

Date Request Submitted: February 15, 2008Priority: 1 of 1

**SENATOR TED STEVENS FISCAL YEAR 2009 PROJECT REQUEST FORM**  
 (PLEASE FILL OUT ONE REQUEST FORM FOR EACH REQUEST. PRIORITIZE EACH REQUEST IN THE UPPER RIGHT HAND CORNER. ATTACH ADDITIONAL PAGES, IF NECESSARY.)

~ ~ ~ **REQUESTS ARE DUE BY FEBRUARY 15, 2008** ~ ~ ~

Name of project: Skills AlaskaWhere is the project located? Lower Kuskokwim, Kenai, Kodiak, Anchorage, Galena and NomeWhich appropriations bill (if known)? LHHS

Which agency (if known)? \_\_\_\_\_

Which account and sub-account (if known)? \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of federal funding requested for Fiscal Year 2009: \$3,742,500

Skills Alaska is requesting \$3,742,500 for both the continuance and expansion of the program. Skills Alaska is currently in 73 schools in Alaska. The amount requested will allow for the continuation of the program in Kenai, LKSD, Kodiak, Anchorage, Nome and Galena, as well as funding expansion to 155 schools in the North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Sitka, Lake and Peninsula, Bristol Bay, and Aleutians East School Districts.

PROGRAM COSTS	
Education assessment and remediation tools (credit recovery)	\$2,152,500
Infrastructure improvement	150,000
Training Academies	200,000
Skills Alaska District Coordinators	980,000
Project assessment and evaluation	60,000
Administration, communication and outreach	175,000
Alaska Native Heritage Center secondary after-school program	12,500
Mt. Edgecumbe High School	12,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,742,500</b>

Total amount of federal funding needed for the project: \$3,742,500

**Number of years to fund this project:** This project is committed to the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the groundbreaking education law enacted by the Congress and the President. Therefore, continuing funding is necessary throughout the duration of the legislation, which will be reauthorized in 2014.

**Source and amount of any matching funds (State, local, private or other):**

Each participating school district in Alaska has contributed towards the costs of implementing "Skills Alaska" in their district. Since joining the program the Anchorage School District has spent \$500,000 to improve its technology so that its students and teachers can take full advantage of the program and for the 07-08 school year paid for the full-time Skills Alaska coordinator. The Lower Kuskokwim School District has paid for a part-time person in every school for the after-school program where the tools are used and supplemented the coordinator's salary since joining the program. During the 07-08 school year LKSD completely paid for a full-time coordinator. Nome City School District and Galena both pay for program coordination. Kodiak has supplemented the program coordination since joining the program and paid completely for this during the 07-08 school year. All districts have provided release time for training and substitute teachers.

**Was it in a prior appropriations bill(s)?** Yes

**If so, which bill(s) and which fiscal year(s)?**

Following the Leaders first received \$3.5 million in funding in FY 2002 from the U.S. Department of Education's FIE account, which allowed FTL to roll out the program in the 2002-2003 school year in 6 states, including Alaska. It is our understanding that Skills Alaska will receive an earmark of \$975,000 for FY 08.

**How much has been funded in each appropriations bill by fiscal year?**

Congress generously provided \$10 million for FTL in FY 2003 and FY 2004. In FY 2005, \$5 million was provided for the project nationally and a number of state specific earmarks were appropriated, including a one-million dollar designation for Alaska through Senator Stevens' office. In FY 2006, \$3.1 million was requested and in FY 2007, \$3.4 million was requested; unfortunately there were no Federal earmarks for 2006 or 2007. It is our understanding that Skills Alaska will receive an earmark of \$975,000 for FY 08.

**Is it in President Bush's budget for FY2009?** No

**If so, how much and which agency and account (if known)?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you requested funding for this project from any other congressional office or federal agency? If so, please list the recipient(s) of this request:**

Senator Lisa Murkowski, Congressman Don Young

Is funding for this project authorized by federal law? If so, please list the appropriate law (Public Law Number or U.S. Code citation): \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information In Alaska:**

Organization: Avant-Garde Learning Associates

**Contact Information in Washington, D.C. (if any):**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Description (include additional pages, if necessary):**

In the classroom, Skills Alaska works with existing school curricula to ensure better alignment to standards. At the same time, it also provides educators with the latest web-based technology to instantly analyze classroom data and make informed decisions about where instruction may need to be tailored or refined to improve student achievement.

Skills Alaska addresses the critical connection between parents, classrooms, districts, state education agencies and lawmakers to impact individual student achievement.

- Parents receive immediate access to information about their child's academic performance.
- Teachers receive the tools to gauge each student's academic progress, and ensure that their current curricula and lesson plans are tailored to specific student needs and aligned with state standards.
- Administrators receive data management systems to efficiently collect, analyze and report student performance information as required by NCLB.
- State and local policymakers receive access to understandable and timely data to make better-informed decisions about education in their state and assistance in developing effective state education policy.

- Most important, students receive an education from a system fully committed to ensuring that all children learn, period.

After six years of active participation in the FTL project, students in Skills Alaska (formerly FTL) schools in Alaska have already shown academic gains in reading and math. Skills Alaska has shown definitively that with the right leadership and support, the policies of NCLB are working to increase student achievement. Data is available to demonstrate when the tools are used effectively student achievement increases as validated by the state assessments.

The Skills Alaska program was established as part of a national Following the Leaders initiative in 2002. Since its inception it has become clear that Alaska has certain challenges that are unique to the state. For that reason this request is being submitted for Alaska only and is not related to any national grant requests.

**Detailed Project Justification - including an explanation of the essential federal government purpose of this funding request (include additional pages, if necessary):**

Skills Alaska administers an education initiative that provides policymakers, administrators, teachers, students and parents in schools and school districts in Alaska with the tools they need, as well as the constant guidance and expertise, to put the essential elements of standards and accountability in place and realize the goals of the groundbreaking education law, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*.

In the classroom, Skills Alaska delivers on the promises of NCLB, putting its policies to work where it matters most—right in the classroom. Through web-based technology, educators obtain the resources to align existing materials and curricula with state academic standards. Skills Alaska ensures that standards drive classroom instruction and student achievement.

**Project Budget Outline (include additional pages, if necessary):**

Alaska has some incredibly complex implementation challenges. The largest one is training and professional development. In other states where this program has been implemented, an entire district's staff can be trained in one or two days at a site within an hour's driving distance at little incremental cost to the district. However in a place like Kenai, with many schools in remote villages, a special training academy had to be held. It cost 22 thousand dollars to do this 2-day event. A statewide training academy held in August 2004 cost 40 thousand dollars.

Initial training is only useful if it is followed up with ongoing professional development. In other parts of the country a full-time coordinator can cover 40 schools providing follow-up training and troubleshooting. In Alaska, because of travel costs and sheer distance, each participating school district has to have its own dedicated Project Leader. The project's technology partners have contributed part of this funding in the past

supplemented by direct funds from the district. This request contains \$980,000 to fund 11 coordinators covering 11 districts.

The leadership of the Skills Alaska program feels very strongly that a complete evaluation of the program's results needs to be conducted. The proposal has set aside \$60,000 for this part of the project. Evaluating progress in many parts of our state is complicated by unusually high turnover rates of students. Therefore, simply trying to look at comparable cadres of students may not truly measure the impact of Skills Alaska on student academic proficiency. We are planning a special emphasis on tracking the progress of individual students. Kodiak Island and Galena School Districts prepared a preliminary study of their results which is a good model for future evaluations.

The tools provided by Skills Alaska are web-based. In some of our remote areas web technology is not always easily accessible especially on certain wireless computers. Our request includes \$150,000 to assist districts with their technical and infrastructure requirements to ensure equal access to all Alaskans to these educational tools.

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