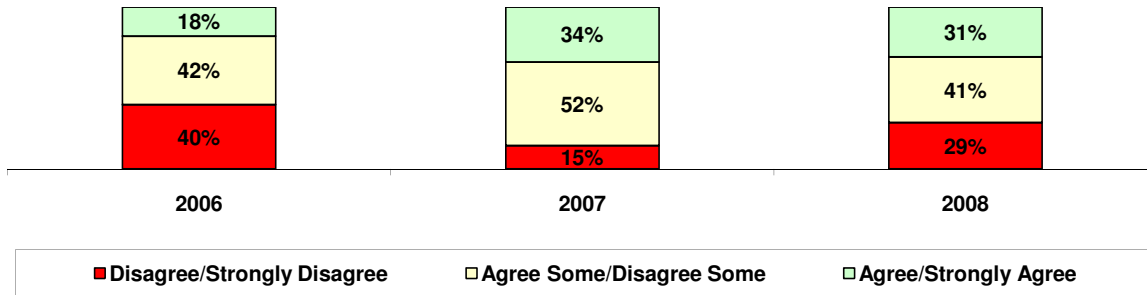


**Figure 67 School Safety, All Dillingham**

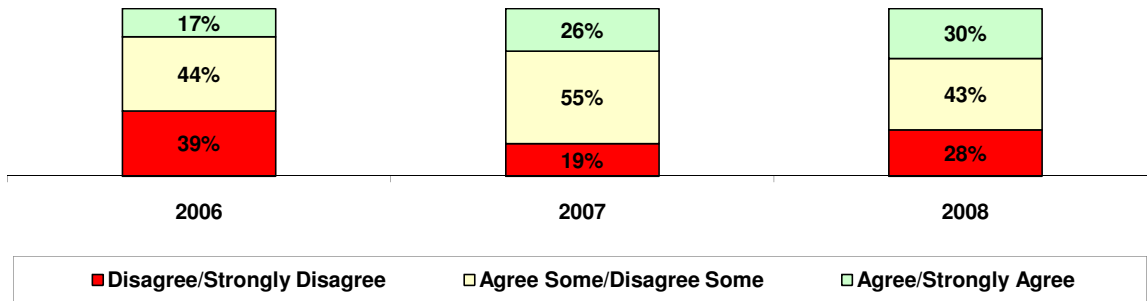


The Respectful Climate scale reflects students' perceptions about the fairness of school rules and whether their teachers treat them with respect. There was marked improvement in student perceptions of a respectful climate in Dillingham schools from 2006 to 2008, both among Alaska Native students (effect size of .31; Figure 68) and overall (effect size of .25; Figure 69).

**Figure 68 Respectful Climate, Dillingham Alaska Native**

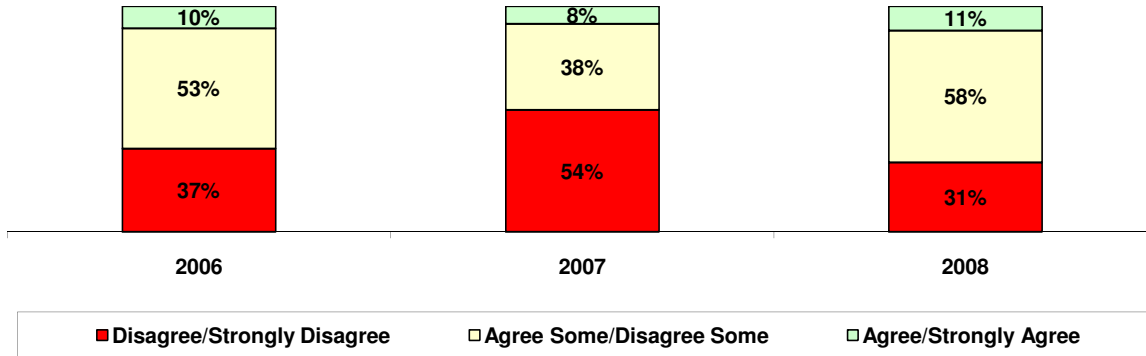


**Figure 69 Respectful Climate, All Dillingham**

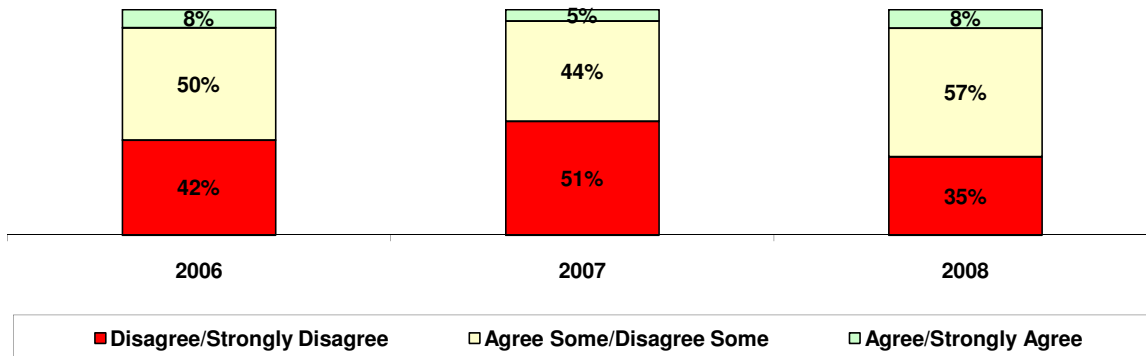


The Peer Climate scale reflects students’ perceptions about whether their peers at school treat them with respect, whether they help one another, and the extent to which teasing and bullying occur at school. Across all participating school districts, Peer Climate has been one of the lowest-rated scales and seems to have been one of the more difficult areas to change. Negative perceptions of peer climate decreased in Dillingham from 2006 to 2008 among Alaska Native students and overall, although few students agreed or strongly agreed that their peer climate was positive by 2008 (Figures 70 and 71). The changes produced small but significant effect sizes, both for Alaska Native students ( $d = .22$ ) and overall ( $d = .21$ ).

**Figure 70 Peer Climate, Dillingham Alaska Native**



**Figure 71 Peer Climate, All Dillingham**



In sum, Dillingham student ratings showed clear improvements in the areas of high expectations and a respectful school climate. There was also a significant reduction in the number of negative ratings the district received in the areas of school safety and peer climate. Among Dillingham Alaska Native students, there were definite improvements in the areas of high expectations and respectful climate, and a more modest improvement in school safety. Patterns of change in the area of peer climate were similar to the district as a whole. Interviews with Alaska ICE staff and community members revealed that the community had been discussing issues of respect and how to create a more respectful climate, and these results provide evidence that these discussions are leading to real improvements for youth.

## Changes in Adult-Youth Relationships

In this section, we first present information from Dillingham students regarding how supported they feel by adults in their schools and in their communities, as well as the level of involvement that their families and communities have in their schools. In the second half of this section, we present information from adult community members regarding their feelings about Dillingham youth, and the extent to which they see other adults in their community actively engaging with youth in ways that support youth-adult connections, and promote youth SEL and youth character development. The student ratings presented in this section were obtained through the SCCS.

The Caring Adults scale reflects students' feelings about whether adults at their school know them, care about them, and are available to talk with and listen to them. Students were increasingly likely to agree that they had caring adults at school from 2006 to 2008, and effect sizes were small-to-moderate both among Alaska Native students ( $d = .36$ ; Figure 72) and across the district overall ( $d = .30$ ; Figure 73).

Figure 72 Caring Adults Dillingham Alaska Native

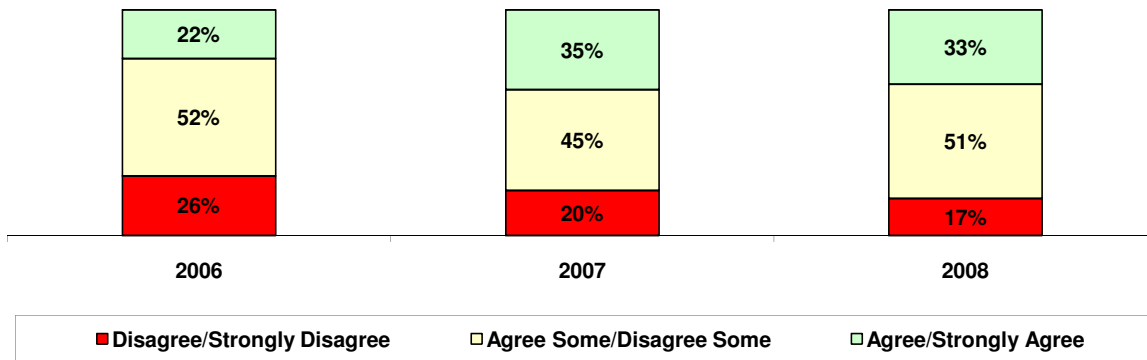
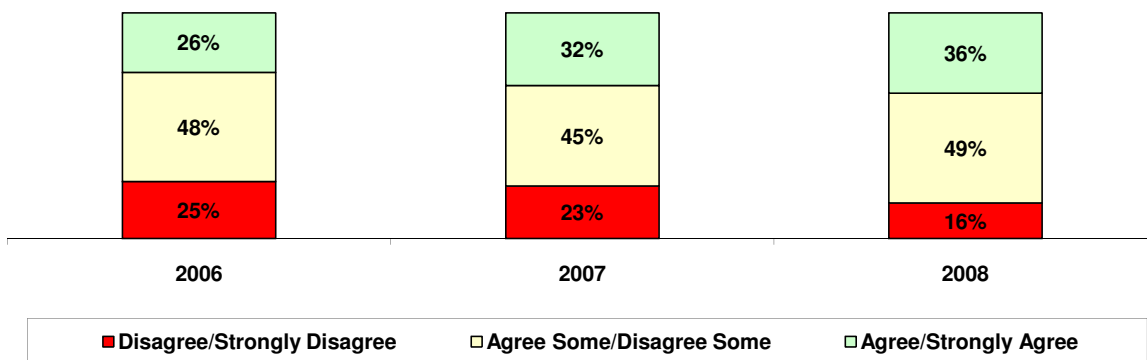
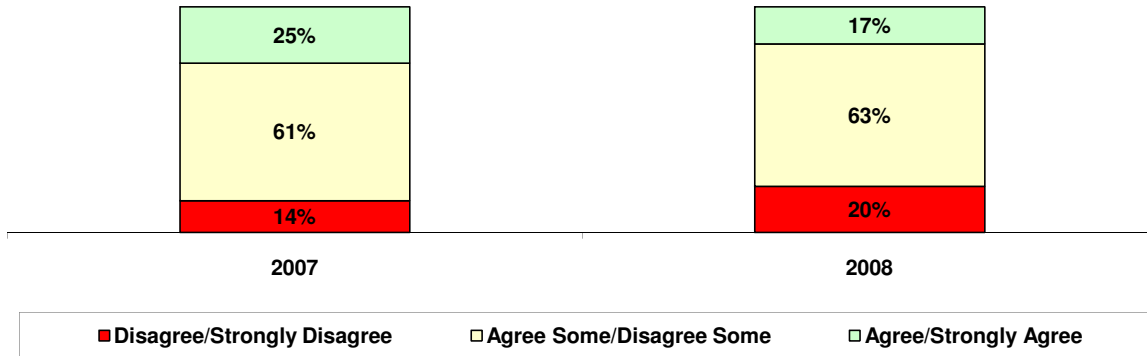


Figure 73 Caring Adults All Dillingham

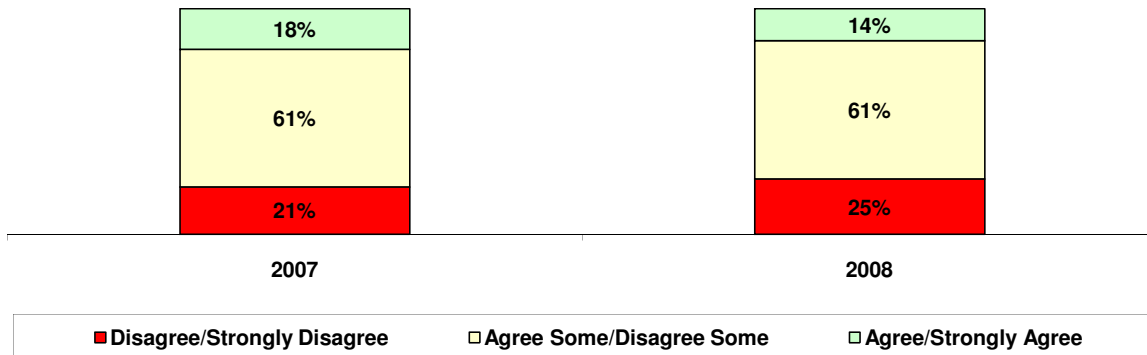


The Parent and Community Involvement scale reflects students' feelings about how much their family and community feel welcome and involved at school, and the extent to which students communicate with their families about their school work. This scale was first introduced in 2007. From 2007 to 2008, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of students who felt that their parents and community were involved in their school, both among Alaska Native students and across the district overall, but the change was not statistically significant (Figures 74 and 75).

**Figure 74 Parent and Community Involvement, Dillingham Alaska Native**

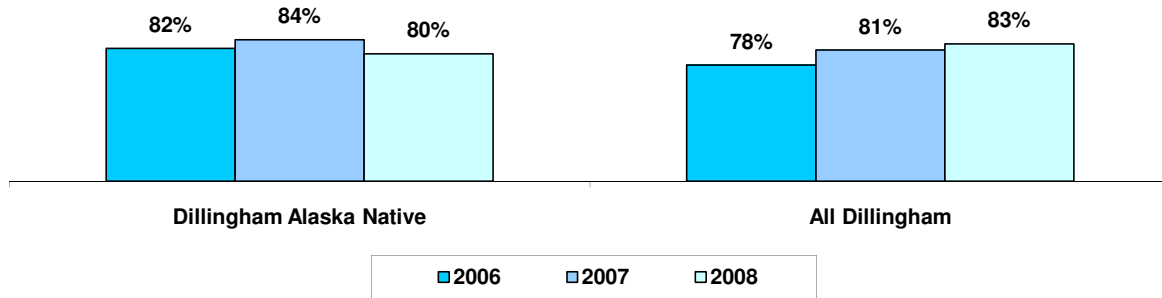


**Figure 75 Parent and Community Involvement, All Dillingham**



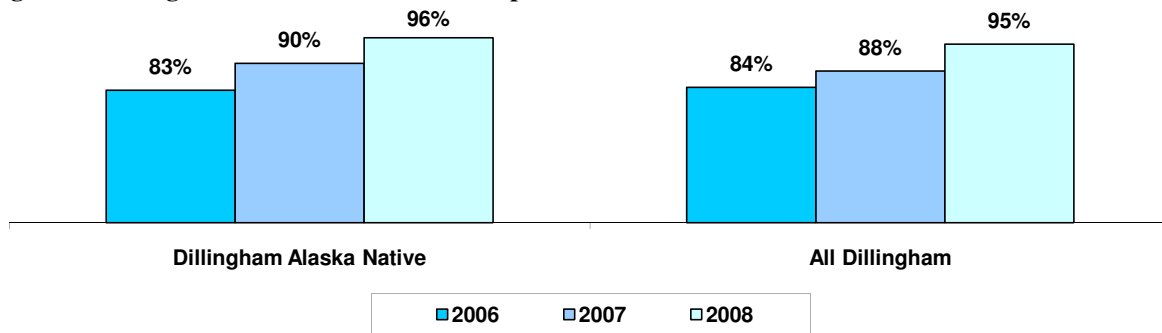
We were also interested in learning about adult supports for youth in the community. Each year, students were asked on the SCCS, *Is there an adult who really knows how you spend your free time?* The percentages of Dillingham students who answered *Yes* each year are presented in Figure 76 below. Overall, the number of Dillingham students who stated that they had this type of support increased by 5% from 2006 to 2008, but these results were essentially unchanged for Dillingham Alaska Native students.

**Figure 76 Dillingham Students with Adult Supervision**



Each year on the SCCS, students were also asked, *Do you have someone outside of school who can help you with homework?* The percentages of Dillingham students who answered *Yes* each year are presented in Figure 77. From 2006 to 2008, there was a substantial increase in the percentage of students who reported that they had help with homework, and this figure reached a very high 95% for the district overall and 96% for Dillingham’s Alaska Native students.

**Figure 77 Dillingham Students Who Have Help with Homework**



The Grading Grownups survey was used to obtain information from adult Dillingham community members regarding their feelings about Dillingham youth, and the extent to which they see other adults in their community actively engaged in supporting youth. As described above, Grading Grownups is an anonymous telephone survey. Results are presented here for 2004 and 2008 Grading Grownups surveys.

As part of the Grading Grownups surveys in 2004 and 2008, adults in Dillingham were asked how often they saw other adults in their community actively engaged with youth in ways that promoted adult-youth connections, and supported youth SEL and character development. Figure 78 below presents the percentage of Dillingham adults who said that they saw other adults in their community engaging in the following behaviors to support adult-youth connections often or very often:

- *Have conversations with youth that allow adults and youth to get to know one another* (shown as *Converse*)
- *Act as a mentor or advisor to youth* (shown as *Mentor*)
- *Ask youth their opinions about issues that will affect youth* (shown as *Opinions*)
- *Engage in sports, outdoor, artistic, or cultural activities together with youth* (shown as *Activities*)

There were modest increases in the percentage of adults acting as a mentor to youth and asking youth opinions, and a decline in the percentage of respondents who saw adults in their community engaging in activities with youth from 2004 to 2008. Overall, most Dillingham adults did not often see any of these supports for youth in their community.

**Figure 78 Dillingham Community Adults Engaging in Activities Often/Very Often that Support Adult-Youth Connections**

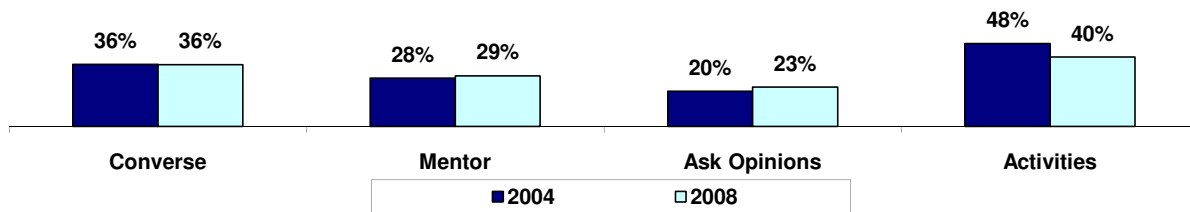


Figure 79 presents the percentage of Dillingham adults who said that they saw other adults in their community engaging in the following behaviors to support youth SEL often or very often:

- *Help youth think through possible good and bad consequences of their decisions* (shown as *Decisions*)
- *Teach youth values such as respect, honesty, and responsibility* (shown as *Values*)
- *Teach youth respect for all people regardless of race, culture, or religion* (shown as *Respect*)

There was a moderate decrease from 2004 to 2008 in reported adult behaviors that taught youth values; the other two areas remained virtually unchanged.

**Figure 79 Dillingham Community Adults Engaging in Activities Often/Very Often that Support Youth Social and Emotional Learning**

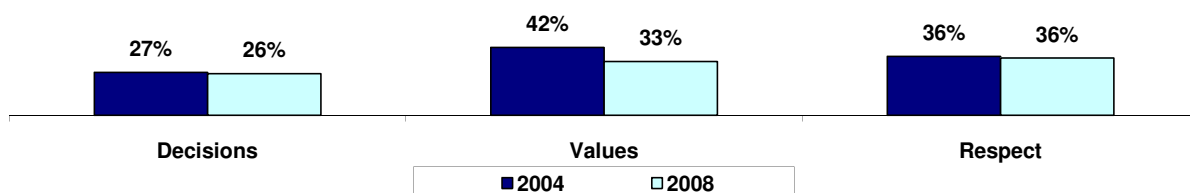
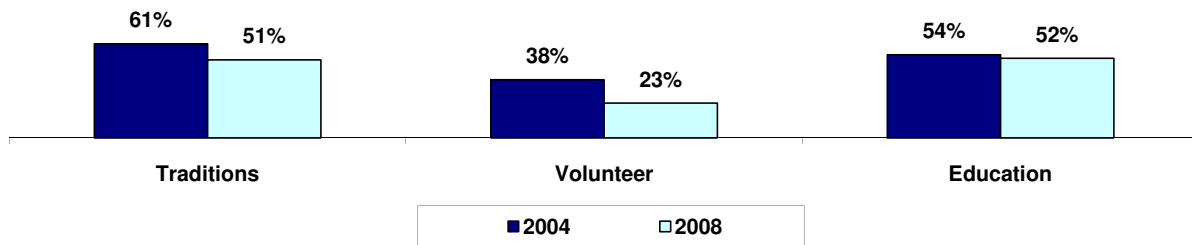


Figure 80 shows the percentage of Dillingham adults who said that they saw other adults in their community engaging in the following behaviors to support youth character development often or very often:

- *Preserve and pass down traditions and values of their own culture or religion* (shown as *Traditions*)
- *Show youth the importance of helping others by volunteering* (shown as *Volunteer*)
- *Encourage youth to take school seriously and do their best work* (shown as *Education*)

There were decreases in reported adult behaviors to support youth character development in Dillingham from 2004 to 2008, but most respondents did see other adults often passing on traditions and values, and often encouraging youth in the area of education.

**Figure 80 Dillingham Community Adults Engaging in Activities Often or Very Often that Support Youth Character Development**

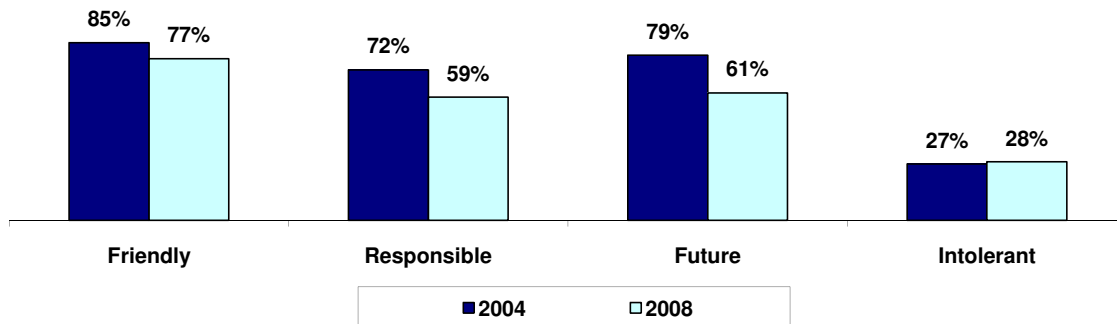


Respondents to the Grading Grownups survey were asked to what extent they agreed with several statements regarding youth in their community (see Figure 81):

- *Teenagers in my community are friendly and helpful toward others* (shown as *Friendly*)
- *Teenagers in my community generally act responsibly* (shown as *Responsible*)
- *Today's teenagers will make Alaska a better place in the future* (shown as *Future*)
- *Alaskan teenagers are often intolerant of other cultures and races* (shown as *Intolerant*)

Most Dillingham adults saw youth in their community as friendly, responsible, tolerant, and people who would make Alaska a better place, but these figures decreased from 2004 to 2008.

**Figure 81 Adult Perceptions of Youth in Dillingham**



Overall, there were mixed findings for Dillingham in the area of adult-youth relationships. Areas of success include a substantial increase in the percentage of students who had someone available to help them with homework – to the point where nearly all students stated that they had this support available to them – and an increase in student perceptions of having caring adults at school. The main areas of challenge involved adult perceptions of youth, which became more negative from 2004 to 2008, and the declining frequency of most adult actions that support youth in the community. In interviews with community members and Alaska ICE staff, some respondents noted that while there have been a lot of improvements in the level of support for youth in terms of increased opportunities for youth to participate in positive activities, better ways to address youth issues, and so on, these changes have only taken place in community organizations. Respondents believed that these changes had not extended to individual community members in general. For example, an Alaska ICE staff member attributed the large increase in the percentage of Dillingham youth who stated that they had help with homework outside of school to the efforts of organizations like RAFT rather than to individual families making a stronger commitment to assist their child. However, other community respondents did believe that adult support for youth in the community was becoming more widespread.

### **Changes in Youth Outcomes**

As discussed in Chapter II, we are examining youth outcomes in three areas: student SEL, youth risk behaviors, and student academic engagement and achievement. We measured student SEL-based student responses to a series of items on the SCCS. We measured youth risk behaviors via the SCCS by asking students how often they observed their peers engaging in vandalism, fights, alcohol use, and/or drug use at school or school events within the prior 12 months. Measures of student academic engagement were based on statewide statistics at the school level – attendance rates and dropout rates. Students were also asked individually on the SCCS to what extent they feel like they have given up on school. And student academic achievement outcomes were based on school-level proficiency rates on the Alaska Standards Based Assessment (SBA) and High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE). SBA results play a key role for the state in determining whether students are on track academically, and whether a school makes Adequate Yearly Progress under the No Child Left Behind act. Student results are presented specifically for Alaska Native students where these data are available.

A. Youth Social and Emotional Learning

In this section, we present information from Dillingham students regarding their SEL. Information on student SEL is presented for Dillingham schools overall, as well as for Alaska Native students attending Dillingham schools in particular. All of the data presented in this section were obtained through the SCCS.

Student SEL consistently improved in Dillingham from 2006 to 2008, both among Alaska Native students in particular (effect size  $d = .20$ ; Figure 82) and overall (effect size  $d = .27$ ; Figure 83).

Figure 82 Social and Emotional Learning, Dillingham Alaska Native

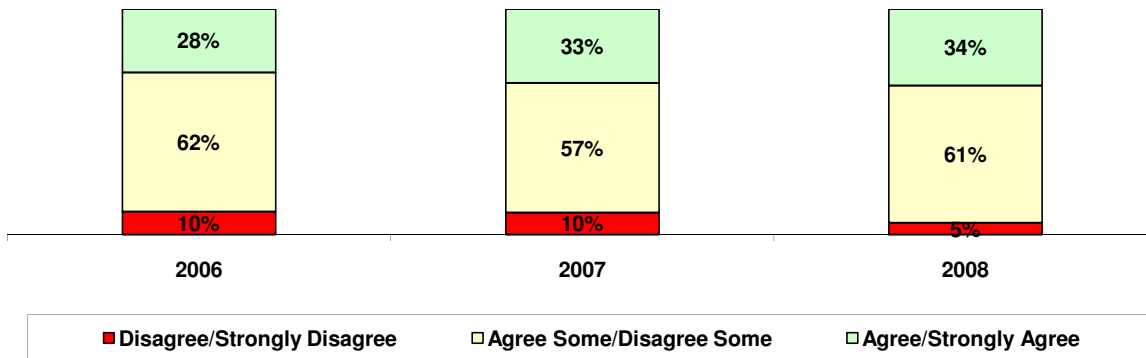
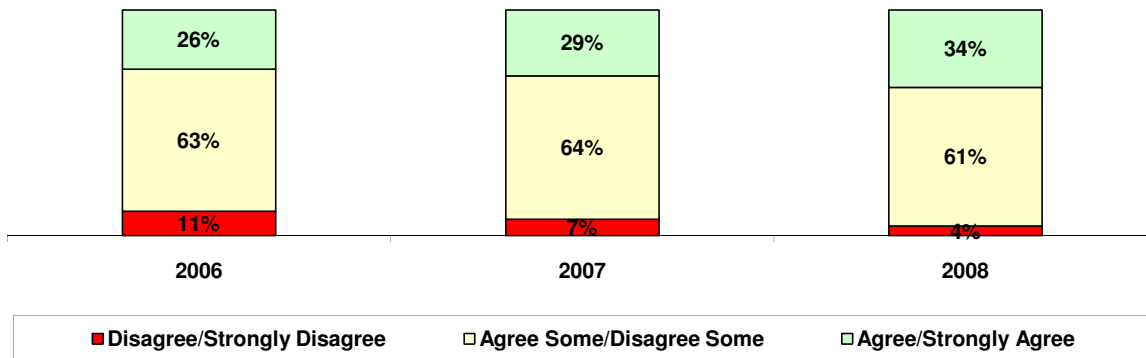


Figure 83 Social and Emotional Learning, All Dillingham

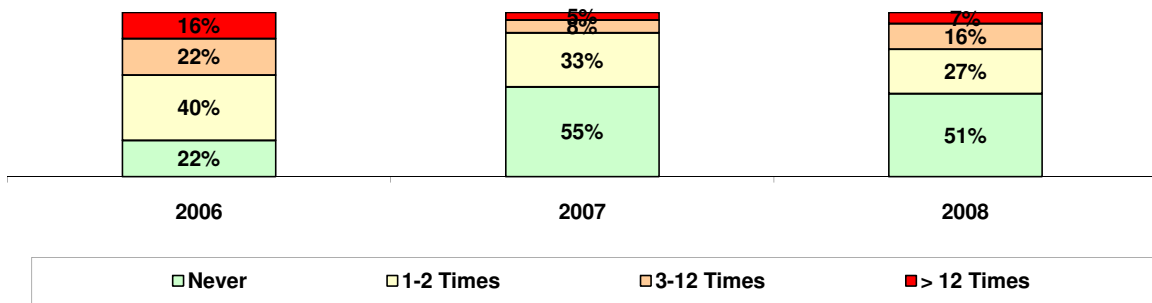


*B. Youth Risk Behaviors*

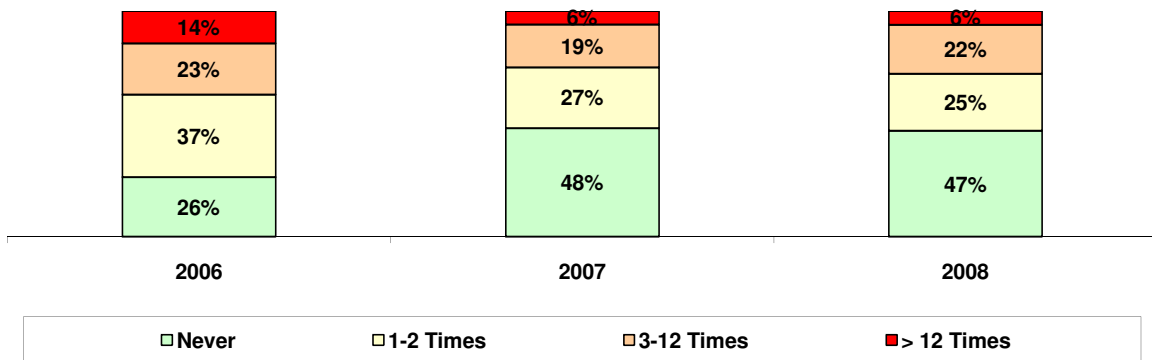
In this section, we present information from Dillingham students regarding the frequency of risk behaviors that they observed personally at school or school events in the prior 12 months. We focused on four of the most common youth risk behaviors: vandalism, fighting, alcohol use, and drug use. All of the data presented in this section were obtained through the SCCS.

There was a substantial decrease in the number of instances of vandalism that Dillingham students observed at school or school events from 2006 to 2008, both among Alaska Native students and overall (Figures 84 and 85). Effect sizes were at the moderate level for Alaska Native students ( $d = .53$ ) and at the small-to-moderate level overall ( $d = .38$ ).

**Figure 84 Student Observed Instances of Vandalism among Peers at School or School Events Last 12 Months, Dillingham Alaska Native**

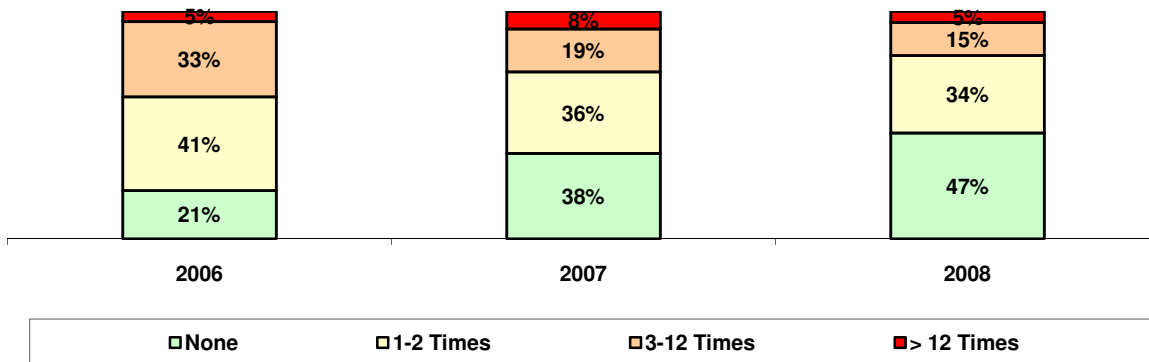


**Figure 85 Student Observed Instances of Vandalism among Peers at School or School Events Last 12 Months, All Dillingham**

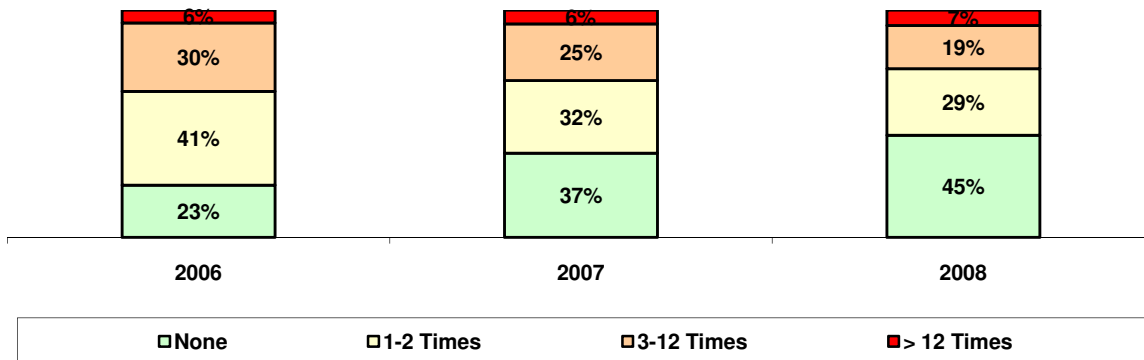


Likewise, there was a significant decrease in the number of fights that Dillingham students observed at school or school events from 2006 to 2008, both among Alaska Native students and overall (Figures 86 and 87). Effect sizes were near the moderate level for Alaska Native students ( $d = .43$ ) and were smaller but significant overall ( $d = .27$ )

**Figure 86 Student Observed Fights among Peers at School or School Events Last 12 Months, Dillingham Alaska Native**

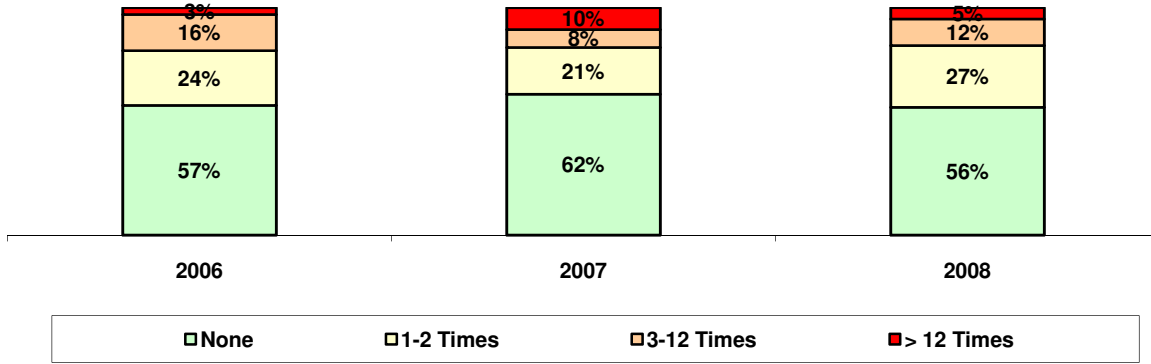


**Figure 87 Student Observed Fights among Peers at School or School Events Last 12 Months, All Dillingham**

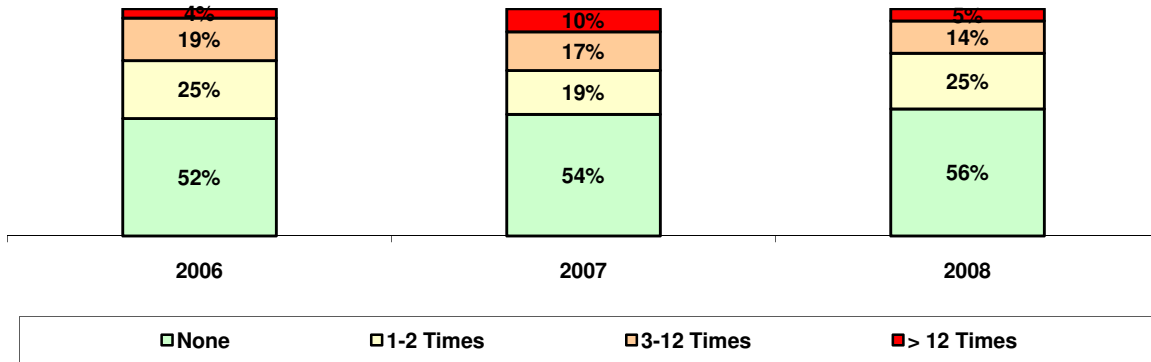


Fewer than half of all Dillingham students had observed any alcohol use at school or school events over the prior 12 months from 2006 through 2008. There was no significant change from 2006 to 2008 in the rate of observed substance use for Alaska Native students or overall (Figures 88 and 89).

**Figure 88 Student Observed Instances of Peers Under the Influence of Alcohol at School or School Events Last 12 Months, Dillingham Alaska Native**

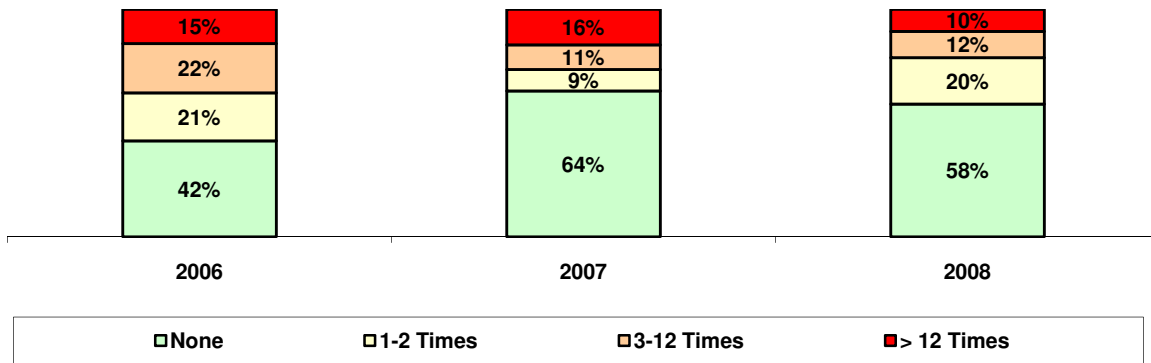


**Figure 89 Student Observed Instances of Peers Under the Influence of Alcohol at School or School Events Last 12 Months, All Dillingham**

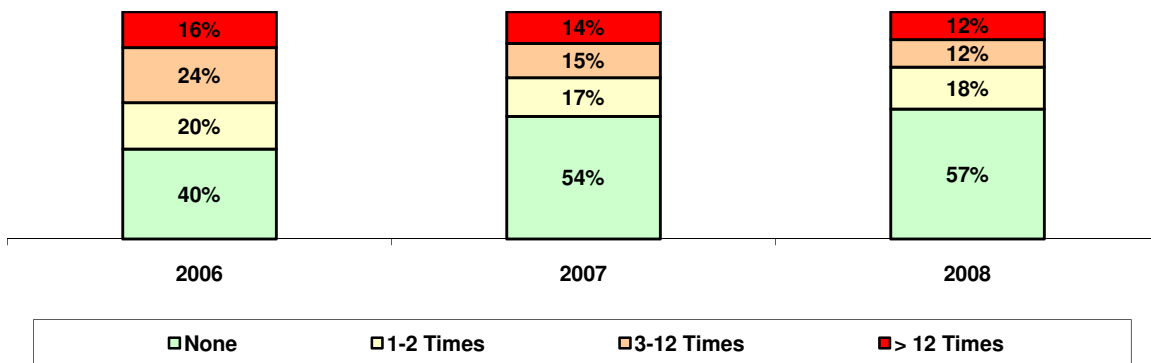


There was a marked decrease in the amount of drug use that Dillingham students had observed at school or school events over the prior 12 months from 2006 to 2007 among Alaska Native students and overall, and this improvement was maintained through 2008 (Figures 90 and 91). Effect sizes were at the small-to-moderate level for both Alaska Native students ( $d = .35$ ) and overall ( $d = .32$ ).

**Figure 90 Student Observed Instances of Peers Under the Influence of Drugs at School or School Events Last 12 Months Dillingham, Alaska Native**



**Figure 91 Student Observed Instances of Peers Under the Influence of Drugs at School or School Events Last 12 Months, All Dillingham**



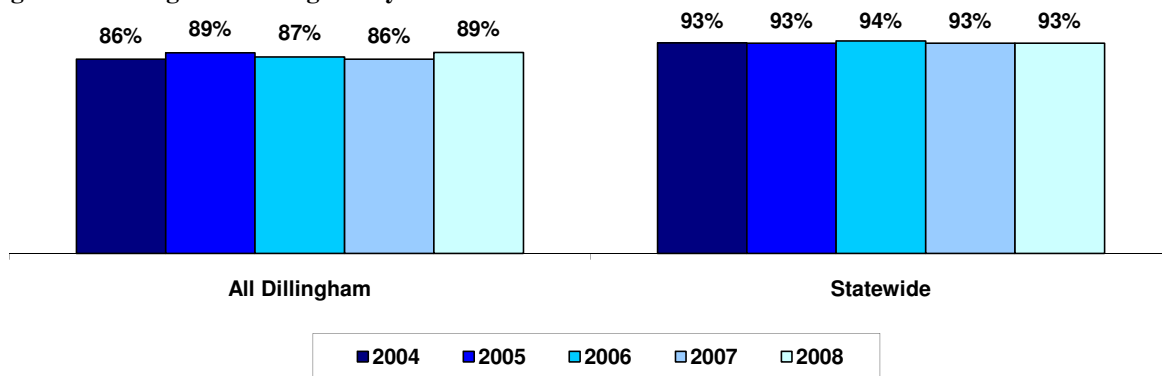
In sum, Dillingham has seen a substantial drop in youth risk behaviors. There was a significant reduction in the amount of vandalism, number of fights, and instances of drug use that students reported observing at school or school events. The one exception to this improvement is in student reported alcohol use, which decreased from 2006 to 2007 but then returned to previous levels in 2008. These patterns of change were similar for the district overall and for Dillingham Alaska Native students in particular. Community members also observed a substantial reduction in youth risk behaviors, and attributed this success to the presence of more positive activities available for youth in the community, and better management of youth risk behaviors among law enforcement and others when they do occur.

*C. Student Academic Engagement and Performance*

In this section, we present information regarding youth academic engagement and achievement among Dillingham students over the past several years. We focused on three measures of academic engagement: attendance rates, student reports of whether they had given up on school, and dropout rates. Attendance and dropout rates were obtained from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, and include overall statewide rates as a reference point. Attendance rates cover all grades, whereas dropout rates are based on students in grades 7 through 12 only. Whether students agreed that they had given up on school was based on an individual survey item on the SCCS. Data are presented specifically for Alaska Native students where available.

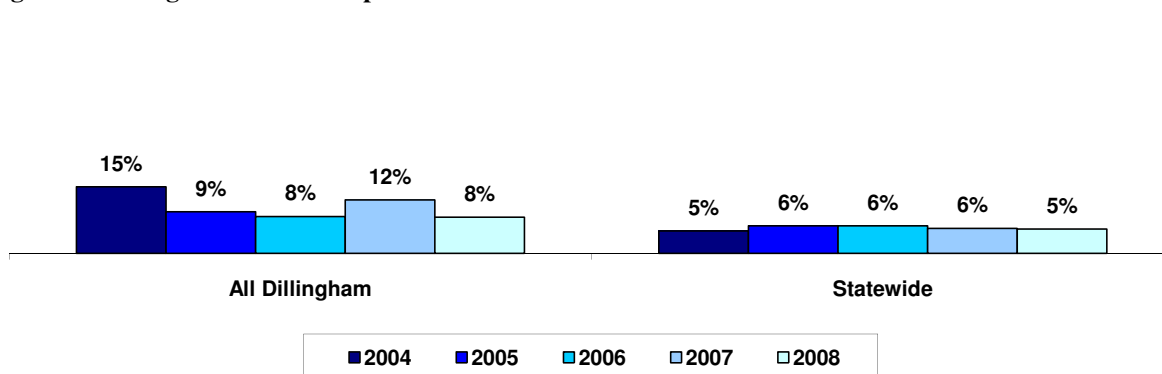
Average daily student attendance rates for the entire state and specifically for Dillingham schools are presented below (Figure 92). Attendance rates were not available by race. Dillingham average daily attendance rates were quite stable from 2005 through 2008, and remained somewhat lower than the statewide average.

**Figure 92 Dillingham Average Daily Attendance Rates**



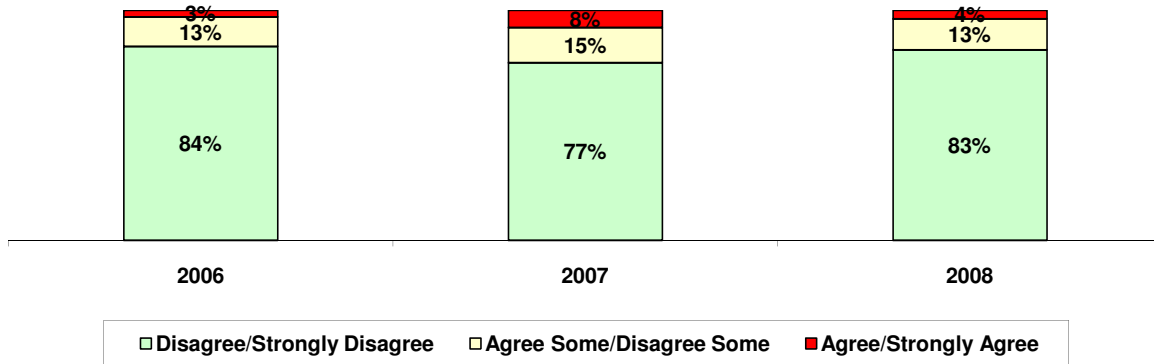
Dillingham had dropout rates for grades 7 through 12 that were somewhat higher than the statewide average from 2004 through 2008, but that fell by nearly half over that time period (Figure 93). Dropout rates were unavailable for Alaska Native students specifically.

**Figure 93 Dillingham School Dropout Rates**

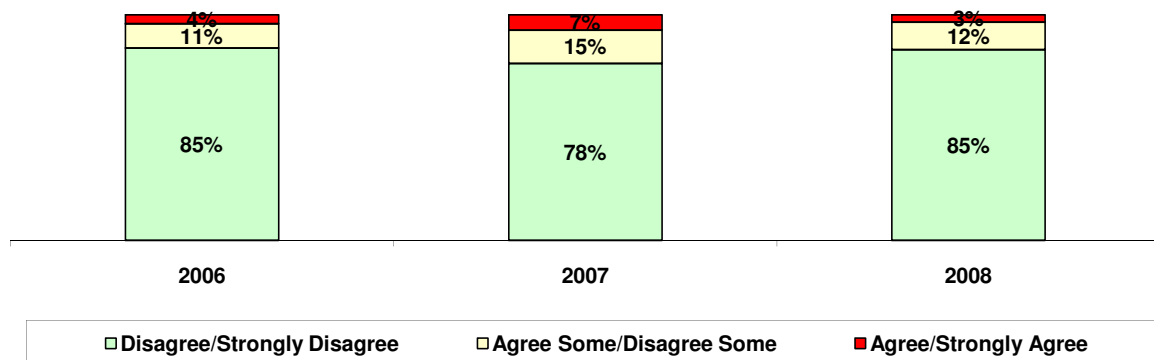


Each year on the SCCS, students were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, *I have given up on school*. Disagreement with this statement is a positive result because it means that the student had *not* given up on school. These results are based on direct frequencies of responses (i.e., percentage of students who checked the response option *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*, and so on). Results were fairly positive, with a clear and sustained majority of Dillingham students indicating that they had not given up on school, both among Alaska Native students and overall (Figures 94 and 95).

**Figure 94 Dillingham Alaska Native Percent Agree "I have given up on school"**



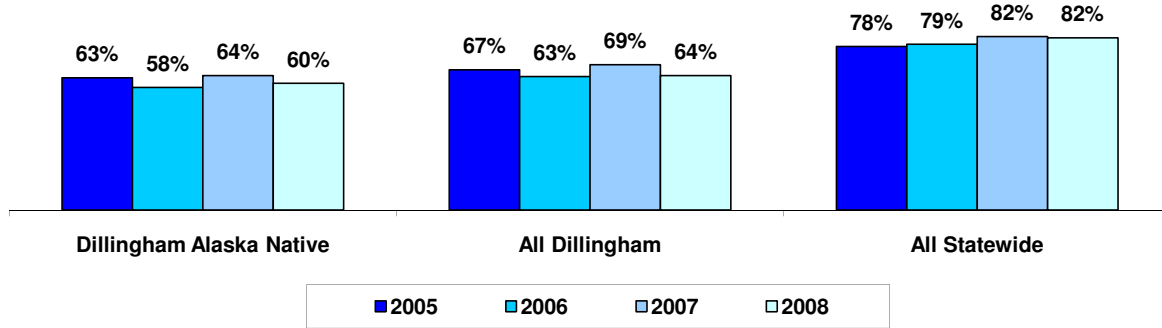
**Figure 95 All Dillingham Percent Agree "I have given up on school"**



We focused on three measures of student academic achievement: rates of student proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics, and high school graduation rates. Student proficiency has been measured in two ways: performance on the Alaska SBA, and performance on the Alaska HSGQE. Note that the SBAs were first introduced as such in 2005, so earlier SBA data are unavailable. Results are presented below for each subject area among Dillingham schools overall and specifically for Alaska Native students. The statewide average was included as a reference.

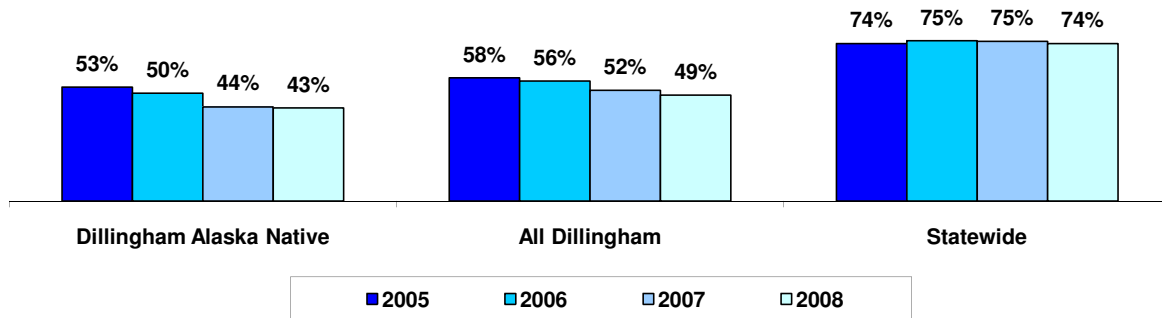
Students in Dillingham schools had lower rates of proficiency on the SBA reading subtest than were observed statewide, and the proficiency level decreased slightly from 2005 to 2008 for both Dillingham students overall and for Dillingham Alaska Native students in particular (Figure 96).

**Figure 96 Dillingham Students Proficient or Above on Alaska SBA: Reading**



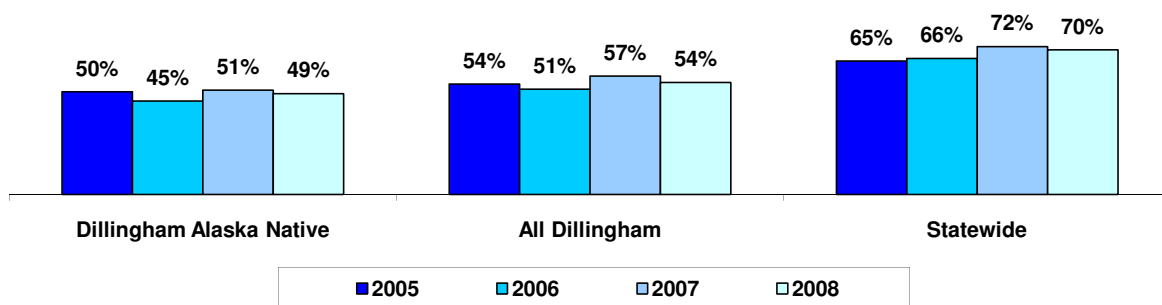
On the SBA writing subtest, Dillingham students had lower proficiency rates than the statewide average in 2005. By 2008, the statewide proficiency level remained the same, but proficiency rates dropped in Dillingham, both overall and specifically among Alaska Native students. Less than half of all Dillingham students were proficient in writing in 2008 (Figure 97).

**Figure 97 Dillingham Students Proficient or Above on Alaska SBA: Writing**



Dillingham student proficiency rates on the mathematics subtest of the SBA were essentially unchanged from 2004 to 2008, while they increased slightly statewide (Figure 98).

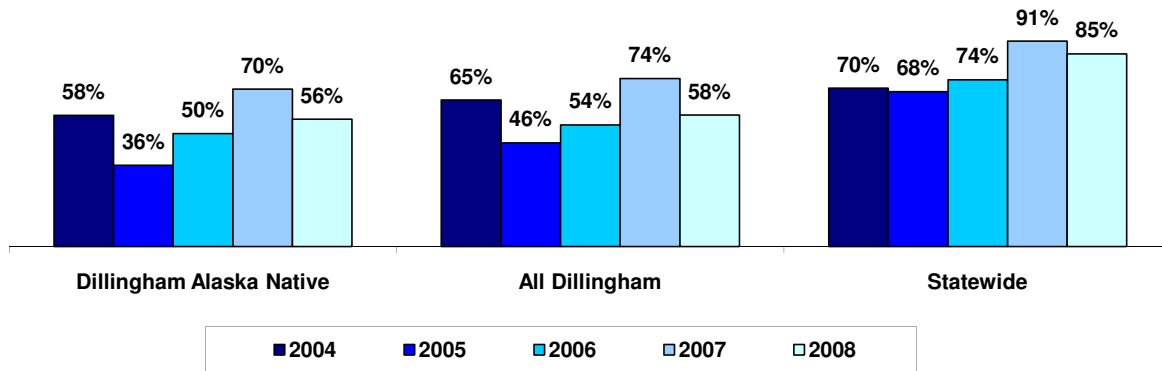
**Figure 98 Dillingham Proficient or Above on Alaska SBA: Mathematics**



Each student must receive scores of “proficient” or better on all three subtests of the HSGQE to receive a high school diploma. Students take the exam in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, with the option to repeat the exam if they do not pass. Proficiency rates presented here are based on first-time HSGQE takers. The statewide average is included in these results as a reference.

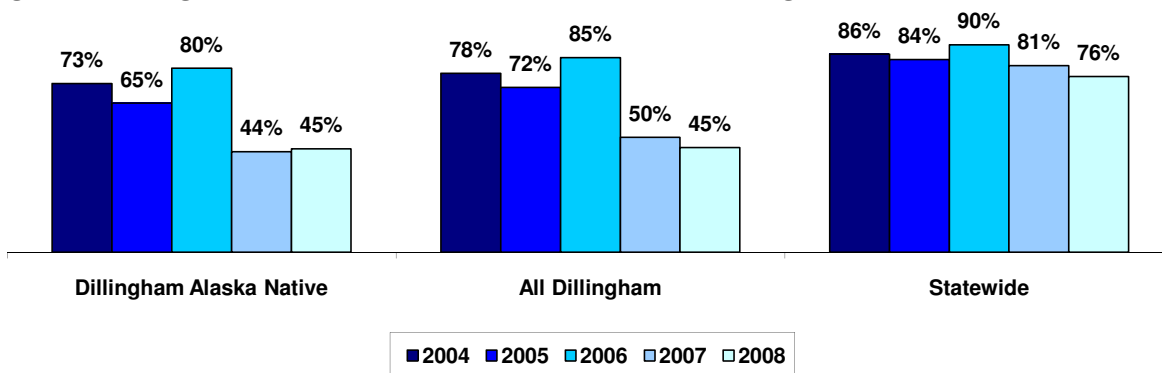
For the HSGQE reading subtest, the proficiency rate among Dillingham students decreased overall from 2004 to 2008, and remained noticeably below the statewide rate both overall and especially among Dillingham Alaska Native students (Figure 99).

**Figure 99 Dillingham Students Proficient on Alaska High HSGQE: Reading**



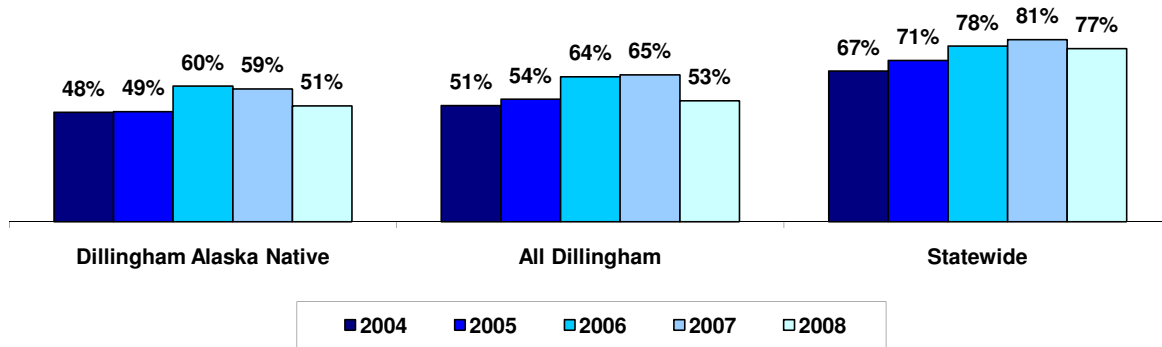
Dillingham 2004 student proficiency rates on the writing subtest of the HSGQE were 8 percentage points below the statewide rate across all Dillingham students, and were 13 percentage points below the statewide rate among Dillingham’s Alaska Native students. This figure dropped precipitously by 2008, so that both Dillingham overall and Dillingham Alaska Native students in particular had proficiency rates 31 percentage points below the statewide level (Figure 100).

**Figure 100 Dillingham Students Proficient on Alaska HSGQE: Writing**



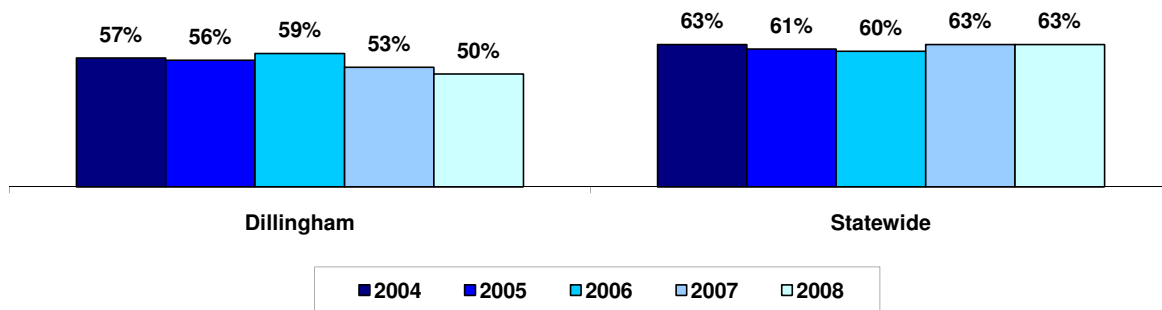
Proficiency rates on the mathematics subtest of the HSGQE showed almost no improvement from 2004 to 2008 among Dillingham students overall, or among Dillingham Alaska Native students in particular. During that time, the statewide proficiency level increased by 10 percentage points (Figure 101).

**Figure 101 Dillingham Students Proficient on Alaska HSGQE: Mathematics**



Dillingham high school graduation rates remained slightly below the statewide average, and declined from 2004 to 2008, with 2006 showing a rate close to the statewide average (Figure 102). Data were not available that were specific to Alaska Native students.

**Figure 102 Dillingham High School Graduation Rates**



In summary, Dillingham School District’s dropout rate declined by almost half from 2004 to 2008. Few Dillingham students indicate that they have given up on school. The school attendance rate has remained somewhat lower than the statewide average, but has been relatively stable from 2004 to 2008. The district has not shown improvement in any of the areas of academic achievement examined. Proficiency rates on the SBA and HSGQE deteriorated substantially in the area of writing, and graduation rates have declined.

## Lessons Learned and Recommendations

In this section, we present a summary of the lessons that have been learned in the course of providing support to communities such as Dillingham, the challenges faced in engaging this community to support youth assets and positive youth development, the challenges faced in achieving desired change within the community, and recommendations for best practices when undertaking community engagement initiatives in places similar to Dillingham.

### *A. What has the Alaska ICE initiative helped this community to accomplish?*

The success of Alaska ICE support for Dillingham has rested in a large measure on the shared focus on and commitment to improving community engagement that has been developed among Dillingham's youth-serving organizations. Organizations have partnered in Dillingham to provide community education around assets and youth risk behaviors, recognize support for youth (for example, through Youth Friendly Business awards), and get the assets message out to the community as a whole (for example, through the widespread use of asset-promoting artwork throughout the town, assets banners hung in businesses, and regular assets newspaper articles).

Community members and Alaska ICE staff believed that the initiative led to community-level awareness of the importance of supporting youth development. They also believed that the initiative served as a catalyst for discussions across the community about respect, and the adoption of a comprehensive and strength-based approach to addressing youth risk behaviors. Survey data confirmed that Dillingham students have found an increasingly respectful climate at school over the past several years.

A very noteworthy accomplishment in this community has been the substantial reduction in youth risk behaviors such as vandalism, fighting, and drug use. There has also been a noticeable decline in the school dropout rate. These were major areas of concern for the community as a whole, especially given the "boom town" character of Dillingham.

Another noteworthy accomplishment is the high level of academic support available to students outside of school. Alaska ICE's work with Dillingham community partners initiated changes that engaged community adults in helping youth with homework, both inside and outside of regular school hours. Now, nearly all Dillingham students feel like they have someone available to help them with homework if they need it. The development of this resource may lead to improved academic outcomes for Dillingham youth, and shows youth a community commitment to their academic success.

A recent area of achievement is the more active involvement of the school district in efforts to improve community engagement and youth outcomes. Dillingham students have already given increasingly higher ratings for nearly all aspects of their school climate and connectedness over the past three years. The new district leadership's commitment to using the SCCS (developed by Alaska ICE) reflects a desire for continued improvement in school climate and connectedness in Dillingham. Continued use of the SCCS will reveal whether Dillingham's improved school climate, provision of academic supports, and reduction in youth risk behaviors will be sustained, possibly leading to improved academic outcomes for Dillingham youth.

*B. What have been the challenges to achieving desired change in this community?*

Alaska ICE staff and some Dillingham community members felt that while Dillingham adults increasingly believed that it was important to support youth, many still thought of that support as something done by outside agencies and organizations rather than something they could and should take on as a parent or other adult in the community. Community respondents also spoke about a lack of communication and collaboration between schools and families as a gap in providing a coherent support system for youth. Alaska ICE staff reported that a lack of identification of clear goals and clear definitions of what was meant by terms like “respect” made it more difficult to get the community on the same page in terms of addressing issues.

Alaska ICE staff also faced challenges in getting “buy-in” from the school district for the first few years of the initiative. Early on the district suffered from several successive years of superintendent turnover and friction among district leadership, including the school board. The school district was not engaged in the initial community-wide planning facilitated by Alaska ICE staff. In addition, there was noticeable reluctance and a lack of interest and engagement by some school staff. None of this was a good start for a cohesive community engagement initiative. However, when Dillingham returned to active QS2 status after its 2004-05 hiatus, the new district leadership (superintendent and board) and key community groups showed much greater readiness for change, and a core group of leaders became actively engaged in the process. At the end of its formal QS2 term (June 2008), there was enough commitment that the district pledged its own funds to continue some level of local community engagement work. The promotion of youth assets has become a key area of focus for Dillingham schools, and school staff have recently become more engaged in the initiative.

*C. What best practices should be incorporated when providing support for community engagement in communities like this one?*

Alaska ICE staff recommended that when providing support for a community like Dillingham, it is important to take time to get to know the community and learn about how that particular community can best use the resources available to achieve change. Alaska ICE staff also recommended spending the first year gaining trust and collaboration among community leaders, and developing capacity within the community so that they can establish their own goals and implement the right kind of interventions to achieve those goals. It is also important to have both key community members and school staff on board. An active local Community Engagement Advocate can be very effective in building awareness and support in the community. The Dillingham Community Engagement Advocates were active promoters of assets awareness in the community, using a variety of methods to increase public awareness and familiarity with the assets framework. Some of these were fleeting but recurring, such as monthly newspaper articles. Others were more permanent presences that are highly visible in the community, providing an artifact to continually remind the community of the importance of supporting youth, such as the giant mural and tiles on the store wall that were done by a young local artist (who had attended an Alaska ICE arts-assets workshop and was inspired to create this community project, intentionally involving adults and youth in creating it).

Dillingham had an active group comprised of many of the local youth-serving organizations that provided an effective mechanism for creating a shared vision, collaborative planning, information sharing, and partnering on projects and initiatives. While school involvement was somewhat slow to develop, there appears to be increased readiness to join the initiative. In building sustainable community engagement initiatives, time is a critical factor; not all parts of a community initiative may get underway at the start. Dillingham may benefit from continuing coaching and support to enable the community to capitalize on the foundation that has been built.

## VI. COMMUNITY EXAMPLE: ANCHORAGE

Anchorage is the largest city in Alaska, with about 280,000 residents in Anchorage itself and 360,000 in the greater metropolitan area. About 40% of the state population lives in the greater Anchorage area. The Anchorage School District did not participate in the Alaska ICE QS2 initiative, but the school district and the community did receive support from Alaska ICE to promote community engagement and the development of youth assets. The community had a core group of leaders who actively promoted a positive youth development framework for more than 10 years before the introduction of Alaska ICE, including personnel from the Anchorage School District in the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (SDFS). The addition of Alaska ICE resources enabled the community to develop or enhance approaches and programs to support community engagement and youth development across multiple sectors of the community. Community members believe that with support from Alaska ICE in combination with steady efforts by SDFS staff, Anchorage has taken key steps toward developing and institutionalizing a positive approach to youth development.

### The Introduction of Alaska ICE

Alaska ICE provided a broad variety of resources to the Anchorage community and the Anchorage School District (ASD). These supports were built around the common goal of creating a more supportive environment through the promotion of an asset-building framework throughout youth-serving organizations, and through the improvement of school climate. More recently, the community and ASD have taken a more focused action targeted toward improving youth outcomes in two key areas: improving youth SEL and reducing youth risk behaviors.

Funding from Alaska ICE has helped the Anchorage community to:

- Develop a positive media/social marketing campaign to improve the public's perception of youth and to recognize positive youth contributions to the community (*Spirit of Youth*).
- Provide young people with the tools and training they need to present youth voices in the media by teaching radio and internet journalism, and producing and broadcasting stories on local and statewide radio networks (*Alaska Teen Media Institute*).
- Provide support for the training by the Forum for Youth Investment, which led to the AYDC strategic plan, led to a comprehensive community youth services mapping project (*Dashboard*), and set the stage for the resiliency approach to be the foundation for youth serving agencies with Anchorage. Community respondents report that the strategic plan and accompanying Dashboard underscored the assets approach and provided the foundation for a strength-based approach in providing youth programs/services.

- Give support for a partnership between United Way of Anchorage and AYDC to provide training and technical assistance (T/TA) regarding youth assets and positive youth development to individuals (including youth), community organizations, local initiatives, and municipal agencies. Community respondents felt that AYDC provided a forum to introduce and educate youth-serving agencies about assets, and helped many agencies evolve in their approach to youth, and that this was especially true for the leaders of the agencies and the policy makers within United Way and the youth-serving community.
- Develop a youth-friendly business recognition program (Spirit of Youth, United Way and AYDC partnership).
- Provide *Youth in Governance* T/TA to staff from Anchorage youth-serving organizations to increase youth engagement in the organizations (AYDC and partners).
- Create a coordinated community-wide initiative (*Anchorage United for Youth*) that coordinated and aligned community efforts to support youth. Alaska ICE also provided a full-time asset trainer who was available and skilled to help Anchorage agencies personalize the asset framework – that is, to figure out what asset building meant for their agency and provide special training accordingly. Community respondents report that the presence of this position greatly aided the institutionalization process with Anchorage.

Alaska ICE funding helped ASD to:

- Provide assets training/professional development to all ASD staff through workshops, including to all new staff at the start of each school year.
- Publish *Helping Kids Succeed – Anchorage School District Style*, which describes how the district builds assets in schools and builds positive school climate.
- Combine resources with the Safe and Drug Free Schools program (SDFS) to provide small grants throughout the school district to support asset-building projects, including the recent development of SEL standards, benchmarks, and indicators.
- Hire a SEL curriculum coordinator to develop SEL standards and benchmarks that were eventually adopted as district-wide SEL standards and benchmarks (a position that has now been absorbed into the district).
- Fully fund a staff member in collaboration with SDFS who serves as the SEL coach in elementary schools and provides professional development for teachers and principals.
- Implement the *Change of Heart* program to build a more supportive community in four high schools, providing ongoing coaching to school staff and student trainers, and develop and implement a follow-up training (*Be the Change*).
- Provide SDFS staff with an organizational consultant to clarify their mission and vision.
- Help SDFS to host the Annual SDFS Assets Fair, which was open to the community. This annual conference brought in national speakers and highlighted asset-building efforts within the school district. The Fair has become a major institution within the Anchorage community for introducing new aspects of institutionalizing the asset framework.

- Provide ongoing support for SDFS’s efforts to initiate and sustain institutional change at the district and school level to provide a positive and supportive environment for Anchorage students.
- Collect and report data annually from the SCCS, and develop an SCCS for grades 3 and 4.

## **Change in the Anchorage Community**

To learn about changes in policies and practices in communities, we conducted interviews in 2005, 2006, and 2008 with leaders and staff of Anchorage non-profit organizations and other agencies. These individuals had been involved with support for community engagement and positive youth development across multiple areas, such as juvenile justice, health, education, and the media. The Grading Grownups and Youth Risk Behavior Surveys were used to learn about changes in adult-youth relationships. The Grading Grownups Survey was administered in Anchorage in 2003 and 2008 regarding adult perceptions of youth and the frequency with which Anchorage adults reached out to engage with and support youth. The YRBS included questions about adult-youth relationships in its 2005 and 2007 administrations in Anchorage. See Chapter II for more information about these surveys.

### *A. Changes in Policies and Practices*

In this section, we examine the extent to which policies and practices were implemented that supported community engagement and positive youth outcomes in Anchorage, describe how change was achieved, and address the challenges involved in achieving desired results. Because of the collaborative approach employed throughout the community, it is difficult at times to identify changes that occurred *solely* because of Alaska ICE, but interview respondents have repeatedly given credit to Alaska ICE for helping positive change to occur in the community and within ASD. Here we present a summary of changes in policies and practices at the community level, within community organizations, and within ASD. Information contained in this section is based on interviews with and reports from individuals working within and across these sectors.

### **Community-Level Change**

In our interviews, community respondents identified the AYDC as a valuable resource that enables youth-serving organizations to coordinate their efforts and share a common youth assets framework. They thought that support from Alaska ICE helped AYDC and its members to better serve youth, families, and the community through the adoption of a strength-based approach to solving problems. Community respondents also pointed to the new Community Youth Plan as an example of how collaboration among organizations (in this case, led by United Way and the Mayor’s office) provided Anchorage with a coherent strategy to help youth complete high school and avoid risk behaviors.

Respondents also identified the following areas of community-level change that they felt had been especially beneficial:

- **Anchorage Youth Services – Dashboard.** The mapping of Anchorage youth services and opportunities included a cross disciplinary inventory of leadership and preparation opportunities, preventive services, and intervention services for high-school-aged youth across the following developmental areas: academic, social/emotional, physical, work force, and civic engagement. Respondents believed that this inventory shifted the focus from exclusively mapping treatment and intervention services, to pointing out the programs and opportunities for youth across developmental domains.
- **Youth participation in municipal functions.** Youth have been involved in local government in several ways. The Mayor of Anchorage included youth on his transition team, there are youth internships in the mayor’s office and planning commission; youth also serve on the Parks and Recreation and Youth Advisory Commissions.
- **Strength-based approaches imbedded.** Respondents felt that strength-based approaches to addressing youth risk behaviors have become imbedded within several far-reaching community-wide initiatives, including: (Mayor’s) Tri-Borough Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Policy Team; United Way Substance Abuse work group; Anchorage United for Youth; and Anchorage Youth Action Group (a five-agency collaborative effort that secured funding to address youth substance use).
- **Community Plan’s Teen Advisory Council.** *Anchorage United for Youth*, the local initiative to address substance use and delinquency, instituted a teen advisory council to provide input and direction to its proposed initiatives.
- **Creation of Anchorage Mentoring Alliance**, a group of 10 organizations whose purpose is to promote and support mentoring for Anchorage youth.
- **When You Were 15.** This media campaign was launched to encourage Anchorage adults to formally or informally reach out and be a mentor for a child or youth.
- **Recognition of Youth.** Respondents believe that the past 10 years has seen an increase in efforts to recognize youth for the positive contributions they make. Formal and informal “practices” by the media, mayor’s office, local organizations and the public have actively sought to ensure that youth feel like valued and respected members of the community. The *Spirit of Youth* initiative has promoted positive messages about youth in the media, and used the media to recognize youth who make positive contributions to their communities.
- The **Youth Friendly Business Campaign**, developed by Spirit of Youth, AYDC, and United Way (with support from Alaska ICE) was described by several community members as having provided an effective way to engage businesses in supporting youth.
- **Helping Kids Succeed – Alaskan Style.** Alaska ICE funded five reprints of the publication *Helping Kids Succeed – Alaskan Style*. This book was identified by a wide array of community members as an essential resource to help adults in the community take concrete steps to support youth. The book’s message has a significant level of credibility in the state because of its special focus on Alaskan culture.

## Organizational-Level Change

Community respondents felt that youth-serving organizations in Anchorage had taken on a more strength-based approach and had gained a far greater awareness of the benefits associated with promoting an asset-building framework. Note that we did not conduct independent evaluations of the changes within these organizations, so assessments of outcomes were based on the perceptions of respondents who worked across organizations to promote youth assets.

Respondents identified the following areas of organizational-level change as especially noteworthy:

- **Anchorage Youth Development Coalition.** Over 40 organizations belong to this networking, resource sharing, advocacy and training coalition. Its mission and values incorporate positive youth development and strength-based approaches. The High/Scope Youth Development Academy provided training to over a dozen organizations to increase their capacity to provide meaningful opportunities and supports to the youth they serve.
- **Holistic perspective.** Several organizations report that the adoption of an assets or positive youth development framework broadened their thinking about youth, and that a more holistic perspective of youth (including their interests, supports, and skills) has modified *how* programs and services are delivered.
- **Incorporation into by-laws, mission statements, and policies/procedures.** Youth agencies have specifically incorporated strength-based principles and terminology into key organizational documents and strategic plans. This takes many forms, including hiring youth, providing internship opportunities, and adopting policies to allow employees to take time off to be a mentor or volunteer in the community.
- **Youth's role in the work of an organization.** Numerous organizations have actively engaged youth in leadership, organizational work, program development, and decision making. Youth positions have been incorporated into advisory committees, hiring committees, and boards of directors. The interest remains high, with requests for assistance and training ongoing. Additionally, more programs have hired youth as the implementers – not just the recipients of – the program.
- **Service Delivery and Program Evaluations.** Organizations have increasingly modified their client assessments and intake forms to include questions related to interests, supports, and strengths. Organizations have also modified their own program evaluation tools to include strength-based measures.
- The **Reclaiming Futures** project involves system-wide collaboration between the police, schools, local non-profit providers, the courts, and the state Division of Juvenile Justice. Its goal is to redesign the way the juvenile justice system addresses juvenile offenders with substance abuse issues. Youth with an identified substance use or mental health issue receive a case-managed, strength-based intervention involving enhanced judicial review, and a treatment plan utilizing positive incentives, natural helpers/mentors, and pro-social opportunities. This approach has become so successful that the Division of Juvenile Justice has now funded a local case manager and mental health clinician to provide direct services to Reclaiming Futures clients.

## School-Level Changes

ASD began adoption of the Search Institute’s Developmental Assets framework in 1996. AASB staff collaborated with SDFS staff and, with the creation of Alaska ICE in 2001, there became a means of additional financial support for the district to further its goal of institutionalizing a youth assets framework into everyday life and learning at Anchorage schools. An ASD staff member stated, “The sustained nature of ICE funding has helped supply funding to continue to infuse the developmental asset[s] approach into almost every aspect of the way ASD does business.”

Within the district, the most prominent areas of change in policies and practices was first the adoption of the assets framework, language, and approach and its dissemination throughout the district over time, and second, the development and adoption of district-wide SEL standards throughout the district and the planned integration of SEL into the curriculum. This approach has made ASD a national leader in the area of SEL. Alaska ICE has supported this work through its funding of staff positions – for Youth Development Specialists who worked with school staff and students, for an SEL curriculum coordinator who led a team developing district-wide SEL standards and benchmarks, and subsequently, for an SEL coach who provides training and technical assistance within the district. District staff have stated that they believe that the focus on changing the environment for youth – the support they receive from teachers and other adults in their lives – will prove to be a far more effective approach to increasing youth assets and improving youth outcomes than the more common “fix the kids” approach. District staff have emphasized that it takes time for attitudes and approaches to change within classrooms and across school systems, but they strongly believe that they will see improvements in youth outcomes over time. Collectively, there was a great deal of experimentation with how to build assets within the school setting, and much was learned and refined over time. This long, sustained funding helped slowly shift the adult focus within ASD to a resiliency approach; everyone had a role to play in youth success. With ICE funding, schools had multi-year mini-grants to target asset building projects.

East High School offers one example of how intentional efforts at supporting youth assets and positive youth development may have been responsible for improvements in school climate and youth outcomes in a high-risk school. East is Anchorage’s largest high school, with a highly diverse population and relatively high proportion of low-income students. ASD worked with the school to consistently and intentionally focus on improving school climate, supporting youth assets, and promoting youth SEL. The school is seeing improved student ratings for school climate, and increases in academic engagement (e.g., improved attendance and decreasing dropout rates). Despite its high-risk status, East High students reported the lowest observed drug and alcohol use of any ASD high school.

East High won an Ethel Percy Andrus Legacy Award for Innovation for its programs to foster a positive school climate and improve student achievement. The award provider issued the following statement:

*East’s Advisory Program fosters a one-to-one relationship between every student and advisor. Its student-led Change of Heart program encourages freshmen to reduce social, gender and cultural prejudices, while the Be-the-Change program addresses the challenges of peer pressure, particularly with respect to sex, drugs and alcohol among sophomores. - AARP-AK News, Spring 2008*

The large size of ASD means that not all schools have been able to receive the level of sustained attention and support that East High has, but the district has made the provision of a positive school climate and the active promotion of youth SEL a priority across the district.

*B. Changes in Adult-Youth Relationships*

In this section, we first present information from adult community members regarding their feelings about Anchorage youth, and the extent to which adults in their community actively engaged with youth in ways that support youth-adult connections, and promoted youth SEL and youth character development. We then present information from Anchorage youth regarding the quality of their relationships with adults and the level of support that they received.

The Grading Grownups survey was used to obtain information from randomly selected adult Anchorage community members in 2003 and 2008 regarding their feelings about Anchorage youth, and the extent to which they saw other adults in their community actively engaged in supporting youth in ways that promoted adult-youth connections, and supported youth social emotional learning and character development.

Figure 103 presents the percentage of Anchorage adults who said that they saw other adults in their community engaging in the following behaviors to support adult-youth connections often or very often:

- *Have conversations with youth that allow adults and youth to get to know one another (shown as Converse)*
- *Act as a mentor or advisor to youth (shown as Mentor)*
- *Ask youth their opinions about issues that will affect youth (shown as Opinions)*
- *Engage in sports, outdoor, artistic, or cultural activities together with youth (shown as Activities)*

There was an increase in the reported frequencies of all four of these behaviors from 2003 to 2008, including a doubling of the percentage of respondents who saw community adults often or very often engaging in conversations with youth in a way that built adult-youth connections.

**Figure 103 Anchorage Community Adults Engaging in Activities Often or Very Often that Support Adult-Youth Connections**

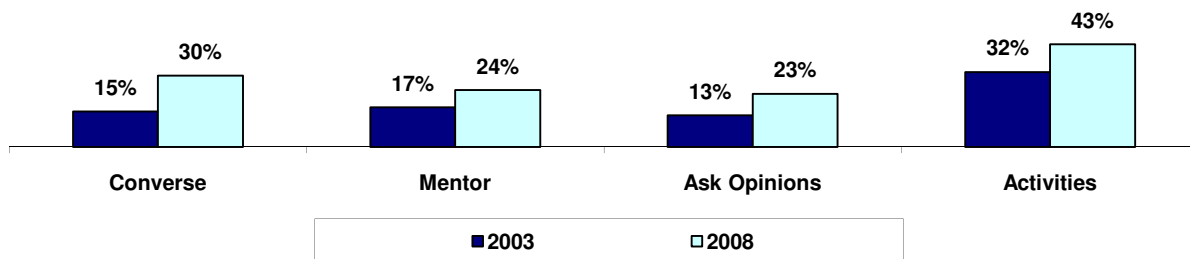


Figure 104 shows the percentage of Anchorage adults who said that they saw other adults in their community engaging in the following behaviors to support youth SEL often or very often:

- *Help youth think through possible good and bad consequences of their decisions* (shown as *Decisions*)
- *Teach youth values such as respect, honesty, and responsibility* (shown as *Values*)
- *Teach youth respect for all people regardless of race, culture, or religion* (shown as *Respect*)

There were notable increases in reported adult behaviors to support youth SEL in Anchorage from 2003 to 2008.

**Figure 104 Anchorage Community Adults Engaging in Activities Often or Very Often that Support Youth Social and Emotional Learning**

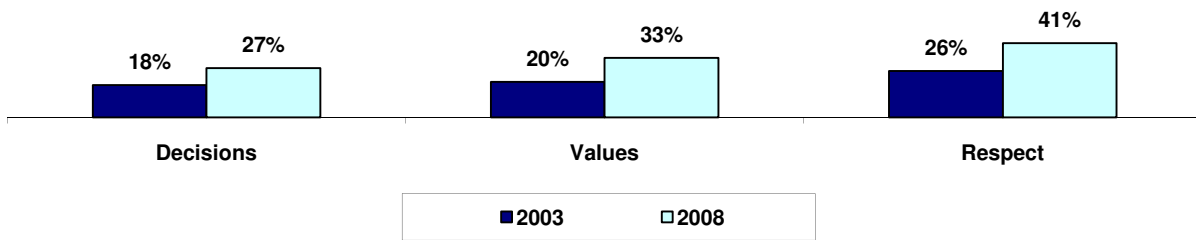
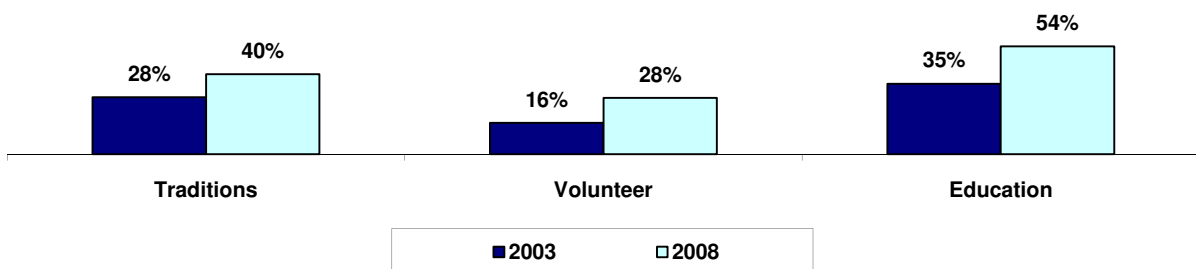


Figure 105 shows the percentage of Anchorage adults who said that they saw other adults in their community engaging in the following behaviors to support youth character development often or very often:

- *Preserve and pass down traditions and values of their own culture or religion* (shown as *Traditions*)
- *Show youth the importance of helping others by volunteering* (shown as *Volunteer*)
- *Encourage youth to take school seriously and do their best work* (shown as *Education*)

There were notable increases in each of these areas from 2003 to 2008.

**Figure 105 Anchorage Community Adults Engaging in Activities Often or Very Often that Support Youth Character Development**



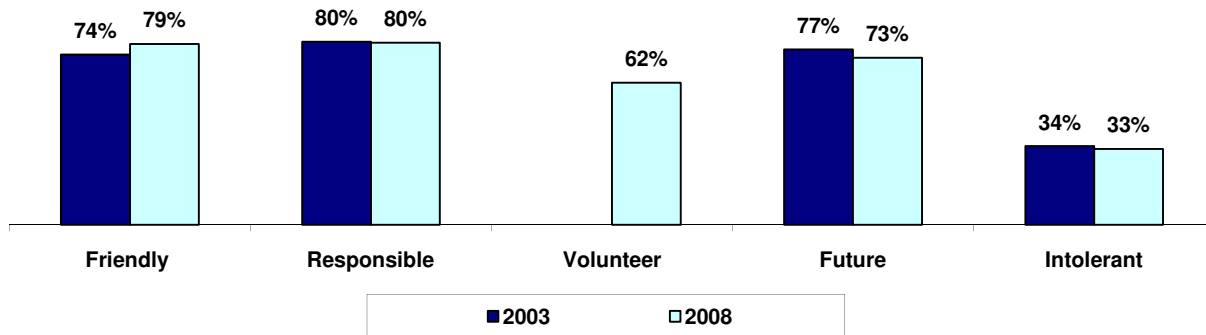
In sum, there was a substantial increase in the observed level of adult support for youth among Anchorage community members between 2003 and 2008. Adult community members appear to have increased the frequency with which they reached out to build connections with youth, and interact with them in ways that support youth SEL and character development.

We also asked adults in the Anchorage community how they perceived youth. Grading Grownups survey respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with several statements regarding youth in their community (Figure 106):

- *Teenagers in my community are friendly and helpful toward others* (shown as *Friendly*)
- *Teenagers in my community generally act responsibly* (shown as *Responsible*)
- *Teenagers in my community volunteer, provide services, or get involved positively in the community* (shown as *Volunteer*, not asked in 2003)
- *Today’s teenagers will make Alaska a better place in the future* (shown as *Future*)
- *Alaskan teenagers are often intolerant of other cultures and races* (shown as *Intolerant*)

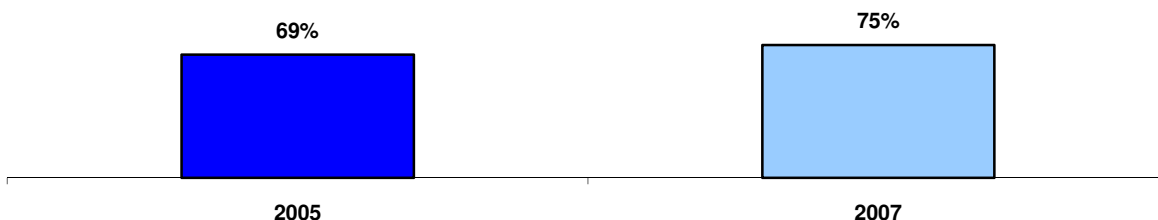
Although there was an increase in the percentage of Anchorage adults who saw youth as friendly and helpful, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of Anchorage adults who saw youth as a positive force for the future. There was little to no change in the percentage that saw Anchorage youth as respectful, or in the percentage that saw Anchorage youth as intolerant.

**Figure 106 Adult Perceptions of Youth, Anchorage**



Youth themselves were also asked how supportive adults were in their community. As part of the 2005 and 2007 YRBS, Anchorage High School Students were asked, *How often does one of your parents talk with you about what you are doing in school?* There was an increase of six percentage points in the number of youth who responded that they spoke with their parents about school once per week or more (Figure 107).

**Figure 107 Anchorage Youth Who Speak with their Parents about School Once Per Week or More**



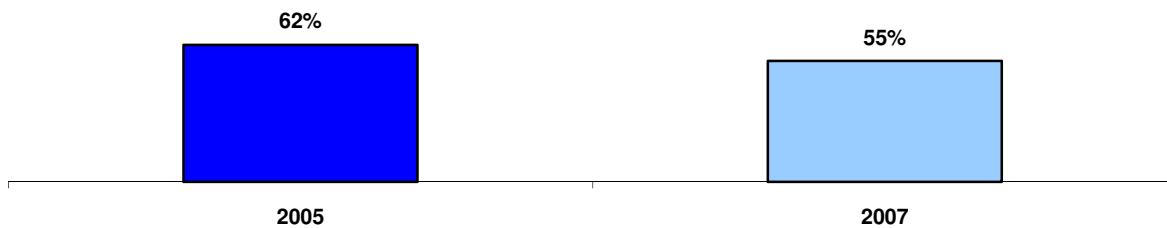
Anchorage high school students were also asked, *Besides your parents, how many adults would you feel comfortable seeking help from if you had an important question affecting your life?* More than two out of three responded that they had two or more adult resources, with no change from 2005 to 2007 (Figure 108).

**Figure 108 Anchorage Youth with Two or More Adults from Whom They Can Seek Help**



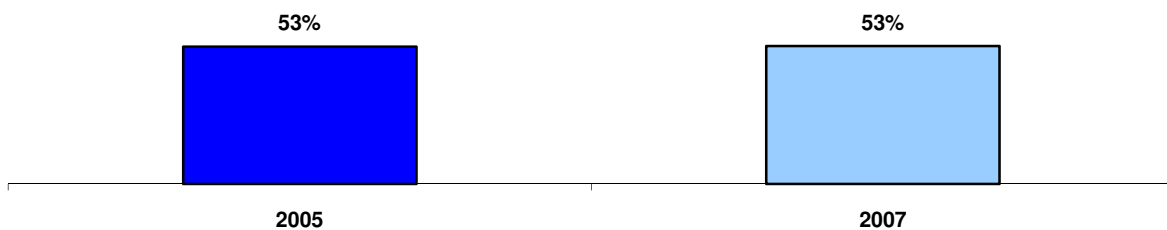
From 2005 to 2007, there was a decrease in the percentage of Anchorage high school students who agreed or strongly agreed with the YRBS item, *My teachers really care about me and give me a lot of encouragement* (Figure 109).

**Figure 109 Anchorage Youth Agree or Strongly Agree that their Teachers Care about and Encourage Them**



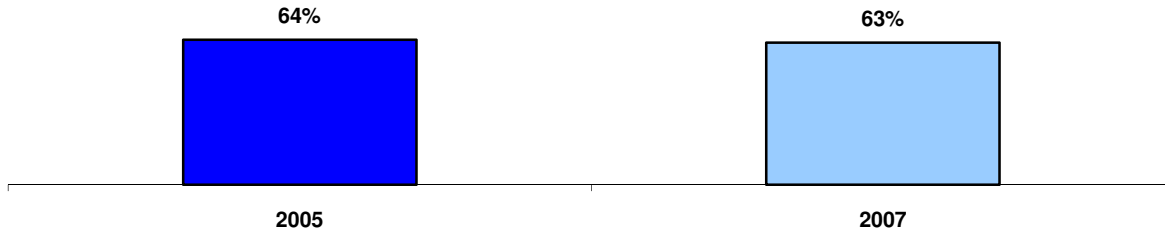
The percentage of Anchorage high school students who agreed or strongly agreed with the YRBS item *In my community, I feel like I matter to people* was unchanged from 2005 to 2007 (Figure 110).

**Figure 110 Anchorage Youth Agree or Strongly Agree that They Matter to People in Their Community**



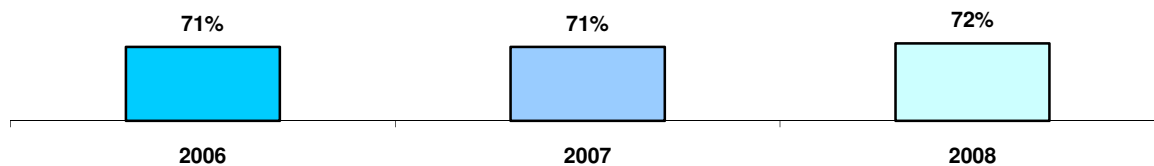
The percentage of Anchorage high school students who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the YRBS item *I feel alone in my life* was essentially unchanged from 2005 to 2007 (Figure 111).

**Figure 111 Anchorage Youth who Disagree or Strongly Disagree that They Feel Alone**



And as part of the SCCS, we asked Anchorage students, *Is there an adult who really knows how you spend your free time?* The percentages of Anchorage high school students who answered *Yes* each year are presented in Figure 112 below. This percentage remained essentially unchanged over the three years.

**Figure 112 Anchorage High School Students with Adult Supervision**



In summary, community members from youth-serving organizations across Anchorage have described the adoption of shared policies and practices to support positive youth development across multiple sectors, such as social services and education. From 2003 to 2008, Anchorage adults reported increasing involvement with and support for youth among other adults in their community. They were more likely to see other adults in their community engage in a variety of behaviors to support the development of adult-youth relationships, youth SEL, and youth character development. For example, the percentage of respondents who reported seeing other adults in their community often or very often engage in conversations that allowed adults and youth to get to know one another doubled from 2003 to 2008. On balance, adult perceptions of youth changed little from 2003 to 2008. Anchorage youth were asked about their relationships with adults in 2005 and 2007. Findings were mixed, with increasing numbers of youth reporting that they spoke with their parents about school, but decreasing numbers reporting feeling that their teachers cared about and encouraged them. Community respondents noted that there was a threatened teachers' strike during the 2007-2008 school year, and suggested that the resulting tension may have contributed to declines in students' perceptions of adults at school as being supportive. It is possible that reported increases in adult support for youth in the community will take time to change community perceptions of youth as well as youth's perceptions of the adults around them.

## Changes in Youth Outcomes

We examined youth outcomes in Anchorage in two areas: Youth SEL and youth risk behaviors. As discussed above, we measured student SEL-based student responses to a series of items on the SCCS, as well as responses to selected items on the YRBS. We measured youth risk behaviors by examining Anchorage youth responses to items on the SCCS and YRBS that addressed whether they had engaged in carrying weapons, engaging in physical fights, cigarette smoking (YRBS only), alcohol use, and/or drug use. It is useful to incorporate information regarding risk behaviors from both the SCCS and YRBS for two reasons: First, the YRBS asks youth to report on their own risk behaviors, and the SCCS asks youth to report their observations of risk behaviors among their peers at school or school events, providing two different perspectives. And second, consent rules changed between 1995 and 2005 for the YRBS. In 1995, parents had to actively *opt out* if they did not want their child to participate in the survey. In 2005, parents had to actively *opt in* (give consent) for their child to participate in the survey. This means that a student who would not or could not engage their parents in reviewing a consent form and providing a response were *more likely* to participate in 1995 and *less likely* to participate in 2005 and 2007. There is evidence that youth who do not have an adult whom they would or could engage in reviewing and returning YRBS consent forms are at higher risk for engaging in negative behaviors compared with youth who have an adult available to review and return the consent form.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, decreases in observed risk behaviors from 1995 to 2005 may be a result of changes in consent rules as much as reflecting real reductions in youth risk behaviors. The provision of SCCS data provides an additional measure of changes in the level of youth risk behaviors (albeit only over the last few years).

In the remainder of this chapter, we present our findings for youth outcomes in Anchorage in the areas of SEL and youth risk behaviors.

### A. Youth Social and Emotional Learning

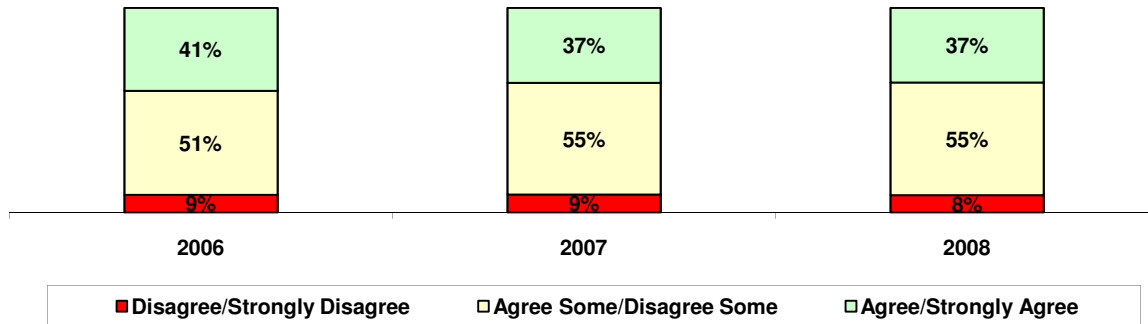
In this section, we present information from Anchorage students regarding their SEL. Student ratings of their SEL were obtained through the SCCS, and through two questions about youth volunteerism and participation in extracurricular activities on the YRBS. Note that the SCCS was first administered district-wide in 2006, but the district had started implementing initiatives aimed at developing youth assets and promoting SEL for several years prior to the survey administration. Therefore, SCCS data from 2006 should not be regarded as baseline information (i.e., they do not reflect conditions prior to intervention).

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<sup>9</sup> See *Parental Permission and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey* (2006). Washington, DC: United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

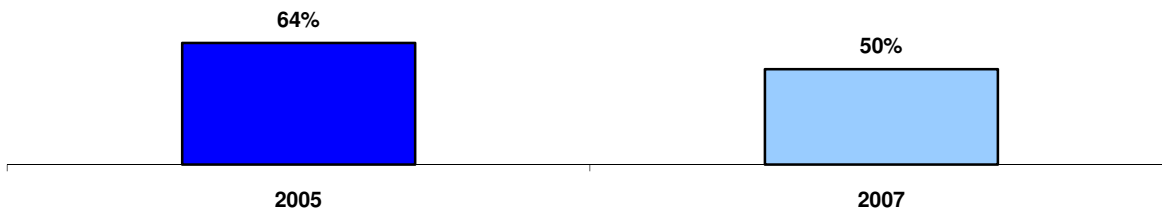
Student reports of their SEL decreased somewhat from 2006 through 2008 across grades 5 through 12, although this change was not statistically significant (Figure 113).

**Figure 113 Social and Emotional Learning**



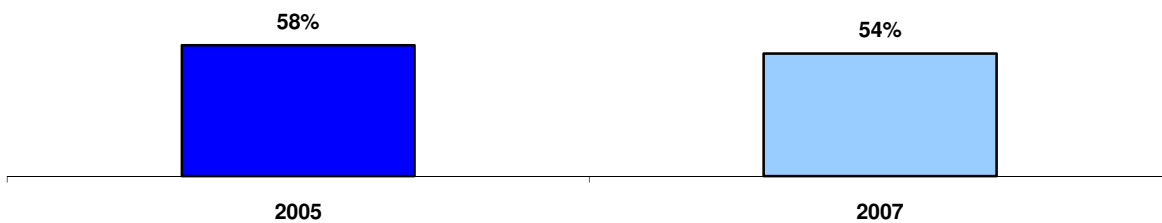
On both the 2005 and 2007 YRBS, Anchorage high school students were asked, *During an average week, how many hours do you spend helping other people without getting paid (such as helping elders or neighbors, watching young children, tutoring, helping out at a hospital, clinic, youth program, local agency, or doing other things) to make your community a better place for people to live?* The percentage of youth who reported that they volunteered one or more hours per week decreased by 14 percentage points from 2005 to 2007 (Figure 114).

**Figure 114 Anchorage Youth Who Volunteer**



Anchorage high school students were also asked, *On how many of the past 7 days did you take part in organized after school, evening, or weekend activities (such as school clubs, community center groups, music/art/dance lessons, drama, church, cultural or other supervised activities)?* The percentage of youth who reported that they participated in any after-school activities within the prior week dropped by four percentage points from 2005 to 2007 (Figure 115).

**Figure 115 Anchorage Youth Who Participate in Organized After-School Activities Past 7 days**

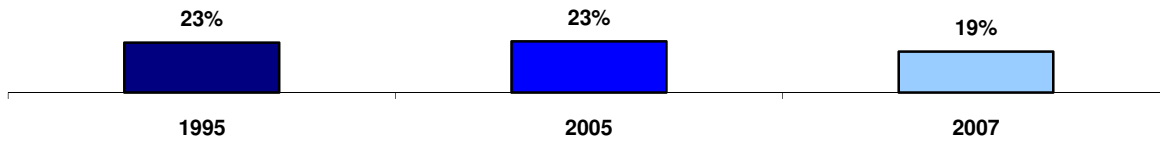


*B. Youth Risk Behaviors*

In this section, we present information from Anchorage youth regarding the frequency of risk behaviors. We are focusing on five common youth risk behaviors: carrying a weapon, fighting, smoking cigarettes, consuming alcohol, and consuming drugs. As discussed above, comparisons between 1995 and 2005/2007 YRBS data should be made with caution because of a change from an opt-out consent procedure to the requirement of active parental consent.

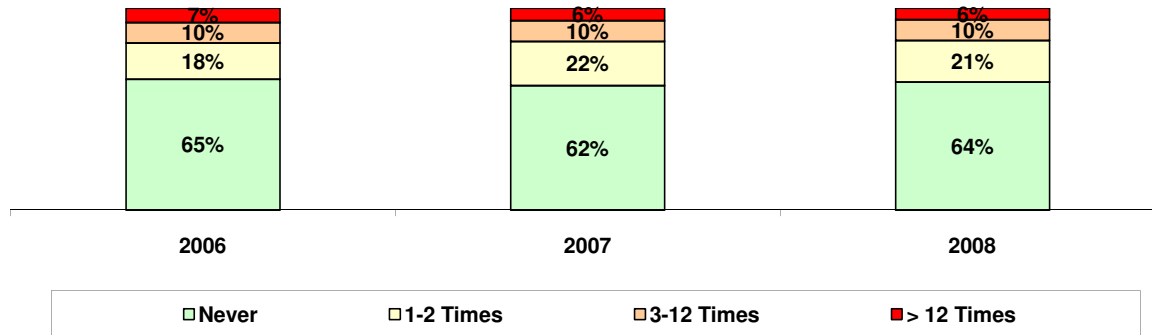
As shown in Figure 116, the percentage of Anchorage youth who reported that they had carried a weapon in the past 30 days was unchanged from 1995 to 2005, but had decreased slightly by 2007.

**Figure 116 Anchorage Youth Who Carried a Weapon in the Last 30 Days (YRBS)**



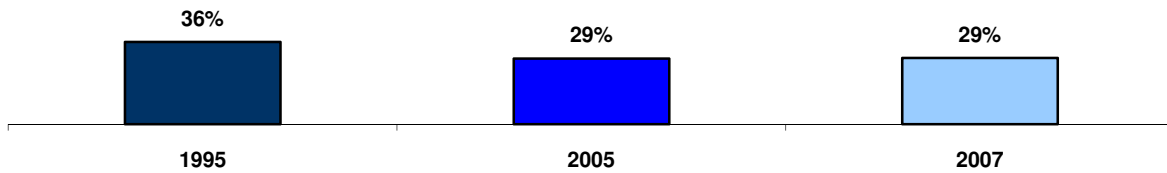
And as shown in Figure 117, the percentage of Anchorage high school students who reported that they had observed peers carrying a weapon at school or at school events did not change significantly 2006 to 2008.

**Figure 117 Observed Instances of Peers Carrying Weapons at School or School Events Last 12 Months**



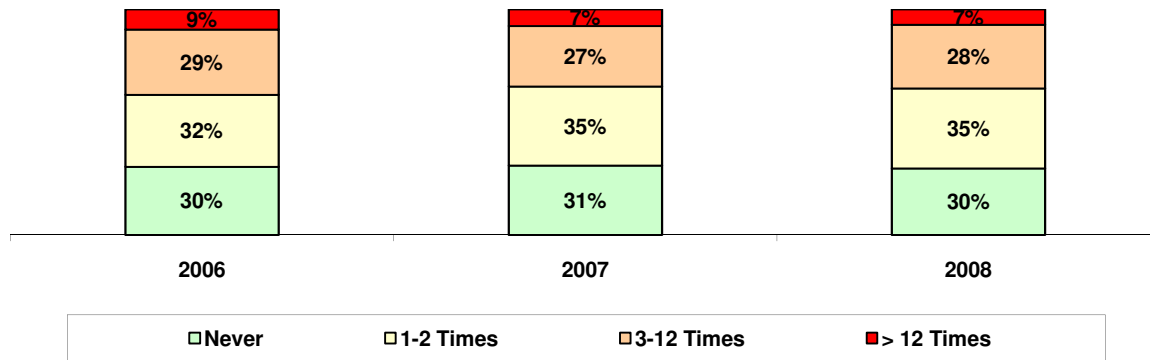
Youth were asked about the prevalence of fighting as part of the YRBS (where physical fighting was specified) and as part of the SCCS (where the type of fighting was not specified). From 1995 to 2005, there was a drop in the percentage of Anchorage youth who reported that they had engaged in a physical fight within the past year, but there was no change from 2005 to 2007 (Figure 118).

**Figure 118 Anchorage Youth Who Engaged in a Physical Fight Last 12 Months**



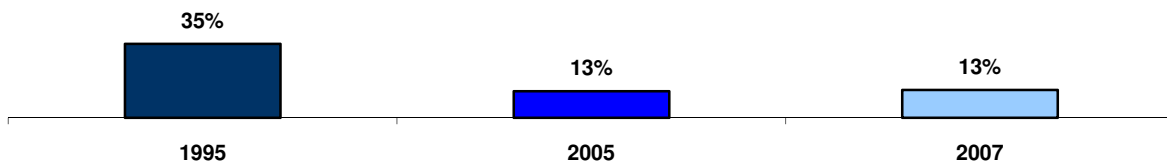
And as shown in Figure 119, the percentage of Anchorage high school students who reported that they had observed peers engaging in a fight at school or at school events did not change significantly from 2006 to 2008.

**Figure 119 Anchorage Youth Observed Peers Physical Fight Last 12 Months**



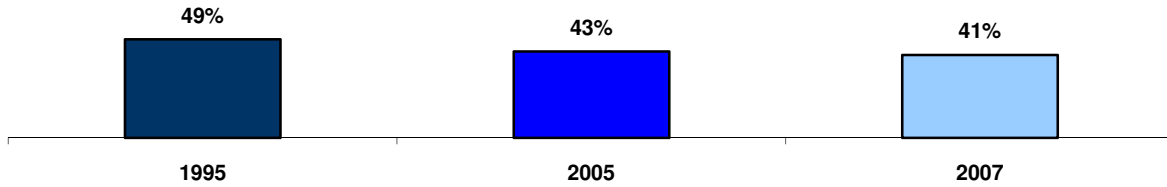
The percentage of YRBS respondents who reported that they had smoked cigarettes within the past 30 days decreased by more than half from 1995 to 2005, but was unchanged from 2005 to 2007 (Figure 120). Students were not asked about smoking on the SCCS.

**Figure 120 Anchorage Youth Who Smoked Cigarettes in the Last 30 Days**



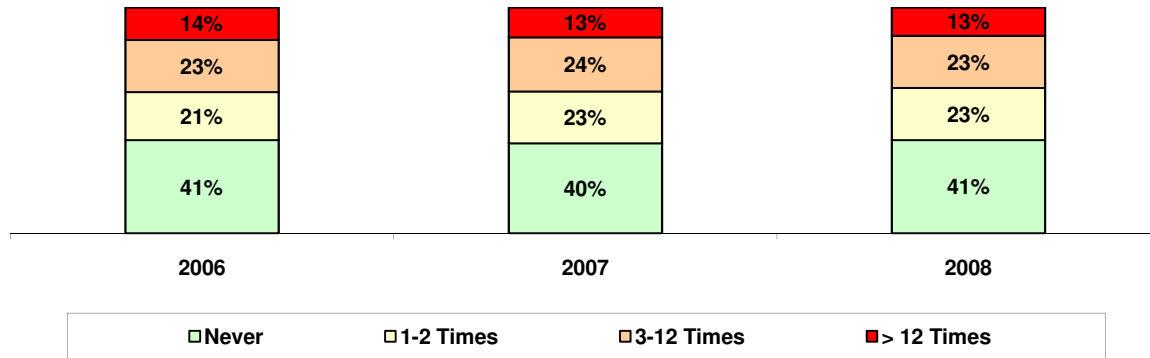
From 1995 to 2007, there was a decline in the percentage of Anchorage youth who reported on the YRBS that they consumed alcohol in the last 30 days, but there was little change from 2005 to 2007 (Figure 121).

**Figure 121 Anchorage Youth Who Consumed Any Alcohol in the Last 30 Days**



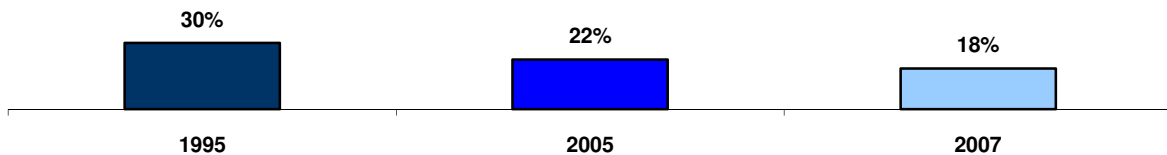
There was also essentially no change in the frequency of alcohol consumption that Anchorage youth reported seeing among peers at school or school events from 2006 to 2008 (Figure 122).

**Figure 122 Alcohol Use Observed Among Peers Last 12 Months**



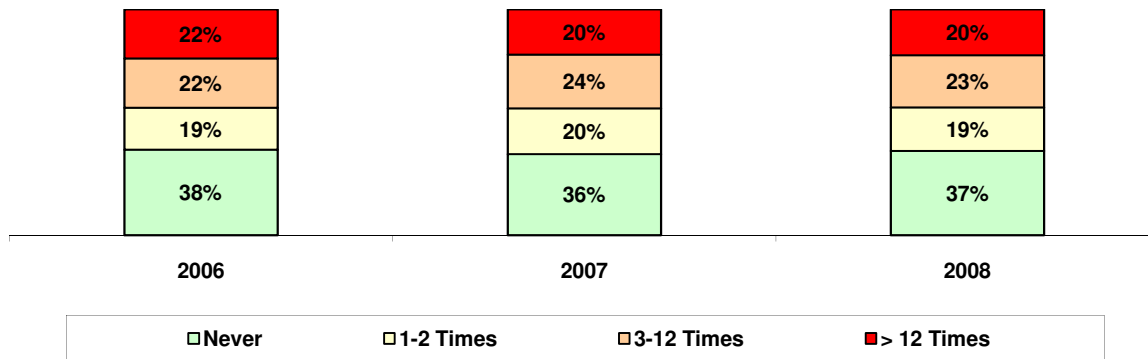
To examine drug use among Anchorage youth from YRBS data, we counted the percentage of students who reported that they had used marijuana and/or cocaine within the past 30 days. The percentage of youth who reported drug use dropped significantly from 1995 to 2005, and continued to decline through 2007 (Figure 123).

**Figure 123 Anchorage Youth Who Used Drugs in the Last 30 Days**



From 2006 to 2008, student reports of observed drug use among their peers at school or school events within the prior 12 months did not change significantly (Figure 124).

**Figure 124 Anchorage Drug Use Among Peers Last 12 Months**



To summarize, we did not observe improvements in youth SEL from 2006 to 2008, and the percentage of Anchorage youth who reported volunteering in their community and/or participated in structured after-school activities dropped from 2005 to 2007. ASD staff respondents have noted that based on the very large size of the school district, they expected that it would take more than just a couple of years for the district's efforts to introduce support for SEL into classrooms to translate into measureable changes in student behavior.

We observed sizable declines in all areas of youth risk behaviors from 1995 to 2005 as measured by the YRBS, but changes in procedures for obtaining consent for survey participation among youth mean that we must interpret these findings with great caution. There were modest declines from 2005 to 2007 in the percentage of youth who reported that they had carried a weapon and/or smoked cigarettes. There was little to no change in the frequency of youth observations of delinquent behaviors or substance use among peers at school or school events among Anchorage high school students from 2006 to 2008.

## Lessons Learned and Recommendations

In this section, we present a summary of what Alaska ICE has helped this community to accomplish, the challenges faced in achieving desired change within the community, and recommendations for best practices when undertaking community engagement initiatives in places similar to Anchorage.

### *A. What has the Alaska ICE initiative helped this community to accomplish?*

There is evidence that Anchorage is emerging as a known youth-friendly community. For example, Anchorage has been selected for the past three years as one of the 100 best cities for youth in the USA by America's Promise. Anchorage is also a leader in its collaborative, resiliency/developmental asset approach to improving supports for youth across key sectors of the community. And the ASD's adoption of SEL benchmarks across grade levels places it at the forefront of initiating progressive reforms among school districts across the country.

Alaska ICE provided support to Anchorage – both the school district and the community – in multiple ways. One community respondent said that “[Alaska ICE] funding was crucial for virtually every developmental assets initiative going on in this community.” Community members from youth-serving organizations identified several Alaska ICE-supported initiatives and collaborations that they believe helped the community to focus on a strength-based approach to working with youth and families.

Surveys of adults across the community revealed a fairly substantial increase in the frequency with which Anchorage adults were taking concrete actions to support youth through engaging in activities with them, listening to them, and providing them with skills and guidance. This level of change in a community the size of Anchorage provides evidence that messages about the importance of supporting youth development are reaching individuals across the general community (not just among adults who work directly with youth). ASD staff described how support from Alaska ICE played a key role in the district’s groundbreaking efforts to institutionalize a youth assets framework, and to take on SEL as a district-wide area of focus and support.

Adult perceptions of youth and youth perceptions of the supportiveness of adults in their lives have yet to change in any marked way in this community. Youth SEL has also not yet shown improvement, but ASD plans to continue to evaluate whether their efforts are beginning to reach youth at the individual level. There has been little change in youth risk behaviors since 2005, and we are unable to be sure that reported decreases in risk behaviors from 1995 to 2005 reflect true changes in youth behavior (rather than a change in survey methods). Again, ASD plans to track youth risk behaviors into the future, so recent increases in adult support for youth both within and outside of the school district may lead to changes in youth risk behaviors in the future.

*B. What have been the challenges to achieving desired change in this community?*

The main challenge that Alaska ICE has faced in supporting community change in Anchorage has to do with the sheer size of the community and the school district. In smaller communities, Alaska ICE staff and its partners have been able to engage directly with the community in general, as well as working to support community organizations. The large population in Anchorage has meant that Alaska ICE has provided support to school and community initiatives; has provided funding support to the school district for staff members within SDFS, and other support, such as the SCCS; and has facilitated collaboration among organizations, also through funding for a community assets trainer and through support to Spirit of Youth and other organizations. The institutionalization of an assets framework and the successful implementation of approaches and strategies to support youth in the classroom and across the district can take a great deal of time and effort in a district that serves approximately 50,000 students, and progress may be uneven as some schools are better prepared to take on change than others.

*C. What best practices should be incorporated when providing support for community engagement in communities like this one?*

Alaska ICE staff and other community respondents have provided several recommendations for best practices when endeavoring to increase community support for youth in communities like Anchorage.

1. Change requires building awareness and the motivation to do something different. It is critical to begin by building a base of support and an understanding of the assets/ positive youth development framework, and it is essential to present concepts on repeated occasions and through multiple formats for people to grasp the message in a comprehensive manner (especially given the high rate of staff turnover in some schools/organizations). Locally developed resources (e.g., the *Helping Kids Succeed – Alaskan Style* series) can help make the message meaningful and relevant. Greater public awareness can be built with media campaigns coordinated with existing promotion efforts.
2. A focus on what *individuals* can do encourages people to apply the asset-building concepts to their personal life through the informal interactions within their own families and local communities. Integration of the framework into a formal setting (e.g., the workplace) should take place after the framework is incorporated naturally into the individual's life. While the enthusiasm is understandable, the missed step of personal application can give rise to the belief by some that the assets/positive youth development framework is simply “another program.” Building assets takes place over time, through informal, one-on-one interactions with children and youth.
3. Assessing community and organizational readiness and capacity to change allows for better targeting of appropriate support. Advocates made inquiries about what organizations were most ready and open to doing things differently. An informal assessment can be conducted through a review of current practices and conversations with managers and direct line staff. Sometimes an organization can be ready to make changes in terms of attitude, but not have the capacity (resources or people) to make their desired changes at that time. Lasting change is often a convergence of high readiness and current capacity at multiple organizational levels. Small changes in the *culture of how things are done* can lead, in time, to formal practices and institutionalized policies.
4. Community organizations (including school districts and state and local agencies) can more efficiently expand their efforts by seeking and seizing opportunities to collaborate. Several years of asset awareness-building activities prepared Anchorage to take advantage of the Alaska ICE funding once it became available. A trainer was hired to work with Anchorage organizations, faith communities, and businesses to integrate the asset concepts into practice. Instead of immediately hiring an independent contractor, or housing the position within a single agency, the advocates waited for AYDC emergence and United Way readiness to develop a leveraged partnership for this position. The assets trainer and/or local advocates attended most community meetings about youth to advance and encourage the assets-based approach. The trainer was able to provide leadership and follow-up to emerging initiatives that adopted strength-based strategies across organizations.

5. Increase youth voice in the development and implementation of community initiatives. A community initiative seeking to improve youth outcomes must involve youth in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of activities. Recruit non-traditional leaders from diverse backgrounds. Encourage greater youth involvement in developing programs, services, and organizational governance by having youth trainers deliver the message. Be prepared to modify community planning meeting times to accommodate youth's schedules, and go to youth settings to get feedback rather than always expecting youth to reach out to the adults. Create a youth advisory council for community-based efforts; recruit intentionally to assure diversity. Do not expect traditional youth leaders to represent the opinions of the disengaged youth. Prepare youth forums and leadership experiences carefully so they are not one-shot motivational events, and assure meaningful outcomes for youth and the community. Do not expect adult facilitators to naturally know how to encourage youth voice and deeper engagement; provide training and resources to interested groups.
6. Know that asset awareness presentations to students *do not* equate with acquisition of those assets. This misguided notion neglects the fact that half of the Search Institute's Youth Developmental Assets™ involve adults creating more supportive, engaging environments with appropriate boundaries and expectations (see Appendix A).
7. Encourage and support youth agencies to adopt strength-based practices. Provide general and targeted training on how to apply the asset-based concepts in daily practice. Use best-practice curricula using principles from the National Academies of Sciences research on effective youth programs. Make one-on-one coaching available to assist in program and service delivery modifications to better align with an assets-based approach. Help agencies think through how to measure positive outcomes as well as a reduction in negative behaviors. Do not assume people who understand the assets framework can translate its principles into their program or school settings. People often need explicit training in *how to apply* new concepts.
8. Promotion efforts must include *all* sectors of the community. Change takes place by hearing the message in multiple venues. It is not enough to focus only on individuals or families. The environments around kids and families need to change as well (e.g., schools, businesses, faith organizations). Outreach beyond traditional settings requires adapting the message through tailored resources, training and assistance targeted to faith communities, treatment settings, law enforcement, businesses, media, and local and state governmental agencies.
9. To motivate, increase awareness, and assist organizations in change, a local champion is a must. Without the assets trainer in Anchorage, the community as a whole and the organizations and systems would not have seen the degree of change that was accomplished over the past 10 years. Interviews with key informants in the community bore this out. While it is extremely helpful to have advocates focused *primarily* within specific sectors, a designated assets trainer was able to meet all of the demands for training, assistance, coaching, and attending meetings across sectors. The local champion motivates, promotes, and facilitates change more efficiently by working across multiple systems simultaneously toward a common goal. Recognize that the initiative may need a different person with a different skill set at different stages of the initiative. Jump-starting an initiative is different than helping organizations and systems make changes.

10. System-level changes are possible, but they take years of nurturing, and communities must be prepared not to see immediate and dramatic change in youth outcomes. Changing how institutions and systems approach young people requires ongoing, extended effort. Therefore, a long-range vision and commitment is required to build youth assets and promote positive youth development across an entire community. Measures of success must be found in meta outcomes and systemic signs of change, while change in youth behavior may take many years across the system. The bigger the system, the longer it will take to see change in youth behavior.

## APPENDIX A: SEARCH INSTITUTE'S 40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS®

Bold italic typeface denotes the 22 assets that can be directly influenced by schools.

### 20 External Assets

- Family support
- Positive family communication
- **Other adult relationships**
- Caring neighborhood/community
- **Caring school climate**
- **Parent involvement in school**
- **Community values youth**
- **Youth given useful roles**
- **Youth volunteers in the community**
- **Safety**
- Family boundaries
- **School boundaries**
- Neighborhood/community boundaries
- **Adult role models**
- **Positive peer influence**
- **High expectations**
- **Creative and cultural activities**
- **Youth programs**
- Religious community
- Time at home

### 20 Internal Assets

- **Achievement motivation**
- **School engagement**
- **Homework**
- **Bonding to school**
- **Reading for pleasure**
- Caring
- Equality and social justice
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Responsibility
- Restraint
- **Planning and decision making**
- **Interpersonal skills**
- Cultural competence
- **Resistance skills**
- **Peaceful conflict resolution**
- Personal power
- Self-esteem
- Sense of purpose
- Positive view of personal future

## APPENDIX B: QS2 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

These districts have made or completed commitments with AASB and Alaska ICE for concentrated school improvement and community engagement initiatives. Asterisks indicate districts that have taken a year or more hiatus after starting partnerships.

### **School Years 2001-03 (QS2 Demonstration Sites, not included in the current evaluation)**

Denali  
Kake  
St. Mary's

### **School Years 2002-04**

Alaska Gateway  
Kodiak Island  
Yupiit

### **School Years 2003-05**

Ketchikan Gateway  
Wrangell  
Yukon Flats \*

### **School Years 2004-06**

Chatham  
Dillingham\*  
Pribilof

### **School Years 2005-07**

Sitka

### **School Years 2006-08**

Delta-Greely \*  
Southeast Island  
Unalaska

### **School Years 2007-09**

Lower Kuskokwim (7 communities)  
Petersburg

## APPENDIX C: SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CONNECTEDNESS SURVEY ITEMS

Note that scale reliability figures (alphas) are based on 2008 data across all survey participants.

### **High Expectations** ( $\alpha = .71$ )

I have given up on school (reverse scored)

At this school, students are encouraged to work to the best of their abilities

If students like their school, they will do better in their classes

I try hard to do well in school

I want very much to get more education after high school

Adults in my community encourage me to take school seriously

Teachers and other adults in this school believe that *all* students can do good work

### **School Safety** ( $\alpha = .75$ )

I am safe at school

This school is being ruined by bullies (reverse scored)

This school is badly affected by crime and violence in the community (reverse scored)

Gang members make this school dangerous (reverse scored)

Crime and violence are major concerns at school (reverse scored)

### **School Leadership and Student Involvement** ( $\alpha = .79$ )

At school, decisions are made based on what is best for students

The principal and other leaders in this school make good decisions

In my school, students are given a chance to help make decisions

Students are involved in helping to solve school problems

The principal asks students about their ideas

### **Respectful Climate** ( $\alpha = .85$ )

Teachers here are nice people

My teachers treat me with respect

When students break rules, they are treated fairly

My teachers are fair

Our school rules are fair

It pays to follow the rules at my school

### **Peer Climate** ( $\alpha = .72$ )

Students in this school help each other, even if they are not friends

Students here treat me with respect

When students see another student being picked on, they try to stop it

Students at this school are often teased or picked on (reverse scored)

Most students in this school like to put others down (reverse scored)

**Caring Adults** ( $\alpha = .68$ )

There is at least one adult at this school whom I feel comfortable talking to about things that are bothering me

At school, there is a teacher or some other adult who will miss me when I'm absent

There are a lot of chances for students in my school to talk with teachers one-on-one

I can name at least five adults who really care about me

Other adults at school besides my teachers know my name

**Parent and Community Involvement** ( $\alpha = .79$ )

This school is a welcoming place for families like mine

Adults in my community know what goes on inside of schools

Adults in my community support this school

Lots of parents come to events at my school

Most students in this school talk with their parents about what they are studying in class

Most students in this school talk with their parents about their homework assignments

This school does not involve parents in most school events or activities (reverse scored)

**Social and Emotional Learning** ( $\alpha = .87$ )

If someone asks me right now, I can describe how I am feeling

I know what I do well and what areas I need to work on

I ask for help from my teachers or others when I need it

I feel bad if my chores, homework, or other responsibilities are not done well or on time

I control myself when I am frustrated, angry, or disappointed

I am honest, even when telling the truth might get me in trouble

When I make a decision, I think about what might happen afterwards

I set goals and then work to achieve them

I care about other people's feelings and points of view

It is important for me to help others in my school

I respect the ways in which people are different

I can tell when someone is getting angry or upset before they say anything

I know how to disagree without starting a fight or argument

I get along well with other students

I work on having positive relationships with friends, family members, and others

**Student Delinquent Behaviors** ( $\alpha = .85$ )

Personally seen other students do at school/school events in past 12 months:

Destroy things

Get into fights

Steal things

Threaten or bully

Carry weapons

**Student Drug and Alcohol Use** ( $\alpha = .76$ )

Personally seen other students do at school/school events in past 12 months:

Under the influence of drugs (marijuana, coke, crack)

Under the influence of alcohol (beer/wine/liquor)

Under the influence of inhalants (sniffing glue, paints, or aerosol sprays)

**APPENDIX D: SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CONNECTEDNESS SURVEY SCORES**

		All QS2 Districts		Pribilof District	Dillingham District	
Scale	Year	Overall	Alaska Native	Overall	Overall	Alaska Native
High Expectations	2006	4.01	3.95	4.17	3.92	3.90
	2007	3.97	3.99	4.09	3.95	4.00
	2008	4.03	4.06	4.08	4.03	4.02
School Safety	2006	3.81	3.80	3.98	3.50	3.57
	2007	3.76	3.77	4.12	3.76	3.72
	2008	3.83	3.85	4.13	3.64	3.69
Respectful Climate	2006	3.36	3.23	3.44	3.18	3.16
	2007	3.39	3.47	3.72	3.43	3.55
	2008	3.46	3.48	3.62	3.37	3.41
Peer Climate	2006	3.02	2.90	2.92	2.91	2.99
	2007	2.98	3.04	3.14	2.84	2.88
	2008	3.01	3.11	3.19	3.05	3.13
Caring Adults	2006	3.53	3.48	3.64	3.39	3.33
	2007	3.53	3.53	3.70	3.51	3.57
	2008	3.56	3.55	3.53	3.63	3.61
Parent & Community Involvement	2007	3.32	3.42	3.61	3.39	3.39
	2008	3.37	3.48	3.65	3.32	3.39
Social and Emotional Learning	2006	3.72	3.66	3.64	3.61	3.63
	2007	3.69	3.68	3.70	3.70	3.73
	2008	3.74	3.73	3.77	3.76	3.74

## APPENDIX E: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FACTORS

**Table 2 School Climate and Student Social and Emotional Learning**

School Climate	Social and Emotional Learning
High Expectations	$r = .59, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,320$ )
School Safety	$r = .25, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,371$ )
Respectful Climate	$r = .54, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,356$ )
Peer Climate	$r = .38, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,378$ )

**Table 3 School Climate and Student Risk Behaviors**

School Climate	Risk Behaviors			
	Vandalism	Fights	Alcohol Use	Drug Use
High Expectations	$r = -.20, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,496$ )	$r = -.15, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,486$ )	$r = -.24, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,476$ )	$r = -.23, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,484$ )
School Safety	$r = -.29, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,532$ )	$r = -.30, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,549$ )	$r = -.20, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,538$ )	$r = -.17, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,547$ )
Respectful Climate	$r = -.29, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,503$ )	$r = -.21, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,524$ )	$r = -.28, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,513$ )	$r = -.24, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,519$ )
Peer Climate	$r = -.35, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,533$ )	$r = -.33, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,552$ )	$r = -.22, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,540$ )	$r = -.21, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,549$ )

**Table 4 School Climate and Academic Engagement**

School Climate	Academic Engagement Outcomes		
	Given Up on School	Attendance	Dropout Rates
High Expectations	$r = -.63, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,524$ )	$r = .22, ns$ ( $n = 69$ )	$r = -.14, ns$ ( $n = 68$ )
School Safety	$r = -.23, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,544$ )	$r = .22, ns$ ( $n = 69$ )	$r = .04, ns$ ( $n = 68$ )
Respectful Climate	$r = -.32, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,519$ )	$r = .19, ns$ ( $n = 69$ )	$r = -.03, ns$ ( $n = 68$ )
Peer Climate	$r = -.19, p < .001$ ( $n = 3,555$ )	$r = .11, ns$ ( $n = 69$ )	$r = .08, ns$ ( $n = 68$ )

**Table 5a School Climate and Academic Achievement Outcomes I**

School Climate	Academic Performance Outcomes I		
	SBA Reading	SBA Writing	SBA Math
High Expectations	$r = .17, ns$ ( $n = 70$ )	$r = .12, ns$ ( $n = 70$ )	$r = .21, ns$ ( $n = 70$ )
School Safety	$r = .17, ns$ ( $n = 70$ )	$r = .18, ns$ ( $n = 70$ )	$r = .10, ns$ ( $n = 70$ )
Respectful Climate	$r = .18, ns$ ( $n = 70$ )	$r = .08, ns$ ( $n = 70$ )	$r = .09, ns$ ( $n = 70$ )
Peer Climate	$r = .03, ns$ ( $n = 70$ )	$r = .05, ns$ ( $n = 70$ )	$r = .01, ns$ ( $n = 70$ )

**Table 5b School Climate and Academic Achievement Outcomes II**

School Climate	Academic Achievement Outcomes II			
	HSGQE Reading	HSGQE Writing	HSGQE Math	Graduation Rates
High Expectations	$r = .01, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = .21, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = -.05, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = -.06, ns$ (n = 53)
School Safety	$r = .21, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = .03, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = .12, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = -.12, ns$ (n = 53)
Respectful Climate	$r = .07, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = .18, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = -.11, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = .01, ns$ (n = 53)
Peer Climate	$r = .14, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = .17, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = .03, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = -.21, ns$ (n = 53)

**Table 6 Community Support and School Climate**

Community Support	School Climate			
	High Expectations	School Safety	Respectful Climate	Peer Climate
Caring Adults	$r = .50, p < .001$ (n = 3,442)	$r = .28, p < .001$ (n = 3,480)	$r = .53, p < .001$ (n = 3,462)	$r = .38, p < .001$ (n = 3,498)
Parent & Community Involvement	$r = .56, p < .001$ (n = 3,391)	$r = .31, p < .001$ (n = 3,423)	$r = .56, p < .001$ (n = 3,409)	$r = .45, p < .001$ (n = 3,432)

**Table 7 Adult Supports and Student Social and Emotional Learning**

Adult Supports	Social and Emotional Learning
Caring Adults	$r = .50, p < .001$ (n = 3,389)
Parent & Community Involvement	$r = .47, p < .001$ (n = 3,324)

**Table 8 Community Support and Student Risk Behaviors**

Community Support	Risk Behaviors			
	Vandalism	Fights	Alcohol Use	Drug Use
Caring Adults	$r = -.16, p < .001$ (n = 3,540)	$r = -.16, p < .001$ (n = 3,558)	$r = -.09, p < .001$ (n = 3,547)	$r = -.07, p < .001$ (n = 3,558)
Parent & Community Involvement	$r = -.28, p < .001$ (n = 3,472)	$r = -.21, p < .001$ (n = 3,488)	$r = -.26, p < .001$ (n = 3,478)	$r = -.26, p < .001$ (n = 3,485)

**Table 9 Community Support and Academic Engagement Outcomes**

Community Support	Academic Engagement Outcomes		
	Given Up on School	Attendance	Dropout Rates
Caring Adults	$r = -.26, p < .001$ (n = 3,594)	$r = .12, ns$ (n = 69)	$r = .12, ns$ (n = 68)
Parent & Community Involvement	$r = -.27, p < .001$ (n = 3,507)	$r = .17, ns$ (n = 69)	$r = -.01, ns$ (n = 68)

**Table 10a Community Support and Academic Achievement Outcomes I**

Community Involvement	Academic Achievement Outcomes I		
	SBA Reading	SBA Writing	SBA Math
Caring Adults	$r = .10, ns$ (n = 70)	$r = -.01, ns$ (n = 70)	$r = -.07, ns$ (n = 70)
Parent & Community Involvement	$r = .17, ns$ (n = 70)	$r = .14, ns$ (n = 70)	$r = .19, ns$ (n = 70)

**Table 10b Community Support and Academic Achievement Outcomes II**

Community Involvement	Academic Achievement Outcomes II			
	HSGQE Reading	HSGQE Writing	HSGQE Math	Graduation Rates
Caring Adults	$r = -.02, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = .01, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = -.13, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = .16, ns$ (n = 53)
Parent & Community Involvement	$r = .09, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = .08, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = -.07, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = -.05, ns$ (n = 53)

**Table 11 Social and Emotional Learning and Student Risk Behaviors**

	Risk Behaviors			
	Vandalism	Fights	Alcohol Use	Drug Use
Social & Emotional Learning	$r = -.20, p < .001$ (n = 3,439)	$r = -.17, p < .001$ (n = 3,457)	$r = -.16, p < .001$ (n = 3,452)	$r = -.13, p < .001$ (n = 3,462)

**Table 12 Social and Emotional Learning and Academic Engagement**

Community Support	Academic Engagement Outcomes		
	Given Up on School	Attendance	Dropout Rates
Social & Emotional Learning	$r = -.36, p < .001$ (n = 3,452)	$r = .26, p < .05$ (n = 69)	$r = -.08, ns$ (n = 68)

**Table 13a Social and Emotional Learning and Academic Achievement Outcomes I**

	Academic Achievement Outcomes I		
	SBA Reading	SBA Writing	SBA Math
Social & Emotional Learning	$r = .07, ns$ (n = 70)	$r = .09, ns$ (n = 70)	$r = .06, ns$ (n = 70)

**Table 13b Social and Emotional Learning and Academic Achievement Outcomes II**

	Academic Achievement Outcomes II			
	HSGQE Reading	HSGQE Writing	HSGQE Math	Graduation Rates
Social & Emotional Learning	$r = -.21, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = .04, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = -.19, ns$ (n = 46)	$r = -.04, ns$ (n = 53)

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