

Grant Approval Memo



Grantee: University of Alaska Southeast
Request Amount: \$50,000.00
Project Title: Trauma-Responsive Tools for Alaska’s Emerging Special Educators
Grant Term: 7/1/2026 to 6/30/2027
Trust Staff: Eric Boyer, Senior Program Officer

Staff Analysis:

- What does this project do?
The requested funds will pay the University of Alaska Southeast, School of Education faculty for the development of core materials (trauma-responsive classroom toolkits, self-regulation lesson plans, visuals, teacher coursework, and learning modules), and limited travel and shipping costs. Once developed and piloted, they can be integrated into existing professional development and teacher preparation structures without requiring ongoing Trust support.
- Who is receiving the funds?
The University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) is one of the campuses of the public University of Alaska system of higher education. The School of Education faculty will be producing the resources for this grant project. UAS was founded in 1987, with a student census of 2500.
- Why is staff recommending this project?
This project is recommended because this resource and the UAS coursework development are in response to a growing need from rural school programs that have high numbers of Trust beneficiaries in their classrooms. In many rural school districts that do not have special education, trained teaching staff are given emergency certification for handling special education teaching. For emergency certification or proof-of-program enrollment educators, anticipated outcomes include increased confidence and competence in trauma-responsive practices, more predictable and safe classroom environments, and reduced burnout and turnover. This program brings the tools to the rural based teachers and school districts with in-person support as well as virtual instruction.
- Will this be a multi-year project?
This is a one-time (12-month) funding increment.

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Trust Five Year Funding History

No grants to the University of Alaska Southeast during this period.

Comp Plan Identification

Area of Focus	Objective	Comments
Area of Focus 1: Early Childhood & Youth	1.6 Youth are safe and secure	

Comp Plan Identification

Budget Area	Strategy	Comments
Early Childhood & Youth	Early Childhood - Not associated with a strategy	

Project Description (from grant application)

This project addresses the urgent need for targeted, trauma-responsive support for Alaska’s K–12 students with disabilities, particularly those served in intensive special education settings by teachers working under a special education proof-of-program enrollment, as candidates admitted to a special education program or emergency certified general education teachers serving as the teacher of record in a special education classroom. Across Alaska, districts increasingly rely on emergency certification or proof of program enrollment for educators in both general education and special education classrooms to staff high-need classrooms. This includes programs serving students with significant emotional and behavioral needs, autism, developmental disabilities, and complex learning profiles. These classrooms often include Trust beneficiaries such as children and youth who experience mental illness, developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injury, and those at heightened risk for later substance-related disorders. Many of these students have experienced trauma, frequent school exclusion, and repeated crisis-level incidents. At the same time, the teachers assigned to support them are new to the profession, working under emergency certification or proof-of-program enrollment, and are frequently isolated. This is especially true in rural and remote communities across Alaska. They often lack access to structured, trauma-responsive tools that focus on self-regulation and increasing student independence.

The proposed project will develop and pilot a trauma-responsive community of practice with hands-on classroom toolkits, accompanying learning supports, and coursework designed explicitly for emergency certification or proof-of-program enrollment teachers across Alaska. Each participating emergency certification or proof-of-program-enrollment teacher will receive a Trauma-Responsive Classroom Toolkit that includes visual supports (e.g., regulation charts, brain-state posters, daily check-in tools), simple self-regulation curricula, and sensory materials that can be used safely in intensive settings. These resources will help teachers explicitly teach students about how their brains and bodies respond to stress, how to recognize early signs of dysregulation, and how to use calming strategies that build long-term coping skills. Alongside the toolkits, the project will provide practice-

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focused coursework and training modules and virtual communities of practice that coach teachers in using these materials within the realities of multi-grade, high-need, and often under-resourced classrooms.

The primary target population for this project is K–12 Trust beneficiaries who receive special education services. This includes students with:

- *Mental illness, and significant behavioral and emotional-regulation challenges in school;
- *Developmental disabilities (such as autism or intellectual disabilities) with co-occurring behavioral needs;
- *Traumatic brain injury or other neurological conditions affecting regulation, attention, and behavior;
- *Elevated risk for future substance-related disorders due to unaddressed trauma, dysregulation, and school disengagement.

A secondary, but critical, target group is the teachers working under emergency certification or proof-of-program enrollment, responsible for these students' daily instruction, behavior support, and IEP services. Geographically, the project is designed to be statewide, serving districts and schools across Alaska, with particular emphasis on rural and remote communities where staffing shortages are most acute and access to mental health and behavioral supports is most limited. The University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) will partner with multiple districts that employ special education proof-of-program enrollment and emergency-certified educators, ensuring representation from urban, rural, and hub communities. All training, coaching, and technical assistance will be accessible virtually, so that teachers in hard-to-reach locations can fully participate without added travel costs or time away from students. Toolkits will be mailed to the schools of participating emergency-certified educators.

Expected outcomes for Trust beneficiaries include improved self-regulation skills, greater independence in using coping strategies, and a reduction in crisis-level behavioral incidents (e.g., suspensions, seclusion/restraint events, and emergency calls for support). Participating educators will collect pre- and post-data on behavior incidents and on students' use of self-regulation strategies, allowing the project to document concrete changes over the grant period.

For emergency certification or proof-of-program enrollment educators, anticipated outcomes include increased confidence and competence in trauma-responsive practices, more predictable and safe classroom environments, and reduced burnout and turnover. At the system level, districts will gain a clearer understanding of which tools and supports are most effective, laying the groundwork for future programs and supports.

Community support for this project is strong and growing. School districts have identified trauma-responsive behavioral support and emergency-certified teacher capacity as high priorities, and special education directors have expressed interest in partnering to pilot practical tools for classroom implementation. UAS faculty in special education, along with district administration and special education leaders, will collaborate to shape the project so it complements rather than duplicates existing initiatives. Families of students with intensive needs have also voiced the importance of having stable, well-supported educators who can help their children feel safe, understood, and successful at school.

This project directly targets Trust beneficiary groups, children and youth with mental illness, developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injury, and those at risk for substance-related disorders, by

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equipping the emergency-certified educators who serve them with trauma-responsive, brain-based tools and supports. By focusing on students receiving special education services in school settings across Alaska, especially in rural and remote communities, the project aims to reduce crisis incidents, build student self-regulation and independence, and strengthen the capacity of the workforce that supports some of Alaska’s most vulnerable young people.

Grantee Proposed Evaluation Measures (from grant application)

A combination of participation data, pre/post surveys, and simple classroom outcome measures will be used to document project success. Data will be collected from participating teachers and districts at baseline, mid-point, and project end, and summarized in grant reporting. Below are proposed performance measures aligned with the Trust’s three guiding questions.

1) How much did you do?

We will track participation and reach, including:

*The number of emergency certification or proof-of-program enrollment teachers who receive a trauma-responsive classroom toolkit.

*The Number of districts and schools represented (including rural/remote sites).

*The number of K–12 Trust beneficiary students served in participating classrooms.

*The Number of trauma-responsive classroom toolkits distributed.

*The Number of professional development activities delivered (coursework, modules, webinars, Communities of Practice sessions).

*Total hours of PD provided and # of teacher completions for each module.

2) How well did you do?

We will assess quality and implementation through brief surveys and checklists:

*The percentage of participating teachers who complete all core coursework and training modules.

*The percentage of teachers who report increased knowledge and confidence in trauma-responsive, brain-based practices (pre/post self-efficacy survey).

*The percentage of classrooms implementing at least three key practices with fidelity (e.g., daily check-ins, calm-down routines, explicit teaching of regulation strategies), as measured by a simple implementation rubric.

*Teacher satisfaction ratings with the toolkits and training (e.g., % rating resources as “useful” or “very useful”).

3) Is anyone better off as a result of this project?

We will examine changes for both students (Trust beneficiaries) and teachers:

*Students (Trust beneficiaries):

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*The number and percentage of students showing improvement on a self-regulation skills checklist (pre/post).

*Change in crisis-level behavioral incidents (e.g., office removals, seclusion/restraint, emergency calls) in participating classrooms, reported as a percentage reduction from baseline.

Teachers:

*The number and percentage of teachers demonstrating increased self-efficacy scores on trauma-responsive practices from pre- to post-project.

*Qualitative evidence (brief comments or focus group themes) describing how the toolkits and practices have improved classroom climate, student engagement, and teachers' ability to support students with significant behavioral and mental health needs.

These measures will allow us to document not only how many people we reached and which activities we delivered, but also how well the project was implemented and whether Trust beneficiaries and their emergency-certified teachers experienced meaningful, positive change as a result.

Proposed Project Performance Measures (developed by the Trust)

How much did you do?

- a. Number (#) of emergency certification or proof-of-program enrollment teachers who receive a trauma-responsive classroom toolkit.
- b. Number (#) of trauma-responsive classroom toolkits distributed.
- c. Number (#) of districts and schools represented (including rural/remote sites).
- d. Number (#) of trauma-responsive classroom toolkits distributed.
- e. Number (#) of K-12 Trust beneficiary students served in participating classrooms, broken down by primary beneficiary category.
- f. Total number (#) of professional development hours provided.
- g. Number (#) of teacher completions for each module.

How well did you do it?

- a. Provide a narrative describing the timeline, activities, successes, challenges, and any lessons learned during the reporting period. Be sure to include information about the development process for the curriculum, toolkit, and modules. Additionally, include information about the location and activities during travel to rural pilot communities.
- b. Number (#) and percentage (%) of teachers who complete all core coursework and training modules.
- c. Number (#) and percentage (%) of teachers who report an increased knowledge and confidence in trauma-responsive, brain-based practices (pre/post self-efficacy survey).
- d. Number (#) and percentage (%) of classrooms implementing at least three key practices with fidelity (e.g., daily check-ins, calm-down routines, explicit teaching of regulation strategies), as measured by a simple implementation rubric.
- e. Number (#) and percentage (%) of teachers who were satisfied with the toolkits.
- f. Number (#) and percentage (%) of teachers who were satisfied with the training.

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Is anyone better off?

- a. Number (#) and percentage (%) of students showing an improvement (pre/post) on a self-regulation skills checklist.
- b. Percent (%) change (from baseline) in crisis-level behavioral incidents (e.g., office removals, seclusion/restraint, emergency calls) in participating classrooms.
- c. Number (#) and percent (%) of teachers demonstrating increased self-efficacy scores on trauma-responsive practices from pre- to post-project.
- d. Four statements from teachers describing how the toolkits and practices have impacted the classroom climate, student engagement, and their ability to support students with significant behavioral and mental health needs.

Sustainability (from grant application)

This project is intentionally designed so that its impact will continue after the Trust's one-time funding ends. The core materials funded by the Trust, trauma-responsive classroom toolkits, self-regulation lesson plans, visuals, teacher coursework, and learning modules, are durable and reusable. Once developed and piloted, they can be integrated into existing professional development and teacher preparation structures without requiring ongoing Trust support.

During and after the grant period, the grantee will work with the Alaska Council for Exceptional Children (AK-CEC) and the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) to continue offering professional development opportunities (e.g., conference sessions, webinars, courses, virtual trainings, and communities of practice) that help emergency certified educators implement trauma-responsive, brain-based practices. These activities will be supported through AK-CEC activities, district professional development funds, and routine university instructional resources rather than new Trust dollars.

In addition, the grantee will partner with local districts to develop their own trauma-responsive classroom toolkits based on the model kits created during the project. Districts will be encouraged to adapt the tools to their context and to purchase or assemble materials using their own funds (e.g., IDEA/Part B funds, district PD and instructional materials budgets, or other grant sources). By building local capacity and embedding the content within AK-CEC professional development opportunities, UAS coursework, and district systems, the project is structured to ensure the benefits for Trust beneficiaries and their teachers continue well beyond the initial funding period.

Who We Serve (from grant application)

This project is explicitly designed to improve outcomes for Alaska Mental Health Trust beneficiaries who are K-12 students receiving special education services across Alaska. In alignment with the Trust's beneficiary definition, the students at the center of this project are those who experience mental illness or serious emotional regulation challenges, intellectual and developmental disabilities (including autism), traumatic brain injuries, and those at elevated risk for later substance use disorders due to unaddressed trauma and chronic school dysregulation. Many of these students are educated in classrooms staffed by emergency-certified teachers, where they encounter frequent

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behavioral crises, exclusion from instruction, and limited access to consistent, trauma-responsive supports.

Through this project, these beneficiaries will be better off in very concrete ways. The trauma-responsive classroom toolkits and self-regulation lessons will help them:

- *Understand, in age-appropriate language, how their brains and bodies respond to stress and trauma;
- *Learn and practice specific coping and regulation strategies they can use in the moment;
- *Experience more predictable, calm, and emotionally safe classroom environments;
- *Face fewer crisis episodes that lead to restraint, seclusion, suspensions, or time out of class.

By increasing their self-regulation skills and independence, we expect improvements in daily functioning at school, more time engaged in learning, stronger relationships with trusted adults, and a greater sense of success and belonging. For students whose disabilities and mental health conditions put them at risk of future substance use disorders, this early, skill-based support also serves as prevention and early intervention, consistent with the Trust’s mandate to reduce the likelihood that individuals will become or remain long-term beneficiaries

Estimated Numbers of Beneficiaries Served Experiencing (from grant application)

Mental Illness:	5
Developmental Disabilities:	250
Traumatic Brain Injuries:	5
Secondary Beneficiaries (family members or caregivers providing support to primary beneficiaries):	300
Number of people to be trained	20

Project Budget (from grant application)

Personnel Services Costs	\$28,000.00
Personnel Services Costs (Other Sources)	\$0.00
Personnel Services Narrative	<p>Curriculum, Toolkit, & Module Development: Develop syllabuses, design lessons, teacher guides, lesson plans, and associated learning modules. Place orders for all materials, assemble kits, and ship kits. Includes stipend funding for curriculum, toolkits, and module development.</p> <p>Virtual Sessions & Communities of Practice: Prepare for and deliver virtual sessions & host community-of-practice meetings. Includes stipend funding for facilitators and guest speakers.</p>

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	<p>Stipend for emergency-certified educators upon successful completion of the course: For the successful completion of the course, implementation of the toolkit, attendance for virtual professional development sessions, and communities of practice, for assisting with data collection needed for grant reporting.</p>
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Travel Costs	\$10,000.00
Travel Costs (Other Sources)	\$0.00
Travel Costs Narrative	The grantee will travel to pilot communities to work with emergency-certified/Proof of Program Enrollment Teachers to assist with implementing the kits. Assistance will include: classroom visits, mentoring, coaching, problem-solving, and modeling. During travel to these communities, the grantee will work with districts in pilot communities to develop their own trauma-responsive toolkits.
Supplies Cost	\$10,000.00
Supplies Costs (Other Sources)	\$0.00
Supplies Cost Narrative	Trauma-Responsive Classroom Toolkits: 20 kits x \$500.00 each (sensory tools, visuals, student materials, printed/laminated self-regulation lessons, brain posters, checklists, and student reflection tools, teacher resources)

Other Costs	\$2,000.00
Other Costs (Other Sources)	\$0.00
Other Costs Narrative	The toolkits will need to be shipped to communities across Alaska, including shipping to remote villages.

Other Funding Sources (from grant application)

No other funding has been secured at this time	\$0.00
Total Leveraged Funds	\$0.00