



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT  
UNITY PROJECT: DATA MINING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**

**Project Start Date: 12/01/2005**

**Project End Date: 10/31/2009**

**Amount awarded: \$ 3,506,757**

Alaska's current data collections and dissemination processes make it difficult and time consuming to track a student's academic performance over time. Further, it is a challenge to collect and analyze performance data to determine whether programs and practices are meeting goals; or monitor the success of research-based programs to make adjustments and achieve the best outcomes for Alaska's students. The State of Alaska, its 53 school districts, 527 schools, and 7,857 teachers will not be able to efficiently make data-driven decisions to improve student outcomes if the state continues to collect and disseminate data the "same old way." To reach a point where Alaska is able to make data-driven decisions to improve student outcomes, the state must make significant improvements to its current data system and data use policies.

In November 2005, the State of Alaska's Department of Education and Early Development was awarded a grant by the U.S. Department of Education to implement a statewide longitudinal data system. The proposal was based on three distinct phases of a larger seven-phase initiative dubbed the Unity Project. Upon completion of these three phases, the system will provide accurate, timely, and accessible student-level data to the following groups of stakeholders: Alaska school districts, parents, teachers, students, legislators, educational organizations, and the public.

It will enable the state and districts to better evaluate their educational progress and investments over time and improve student achievement. It will also provide an efficient, flexible, and secure means for the districts and state to comply with federal reporting requirements delineated in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

The proposed work of this grant will occur in three distinct phases and will revolutionize data collection and analysis in Alaska:

- 1) Unification of numerous and disparate data repositories into one authoritative data warehouse
- 2) Constructing web portals customized for internal department use, districts, researchers, the Alaska Legislature, the public, and the U.S. Department of

Education. Each portal will provide reports as well as tools to create customized reports

- 3) Statewide implementation of the School Interoperability Framework (SIF) to vertically integrate the State of Alaska data system with Alaska's 53 school districts. This will result in quick, efficient, and exact district reporting.

Alaska will elicit the input of stakeholders throughout the project using several avenues, including regional stakeholder meetings, the development of six portal review committees, and a data oversight committee. The state will also turn to these committees to assist in the development of user and acceptable use policies.

The Unity Project will provide training to district data entry and state programming staff, as well as develop, and implement, training for teachers and administrators in asking data-driven questions. It will also help them analyze data to improve student achievement in their classroom and schools.