

# The Facts about School and District Accountability



*Toward preparing students to be college, career, and culturally ready graduates*

In June 2013, the State Board of Education & Early Development adopted new school and district accountability regulations to replace the Adequate Yearly Progress system of No Child Left Behind. The new accountability system is based on two prongs: the Alaska School Performance Index (ASPI) and Annual Measureable Objective targets.

## **Alaska's new school performance identifier**

Each year, through ASPI, Alaska's differentiated system of recognition, accountability, and support will present an overall picture of a school's performance in ensuring that students are college and career ready. Each school will receive a score that is a weighted combination of: performance on state assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics; school *progress* in state assessments as measured by the Growth and Proficiency Index; attendance rates; and, for schools with high school students, graduation rates, scores on college and career readiness indicators (such as ACT, SAT, and WorkKeys), and participation rates on the WorkKeys assessment.

The overall ASPI score will determine the category, or star rating, of each school. The top performing schools in the state will be rated as 5-star schools, while the lowest performing schools will be rated as 1-star schools.

## **Continuing to measure performance of the all-students group and subgroups**

In addition to the ASPI star designation, each school and district, as well as the state, will receive individualized Annual Measureable Objective (AMO) targets in reading, writing, and mathematics that are ambitious but achievable. The targets will increase by annual increments toward the goal of reducing by half the percentage of students who are not proficient within six years in each assessment area. EED will report annually on whether the AMO targets have been met for the all-students group and for each

of the currently identified subgroups that have at least five students (economically disadvantaged students, limited English proficient students, students with disabilities, and all six ethnic groups).

## **Designation of schools**

Schools may receive a designation in addition to their ASPI star rating:

*Reward schools* are in the top 10% of the highest-performing and high-progress schools in the state. These schools will be given special recognition and encouraged to serve as models for other schools.

*Priority schools* are identified from among the 1-star and 2-star schools for the most rigorous attention and support. At least 5% of the lowest performing Title I schools are designated Priority and remain so for at least three years. Priority schools are required to develop and implement a comprehensive school improvement plan to implement the seven turnaround principles as required by state regulations and the U.S. Department of Education. (4 AAC 06.865)

*Focus schools* are selected from among the 1-star and 2-star schools that were not identified as Priority schools but would benefit from a program of improvement targeted to their specific needs. At least 10% of the lowest-performing Title I schools are designated as Focus schools for at least two years. Focus schools are required to develop and implement a school improvement plan targeted to their specific needs, including consideration of the seven turnaround principles. (4 AAC 06.870)

## **School improvement planning**

Priority, Focus, 1-star, and 2-star schools are required to submit School Improvement Plans for approval to EED. All 3-star schools are required to complete a School Improvement Plan and submit it to their district office for approval. Any 4-star or 5-

star schools that have not met AMO targets or that have experienced declines in the Growth and Proficiency Index or the graduation rates for two years are required to submit a plan to improve the performance of the low- performing subgroup(s) to the district for approval. (4 AAC 06.845)

All improvement plans will be submitted through Alaska STEPP (Steps Toward Educational Progress and Partnership). Alaska STEPP is an online, continuous, and comprehensive planning tool. STEPP is founded in research-based indicators of success, and organized into six domains of effective schools: curriculum, assessment, instruction, supportive learning environment, professional development, and leadership. EED provides initial training and webinars throughout the year to support schools in implementing STEPP (4 AAC 06.845(b)).

### **Categorization of districts**

Districts will be categorized within one of three tiers. Districts in which less than 25% of the schools are 1-star or 2-stars will be Tier 1. Districts in which 25% to 49.99% of the schools are 1-star and 2-star schools (or 25% to 49.99% of students attend a 1-star or 2-star school) will be Tier 2. Districts in which 50% or more of the schools are 1-star and 2-star schools (or more than 50% of the students attend a 1- or 2-star school), will be Tier 3. Districts categorized as Tier 2 or 3 will submit an improvement plan to EED. (4 AAC 06.850)

### **EED support for schools and districts**

Districts categorized as Tier 1 and all schools have access to information and resources from EED aligned to the six domain areas of Alaska's Effective Schools Framework through the EED website, audio- or web-conferences, and through regional or state conferences offered to participants from all districts.

Districts categorized as Tiers 2 and 3 and schools designated as Priority or Focus schools have increased resources and support available from EED. Depending on the specific needs of each school and district, and as a result of consultation with school and district leadership, supports available from EED could include one or more of the following:

- Training, support, and feedback in use of Alaska STEPP.
- School Improvement Coach assistance in improvement plan implementation.
- Participation in training events such as the Teaching and Learning Support Institute.
- Partnerships with statewide coach and mentoring programs for school staff.
- Access to Title I and SIG school improvement funding for Title I Priority and Focus schools.

For more information, visit <http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/accountability.html> and click on “general ASPI information.”

