



Skills Alaska Initiative

Mission

Avant-Garde Learning Foundation (AGLF) assists schools in implementing the Skills Alaska program, bringing together effective technology and research-proven instructional strategies to target—and close—the significant achievement gap in Alaska’s schools. The initiative aims to improve K-12 student learning and academic success, while providing powerful professional development to urban and rural teachers most in need.

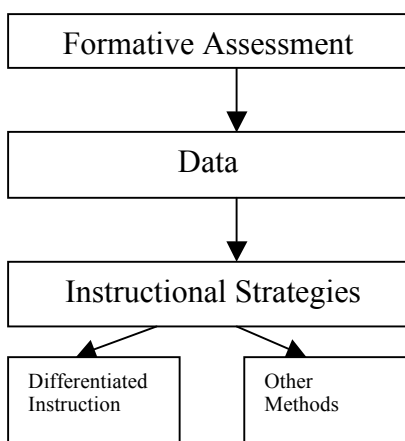
Goals

By providing training to better integrate Skills Alaska into classrooms, AGLF hopes to increase graduation rates and improve student scores on state assessments. Specifically, AGLF will work to:

- Improve teaching quality and effectiveness.
- Offer data-generating tools and training to analyze and act on data.
- Create an infrastructure for on-going teacher training and resources.
- Build awareness and sustained support from educational leadership.

Our Plan

Skills Alaska uses research-proven strategies for improving student success.



Formative Assessment is a *PROCESS* not a *PRODUCT*. Ongoing assessments provide feedback to redirect instruction to improve student learning.

Data-Driven Instruction allows data to determine the scope and direction of the learning process. Data gathered through formative assessment points to which instructional strategy to implement.

Differentiated Instruction is a highly effective instructional strategy focused on meeting diverse classroom needs. By understanding and responding to individuals’ needs, differentiation provides individualized instruction across a mixed-level classroom—a common challenge in rural schools.

Need



Alaska state test scores and graduation rates rank among the lowest nationwide.



50% of rural Alaska Natives leave school before earning a high school diploma.



Compared to statewide averages, Alaska Native students who remain in school underperform:

- Up to 29% below in language arts.
- Up to 26% below in math.



A recent 10-year projection of Alaska’s students forecasts that, for every 50 9th graders, only:

- 31 will graduate high school.
- 14 will attend college.
- 9 will return as sophomores.
- 3 will earn four-year degrees.

Initiative Components

To succeed, this initiative offers effective tools and appropriate training, while also bringing together both family and community support, as well as support from educational leadership.

Effective Tools

Through the use of two multi-functioning, internet-based programs, Skills Alaska offers the necessary tools to conduct formative assessments, gather data to drive instruction and provide differentiated instruction.

Assessment Center allows teachers to create formative assessments aligned to state standards and Grade Level Expectations (GLEs), and produces reports providing immediate, directive feedback to students, teachers and family. Key features include:

- Real-time reports that drill down to individual or whole group deficiencies.
- Resource pages with lesson plans, topic-specific curricula links and parental involvement tips.

Skills Tutor links to Assessment Center to provide prescriptive and supplemental differentiated instruction for students who struggle to master previously encountered skills in specific content areas.

Key features include:

- Interactive, online instruction with instant feedback and coaching for problem-solving routines.
- Simultaneous enrichment or remediation, with lessons available at, above or below grade level.

Training

Professional development facilitated by AGLF supports the use of Skills Alaska, while more broadly demonstrating research-proven strategies that improve student performance. Through on-going communication and coordination with other schools to identify best practices, AGLF seeks to connect a community of users who, while mastering Skills Alaska, will also be moving toward teacher mastery.

Parental and Community Support

Skills Alaska has the capacity to involve local communities. Teachers can utilize this flexible tool to:

- Generate monthly, weekly, even daily progress reports that target growth areas.
- Furnish mini-lessons at home where parents can assist.
- Involve parents in their child's education by sharing resources such as homework aids, tips to explain subject-specific content and games that address targeted skill acquisition.

Educational Leadership

AGLF is committed to working with state, district and school leaders to fully integrate Skills Alaska at the classroom level. This initiative's strength relies on the alignment of shared values including:

- Sustained and unified support for training and implementation plans.
- Active and consistent encouragement to formatively assess, analyze, then act on data school-wide.

Learn More

For more information, visit www.avantgardealaska.org or contact Nicole Lebo, Director of Education Programs, at nicolel@avantgardealaska.org.