



MEMORANDUM

To: State Board of Education & Early Development
Date: August 18, 2020

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

From: Director Tamara Van Wyhe
Subject: Agenda Item 5A:
Division of Innovation and
Education Excellence Standing
Report

Assessments

- From June 8 through June 11, members of the assessments team met with the Technical Advisory Committee, a panel of national experts in assessment and accountability. Topics covered included handling the lack of assessment data in 2020, the statewide accountability system in 2021, and development of the PEAKS Science assessment.
- From June 11 through June 12, the members of the assessments team met with DRC, the vendor for Alaska's content area assessments, to plan for the 2021 administration of PEAKS ELA and math assessments as well as the field test of the new PEAKS science assessment.
- From June 22 through 25, representative Alaska science educators met the test vendor, DRC, to review assessment items that will appear on the new PEAKS science assessment.
- On July 28, the United States Department of Education approved a requested waiver from certain assessment and reporting requirements related to the Alaska Science Assessment. This waiver will allow Alaska to field test the new PEAKS Science without double-testing students.
- Field testing for the new PEAKS Science assessment will take place during the spring 2021 PEAKS testing window.
- From August 3 through September 25, a special window will be open for a number of students to compete WIDA ACCESS for ELLs assessments. If a student might have exited EL services, based on scores in some assessed domains, but were unable to complete all domains for a composite score, that student will be eligible for testing during this special window.
- After being initially postponed for one year, NAEP Long Term Trend assessment for 17-year-old students will *not* take place in 2021.

- Statutes and regulations requiring the Alaska Developmental Profile (ADP), Alaska’s kindergarten entrance observation have been suspended for 2020. The ADP will not take place in 2020.
- Scheduled 2020 – 2021 Assessment windows:
 - August 3 – September 25, 2021: special window for eligible students to complete WIDA ACCESS for ELLs
 - January 25 – March 5: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
 - February 1 – March 31, 2021: WIDA ACCESS for ELLs
 - March 15 – April 30, 2021: Dynamic Learning Maps alternate assessment
 - March 29 – April 30, 2021: Performance Evaluation for Alaska’s Schools (PEAKS), Computer-based
 - April 5 – April 16, 2021: Performance Evaluation for Alaska’s Schools (PEAKS), Paper-based

Career and Technical Education program

- The Career & Technical Education Team has worked to provide the following COVID related flexibility moving into the 2020-21 school year (FY21) for Perkins CTE funds awarded to school districts:
 - While unspent Perkins funds would normally be returned to DEED to be redistributed at the end of the fiscal year, districts with unspent Perkins funds for FY20 will be allowed to spend those funds down for an additional three months until September 30, 2020. Unspent funds will be added to the grants of new funds for the 2020-21 school year.
 - In anticipation of potential interruptions to district planning/application for FY21 Perkins funds, DEED staff are working with districts to provide additional time to submit applications and have allowed for access to new funds while applications are developing. This is based upon flexibility formally provided by the US Department of Education for Perkins funds.
- The Alaska State Plan (Strengthening Career and Technical Education in the 21st Century) was approved by the US Department of Education on July 1, 2020. The plan itself, approval letter, and background on the development process are available at <https://education.alaska.gov/cte/perkins-state-plan> .
- DEED/CTE team members have reached out to each district to support the annual application for new funds and the implementation of new planning processes including a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA), Four-Year CTE Plan, and Annual Update in the established Grants Management System. An important part of this planning process is stakeholder engagement through formally established local CTE Advisory Council meetings.
- From March through June, the CTE Team sponsored a weekly “check-in” webinar for district and post-secondary Perkins grantees, for the purpose of hearing COVID related statewide concerns, sharing ideas among stakeholders, and raising awareness of DEED/State sponsored supports and information.

CARES Act

- The FY20 (19-20) CARES Act application (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSERF) and Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEERF)) for school districts is still open. Funds will be distributed once the district’s application and reimbursement

request is approved. The FY21 (20-21) CARES Act Application is now live in DEED's grants management system.

- A list of district applications is posted to the DEED COVID-19 webpage: <https://education.alaska.gov/news/COVID-19/caresact/CARES%20Act%20Allocations%204.27.2020.pdf>

Data and Accountability

- Data Collections
 - The Summer OASIS data collection opened on 06/01/2020 and certified submissions were submitted and received by 07/15/2020.
 - The Suspensions and Expulsions collection opened for trial submissions on 4/20/2020 and certified submissions were due by 06/30/2020.
 - The Certified Staffing collection opens on 10/01/2020 and closes on 10/15/2020.
 - The Classified Staffing collection opens on 10/01/2020 and closes on 10/15/2020.
 - The Fall OASIS collection opens on 10/23/2020 and closes on 11/06/2020.
- ED Facts – Federal Reporting Requirements
 - Multiple rounds of data quality review for SY2018-2019 data have been completed with the US Department of Education to ensure and improve data quality.
 - Submissions for the 2019-2020 school year ramp up in November with large collections from November-February.
- Accountability System
 - In preparation for meeting with the state's Technical Advisory Committee in October, the team has begun examining graduation rate from the 2019-2020 school year.
 - Guidance for reporting on attendance in the 2020-2021 school year was developed during July/August with input from district stakeholders.
- English Language Proficiency Exam
 - Data validation for the English Language Proficiency exams received by the vendor after 04/15/2020 is ongoing.
- Preparations for the Report Card (due on 01/15/2021) have begun. As a reminder, many federal requirements related to the Report Card that uses data from the 2019- 2020 school year have been waived:
 - Percentage of students assessed and not assessed
 - Assessment results
 - Number and percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities taking an alternate assessment
 - Accountability system description
 - Other academic indicator results (academic growth)
 - School quality or student success indicator results (chronic absenteeism, Grade 3 ELA)
 - Progress toward meeting long-term goals and measurements of interim progress

Early Learning Program

- Preschool Development Grant Activities

- Alaska Early Childhood Strategic Plan finalized and submitted to our federal funders
- DEED completed and posted the eLearning unit named Trauma-Engaged Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
- Alaska Early Childhood Needs Assessment posted on earlychildhoodalaska.com
- FY21 Request for Applications for Pre-elementary programming with school districts resulted in 22 applications, 17 of which were awarded.
- Head Start programs closed center-based classrooms in March, however they continued to provide comprehensive services to children and families remotely. Head Starts worked closely with their school district partners to ensure that children & families continue to receive meal services throughout the physical school closures.
- The 17 Alaska Head Start Grantees cumulatively received \$1,174,366 of CARES funding.
- In the 3rd quarter, Head Starts reported serving 2,530 children ages 3-5 in 86 different communities: Akiachak, Akiak, Alakanuk, Allakaket, Anchorage, Angoon, Bethel, Brevig Mission, Cheforak, Chugiak, Craig, Dillingham, Elim, Emmonak, Fairbanks, Fort Yukon, Galena, Gambell, Golovin, Grayling, Haines, Holy Cross, Homer, Hoonah, Hooper Bay, Hughes, Huslia, Juneau, Kake, Kenai, Ketchikan, King Cove, Kipnuk, Klaworck, Kluti Kaah, Kodiak, Kotlik, Koyuk, Kwethluk, Manokotak, Marshall, McGrath, Meadow Lakes, Metlakatla, Minto, Mountain Village, Nanwalek, Napaskiak, Nenana, New Stuyahok, Nome, Northway, Nulato, Nunapitchuk, Palmer, Petersburg, Pilot Station, Port Graham, Quinhagak, Russian Mission, Sand Point, Savoonga, Saxman, Scammon Bay, Shageluk, Shaktoolik, Shishmaref, Sitka, St. Mary's, St. Michaels, Stebbins, Sterling, Tanana, Teller, Tetlin, Togiak, Tok, Toksook Bay, Tuluksak, Tuntutliak, Unalaska, Wasilla, White Mountain, Wrangell, and Yakutat.

ESEA/ESSA Federal Programs

- District's FY21 (20-21) 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 \$79 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 annual training on the identification and recruitment of migratory children to school district staff virtually during the months of August and September. Additionally, the Migrant Education Program team is working to create a series of YouTube videos for district staff to access that cover topics such as program overview, eligibility requirements, system tutorials, and more.
- This spring, though unable to offer in-person afterschool programming due to COVID-19, DEED's 21st CCLC programs continued to support students and families by offering some of the following:
 - Provided to-go bags with academic and enrichment activities and supplies for core academics, STEM, art, mindfulness, and more
 - Connected via individual letters, phone calls, and Zoom calls with students and parents
 - Continued to provide afterschool meals or snacks

- Offered live online activities (e.g tutoring, STEM projects, Zumba, group games, cyber wellness, counseling)
 - Held virtual celebrations
 - Offered virtual for-credit classes
 - Shared technology devices to equip students
 - Additionally, several programs were able to offer summer programming—some virtual some in-person.
- Per federal requirements, DEED’s 21st CCLC program engages in a robust annual statewide evaluation process. The [18-19 summary](#), as well as the [full 18-19 report](#) are publicly posted. Of note: 44% of 21st CCLC regular attendees met growth targets in ELA and 42% in math.
 - The Boys and Girls Clubs of the Kenai Peninsula 21st CLCC program partnered with the Center of Alaska Coastal Studies to win a national NOAA Watershed STEM grant.
 - This spring DEED ran a competitive application process to award \$2.7 million in federal 21st CCLC funds. Due to COVID-19, the application deadline was extended by a month, but still seemed to depress the typical number of application submissions. Ten applications requesting over \$4 million in funds were received. The seven offered funding are listed below. Of note: Virtually all applications partnered with their local Alaska Native Tribe within the application.
 - Anchorage School District
 - Kuspuk School District
 - Fairbanks North Star Borough School District
 - Juneau School District
 - Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District
 - Boys & Girls Clubs of the Kenai Peninsula
 - Kake City School District
 - This spring, DEED assisted rural Alaska districts in applying for approximately \$695,000 from US ED in Title V-B REAP (Small, Rural School Achievement Program (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School Program (RLIS)) funding.
 - The McKinney Vento competitive grant for three years was granted to Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai and Mat-Su for a total of \$240,000. Districts that have 50 or more homeless students are eligible for this competitive grant.

Health and Safety Programs

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Preparedness

- The Health and Safety Team is supporting the delivery and content development for the School Health ECHO Series in partnership with DHSS.
- The Health and Safety Team partnered with DHSS to create sample health and safety protocols districts can utilize to assist them in composing their Alaska Smart Start 2020 district plans. These sample protocols may be particularly helpful for our smaller districts.
- Partnered with Public Health to create grants for Fairbanks, Kenai, Juneau, and Mat-Su school districts to be trained and paid to conduct COVID-19 contact tracing.
- Expanded DEED’s dedicated COVID-19 webpage for district use.

- The Health and Safety Team is integrally involved in reviewing the Conditions for Learning section of all Alaska Smart Start 2020 school district plans.
- DEED will premiere *The Trauma-Engaged Toolkit*, a practical and resource rich companion to its nationally recognized *Transforming Schools: A Framework for Trauma-Engaged Practice in Alaska* on August 25th. It has been created in collaboration with AASB.

eLearning

- Updated the most-frequently trafficked eLearning courses with latest state and national data and resources.
- Continuing the procurement process for the next 5-year (2020-2025) eLearning contract to ensure no interruptions in training for the program's 25,000 school district members
- DEED released a new eLearning course Trauma Engaged Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. It introduces the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health framework and describes how trauma and adverse childhood experiences influence brain architecture and impact the developing brain.

Quality Schools

- Collected and approved Quality Schools grant applications for the 2020-2021 school year
- Collected and approved End of Year Reports for the 2019-2020 school year

Alaska Safe Children's Act Update

- The team is in final stages of completion for the state authored student training to support districts with the implementation of the Alaska Safe Children's Act in grades 7-12. The three grade bands (7-8, 9-10, 11-12) include 5 modules for dating violence awareness and prevention and sexual assault/abuse awareness and prevention that will be delivered via eLearning. The state authored curriculum will be available to districts for the 2020-2021 school year.
- The team is participating in a statewide group hosted by AASB regarding professional boundaries and child sexual abuse in the educational setting.
- The team is partnering with domestic violence and sexual assault agencies to develop a teacher training and implementation guide to support educators and link them to state and local resources for teen dating violence and child sexual abuse.

School Improvement

- Staffing
 - The Program Administrator for School Recognition and Support, Allie Gardner, began on July 7, 2020. Allie has experience teaching Preschool – Graduate level students, and has experience designing and facilitating professional development trainings for adults across industries. She is excited to partner with schools to provide an excellent education for every student every day.
 - The School Improvement Support Specialist, Samantha "Sammy" Carlon, began on August 10, 2020. She has experience teaching and leading in and out of the classroom in different industries as well.
 - Currently in the process of filling the vacant positions on the School Improvement team for Ed Spec II (Math Content Specialist) and Ed Associate II (School Recognition & Support Program Assistant).

- Grant Funding News
 - Continue to support schools and districts in a cycle of continuous improvement
 - School Improvement grants will be moving from a paper-based system to a digital format through the Grant Management System; thus ensuring a smoother process for all involved in the application, budget, and approval process.
 - School improvement funding cycle will be moving to accommodate allocations in July to match the standard fiscal year grant cycle (July 1 to June 30)
- Specific Grant Information
 - CSI /TSI Grants
 - Reviewing and approving Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) and Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) grant applications.
 - Grants provide funding to implement identified strategies toward improving student outcomes.
 - School year 2020-2021 allocation calculations have been updated. School designations associated with the March 27, 2020 assessment and accountability waivers will remain the same as they were for school year 2019-2020. No schools will exit a designation category for the upcoming year due to Accountability System freeze.
 - Staff are working with districts to update needs assessments and applications for the CSI/TSI award money for FY 21.
 - Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Program Grant
 - Reviewing, approving, and supporting schools awarded the CLSD Program Grant.
 - Grants provide funding to implement literacy-based strategies to improve literacy rates in K-12
 - This is a Five-Year grant and the 2nd Year allocations will be going out to districts Fall 2020
 - School Improvement (1003g) Grant
 - The last School Improvement 1003g grants are to be distributed this year. This federal grant program is sunsetting this year.
- Coaching Program
 - Carl Chamblee is under contract to provide coaching program redesign recommendations and assist in supporting DEED's initiatives and directives for the school improvement program.
- Professional Development
 - The team is building a year-long New Teacher Course to support New to Alaska teachers and to help them focus on relationship building, classroom management, lesson planning, data driven instruction, and skills to become reflective practitioners.
 - Utilizing Alaska's Education Network / Project ECHO in the K-12 system to invite educators around the state to learn and grow together
 - Planning opportunities with ASTE members to support educators in the classroom through the use of technology
 - Developing some online webinars/ virtual training sessions to meet teacher leaders where they are
 - Redesigning and developing resources on [AKLearns](#) website to house support and resources for families, students, teachers, and administrators in Alaska
- Relationship Building

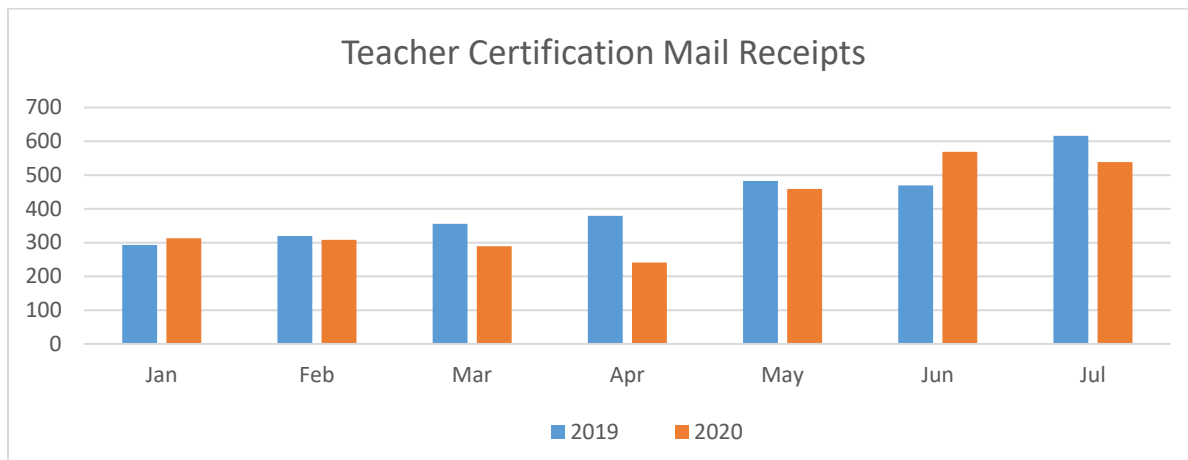
- Building CSI/TSI Newsletter to inform and support districts
- Utilizing Newsletters to send out information on CLSD grants and introducing the team to districts.

Special Education Program

- Daily Special Education webinars for education personnel have been reduced to Wednesdays during the summer. The focus is still COVID related issues, but other issues are also discussed and addressed. The webinars will return to daily once the school year starts to support Smart Start 2020.
- The Alternate Assessment "1%" letters have all been collected from districts that went over the 1% cap
- Planning for the special education directors' training next fall – details pending as the training is switched from in person training to virtual training due to travel restrictions
- District Disproportionality reporting completed with ongoing training for the districts found in significant disproportionality.
- The Annual Performance Report/ State Performance Plan (APR/SPP) and State Systemic Improvement Plan (S-SIP) are submitted and approved. The federal special education grant application was submitted and is approved.
 - Complaint and Due Process Hearing information remains available to the public. Current Due Process and Administrative Complaints status is as follows:
 - Due Process Hearings: 4 filed in FY20; 0 filed in FY21 (started July 1)
 - Complaint Investigations: 6 filed in FY20 (5 had findings, 1 had no findings) 0 filed in FY21 (Started July 1, 2020)

Teacher Certification Information

Teacher Certification has experienced a significant influx of applications over the past three months. The number of application during the first six months of this year is slightly below the numbers received in the same time period from last year.



Year	2019	2020
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Jan	293	313
Feb	320	308
Mar	356	289
Apr	379	241
May	483	459
Jun	469	569
Jul	616	539
Total	2916	2718

Teacher Certification is continuing to issue emergency certificates. As part of the Declaration of Public Health Disaster Emergency issued by Governor Mike Dunleavy on March 11, 2020, and Alaska Statutes 26.23.020(g)(1) and (7), the Governor, under Order of Suspension No. 2, suspended statutory and regulatory requirements that were barriers for educators to gain or maintain Alaska certification and for districts to focus on the continuation of educational services to their students. The suspension of requirements applied to any applicant for Alaska certification and all certificated staff of Alaska School Districts. Additionally, Commissioner Johnson invoked his authority under AS 14.20.020 and 4 AAC 12.410 to issue emergency certification and waive requirements for the renewal of certification in light to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Because of the disruption caused by the pandemic, the following certification requirement were suspended:

- Basic competency examination
- Content area examination
- Alaska studies coursework
- Alaska multicultural coursework
- Notarization
- Minimum required hours for student teaching

As of July 31, 2020, the teacher certification office has issued 99 emergency certificates for the 2020-2021 school year; 88 teaching certificates and 11 special service certificates. All applicants for emergency certificates must have the support of an Alaska public school district.

The department continues to work with the Department of Public Safety to allow for a temporary name based criminal history check as an alternative to the submission of a fingerprint card. The name based criminal history check will allow the department to process applications while giving the applicants additional time to find a trained technician to roll their fingerprints.