



## Partnering with Higher Education in Anchorage

*The Anchorage School District and the University of Alaska-Anchorage have developed a strong working relationship to improve in-service learning.*

As part of its work through the [Collaborating Districts Initiative](#), Anchorage has prioritized professional learning for all staff, from counselors to PE teachers. Indeed, SEL is housed within the Office of Professional Learning. And it is embedded in virtually all trainings, from new staff orientation to workshops throughout the year.

The university contributes in several ways:

- Ensuring the SEL curriculum is rigorous
- Serving as an ongoing thought partner with ASD leaders and staff
- Providing credits that can be used for certifications and/or salary increases.

Indeed, the SEL curriculum goes well beyond offering a mere Continuing Education Credit (which is mainly based on attending 10 hours of lectures) to require 15 hours of instruction, plus asking teachers to spend 30 hours applying what they've learned and then document the work.

A hallmark of all ASD training is the emphasis on application. "We want teachers to learn practice and reflect on how they'll bring it back to the classroom," says Jan Davis, ASD's SEL/Professional Learning Specialist.

"They need to make the connection to how this will help their kids. Otherwise the training binders just sit on the shelf." ASD, with university support, also ensures principals can "walk the talk." "If the SEL standards are good enough for the students, we need to give teachers and principals a chance to learn and practice them," says Davis.

The University of Alaska-Anchorage's Jennifer Harty, Coordinator of Professional Programs, and Jennifer Greene, Enrollment and Operational Services Coordinator, shared that the university is also exploring how to more deeply infuse SEL elements into professional learning opportunities across Alaska, including areas related to state priorities such as childhood safety and dealing with trauma ■



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*says Jan Davis, SEL/Professional learning specialist*