

STATE OF ALASKA

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Department of Education & Early Development

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Teaching & Learning Support

To: Superintendents of Title I Districts

cc: Title I Coordinators

From: Margaret MacKinnon
Title I/NCLB Administrator



Date: August 15, 2011

**Subject: Notification of Alaska's Intent to Apply for Waiver of Implementation
Timeline for Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems in Schools
with SIG 1003(g) Grants**

The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development is planning to request a waiver of the requirement in Section I.A.2(d)(1)(i)(B) of the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program, which requires a local educational agency (LEA) to develop and implement teacher and principal evaluation systems that meet certain requirements during the first year a school is implementing the transformation model. **This waiver would only apply to the schools that have received a SIG grant under Section 1003(g) that are implementing the transformation model.**

The required teacher and principal evaluation systems must be rigorous, transparent, and equitable and take into account data on student academic growth as a significant factor as well as other factors, such as multiple observation-based assessments of performance, ongoing collections of information on professional practice reflective of student achievement, and increased high school graduation rates. This waiver would permit the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, in accordance with criteria developed by Alaska, to permit an LEA that is implementing the transformation model in one or more schools to take additional time to develop and implement high-quality evaluation systems that meet these requirements. This waiver would apply only to evaluation systems for cohort 1 and cohort 2 SIG schools as follows:

- A school that began implementing the transformation model during the 2010–2011 school year (cohort 1) and that was not able to complete the development and implementation of its evaluation systems during that year must develop them during the 2011–2012 school year and, at a minimum, pilot them for all teachers and principals no later than the 2012–2013 school year. The piloted systems should be capable of being used for decisions regarding, for example, retention, promotion, compensation, and rewards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year.
- A school that begins implementing the transformation model in the 2011–2012 school year (cohort 2) must develop its evaluation systems during that year, pilot them for all teachers and principals during the 2012–2013 school year, and use the system in the

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school, including for decisions regarding, for example, retention, promotion, compensation, and rewards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year.

Alaska plans to seek this waiver because the work required to implement comprehensive evaluation systems that take into account student academic growth as a significant factor is considerable, given that this is a new area of focus for teacher and principal evaluation systems and research and models in this area have not been readily available. Without previous groundwork and investment in time prior to the release of the SIG grants, LEAs and schools have been challenged to complete this work during the first year of the SIG grant. The state is providing technical assistance to the LEAs with SIG schools to ensure that the evaluation system will be developed and piloted in 2011-2012. Alaska believes that the additional time will enable qualifying LEAs to meet the SIG final requirements while encouraging the development and implementation of high-quality teacher and principal evaluation systems that will increase the quality of instruction for students and improve the academic achievement of students.

This notice is to meet the notification requirements under Section 9401(b)(3)(A)(i) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. **Districts are invited to submit comments to the department regarding this waiver request no later than August 22, 2011. After that date, the department will submit the district comments to the US Department of Education (USED) along with its waiver request. Comments may be submitted to Margaret MacKinnon by email at margaret.mackinnon@alaska.gov or by fax at 907-465-2989.**

Complete information about the School Improvement Grants under 1003(g), including the state's application, LEA application forms, and federal requirements and guidance documents, is posted on the department website at <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/stim/home2.html> under "ARRA Title I School Improvement 1003(g) Grants."