



MEMORANDUM

To: State Board of Education & Early Development
Date: August 4, 2021

Thru: Commissioner Michael Johnson
Telephone: (907) 465-2857

From: Kelly Manning
Deputy Director
Subject: Agenda Item 5A.
Division of Innovation and
Education Excellence Updates

Assessments

Innovative Assessment Project

- Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) has been selected as the vendor to develop an innovative, balanced assessment system for the state. The Innovative Assessment Project Kick Off Meeting occurred on Monday, July 12 and Tuesday, July 13 and a presentation was provided to Superintendents at the Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA) summer meeting on Monday, July 26.
- DEED is working closely with NWEA and the Region 16 Comprehensive Center to develop and implement an effective roll out of the new assessment system as well as the comprehensive professional learning package associated with the contract.

Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools (PEAKS)

- The spring 2021 PEAKS administration concluded on May 14, 2021.
- Data will be reported on September 7, and districts will send student reports to students and families by October 1.
- The participation rates among students taking the state assessment were so low that DEED cautions against drawing sweeping conclusions about student performance statewide. However, we can still glean helpful information by looking at performance at the school and individual student levels.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Districts will be notified in September if they have any schools selected in the NAEP 2022 sample.

Assessments in Alaska will include:

- **International:** Progress in International Literacy Study (PIRLS), grade 5, October 4-29, 2021
(Districts and schools were notified in May)

- **National:** National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), grade 8 Civics & U.S. History, January 24-March 4, 2022
*Tentatively: Long-Term Trend - Age 9 Math & Reading, January 10-March 18, 2022
(The National Assessment Governing Board will confirm in August- this would be in replacement of Long-Term Trend Age 17 which was postponed in 2020 to allow for pre/post COVID-19 analysis)*
- **State:** National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), grades 4 & 8 Math & Reading, January 24-March 4, 2022

Anticipated fall reporting releases:

- Long-Term Trend 2020- Ages 9 & 13
- 2019 NAEP High School Transcript Study

Data and Accountability

- Accountability System
 - The U.S. Department of Education (US ED) released an addendum for accountability for the system that will be calculated in Fall 2021. This addendum provides for some flexibility around: indicators in which we have missing data from 2019-2020, long-term goals (bumping them one year forward), and around school identification and continued school support. DEED prepared a plan, shared this plan with stakeholders in December 2020, and finalized this plan in late January 2021. The addendum (and a corresponding waiver for the identification of Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) schools in Fall 2021 was submitted to US ED in early February 2021.
 - Three weeks after the initial due date for the addendum template, a waiver template for accountability and reporting was released by US ED. At the end of March 2021, webinars were held with internal and external stakeholders to describe the waiver template and answer any questions. During the month of April 2021, stakeholder feedback was gathered on the waiver template. The stakeholder feedback survey closed on April 30. Responses were consistent and demonstrated support for applying for a waiver using the waiver template released at the end of February 2021. This waiver was submitted on June 7 and was approved by US ED on June 9.
- Data Collections
 - The Suspensions and Expulsions collection opened for submissions on May 15, 2021 and was set to close on June 30, 2021. This collection remains ongoing.
 - The Participation Rate collection closed submissions on April 19, 2021.
 - The Summer OASIS collection is set to open on June 1, 2021 and was set to close on July 15, 2021.
 - Additional data collections related to the American Rescue Plan (ARP) State Plan template and Pandemic-Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) were launched in the month of May. As of the beginning of July, the P-EBT collection is ongoing.
 - A number of elements related to access to technology were added to Fall OASIS 2021. These elements are critical in gathering information that will be necessary for federal reporting for our ARP State Plan. These include questions about access to devices and connectivity.

- ED Facts – Federal Reporting Requirements
 - The next round of federal reporting requirements will ramp back up beginning in the Fall.

ESEA/ESSA Federal Programs

- District's FY2022 (2021-2022 school year) ESEA Federal Programs Allocations were finalized mid-July and uploaded to the ESEA Consolidated Application in DEED's Grants Management System (GMS). Districts were allocated a total of \$85 million which includes Title I-A, Title I-C, Title I-D, Title II-A, Title III-A, and Title IV-A.
- The Title I, Part C Migrant Education Program will be providing their statewide annual training on the identification and recruitment of migratory children to school district staff virtually during the months of August and September.
- The Migrant Education Program's annual federal child count reporting deadline has been moved from February 2022 to December 2022. The Migrant Education Program team is coordinating with DEED's Data Team to ensure timely and accurate reporting.
- The State Board met on June 9 and 10 after a period of public comment regarding the proposed changes to the English learner regulations. The State Board voted to adopt the changes, which include revised exit criteria, adoption of the 2020 WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards, and the addition of alternate scoring for English Learners with Individualized Educational Plans (IEP)/504s.
- The Design Professional Learning for a Virtual World Professional Learning Plan was developed by DEED with partners, the Region 16 Comprehensive Center (R16CC) and University of Alaska Professional and Continuing Education (PACE). The problem of practice address was how to collaboratively develop an equitable and sustainable system of culturally responsive professional learning which maximizes the potential and impact of digital learning, leverages the current environment, and scales evidence-based practices aligned to identified measurable goals in Alaska's Education Challenge, promoting increased coherence across systems. A responsive, coherent, and effective statewide system of professional learning based on evidence-based practices for all educators to ensure an excellent education for every student every day is the vision. A copy of the plan is available on request.

Federal COVID-19 Relief Funding

- Districts are working to complete their funding applications for FY2022 COVID-19 Relief funding to include funds from the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES), the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA), and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Acts.
- Districts have recently submitted required mitigation plans to DEED, as required by the ARP Act. These plans were due June 23, 2021. DEED has completed the initial review of these plans and districts were notified of any updates that were required.
- Districts are working on their district ARP plans, due August 23, 2021. DEED provides technical assistance to districts, if requested.
- As part of the ARP, Alaska is receiving federal money dedicated to Educating Children and Homeless Youth known as ARP-HCY; an application was submitted to US ED on July 19, 2021. The state will receive \$2,349,723 which is eight times Alaska's yearly allocation. The money is split into two distributions of \$587,431 and \$1,762,292.

- The first distribution will be used to extend the current ECHY subgrants to Anchorage School District, Fairbanks Borough School District, Juneau School District, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, and Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District. The state level funds will be used to provide additional technical assistance to all districts.
- The second distribution will be distributed via a formula that used a district's allocation under Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and the number of identified homeless children and youth in 2018-2019. This formula will provide more districts access to these funds. DEED is still determining the best way to utilize the state level funds.
- In addition to the ARP-HCY application, the second step in the process is to submit a State Plan for ARP-HCY, which is due to US ED by September 7, 2021. DEED is currently working on this State Plan and will submit to US ED by the deadline.
- US ED reviewed DEED's ARP ESSER State Plan (originally submitted on June 18, 2021) and provided requested revisions on July 12, 2021 related to consultation; impact of lost instructional time – evidence-based interventions; impact of lost instructional time – address student groups; summer learning – evidence-based interventions; afterschool programs – evidence-based interventions; and LEA plans for use of funds. DEED addressed the requested revisions and resubmitted the ARP ESSER State Plan on July 22, 2021. On August 3, 2021 US ED requested additional clarifications and detail related to the impact of lost instructional time – evidence-based interventions; summer learning – evidence-based interventions; and after school programs – evidence-based interventions. DEED will address these requested revisions and resubmit by August 10, 2021.

Health and Safety Programs

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Preparedness

- The new COVID-19 Response and Recovery Mental Health Education Specialist II Position has had an effective first six months and has now onboarded 10 rural and remote school districts that do not otherwise have in-school access to mental health supports. The team has delivered presentations and social-emotional learning (SEL) coaching directly via zoom to elementary students and high schoolers across the state, as well as working with districts individually to identify SEL curricula specific to their needs. Through the position there have also been direct, one on one services available to staff and students. While school is not in session there has been focus on creating and expanding milestone guides for the *Transforming Schools Trauma Engaged Framework and Toolkit* as well as building mental health related resource guides for FY2022.
- DEED, in partnership with DHSS, has continued to deliver School Health ECHO trainings to districts every Monday at 3pm. These popular statewide virtual trainings provide weekly updates on COVID-19 mitigation strategies and allows districts to both seek clarification on COVID related issues and to share successes and challenges.

School Health and Safety Events

- The Health and Safety Team has mailed out 8,500 *Transforming Schools: A Framework for Trauma Engaged and Practice in Alaska* to Alaskans. The companion toolkit has also continued to be utilized by districts for professional development.

Quality Schools Program

- Reviewed Quality Schools Grant applications detailing each school district's plans to improve student achievement through the use of state standards.
- Assisted districts with End of the Year reports for the 2020-2021 school year. This report demonstrates how their funded activities contributed to student academic achievement.

School Disciplinary Reports

- Assisted districts with their 2020-2021 Suspension and Expulsion report into the State Report Manager (SRM).
- Districts are continuing to send in their 2020-2021 Restraint & Seclusion report.

eLearning

- Released the eLearning course *E-Cigarette Use Among Alaska Teens*. The course explains the health harms, identifies various types of products, and gives resources for schools, parents, and teens. This course was created in partnership with the Division of Public Health.

School Recognition and Support

- **Staffing**
 - Math / Science Content Specialist, Joy Abbott, began June 4, 2021.
 - Interviews for an Education Associate II position occurred in July.
 - Program Administrator, Allie Gardner, resigned effective August 16, 2021.
- **Grant Funding News**
 - **Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD)**
 - CLSD Grant Specialist utilized the evaluation from all grant recipients to gather insights on commonalities, along with contact information so that grant leads could collaborate with one another in these areas:
 - Common Categories include; Challenges, Strengths, Goals, Money Well-spent, and spotlights;
 - 30 district grant project team members attended calls each month; and,
 - The end-of-year evaluation showed that the common challenges were related to the inability to spend funds for travel or professional development (PD) due to the COVID-19 pandemic; limited access to families; and the loss of the human experience, relationship building, and bonding through virtual PD.
 - **Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI)**
 - FY2021 Grant
 - Fund Expenditure Reports are due August 15, 2021.
 - Unspent funds will be redistributed as a Competitive Grant for CSI/TSI Schools to utilize for school improvement.
 - FY2022

- All but three districts turned in FY2022 documentation by the June 30, 2021 deadline.
- A process improvement over the previous year submission in spring 2021 left very little time to expend funds for the current year. The hope is districts will have a full school year to expend funding as they implement their plan.
- **School Improvement Redesign**
 - DEED, the R16CC, and consultants worked on location in Anchorage for three days in July to continue the redesign process.
 - Determined FY2022 process and documents will remain the same to allow for partnership and more time for training school and district leadership teams for FY2023 and forward.
 - 5 Empowerment Specialists will be contracted through the R16CC to provide a focused study for sustainability and feasibility to implement new planning and training process in a three-year redesign of school improvement process for lowest 5% schools.
- **State System of Support (SSOS)**
 - Request For Proposal (RFP)
 - Round 1 resulted in three current coaches extended contracts; and,
 - Round 2 no new contracts extended.
 - DEED and SSOS Coach meetings will continue in the new school year on a bi-weekly basis.
 - SSOS coaches for the coming year will be focused on providing school improvement plan implementation support to site leadership.
 - SSOS Coach contracts granted \$175 per hour and hours increased to 40 hours per month.
- **School Board**
 - No news to share.
- **Standards Training**
 - Math and English Language Arts (ELA) Content Specialist
 - Working diligently on large scale mapping and planning for a Math and ELA content standards website to contain user-friendly and easily accessed tools for unpacking and using standards in the classroom for teachers across Alaska.
 - The site will be expanded to other content areas in the future.
- **Recognition**
 - Teacher of the Year
 - New nomination will begin in Fall 2021.
 - Milken
 - Candidates are in the vetting process currently.

Special Education Program

- Compliance/ Special Education Monitoring –
 - FY2021 compliance monitoring is ongoing for district close-out reports (corrective actions have six months for completion from date of monitoring).
 - FY2021 onsite technical assistance support was limited due to staffing/travel issues.
 - FY2022 compliance monitoring is scheduled and ready to be initiated at the start of the school year.
- The state maintains support of district use of PowerSchool–Special Education in accordance with state requirements.
- The annual federal grant was approved and awarded for Alaska Special Education including:
 - \$41 million for IDEA Part B Special Education;
 - \$8.6 million for ARP funding specific to IDEA for COVID-19;
 - \$1.3 million for Preschool Disabled, Section 619 (3 to 5-year-old) Special Education; and,
 - \$666,666 for ARP funding specific to IDEA for COVID-19.
- Weekly Special Education webinars continue for Special Education professionals. The weekly Q&A session started due to COVID-19 and will be continued indefinitely.
- The state’s determination for special education was “Needs Assistance,” which is the same as the previous year, however there are concerns:
 - The rating score is 68.75 - slippage would place Alaska in “Needs Intervention” resulting in increased requirements; and,
 - Changes in compliance monitoring and onsite training could directly impact Alaska’s 100% compliance score.
- DEED has planned two Special Education Director trainings this school year: one in September 2021 and one in March 2022.
- All federally required data that is posted on the state’s Special Education website is current and ADA compliant.
- Due Process Hearing and Complaint Investigation information remains available to the public (though not posted online Re: 34 CFR 300.513 (d)).
- The Due Process Hearing and Complaint data for the current reporting period is as follows:
 - Due Process Hearings: 1 in progress; and,
 - Complaint Investigations: 9 investigations completed.

Early Learning Program

- DEED is continuing with year two of a three-year grant cycle with seventeen (17) school districts receiving PreK grant funds. All districts have indicated in-person class is expected at the start of the school year, though they are committed to adjusting the plan should the community health status change.
- DEED continues to partner with DHSS to convene quarterly meetings of the Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council (AECCC).
- Congress appropriated FY2022 funding for Head Start. This includes a 1.2% COLA increase. An additional \$1 billion for Head Start nationally, approximately \$2 million will be allocated to the

17 Head Start and Early Head Start grantees in the state directly from the federal office. Grantees will receive \$1,100 per funded enrollment slot.

- Using funds from the Federal Head Start Collaboration Grant, DEED released a request for quotes on an “Early Childhood Career Technical Education Program of Study” that will allow students in High School to earn dual credit in early childhood education studies. The University of Alaska Fairbanks was selected to develop 2 courses.

Career and Technical Education Program

- As of August 2021, more than half of the nearly 42 school districts that accept federal Perkins CTE funds have applied for and been approved to receive allocations for the 2022 fiscal year. DEED CTE Program Managers are working with remaining applicants to ensure participating districts will have access to Perkins funds. To apply, school districts complete a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) every two years and a 4 Year Plan every 4 years. This year is the “off” year so application paperwork for districts is significantly reduced. School districts accepting Perkins funds continue to conduct annual consultation with a local CTE Advisory Committee.
- The CTE Team is gathering the annual “All-In-One” data submission reports focused on CTE participators and programs of study. Most districts have submitted this report prior to departing for the summer. The remaining will submit this report upon starting up the new school year.
- The CTE Team conducted virtual monitoring of federal Perkins CTE programs in four districts last year. Two of those have been completed and closed. The remaining two will be closed as new district staff start the school year.

Teacher Certification

During the 2020-2021 school year, Alaska school districts had approximately 8,100 teaching positions. Of Alaska’s 8,100 teaching positions, 333 or 0.04% were filled with an educator who held a reading endorsement. Of Alaska’s 54 school districts, 37 districts employed at least one teacher who held a reading endorsement. The table below provides the number of teachers with reading endorsements by school district.

Districts	# of teachers with reading endorsements
Alaska Gateway School District	3
Aleutians East Borough School District	4
Anchorage School District	86
Annette Island School District	2
Bering Strait School District	14
Chatham School District	1
Chugach School District	3
Copper River School District	2
Craig City School District	2
Delta/Greely School District	4

Districts	# of teachers with reading endorsements
Denali Borough School District	1
Dillingham City School District	3
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District	29
Galena City School District	3
Haines Borough School District	1
Juneau Borough School District	15
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	31
Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District	8
Klawock City School District	1
Kodiak Island Borough School District	8
Kuspuk School District	2
Lower Kuskokwim School District	19
Lower Yukon School District	7
Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District	37
Mount Edgecumbe	1
Nenana City School District	2
Nome Public Schools	3
North Slope Borough School District	16
Northwest Arctic Borough School District	8
Petersburg Borough School District	2
Sitka School District	2
Southeast Island School District	2
Southwest Region School District	2
Unalaska City School District	2
Valdez City School District	4
Wrangell Public School District	1
Yukon-Koyukuk School District	1
Yup'it School District	1
Total	333

Source: Teacher Certification Database July 15, 2021

Online Teacher Certification System

DEED has contracted with Software House International (SHI) to develop an online teacher certification application system. The online system will allow initial applicants to complete most steps of the application process electronically. The online system will also allow the teacher certification team to process applications and issue certificates electronically. It is anticipated that the online teacher certification system will be fully operational at this time next year.

