ESEA Flexibility

Request for Window 3

ALASKA

Amended Principle 1 & 2 as approved December 19, 2014

June 7, 2012

U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202

OMB Number: 1810-0581

Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0581. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 336 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4537.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Insert page numbers prior to submitting the request, and place the table of contents in front of the SEA's flexibility request.

CONTENTS		PAGE
Cover Sheet for ESEA Flexibility Request for Window 3		6
Waivers		7
Assurances		10
Consultation		12
Evaluation		24
Overview of SEA's Request for the ESEA Flexibility		24
Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students		**26**
1.A	Adopt college-and career-ready standards	26
1.B	Transition to college- and career-ready standards	26
1.C	Develop and administer annual, statewide, aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth	45
Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support		**50**
2.A	Develop and implement a State-based system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support	50
2.B	Set ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives	76
2.C	Reward schools	80
2.D	Priority schools	82
2.E	Focus schools	91
2.F	Provide incentives and supports for other Title I schools	96
2.G	Build SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning	98
Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership		**104**
3.A	Develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems	104
3.B	Ensure LEAs implement teacher and principal evaluation and support systems	110

Table Of Contents, -continued

For each attachment included in the *ESEA Flexibility Request for Window 3*, label the attachment with the corresponding number from the list of attachments below and indicate the page number where the attachment is located. If an attachment is not applicable to the SEA's request, indicate "N/A" instead of a page number. Reference relevant attachments in the narrative portions of the request.

Label	List of Attachments	Page
1	Notice to LEAs	117
2	Comments on request received from LEAs (if applicable	120
3	Notice and information provided to the public regarding the request (***In progress*** http://education.alaska.gov/nclb/esea.html)	126
4	Evidence that the State has formally adopted college- and career-ready content standards consistent with the State's standards adoption process	130
5	Memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs) certifying that meeting the State's standards corresponds to being college- and career-ready without the need for remedial coursework at the postsecondary level (if applicable)	132
6	State's Race to the Top Assessment Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (if applicable)	N/A
7	Evidence that the SEA has submitted high-quality assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review, or a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review (if applicable)	N/A
8	A copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2011–2012 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the "all students" group and all subgroups (if applicable)	134
9	Table 2: Reward, Priority, and Focus Schools	135
10	A copy of the guidelines that the SEA has developed and adopted for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems (if applicable)	140
11	Evidence that the SEA has adopted all of the guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems (See: http://education.alaska.gov/TeacherCertification/statregs.html)	916
12	List of Acronyms	160
Consultation Attachments		**163**
C.1	Title I Committee of Practitioners Meeting Agenda & Notes from 4/18/2012	163
C.2	ESEA Waiver Overview 4/18/2012	167
C.3	Title I Committee of Practitioners Meeting Agenda & Notes from 8/20/2012	192
C.4	Invitation to ESEA Flexibility Waiver options	198
C.5	ESEA Waiver overview 5/30/2012	199
C.6	Presentation to superintendents, Principle 2 Accountability	234
C.7	List of organizations offering comments	271
C.8	List of Stakeholders Invited to Webinars	272

C.9	ESEA Flexibility Requirements 8/02/12	274
C.10	Alaska Wavier Principle 1 Website information	289
C.11	Alaska Wavier Principle 2 Website information	301
C.12	Alaska Wavier Principle 3 Website information	338
C.13	List of organization participants in webinars	348
C.14	Stakeholder outreach plan	349
C.15	Alaska Standards Revision Plan	350
C.16	Alaska Position common core	351
C.17	Recruitment Letter	353
C.18	Invitation Letter to Business	354
C.19	Stakeholder Feedback Plan	362
C.20	EL Parent Outreach	368
Principle 1 Attachments		**369**
1.1	Alaska standards review CCSSO August 3, 2012	369
1.2	Phased Transition Plan	371
1.3	Standards Professional Development Timeline	376
1.4	Alaska Administrative Coaching Project	379
1.5	Alaska Statewide Mentor Project	381
1.6	Curriculum Alignment Institute	383
1.7	RAPPS- Rural Alaska Principal Preparation and Support	390
1.8	IHE Preparing incoming Teachers and Administrators	392
1.9	IHE participants List	393
Principle 2 Attachments		**394**
2.1	Growth and Proficiency Index	394
2.2	Alaska Statewide AMO Targets	397
2.3	State System of Support (SSOS) Operations manual	398
2.4	Alaska STEPP District Indicators	448
2.5	Alaska STEPP School Indicators	462
2.6	Expectations for Districts in Intervention	473
2.7	Expectations for Sites in Intervention	477
2.8	Demonstrating Reward Priority Focus Criteria	481

Principle 3 Attachments		**483**
3.1	Evaluation Handbook for Professional Alaska Educators	483
3.2	Teacher Quality Working Group (TQWG) Member list	730
3.3	Teacher Quality Working Group Agendas	732
3.4	Teacher Quality Working Group Recommendations to the State Board	747
3.5	State Board Agenda and Minutes March 2012	762
3.6	Teacher & Principal Evaluation Proposed Regulations June 2012	780
3.7	Teacher & Principal Evaluation Survey 2011 Results	813
3.8	Current Teacher and Principal Evaluation System	833
3.9	Teacher Quality Working Group Resources	835
3.10	Alaska Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Members	838
3.11	Alaska Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Agendas	839
3.12	Re-noticed Regulations October 2012 Board Meeting	844
3.13	Alaska Plan—Education Northwest	857
3.14	State Board Meeting December 6-7	862
3.15	Teacher Quality Working Group Member List	911
3.16	Changes made to proposed regulations October 28, 2012	914
3.17	Proposed Changes to Re-noticed regulations – December 7, 2012	915

COVER SHEET FOR ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Legal Name of Requester: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development	Requester's Mailing Address: 801 West 10th Street, Suite 200 P.O. Box 110500 Juneau, AK 99811-0500
State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility Request Name: Margaret MacKinnon Position and Office: ESEA Administrator, Division of Teaching and Learning Support Contact's Mailing Address: 801 West 10th Street, Suite 200 P.O. Box 110500 Juneau, AK 99811-0500 Telephone: 907-465-2972 Fax: 907-465-6760 Email address: margaret.mackinnon@alaska.gov	
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Mike Hanley, Commissioner	Telephone: 907-465-2800
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: X_____ Mike Hanley _____	Date: 5/15/2013
The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of the ESEA Flexibility.	

WAIVERS

By submitting this flexibility request, the SEA requests flexibility through waivers of the ten ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested; a chart appended to the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions* enumerates each specific provision of which the SEA requests a waiver, which the SEA incorporates into its request by reference.

☒ 1. The requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(E)-(H) that prescribe how an SEA must establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The SEA requests this waiver to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support and improvement efforts for the State, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups.

☒ 2. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(b) for an LEA to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, a Title I school that fails, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP, and for a school so identified and its LEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA and its Title I schools need not comply with these requirements.

☒ 3. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(c) for an SEA to identify for improvement or corrective action, as appropriate, an LEA that, for two consecutive years or more, fails to make AYP, and for an LEA so identified and its SEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that it need not comply with these requirements with respect to its LEAs.

☒ 4. The requirements in ESEA sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) that limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds may use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA makes AYP.

☒ 5. The requirement in ESEA section 1114(a)(1) that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a schoolwide program. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA may implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles or interventions that are based on the needs of the students in the school and designed to enhance the entire educational program in a school in any of its priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, as appropriate, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.

☒ 6. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or

restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs in order to serve any of the State's priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

☒ 7. The provision in ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) that authorizes an SEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may use funds reserved under ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) for any of the State's reward schools that meet the definition of "reward schools" set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

☒ 8. The requirements in ESEA section 2141(a), (b), and (c) for an LEA and SEA to comply with certain requirements for improvement plans regarding highly qualified teachers. The SEA requests this waiver to allow the SEA and its LEAs to focus on developing and implementing more meaningful evaluation and support systems.

☒ 9. The limitations in ESEA section 6123 that limit the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs. The SEA requests this waiver so that it and its LEAs may transfer up to 100 percent of the funds it receives under the authorized programs among those programs and into Title I, Part A.

☒ 10. The requirements in ESEA section 1003(g)(4) and the definition of a Tier I school in Section I.A.3 of the School Improvement Grants (SIG) final requirements. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may award SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any of the State's priority schools that meet the definition of "priority schools" set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

Optional Flexibilities:

If an SEA chooses to request waivers of any of the following requirements, it should check the corresponding box(es) below:

☐ 11. The requirements in ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The SEA requests this waiver so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.

☒ 12. The requirements in ESEA sections 1116(a)(1)(A)-(B) and 1116(c)(1)(A) that require LEAs and SEAs to make determinations of adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools and LEAs, respectively. The SEA requests this waiver because continuing to determine whether an LEA and its schools make AYP is inconsistent with the SEA's State-developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system included in its ESEA flexibility request. The SEA and its LEAs must report on their report cards performance against the AMOs for all subgroups identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v), and use performance against the AMOs to support continuous improvement in Title I schools.

☐ 13. The requirements in ESEA section 1113(a)(3)-(4) and (c)(1) that require an LEA to serve eligible schools under Title I in rank order of poverty and to allocate Title I, Part A funds based on that rank ordering. The SEA requests this waiver in order to permit its LEAs to serve a Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent that the SEA has identified as a priority school even if that school does not otherwise rank sufficiently high to be served under ESEA section 1113.

ASSURANCES

By submitting this request, the SEA assures that:

☒ 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of the flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.

☒ 2. It will adopt English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the new college- and career-ready standards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year. (Principle 1)

☒ 3. It will develop and administer no later than the 2014–2015 school year alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)

☒ 4. It will develop and administer ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii). (Principle 1)

☒ 5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)

☒ 6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)

☒ 7. It will report to the public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools at the time the SEA is approved to implement the flexibility, and annually thereafter, it will publicly recognize its reward schools as well as make public its lists of priority and focus schools if it chooses to update those lists. (Principle 2)

☒ 8. Prior to submitting this request, it provided student growth data on their current students and the students they taught in the previous year to, at a minimum, all teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs, or it will do so no later than the deadline required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. (Principle 3)

☒ 9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)

☒ 10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its request.

☒ 11. Prior to submitting this request, it provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (Attachment 1) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs (Attachment 2).

☒ 12. Prior to submitting this request, it provided notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the State customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice (Attachment 3).

☒ 13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout this request.

☒ 14. It will report annually on its State report card, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report on their local report cards, for the "all students" group and for each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II): information on student achievement at each proficiency level; data comparing actual achievement levels to the State's annual measurable objectives; the percentage of students not tested; performance on the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and graduation rates for high schools. It will also annually report, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report, all other information and data required by ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C) and 1111(h)(2)(B), respectively.

If the SEA selects Option A in section 3.A of its request, indicating that it has not yet developed and adopted all the guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, it must also assure that:

☒ 15. It will submit to the Department for peer review and approval a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2012–2013 school year. (Principle 3)

CONSULTATION

An SEA must meaningfully engage and solicit input from diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. To demonstrate that an SEA has done so, the SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State's Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in the request and provide the following:

1. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives.

Introduction. In preparing the elements of this waiver application, Alaska has consulted with both educators and diverse groups. First, for both Principle 1 (standards) and Principle 3 (teacher and administrator evaluation), the process of consultation with the public began over two years ago, and the record of the consultation is quite detailed. For Principle 2, the record of consultation begins with the preparation of this waiver application. Because the three principles have been introduced to the public at different times, the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (EED) will address the record of consultation on each principle separately.

Before turning to the actual record of consultation, EED will describe the solicitation/advertising processes that were used frequently to solicit public input and participation:

- ***Information Exchange.*** *Information Exchange* is EED's weekly electronic newsletter. It is emailed to approximately 800 entities, including all school districts, the media, and others interested in education. School district superintendents are sent a web link to the *Information Exchange* so they have a convenient way to forward it to district personnel. Potentially, each week thousands of Alaska educators see the *Information Exchange*. The *Information Exchange* is available at EED's web site.
- ***Proposed regulations***. When a regulation is first proposed, the public is given advance notice when the State Board of Education & Early Development's agenda is published, usually two weeks before a meeting. The public has an opportunity to give oral comment on agenda and non-agenda items. Before the State Board considers the regulation for adoption, it must send the proposal out for public comment. Standard public comment for most items is more than two months, to coincide with the State Board's regular quarterly meetings, but on items of special interest the State Board will extend public comment to encourage more participation.
- ***Advertising proposed regulations***. EED advertises proposed regulations: a) on its website, with a method to comment online; b) on the online State of Alaska public notice web page; c) in notices in the Anchorage Daily News, the state's largest-circulation newspaper, which is widely distributed in rural Alaska; d) by mailing approximately 700 notices to education stakeholders, including the media, public libraries, and all public schools; and e) by inserting notices (each week up to the deadline to comment) in *Information Exchange*. Notices are emailed to the Alaska Department of Law, all members of the Alaska Legislature, and the Legislative Affairs Agency.
- ***Adoption of proposed regulations***. After written public comment closes, EED staff reviews all public comments and makes recommendations to the State Board for changes to the proposed regulations. All written public comment is collected and forwarded to the State

Board. The public has an additional opportunity to provide oral testimony at the State Board meeting where the proposed regulation is being considered for adoption. Testimony by teleconference is welcome, and Legislative Information Office teleconference lines, available throughout Alaska including several remote sites, are open for this purpose.

- ***Reporting of State Board action.*** After each meeting of the State Board, EED reports regulatory actions in an electronic news release to the media; repeats the release once in the *Information Exchange* and places it on the front page of the department's web site; and places the proposed regulation on the EED regulation webpage and in the State of Alaska online public notice webpage.

Principle 1: Engagement of educators and their representatives in the standards-setting process.

Summary: A large group of stakeholders, working together for over a year, developed Alaska's new college- and career-ready content standards in English/language arts and mathematics for grades kindergarten to 12. The proposed standards were widely circulated, and EED sought public input. After an extended period of public comment, the State Board formally adopted the standards on June 8, 2012.

Evidence:

(1) ***History.*** In 2009, Alaska launched a project to replace its existing content standards in English/language arts and mathematics, which had last been revised and adopted in 2005. The project was called Next Generation Standards. Alaska did not join the Common Core State Standards initiative specifically so that EED could consult with stakeholders in the standards-adoption process. (See Attachment C.16)

(2) ***Drafting process.*** Several working groups were formed to draft the new content standards that were college- and career-ready. The working groups met in central locations. The working groups drafted content standards for each content area and age group. (See Attachment C.15)

(3) ***Selection of educator participants.*** More than 200 educators participated in the working groups. EED encouraged all educators to participate in the groups. It sent recruitment notices to its database of past committee volunteers (about 700 educators), all universities/colleges in Alaska, and all school district superintendents. The participants provided representation from each of the following: 1) Geographic representation of each region of the state (in Alaska, this is a very challenging criterion); 2) teacher representation from all content areas and grade levels; 3) teacher representation from all major subgroups, including special education and Alaska Native; 4) teacher union representation; 5) principal and superintendent-level participation; and 6) higher education representation. Specific attendance for each meeting broken down by special education and limited English proficiency educator was as follows (SSOS refers to the State System of Support):

Meeting	Participants	SPED	LEP
2010 February Common Core Comparison	52	3	3
2010 October Career & College Standards Review	32	2	4
2010 November Career & College Standards Review	50		
2011 January Career & College Standards Review	39	3	5
2011 February Career & College Standards Review	43	3	4
2011 June SSOS Standards Review	10		

2011 October College & Career Standards Review	60	3	4
2011 November College & Career Standards Review	56	18	14

(4) ***Meetings of working groups.*** The working groups met in-person eight times over 13 months, in different locations across the state. (In Alaska, this is very challenging and very expensive. Cost to EED for these meetings was more than $300,000.) Groups composed of participants representing different stakeholders would meet at tables, and the drafting process was a collaborative effort among the participants. (See Attachment C.15)

(5) ***Updating of educators during the drafting process.*** During its review of Alaska's English/language arts and mathematics content standards for revision, EED frequently placed notices regarding the process in *Information Exchange*. The updating included the following:

- Sept. 23, Oct. 22 and Oct. 29, 2010: Noticed a Nov. 18-19 meeting between EED and universities, industries, vocational programs, and high schools to outline Alaska's content standards in English/language arts and mathematics. Invited interested people to participate.
- Jan. 14, 2011: Noticed a Feb. 15-16 review of Alaska's college- and career-ready standards. Expressly invited mathematics teachers, curriculum specialists, special education teachers, and teachers of English language learners.
- Sept. 23 and Sept. 30, 2011: Noticed a meeting on Oct. 11-12 related to text complexity in English/language arts and standards for mathematical practice. Expressly invited K-12 teachers in mathematics and language arts, school librarians, and high school career and career and technical educators.

(6) ***Regulation process.*** On December 16, 2011, the State Board sent out the proposed content standards for a five-month period of public comment. (http://www.eed.state.ak.us/State_Board/minutes/2011_12_15_16minutes.pdf at page 7)

(7) ***FAQ.*** In addition to the extensive public notice provided for all regulations (see Introduction, above), after noticing Alaska's proposed standards for public comment, EED emailed a six-page FAQ about the standards and copies of the standards to dozens of entities, inviting them to comment. The following education entities received the FAQs: university faculty and administrators, instructors in high school and postsecondary career and technical schools, and faith-based colleges.

(8) ***Webinars and public meetings.*** During the public comment period, EED held more than 30 webinars and in-person meetings to inform and consult with the public about the proposed college- and career- ready standards. Efforts to specifically target educators included:

- ***Special education.*** Feb. 23, 2012: Presentation to Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference. Also, EED specifically encouraged special educators to attend webinars.
- ***Rural educators.*** EED made a special effort to seek feedback from rural Alaska, which has a high concentration of low-performing schools, Alaska Native students, and English learner (EL) students. Presentations on the proposed standards in remote sites included:
  - February 7, 2012: Galena School District (Galena).
  - February 24 and March 13, 2012: Kuspuk School District (Aniak).
  - March 8, 2012: Lower Kuskokwim School District (Bethel).
  - March 15, 2012: Southwest Region School District (Dillingham).

- March 27, 2012: Northwest Arctic Borough School District (Kotzebue).
- March 28, 2012: Hoonah School District (Hoonah).
- April 17. 2012: Nome School District (Nome).
- April 26, 2012: North Slope Borough School District (Barrow).
- May 9, 2012: Kashunamiut School District (Chevak).

- ***EL.*** April 25, 2012: Presentation to the Bilingual Multicultural Equity in Education Conference in Anchorage.
- ***Urban school districts.*** In addition to all other general presentations and workshops, EED made on-site presentations to school districts in Kenai, Fairbanks, and Kodiak.
- ***Standards Webinars.*** Before finalizing the proposed college- and career-ready standards for presentation to the State Board, EED invited educators and the public to attend a series of 10 webinars on the standards. Attendance (not including those who later listened to the recordings) was as follows:

Date	Type	Number Attended	Number RSVP	Non-Educators Attended
6-Feb	Overview	31	50	1
8-Feb	ELA	19	36	2
9-Feb	Mathematics	18	43	1
21-Feb	ELA	5	7	0
22-Feb	Mathematics	9	13	0
5-Mar	ELA	6	11	0
6-Mar	Mathematics	2	3	0
20-Mar	ELA	0	2	0
21-Mar	Mathematics	0	2	0
4-Apr	ELA	0	6	0
5-Apr	Mathematics	2	4	0
17-Apr	ELA	0	2	0
18-Apr	Mathematics	0	1	0

Extensive evidence of invitations is available. In addition, the August 2012 webinars described in more detail under Principle 2, below, solicited feedback on the entire waiver application, including Principle 1.

- ***Higher education.*** Involvement of higher education educators included a pre-adoption validity study, which required extensive work with university instructors who taught first-year students. Higher education participation was targeted in the webinars, and the deans of the colleges of education at all Alaska universities were individually encouraged to attend.
- ***CTE.*** February 1-3, 2012: Presentation to school district career and technical coordinators in Anchorage.
- ***Institutes and training.*** On January 23 and February 16-19, 2012, EED trained coaches and mentors, who serve as independent contractors and interface with educators, so they could inform educators in the field about the standards. Presentations to educational leaders, including rural educators who were training to become principals, occurred May 23-25 and May 29, 2012, at the Summer Literacy Institute and the School Leadership Institute.

- ***Title I Committee of Practitioners.*** On April 18, 2012, the proposed English/language arts and mathematics standards were discussed at the Title I Committee of Practitioners meeting as part of the overall presentation on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility waiver requirements. (Alaska Standards Rollout Plan at pages 1-7). Additional evidence available upon request. Note that the Alaska standards adoption process was wholly independent of this application for flexibility, and that EED planned and executed the extensive consultation documented here before the decision was made to apply for a waiver.

(9) ***Educator comments.*** During the public comment period for the proposed regulations, general comments were received from 12 educators and one non-educator. Comments on the proposed college- and career-ready English/language arts standards were received from nine educators, two non-educators, two districts, and one university. Comments on the proposed mathematics standards were received from nine educators and one district. During the regulations process, the State Board made approximately 43 changes to the proposed regulations in response to public comment. During the entire public process, in response to all stakeholder comment, EED staff made over 150 changes to the proposed English/ language arts standards and over 150 changes to the mathematics standards. (http://www.eed.state.ak.us/State_Board/pdf/12_june_packet.pdf at 282-348 [Note: EED's internal public comment tracking form is not attached, but would be available upon request.])

(10) ***Adoption.*** On June 7, 2012, the State Board held an oral hearing at which the public had an additional opportunity to comment on the proposed content standards. On June 8, 2012, after consideration of public comment, the State Board adopted into regulation Alaska's revised content standards for English/language arts and mathematics. (See Attachment 4)

(11) ***Post-adoption outreach.*** EED will continue outreach and training for educators, including planned sessions with special education directors and NEA-Alaska. For a list of post-adoption outreach, see Attachment C.14. See also http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/GLEHome.html. (EED website with extensive information and support materials for new standards).

I. Principle 2: Engagement of educators and their representatives in the development of Alaska's System of School Recognition, Accountability, and Support.

Summary: EED will base its recognition, accountability, and support for schools on an index and revised Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOs). The index was designed to be simple and responsive to public comment, and the accountability plan includes elements currently in State regulation that were adopted through a public process. EED publicized its proposed system, requested feedback from educators, and made changes in response to educator input.

Evidence:

(1) ***The Index.*** After the U.S. Department of Education (USED) announced the availability of Window 3, a team of EED staff drafted a proposed accountability framework based on an index of several indicators. The index, called the Alaska School Performance Index (ASPI), was designed to be easily understood and easily amended to facilitate stakeholder input. All indicators included in the ASPI are scored on a 100-point scale. Each indicator is then weighted by importance so that the total index equals 100 points. This methodology makes

it very easy for stakeholders to give input on: a) what indicators should be included; b) how to configure the 100-point scale by which an indicator is measured; and, c) the weight to be given each indicator.

(2) ***Use of existing state accountability.*** EED's proposal draws heavily from existing State accountability that educators already know and use. For example, the growth and proficiency index that will be used as the school progress indicator is in regulation at 4 AAC 33.540. This model is used in the current state identification of schools for state intervention, 4 AAC 06.872, and in identification of School Improvement Grant (SIG) grantees. Significantly, an education advocacy organization, Council for the Educational Advancement of Alaska's Children, specifically selected this model as the appropriate method to identify low-performing schools in the settlement of a lawsuit on educational adequacy, *Moore v. State,* Case No. 3AN-04-9756 CI. In addition, the diagnostics that will be applied to determine accountability after schools are ranked under ASPI, described in 4 AAC 06.850, already have been through the public comment process, and are used by educators in a variety of ways, including a computerized school improvement tool. In short, educators were consulted during the development of the pre-existing elements built into the proposal, and their familiarity with these elements has facilitated their understanding and feedback. (http://education.alaska.gov/news/releases/2012/state_settles_moore_lawsuit.pdf)

(3) ***Outreach to superintendents***. On July 30, 2012, during EED's summer conference for school district superintendents, EED provided an overview of the waiver's principles, and held breakout sessions and a Q&A session on the State's proposed accountability system. The superintendents asked questions and suggested changes. The first suggested change was to add an additional point value for attendance between 70% and 85%. This change was made. The other significant change was to incorporate ACT and SAT scores as well as scores for WorkKeys certificates into the College and Career Ready indicator. This change was incorporated into the ASPI index. Superintendents raised other questions that were addressed by including more specifics in the proposal language to clarify the requirements. Several superintendents voiced support for the proposed accountability system, and indicated that they and their staff would closely analyze the State's draft application. (See Attachments 2, C.6, and C.7)

(4) ***Outreach to educators regarding decision to apply***. On May 30, 2012, EED invited educators to participate in a webinar to address whether the State should apply for a waiver and possible ideas for a school performance index system. Representatives from eight districts participated in the webinar, and indicated support for the application and cautious support for the concept of using an index. (See Attachments C.4, and C.5)

(5) ***Outreach to districts regarding AMO freeze***. On May 31, 2012, EED notified school district superintendents and federal program coordinators that the State intended to apply to freeze the AMO targets in order to allow time to create an application for the flexibility waiver for the September submission date. Two comments were received, both in support of the AMO-freeze waiver. Because the decision to freeze the AMO targets required a regulation change, the concept went through a public process, including oral comment at two State Board meetings, and an opportunity to provide written comment. (See Attachments 1 and 2)

(6) ***Outreach to educators regarding application.*** EED posted a draft of the state's waiver application on its website on August 6, 2012. (Note: these webinars covered all three principles.) On August 3, 2012, EED sent an email invitation to a large number of stakeholder groups throughout the state to participate in one of three webinars scheduled during the week of August 13 to learn about the State's waiver proposal. The invited

stakeholders included school districts and education organizations. The webinars also were announced through *Information Exchange*. The State presented the draft proposal during webinars on August 13, August 15, and August 16, 2012. More than 25 participants attended the webinar, including staff from ten school districts.

(7) Planned Adoption. Revising regulations for Alaska's System of School Recognition, Accountability, and Support requires repealing current regulations that are required by ESEA. In anticipation of the approval of Alaska's waiver request, new regulations were proposed at the March 13 meeting of the Alaska State Board of Education and are currently out for public comment to allow adoption at the June 2013 meeting of Alaska's State Board of Education & Early Development. This timing is critical if new regulations are to go into effect for the 2013-2014 school year. Post-adoption outreach will include targeted involvement of stakeholders.

II. Principle 3: Engagement of educators and their representatives in the process of supporting effective instruction and leadership.

Summary: EED has been working for more than two years with educators to put into law a more extensive state framework for meaningful and serious evaluation of teachers and administrators. That framework meets the requirements of this application and is currently out for public comment.

Evidence:

(1) ***Pre-existing state guidance on teacher evaluation.*** In 1997, in response to legislation requiring school districts to base evaluations on standards adopted by the State Board, EED convened a professional evaluation project committee of educators, parents, NEA-Alaska, school board members, and others. The Evaluation Handbook, which resulted from this extensive consultation with educators, addressed many of the requirements of this application. (See Attachment 3.1)

(2) ***The Teacher Quality Working Group.*** Immediately after Alaska's 2009 Education Summit, EED formed the Teacher Quality Working Group to work on issues affecting teacher quality. A specific task set to the group in 2009 was to provide input and consult on providing a statewide framework for teacher and administrator evaluation.

- ***Membership:*** the working group consisted of 42 members, 33 of whom were educators, former educators, or school district employees. Of special note are the following educators:
  - Five educators from rural Alaska, including the State's rural education director. These educators provided input on both the Alaska Native subgroup and the English learner subgroup.
  - Two special education teachers.
  - The program coordinator for University of Alaska Southeast Special Education Teacher Preparation Program.
  - Representative from NEA-Alaska.
  - Representative from the Alaska Council of School Administrators.
  - Higher education participation—the five deans from Alaska university education departments. (See Attachment 3.2)
- ***Meetings:*** The working group met 13 times for a total of 28 days to work on the evaluation system, beginning on November 4-6, 2009, and ending on April 16-17,

2012. (See Attachment 3.3)

- ***Product.*** The working group produced a set of recommendations for an evaluation framework, including timelines for implementation and minimum requirements for the inclusion of student data in evaluations. (See Attachment 3.4)

(3) ***Draft regulations.*** Based on the recommendations from the working group, EED staff drafted proposed evaluation regulations for the State Board to consider. The draft regulations were on the agenda for June 7-8 meeting of the State Board, and the public had an opportunity to comment at an oral hearing. On June 8, 2012, the State Board put out the proposed regulations for public comment. To encourage educator comment, the State Board extended public comment to November 2012, in recognition that summer and early fall is a difficult time to engage educators. As described above, both EED staff and the State Board analyzed and considered public comment during the regulation adoption process. (See Attachment 3.6)

(4) ***August Webinars/superintendents' conference.*** The presentations on the entire waiver package made at the August webinars and the superintendents' conference were described above and will not be repeated here. Both of these presentations included a description of Principle 3 and both resulted in feedback on Principle 3.

(5) ***Adoption.*** Since the filing of the original application, regulations have been adopted. The regulatory process involved extensive engagement of stakeholders and resulted in many significant substantive changes that were adopted into law on December 7, 2012, by the State Board. Post-adoption outreach and engagement has already begun, with distribution of information concerning the new requirements through the department's website, http://education.alaska.gov/, and the Information Exchange, its electronic newsletter. The department has developed an FAQ that has been emailed to all district superintendents and is available online at http://education.alaska.gov/TeacherCertification/pdf/evaluation_reg_faqs.pdf. The FAQ will be sent directly to administrators, teachers, and their state organizations. A specific webpage has been established to house resources that districts can use as they begin to update their current evaluation to satisfy the new requirements.
With the assistance of the Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center, EED has reorganized and reconvened the Teacher Quality Working Group to assist with the formation of the more detailed guidelines, the development of tools to support smaller districts, and the development of a peer review process.

2. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes.

I. General outreach common to all principles:

Summary: EED reached out to a diverse group of stakeholders to present information and encourage feedback on all principles related to the waiver. The stakeholders included the Title I Committee of Practitioners (COP) and a large number of community, business, Alaska Native, and advocacy groups.

(1) ***Title I Committee of Practitioners.*** The Title I/ESEA Administrator for Alaska presented the ESEA flexibility waiver options to the Title I COP on April 18, 2012. The

three principles of the waiver and the State's current status on elements of the principles were discussed. At that time, the proposed English/language arts and mathematics content standards were out for public comment and scheduled for adoption in June. The Teacher Quality Working Group was working on proposed changes to the teacher and principal evaluation regulations to be presented to the State Board in June. The requirements for Principle 2 were presented to the committee, but no specific ideas for a new accountability system were presented at that time. Most members who expressed opinions supported the State's intention to apply for a flexibility waiver, but they were interested in seeing the specifics that would be proposed. Subsequently, the Title I/ESEA administrator presented the draft waiver document to the COP members for their review and held a meeting by webinar on August 20, 2012. The members made comments about the draft proposal at that meeting. Comments were supportive overall for the State's waiver application. The PowerPoint presentation to the COP and the notes of both meetings can be found in the attachments. (See Attachments C.1, C.2, and C.3)

(2) ***Notice to districts and the public.*** Notice to school districts regarding the waiver application, and an invitation to all stakeholders to participate in the August 2012 information webinars, was provided on August 3, 2012, through an email announcement, through *Information Exchange,* and through postings on EED's website. EED sent invitations to participate in the webinars to 62 entities, including Alaska PTA; advocates for rural education, early education and children with disabilities; Alaska Native organizations; K-12 school administrators; NEA-Alaska; universities; career and technical programs; the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development; the Alaska Municipal League; and teachers' content-area associations. More than 25 participants joined the webinars. A recorded webinar was posted on the web for individuals who were not able to participate in the live webinars. EED received written public comment either by letter or through the online public comment form from several Alaska school districts, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, Citizens for the Educational Advancement of Alaska's Children, a representative in the Alaska Legislature, Alaska's commissioner at-large to the Education Commission of the States, and University of Alaska representatives. EED received oral feedback at the webinars or during in-person presentations. Comments relating to specific principles will be addressed in each applicable section below. (See Attachments 3 and C.8, C.9, C.10, C.11, C.12 & C.13)

II. Principle 1: Engagement of diverse communities in the standards-setting process.

Summary: In adopting college- and career-ready standards, EED extensively consulted with representatives of business, industry, special education advocacy groups, and Alaska Native organizations.

Evidence:

(1) ***Solicitation of diverse group participation in drafting standards.*** In the standards-drafting process described earlier, EED solicited diverse group participation by sending approximately 125 invitations to non-educators, including Native American groups, special education advocacy groups, and others. Because of the time commitment needed for the process, however, only one non-educator, a representative of the transportation industry, actually participated. (See Attachments C.17)

(2) ***Business and industry presentations.*** After the draft college- and career-ready standards were ready to circulate to the public, EED held four public meetings in regional hubs that were targeted to business and industry, as follows: March 30, 2012, Juneau; April 9, 2012, Anchorage; April 24, 2012, Fairbanks; and April 25, 2012 Bethel. Representatives from the following business/industry sectors attended the meetings: oil industry; labor unions; retail; tourism; hospitality; insurance; fisheries; education/training (as employers); tribal corporations; banking, and resource development. Each meeting included individuals who worked with new entrants to the workforce, either through making hiring decisions or training individuals to be ready for the workforce. The meetings focused on the business community's expectations for high school graduates, and provided a review of the proposed Alaska college- and career-ready standards, including how those standards would address business expectations. (See Attachments C.18 and C.19)

(3) ***Community open houses.*** After the working groups had produced a draft of the new standards (but before the first presentation to the State Board), EED held four community open houses to introduce and seek feedback on the proposed standards. The open houses were held in the following communities: March 30, 2012, Juneau; April 9, 2012, Palmer; April 24, 2012, Fairbanks; and April 25, 2012, Bethel. EED chose the communities to provide access to regional hubs representing multiple cultures. EED held the community meetings in the evening to facilitate community participation, and provided food. Each open house included conversations about accommodations for students with disabilities and for English learners. Participants in each location focused on the importance of respecting cultural differences and including cultural awareness in the Alaska career- and college-ready standards. EED's solicitation of attendees was a major effort. For example, for the March 2012 meeting in Juneau, EED placed an online ad on the front page of the *Juneau Empire* newspaper; interviewed with KINY radio station; inserted a notice in *Information Exchange*; sent an electronic news release to the media and to a list of recipients that included the disability law center and several Native Alaska organizations; placed posters at City Hall; and notified the Juneau School District, the University of Alaska Southeast, the Central Council Tlingit Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, and the Juneau Chamber of Commerce. (See Attachments C.19 and C.20)

(4) ***Outreach to EL and Alaska Natives.*** The Bethel community meeting was held at the Yuut Elitnaurviat Center, which translates from Yup'ik as the People's Learning Center. EED met with former graduates, students, parents and employers that use this regional vocational campus. (See Attachment C.20)

(5) ***Availability of parent-focused brochures.*** EED will publicize and make available parent guides at each grade level from K-8 and one guide each for high school English/language arts and mathematics.

(6) ***Regulation-adoption process.*** As described earlier, the State Board's process for adoption of the college- and career-ready standards provided for inclusive advertising and outreach to all sectors of the public. For the standards regulations, EED's solicitations for public comment went well beyond the normal solicitation. More than 98 entities were specifically targeted including:

- More than 22 business and industry groups (construction, oil, fishery, health care, etc.);
- Alaska PTA;
- State and local Chambers of Commerce;
- Rotary;
- Higher education;

- Alaska Federation of Natives and Association of Village Council Presidents;
- Special education advocates, including Disability Law Center and the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education;
- Early learning entities;
- Regional Native corporations; and
- Tribal organizations.

(7) ***FAQs.*** The FAQs on the proposed college- and career-ready standards that EED distributed during the public comment period (described above in Question 1, Part I) were distributed to Alaska Native tribal corporations and organizations, advocates for children with disabilities, advocates for early education, major employers, the AFL-CIO, the Alaska PTA, NEA-Alaska, industry associations, chambers of commerce, Rotaries, the Alaska Municipal League, and K-12 education associations. Also as noted earlier, EED made more than 300 changes to its proposed standards as a result of stakeholder (educator and non-educator) input during the standards-drafting and adoption process.

(8) ***August 2012 webinars.*** EED's August 2012 webinars are described in more detail in the previous section and the next section under Principle 2. Participants were also encouraged to consult on Principle 1. As explained below, invitations to participate were extended to EL and special education advocacy groups, as well as Alaska Native organizations.

III. Principle 2: Engagement of diverse communities in the development of Alaska's System of School Recognition, Accountability, and Support.

Summary: EED solicited diverse community comment on the proposed system of school recognition, accountability, and support, through the web, email, the media, and webinars.

Evidence:

(1) ***Solicitation of public comment.*** EED posted a link to Alaska's ESEA Flexibility Wavier Information under the "News and Announcements" section of its homepage (http://education.alaska.gov/). EED opened a comments page on its website on July 30, 2012, to gather feedback from the public. (https://education.alaska.gov/Surveys/Esea/FlexibilityWaiverComments). PowerPoint presentations on the key elements of the state's proposal for Principles 1, 2, and 3 were posted on the website on August 2, 2012, to allow the public to review the key elements of the plan (http://education.alaska.gov/nclb/esea.html). A draft copy of the state's proposal was posted on the website on August 6, 2012. (These postings sought comment on all three principles. However, given that principles one and three had been through extensive public comment and webinars already, the expectation was that Principle 2, which was new to the public, would receive the most attention.) (See Attachments 3, C.3, C.4, C.5, C.6, C.7 and C.8)

(2) ***August 2012 Webinars.*** The three August 2012 webinars (in which the public was invited to comment on all aspects of the waiver application) have been described. EED emailed invitations to participate to 62 entities, including Alaska PTA; advocates for rural education, early education, and children with disabilities; Alaska Native organizations; K-12 school administrators; NEA-Alaska; universities; career and technical programs; the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development; the Alaska Municipal League; and teachers' content-area associations.

(3) ***Regulations adoption process.*** As described earlier, the freezing of the AMOs required a

public process to amend the regulations, which included invitations to, and provided several opportunities for, the public to comment, including the diverse groups that are listed in this application. If this waiver application is accepted, EED will need to adopt regulations to implement Principle 2. This will provide several additional opportunities for public comment.

(4) ***Comments received.*** Comments about the proposed accountability system were positive overall, especially in the use of a school progress factor in addition to a student achievement factor, and the use of multiple indicators that focus on realistic factors for schools in Alaska. Comments indicated that the system was a "vast improvement" over the current law, and it is a "well-designed formula for including a variety of indicators into a numeric school rating." Several comments specifically referred to the recognition for reward schools. Some comments indicated that there was a lack of clarity between the use of the Alaska School Performance Index system and the use of the AMOs, so the proposal language has been clarified to address those issues.

IV. Principle 3: Engagement of diverse communities in the process of supporting effective instruction and leadership.

Summary: EED's partnerships on teacher quality included community organizations. Community organization input has been encouraged through webinars and the regulations adoption process.

Evidence:

(1) ***The Teacher Quality Working Group.*** The extensive meeting and consultation process involving the Teacher Quality Working Group in the preparation of the State evaluation framework (which is now the basis for Principle 3) has been described already. In addition to the educator members, the working group included four community representatives. EED made special care to include representative from the Alaska Native community. In addition to the Native Alaskan educators already discussed, the working group included representatives from Cook Inlet Tribal Council – a tribal organization providing services to Alaska Natives in the greater Anchorage/Cook Inlet region – and from Kawerak, Inc., an Alaska Native tribal association of 20 Bering Strait Native villages. As stated earlier, Alaska Natives constitute the largest sector of English learner (EL) students in Alaska. (See Attachment 3.2)

(2) ***August 2012 webinars.*** EED's 2012 August webinars are described in more detail under Principle 2. EED encouraged participants to consult on Principle 3. As explained in the previous section, invitations to participate were extended to EL and special education advocacy groups, as well as Alaska Native organizations.

(3) ***Regulations adoption and notice process.*** The State Board has opened a period of public comment on regulations that would adopt an evaluation framework. The state public comment/consultation process for regulations has been thoroughly described in this application already. As stated, diverse groups are invited to and do participate in the process, and EED staff and the State Board will consider all comments. (See Attachment 3.5)

EVALUATION

The Department encourages an SEA that receives approval to implement the flexibility to collaborate with the Department to evaluate at least one program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs implement under principle 1, 2, or 3. Upon receipt of approval of the flexibility, an interested SEA will need to nominate for evaluation a program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs will implement under principles 1, 2, or 3. The Department will work with the SEA to determine the feasibility and design of the evaluation and, if it is determined to be feasible and appropriate, will fund and conduct the evaluation in partnership with the SEA, ensuring that the implementation of the chosen program, practice, or strategy is consistent with the evaluation design.

☐ Check here if you are interested in collaborating with the Department in this evaluation, if your request for the flexibility is approved.

OVERVIEW OF SEA'S REQUEST FOR THE ESEA FLEXIBILITY

Provide an overview (about 500 words) of the SEA's request for the flexibility that:

1. explains the SEA's comprehensive approach to implement the waivers and principles and describes the SEA's strategy to ensure this approach is coherent within and across the principles; and

2. describes how the implementation of the waivers and principles will enhance the SEA's and its LEAs' ability to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement.

Alaska is a state of contrasts. It is the largest state, with a very small population. It is a young state with a long history of indigenous cultures. It is a land of opportunity that faces extreme climatic and geographic conditions. Although Alaska delivers educational services to remote villages and modern urban population centers, we demand first-class educational opportunity for all children.

Two themes running throughout this application illustrate Alaska's comprehensive and coherent approach to school improvement: 1) effective school improvement must be based on ***diagnostics***—there must be an understanding of what is wrong before we can improve; and 2) effective school improvement must be based on ***stakeholder involvement***—there must be buy-in and participation from all participants in education if we are to improve.

In addition, Alaska has learned the benefit of simplicity. Although our sister states have devised very impressive accountability systems, we have avoided the dizzying array of complicated statistics in favor of a system that everyone can understand.

Our approach to the principles in this application adheres to these themes. Alaska did not adopt the Common Core State Standards but embarked on a two-and-a-half-year process of having stakeholders develop challenging college- and career-ready standards. The result is English language arts and mathematics standards similar in rigor and complexity to the Common Core, but that have Alaska-specific components and stakeholder buy-in. Following several meetings and analysis of its options, Alaska began the process of joining the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) in August, 2012. On August 17, 2012, SBAC's Executive Council met and recommended that SBAC discuss with USED the inclusion of Alaska as a member. EED provided evidence to the SBAC leadership showing that the Alaska's new English/language arts and mathematics standards are well-aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Alaska joined the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) on April 19, 2013, for implementation of new assessments in 2014-2015 that will be aligned to Alaska's college- and career-ready standards.

Subsequent to the approval of the initial ESEA Flexibility Waiver, Alaska solicited Requests for Proposals (RFP) through a public bid process beginning in August 2013. The request sought options for a comprehensive assessment system that aligned with Alaska's English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards and met the unique needs of a full scale assessment system in a state with geographical challenges and a high number of small schools. The Request for Proposals (RFP) included options for custom-developed assessments, commercially available, published or vendor-owned assessments. No proposals were received that included services in support of an assessment from either consortium. Through analysis of the responses to that RFP, Alaska selected Achievement and Assessment Institute (AAI) to provide a complete assessment system and withdrew its membership in SBAC.

In revising its accountability model, Alaska has included measures that will give feedback and incentives to schools and students, including a strong incentive for growth, attendance, and graduation. We revised the AMOs to expect fifty-percent reduction in percent proficient in six years, including all subgroups. In determining consequences and State support, we will continue to employ the diagnostic tools we have developed and refined with the assistance of the Alaska Comprehensive Center.

Alaska is ahead of the curve on ensuring effective instruction and leadership. A teacher quality working group has been meeting for more two years to devise new standards for teacher and administrator evaluation, and this process has resulted in new regulations that are out for an extended period of public comment.

The flexibility in these waivers is crucial for Alaska's school improvement agenda, both on a state level and a school-district level. Without the waivers, we would continue to be trapped in a cycle of identification and corrective action that has lost credibility, causes unnecessary expense and poor use of resources, and makes no sense for many of Alaska's remote single-site K-12 schools. Although Alaska would urge USED to consider additional flexibility and amendments to make the law better-suited to the needs of school improvement in Alaska, the flexibility in use of resources and the identification of focus and priority schools offered by these waivers are significant improvements. Accordingly, we ask that USED grant the flexibility requested in this application.

PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

1.A ADOPT COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

Option A	**Option B**
☐ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a significant number of States, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards. i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)	☒ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that have been approved and certified by a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs), consistent with part (2) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards. i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4) ii. Attach a copy of the memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of IHEs certifying that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level. (Attachment 5)

1.B TRANSITION TO COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Provide the SEA's plan to transition to and implement no later than the 2013–2014 school year college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and schools and include an explanation of how this transition plan is likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with such standards. The Department encourages an SEA to include in its plan activities related to each of the italicized questions in the corresponding section of the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance for Window 3*, or to explain why one or more of those activities is not necessary to its plan.

- *Does the SEA intend to analyze the extent of alignment between the State's current content standards and the college- and career-ready standards to determine similarities and differences between those two sets of standards? If so, will the results be used to inform the transition to college- and career-ready standards?*

The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (EED) worked with stakeholders to develop the state's new college- and career-ready English/language arts and mathematics standards in grades kindergarten through 12. http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/2012AKStandards.html. The stakeholders used the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as the lens through which to examine Alaska's previous standards and revise them. This work was conducted over 18 months and included a study by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) of the alignment of Alaska's college- and career-ready standards with the CCSS (See Attachment 1.1).

Following an extended period of public comment and further revisions to the proposed Alaska standards, the State Board of Education & Early Development (State Board) adopted them in June 2012.

To help Alaska's teachers and students transition to Alaska's college- and career-ready standards, EED has developed a comparison tool that analyzes the commonalities and differences between Alaska's new standards and its former standards, the Fourth Edition Grade Level Expectations.

- *Does the SEA intend to analyze the linguistic demands of the State's college- and career-ready standards to inform the development of ELP standards corresponding to the college- and career-ready standards and to ensure that English Learners will have the opportunity to achieve to the college- and career-ready standards? If so, will the results be used to inform revision of the ELP standards and support English Learners in accessing the college- and career-ready standards on the same schedule as all students?*

As a member of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium (WIDA), Alaska adopted new English Language Proficient (ELP) standards in 2011 based on the WIDA consortium standards. WIDA enlisted an independent research group to conduct an alignment study of its ELP standards and the CCSS (http://www.wida.us/Research/agenda/Alignment/index.aspx). Results, released in March 2011, indicate strong alignment between the WIDA ELP standards and the CCSS for English/language arts and mathematics. Because of the overwhelming similarities between the CCSS and the Alaska college- and career-ready standards, this work will benefit English learners (EL) in Alaska by providing school districts the WIDA-Access Placement Test, which may be used as a screener for identification purposes. These tools provide measures for assessing how well English learners are learning content needed to fully understand the State's academic standards. This data then is used to guide instruction and supports for students.

EED conducted further training in September 2012 at the annual Test Coordinators Conference, where instruction on delivery, procedure and administration of all tests were addressed.

In addition to the assessment tools, EED, in conjunction with WIDA, provided English Language Development Standards training for school districts on September 26 and 27, 2012, via webinar and live training on November 27 and 28, 2012, in Anchorage. On November 9 and 10, 2012, EL content educators and curriculum development personnel attended the EED-sponsored Curriculum and Alignment Institute in Anchorage to facilitate further understanding on implementing Alaska's college- and career-ready standards.

- *Does the SEA intend to analyze the learning and accommodation factors necessary to ensure that students*

with disabilities will have the opportunity to achieve to the college- and career-ready standards? If so, will the results be used to support students with disabilities in accessing the college- and career-ready standards on the same schedule as all students?

EED uses the Special Education Annual Performance Reporting measures for tracking data, and conducts detailed analysis with this collected data. EED conducts stakeholder sessions twice annually to review the meaning of data results and to develop a plan to best implement the data results to school districts. Factors that were directly tied to the opportunity to achieve college- and career-ready levels are tied to indicators 1-Graduation Rates, 2-Dropout rates and 13-Secondary transition. This information, complemented by the implementation of new Alaska standards, provides the framework to developing student plans at the individual level.

School districts with high performance rates model in other districts with similar demographics, in an effort to replicate success rates while allowing for individual district considerations. College- and career-ready standards are the same for students with disabilities. Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) contain goals that must be aligned to the State content standards, and which are monitored for compliance by EED's Special Education Team. Students with disabilities have access to extensive accommodations to empower students to achieve State standards through the IEP, as well as supports and teaching specifically designed to the students' disability.

Training on the college- and career-ready standards is being accomplished statewide through a variety of venues. Within special education, the primary effort is conducted in a statewide special education director's training. Because of Alaska's relatively small number of school districts (54), gathering the special education directors for an annual meeting was manageable and provided a time for individualized district support. This meeting, which addressed implementing the new standards, was held on September 27-28, 2012. Further technical assistance will be offered through personal contact provided through the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) funded by the Office of Special Education Programs.

Through the SPDG, Alaska is supporting and preparing teachers of students with disabilities. This is a multi-tiered response-to-intervention framework that facilitates high-quality core instruction for students with disabilities and other students as identified, by partnering with the University of Alaska Fairbanks to mentor early-career teachers of students with disabilities and special education directors. Furthermore, the grant provides for early childhood Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention-trained Positive Behavioral Intervention Support coaches in Alaska school districts.

With the development of the new college- and career-ready standards, the current assessment measures for student with disabilities may require additional supports and considerations. The State's current assessment procedures have very specific guidelines for accommodations, modifications, and alternate assessments. EED makes available to school districts training and support to all teachers and administrators to ensure students have appropriate measures in place for assessment under the college- and career-ready standards.

EED conducts training through conferences, presentations, and webinars as well as through one-on-one technical assistance as geographic and financial circumstances allow. Training is conducted from the perspective of how the new standards best support all students to achieve college and

career readiness. Frameworks and instructional supports are presented with specific consideration on how the new standards will impact students with disabilities.

- *Does the SEA intend to conduct outreach on and dissemination of the college- and career-ready standards? If so, does the SEA's plan reach the appropriate stakeholders, including educators, administrators, families, and IHEs? Is it likely that the plan will result in all stakeholders increasing their awareness of the State's college- and career-ready standards?*

To ensure that all education stakeholders in Alaska are knowledgeable regarding Alaska's college- and career-ready standards, EED will use a phased approach. The Phased Transition Plan provides educators of all students the opportunity to become aware of the Alaska standards, transition to their use, and prepare their students to be assessed on the standards. (See Attachment 1.2)

The Phased Transition Plan builds awareness of the college- and career-ready standards through an awareness campaign and tools to support transition. Transition tools will provide support for curriculum alignment and instruction in the standards; implementation tools will enable educators to fully implement the standards while offering continued support for instruction of students. The timeline below is a result of a commitment to stakeholders to be thoughtful and intentional in the transition process.

- January 2013: Complete an awareness campaign that began during the standards adoption process using tools to support districts in the effort
- 2013-2014 school year: Provide support for curriculum alignment and changes in instructional practices to the new standards with the expectation that all districts will begin implementation of the new standards.
- 2014-2015 school year: Continue support for instruction in the new standards with the expectation that all students in all grades and/or content area are receiving instruction linked to the new standards.
- 2015-2016 school year: Continue support for instruction in the new standards with expectations that all students are receiving instruction linked to the new standards.

Understanding that school districts will implement Alaska's college- and career-ready standards at varied rates, EED has provided a plan for the transition in a phased roll-out plan as outlined below:

Phase I: Awareness
The awareness phase has involved, and will continue to involve, presentations at meetings and a series of awareness webinars for key stakeholders including families and community members. A webpage with resources/activities/information related to the college- and career ready standards will be available to all community members, parents, school district personnel, teachers, and all other stakeholder groups.

The literacy and mathematics content specialists are providing outreach on, and dissemination of, the college- and career-ready standards to education providers and stakeholders, including the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project, the Alaska Administrator Coaching Project, the Statewide System of Support coaches, the Teacher Quality Working Group, and EED's Teaching and Learning Support Education teams who liaison with school districts in a variety of Federal and State programs. These collaborative efforts are further described throughout Principle 1, 2 and 3.

Other steps in the awareness campaign include:

- printing and distribution of the college- and career-ready Alaska standards in English/language arts and mathematics, and distribution of parent and teacher guides and publications for the standards;
- webinar series for school district leaders, principals, teachers, educational organizations, professional development providers, community members and parents that will be archived and retrievable on demand;
- presentations at the Annual Association of School Administrators/EED Summer Meeting in July 2012 and Professional Development (Title II) competitive grant technical assistance meetings in September 18-20 and 24-26, 2012, in Anchorage; and
- presentations during the 2012-2013 school year at the Association of Alaska School Boards winter board membership academy, Alaska Elementary and Secondary Principals Conference, Alaska PTA Conference, and the NEA-AK Delegate Assembly and Professional Development Conference.

Content specialists will collaborate with content teacher leader organizations such as the Alaska State Literacy Association and the Alaska Council of Teachers of Mathematics to coordinate efforts of awareness of the college- and career-ready standards. EED, with the Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council, will work with content specialists to provide information about the standards. EED will provide business and community awareness through presentations to the State Board of Education & Early Development (State Board), Alaska Workforce Development Board, Alaska Legislature, Chamber of Commerce and community organizations.

Phase II: Transition
In preparation for the transition to the college- and career-ready standards, EED conducted a comprehensive crosswalk in English/language arts and mathematics to determine the comparisons between the state's former content standards and the new standards. The crosswalk documents are available on EED's website at (http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/2012comparison.html). The crosswalk was designed to be a tool for school districts to become familiar with the new standards in relationship to the former content standards and Grade Level Expectations.

The transition phase of the college- and career-ready standards will include State-sponsored professional development for teachers and administrators. Content specialists are developing tools to be used by school districts and teachers during the transition phase. During the spring of 2013, EED will continue to build the capacity for statewide implementation of the new standards by providing ongoing State-sponsored professional development opportunities, including workshops and online training webinars.

For the past several years, EED has hosted two Curriculum Alignment Institutes, at which time teams from school districts and EED worked on aligning district curricula to State standards. During the 2012-2013 school year, EED will host institutes focusing on helping districts align their curricula with the new standards. (See Attachment 1.6)

Phase III: Implementation
The third phase is the full implementation of the college- and career-ready standards. EED will

continue to provide support through 2013-2014 for curriculum alignment and changes in instructional practices to enable full implementation of the new standards which will be assessed in 2014-2015. A portion of this phase will consist of field test questions aligned to the standards on the spring 2013 state assessment. The results of these field tested questions will be used to plan future professional development for teachers in their instructional practices.

An additional activity of this phase includes the piloting of tools for use as early as 2013-2014 school year for principals and building leaders to evaluate the quality of standards implementation at the classroom level. Please see the complete description of the activity later in this principle.

- *Does the SEA intend to provide professional development and other supports to prepare teachers to teach all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, to the new standards? If so, will the planned professional development and supports prepare teachers to teach to the new standards, use instructional materials aligned with those standards, and use data on multiple measures of student performance (e.g., data from formative, benchmark, and summative assessments) to inform instruction?*

EED has developed a multi-dimensional professional development plan to support all teachers. Included in this plan are webinar series, presentations, and collaborative efforts as outlined in the Standards Professional Development Timeline. Because of the geography, cost of travel from remote areas, and isolation of a large number of the schools in Alaska, a significant portion of the professional development plan uses distance delivery as the venue. (See attachment 1.3)

One dimension of this plan is the collaborative efforts of EED's Special Education team, NCLB Title I and III teams, assessment team, and literacy and mathematics content specialists to offer webinar series and conferences to train teachers of all students with specific emphasis on English language learners and students with disabilities.

The Limited English Proficient (LEP) Title III program and the Assessment Office developed a series of webinars available to all teachers on the Amplified English Language Development Standards and how they fit into instruction in the general education classroom. EED sponsored two professional development workshops in October, 2012 on Academic Language in the Content Areas of Mathematics and Science: Skills and Strategies to Adapt Instruction for English Language Learners. Workshops were held in Palmer and Fairbanks, and EED invited teachers from other districts in the state to participate in these workshops. Additional sessions are planned for the 2013-2014 academic year on Alaska content and English Language Development Standards.

EED's Special Education team and content specialists are working to achieve the goal of making the college- and career-ready standards accessible to all students, including students with disabilities, by using resources available through memberships to the State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards Assessing Special Education Students (ASES) and the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) consortium, through the Office of Special Education Programs, which provide technical assistance to teachers and directors.

Alaska is a member of both collaborative organizations. These enterprises address the inclusion of students with disabilities in large-scale standards, assessments, and accountability systems.

A second dimension of the professional development plan is to conduct training at annual state conferences. During the 2012-2013 school year, the literacy and mathematics content specialists conducted training workshops for teachers at the following professional development conferences held in Alaska each year: Special Education, Career and Technical Education, and Alaska Society for Technology in Education. During the 2013-2014 school year, content specialists conducted training for teachers at the biennial Mathematics/Science, Literacy, and Bilingual Multicultural and Education Equity conferences.

The final dimension of the professional development plan is to conduct State-sponsored opportunities for educators of all children. EED will sponsor the Literacy Institute, Transforming K-8 Mathematics Instruction Institute, and Curriculum Alignment Institute to help ensure all teachers have the supports needed to teach to the college- and career-ready standards. Additionally, EED content specialists will collaborate with teacher leader content consortia and organizations such as the Alaska State Literacy Association and Alaska Council of Teachers of Mathematics to ensure the college- and career-ready standards are being addressed in their statewide professional development efforts.

EED is continuing to work on building capacity with districts and schools to prepare teachers to teach English learners to the new standards. To date, EED has provided four opportunities for professional development on the implementation of the new WIDA English Language Proficiency/English Language Development Standards beginning in spring 2011 through fall 2012. EED provided districts with printed copies of the new standards. EED reimbursed district personnel to attend the face-to-face training sessions. EED worked with WIDA to provide a live webinar on the new ELP standards. The webinar was recorded and posted on WIDA's website: http://www.wida.us/. EED has provided two face-to-face annual trainings to districts on administering the new ACCESS for ELLs assessment. Districts were provided training and a binder containing comprehensive program information on the following: identification of limited English proficient (LEP) students according to Federal and State regulations; recent research on accommodating English language learners (ELL); accommodations for ELLs for content assessments; accommodations for ELLs with disabilities for the ELP assessment; PowerPoint presentations for each day of training; ACCESS test administration manuals; ACCESS score report interpretation information; training on administration of ACCESS; and navigation of the WIDA website with instructional and assessment information.

EED has provided a face-to-face training in Anchorage with WIDA professional development staff for administration of the identification screener, the W-APT.

WIDA and EED worked collaboratively to provide live webinars to be recorded and posted to WIDA's website (all are posted here: http://www.wida.us/downloadLibrary.aspx). The specific webinars are listed below:

- ELP/ELD Standards and Alaska's new ELA/mathematics standards training live webinar.
- Interpreting ACCESS for ELLs Score Reports live webinar.
- ACCESS test administration review live webinar.
- Alternate ACCESS for ELLs live webinar – December 18, 2012.

An audio call with districts focusing on how to process and return test materials for scoring and reporting was completed.

Several projects were conducted collaboratively with the Alaska Comprehensive Center and specialists at the George Washington University to produce documents that support districts through professional development for ELL staff: http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/elp.html.

EED worked with the Alaska Comprehensive Center and specialists at the George Washington University to do the following:

- Conduct studies on the latest research on accommodations that are responsive to the needs of ELLs.
- Form a committee to help create a list of new accommodations for Alaska ELLs that were found to be ELL-responsive.
- Develop a '*Testing Accommodations Manual for Limited English Proficient Students*' for districts – posted at EED's website.
- Develop a PowerPoint and live webinar, provided by EED to Alaska's districts, on the use of the new ELL accommodations list and the use of the manual – posted at EED's website.
- Provide teacher specific tools for ELL accommodations -- posted at EED's website and within the *Testing Accommodations Manual for Limited English Proficient Students.*

EED has developed several documents that districts can use for tracking and monitoring the use of ELL accommodations for testing. These documents are provided in Word so they can be modified according to the district's needs.

EED has developed the *Translation Guidance for ELLs* document with specialists at the George Washington University to support teachers and districts with translation of directions for assessments: http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/accommodations.html. This project was supported by the Alaska Comprehensive Center.

Specialists at the George Washington University developed an *LEP Student Supplement to DIASA Handbook,* with direction from EED and sponsored by the Alaska Comprehensive Center, to assist districts in accessing student performance data in a way that is beneficial and informative.

The annual Bilingual Multicultural Education/Equity Conference will take place in fall 2013. There are three days of workshops and professional development designed to increase capacity in districts to improve skills of teachers of ELLs. Several planned sessions and conversations will focus on the new standards and the roles of teachers working with ELLs.

The English Language Proficiency (Title III) working group meets yearly to discuss practice, policy, planning and implementation for meeting Alaska's annual measureable achievement objectives. The group convened in 2011 to plan district implementation of the newly adopted ELP assessment. In September 2012 for the initial phase of the Bridge Study linking IPT and ACCESS assessments, it met with WIDA Research Director Gary Cook. The group will again convene in September of 2013.

The Title III program will continue to host professional development opportunities in regional locations of Alaska to support effective content and English language development of ELLs. (Such as the 2012 October workshops on math and science for ELLs). These workshops are being planned with the input of the Title III ELL Working Group as a result of the ELL Needs Assessment Survey distributed to districts in December 2012). PRIME correlation (Protocol Review of Instructional Materials for ELLs) training of district curriculum specialists is under consideration for spring 2013.

EED is continuing to work on building capacity with districts and schools to prepare teachers to teach students with disabilities to the new standards. In order to ensure districts are capable of meeting the requirements of the new standards, EED has provided professional development (PD) training to all district special education directors. This PD includes information on the new standards and instruction on how to access the standards and support materials on the state web site. Specific instruction is provided in applying the new state standards to ensuring students with disabilities have access to college and career ready standards. Additionally, the EED's special education section has provided webinars open to all districts on the State special education handbook. The State's model Individualized Education Program (IEP) form has been updated to include a drop down listing of State standards. All PD involving the State special education handbook and the State special education forms include instruction on implementing the new standards specifically pertaining to special education. As part of the special education monitoring for Federal compliance, monitoring standard 5.08 requires goals on the student's IEP to be aligned to State standards. EED requires non-compliant districts to provide training on the requirement to align goals to the State's standards. This professional development must be documented and provided to EED for verification. Each of these activities support and assist districts with the implementation of the new State standards.

In order to facilitate building capacity, there will be multiple opportunities for PD involving the new State standards at the Alaska State Special Education Conference (ASSEC). The annual Alaska State Special Education Conference (ASSEC) was held February 2013 (www.assec.org). This is a primary source for professional development in Alaska for special education teachers and special educators. EED annually conducts a 2-day, 1-credit class at ASSEC for new special education teachers. EED has developed special education e-learning modules to provide training for teachers and paraprofessionals, and the EED special education team conducts monthly webinars for special education personnel. EED's special education section routinely supports districts concerning the implications of the new standards specific to special education on a one-to-one basis through providing technical assistance via telephone and email. All district-level training and information pertaining to general education teachers applies to special education teachers. A general session covering all aspects of the State special education handbook included covering how the new standards apply to the alignment with special education goals. New standards information, web resources and timelines for implementation were included in this training. It is noteworthy to point out that special education teachers are required to participate in all district activities designed for all teachers including training conducted concerning the district's application of the new standards.

Training specific to the application of Alaska's new college- and career-ready standards has been implemented with Alaska's special education directors, as well as presentations at the Alaska State Special Education Conference (ASSEC). Stakeholder groups associated with the Federal Annual

Performance Report and State Performance Plan have received training on implementing the new standards and have discussed how this will affect Alaska's students with disabilities. Through these efforts, each Alaskan district's special education director has had instruction in the new standards and the opportunity to comment.

Strategies that focus on the needs of specific groups of students are planned. To address the needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities, Alaska has joined the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) consortium. DLM is developing a new system of supports including end-of-year summative assessments and instructionally embedded assessments, instructionally relevant items and professional development to help students with significant cognitive disabilities leave high school ready for postsecondary options. DLM's system includes items and tasks which can be embedded in daily instruction and are aligned to the Alaska CCR ELA and Math standards. Information and resources from DLM will be shared with special education educators and directors at the annual Special Education Director's Conference and Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference. Information about DLM is available at this link: http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/alternate.html.

EED has revised the Participation Guidelines and Accessibility and Accommodations guidance to reflect the changes with the AMP and DLM assessments. EED will continue to analyze the learning and accommodation factors necessary to ensure that students with disabilities have the opportunity to access learning content aligned with Alaska's new standards. EED makes it a priority to help all teachers understand their responsibility to serve these students and to empower teachers by embedding differentiated strategies that benefit students with disabilities, as well as all other students.

As a DLM partner state, Alaska has convened stakeholders -- including district special education supervisors, special education teachers, EED staff, and advocacy groups -- to participate in the focus on professional development. Additionally, Alaska will have access to work done by other states in assessment, curriculum and instruction.

Alaska recognizes the role of teacher preparation programs in developing the next generation of educators. Alaska has taken specific steps to bring higher education into the transition to Alaska's new standards. Representatives from Alaska's public universities' teacher preparation programs are engaged in a standards professional development series for teachers. These instructors will incorporate the standards and associated instructional approaches into their pre-service programs.

The new recognition, accountability, and support system proposed by this application will significantly increase the focus and attention on the issue of subgroup performance over what was occurring under Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). This is because the high-stakes nature of AYP required that we have a minimum N and a confidence interval regarding whether a school or district met AYP for that subgroup. In contrast, inclusion of a point value in an index is not itself a high-stakes matter, even though the overall index point value is high stakes. This allows Alaska to relax the minimum N for inclusion of subgroups into the index to five. The impact of this change will be significant because many of our schools were small to medium- sized schools that were affected by the minimum N/confidence interval for subgroups. In reviewing the proposed Alaska School Performance Index (ASPI) model, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education provided comment in favor of the increased accountability that the minimum N of five will bring to the students with disabilities subgroup. Furthermore, in order to maintain

high accountability for subgroups, Alaska has resisted requests to consider a super subgroup or to eliminate duplication for students in more than one subgroup. Thus, the system is designed to close achievement gaps.

In addition, schools are still required to set and meet AMOs for each subgroup. Whether a school has met its AMOs for subgroups will be included as a factor in determining whether a school is a focus or a priority school. This is further evidence that the system is designed to close achievement gaps.

The State System of Support has provided and will continue to provide resources and training to address the needs of Alaska Natives, ELLs, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students to all schools, not just struggling schools and districts. Continued professional development provided or sponsored by EED will focus on Alaska's new ELA and mathematics standards and how to scaffold instruction to support struggling learners. Specific areas of focus include scaffolding with regard to informational text, complex text, and text-dependent questions.

- *Does the SEA intend to provide professional development and supports to prepare principals to provide strong, supportive instructional leadership based on the new standards? If so, will this plan prepare principals to do so?*

EED is working with various organizations to provide professional development and supports to prepare principals to provide strong, supportive instructional leadership based on the college- and career-ready standards. The Alaska Administrator Coaching Project will support early-career principals who have less than two years of experience. In partnership with the Rural Alaska Principal Preparation and Support program, EED supports principal preparation specifically focused on high-poverty and remote schools, and all principals are supported through partnership with the Alaska Council of School Administrators, Alaska Association of School Administrators, Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals, and Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals. In addition, EED has formed a Teacher Quality Working Group that includes representatives of the University of Alaska Teacher and Administrator Preparation Programs. Below are descriptions of the programs and activities planned to prepare principals to provide strong, supportive instructional leadership based on the new standards.

Alaska Administrator Coaching Project (See Attachment 1.4)

EED, along with the Alaska Administrator Coaching Project (AACP), will develop tools to evaluate the quality of implementing the new standards at the classroom level. These tools will be piloted first with experienced administrators, including principals and superintendents who have completed the AACP program, then expanded to targeted principals throughout the state, and finally to all instructional leaders statewide. Below are activities planned and proposed:

- Workshop for early-career instructional leaders (including principals) on the new standards during the November 2012 AACP Institute. This workshop included introduction of the available awareness and transition tools, such as the District Leaders Standard Guide in the Alaska Standards 2012 Toolkit (http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/2012toolkit.html).
- Development of a tool for administrators, specifically principals and building leaders, to

evaluate standards-implementation quality at the classroom level. In 2013-2014, AACP coaches and experienced principals will pilot the tool.

- Workshop on teacher observation for determining effective school-level and classroom-level instructional practices during the October 2013 AACP Institute.
- Review of existing teacher and principal evaluation tools by AACP coaches and experienced administrators. During spring 2013, piloting of the teacher evaluation tool by AACP coaches and experienced principals and then the principal evaluation tool by AACP coaches, school district administrators and superintendents during spring 2014.
- Work with AACP to identify ways that school district and State resources can be leveraged to expand efforts to more principals and administrators especially those new to Alaska.

Alaska School Leadership Institute (See Attachment 1.7)

EED works collaboratively to sponsor the Alaska School Leadership Institute each summer with the Rural Alaska Principal Preparation and Support program (RAPPS). RAPPS is a comprehensive leadership development program focused on preparing principals for high-poverty and remote schools, and supporting principals who are serving in those schools. Below are planned and proposed activities:

- Dissemination of resources from the Alaska Learning Standards Pre-conference session at the Alaska School Leadership Institute 2012, attended by more than 25 educators on May 29, 2012.
- Workshop dedicated to the college- and career-ready standards, ensuring that principals are prepared to help teachers to transition. Summer 2013 will focus on the standards transition phase, and summer 2014 and beyond will focus on transition and implementation phases.
- Workshop dedicated to Alaska's new student accountability system, ensuring that principals and teachers can use data to improve instruction. In summer 2013, continue the focus on using school district and state assessment data. Additionally, provide an awareness of the data that will be used for meeting Annual Measurable Objectives targets and indicators that contribute to a school's Alaska School Performance Index score and star rating.
- Workshop dedicated to Alaska's new teacher and principal accountability system, focusing on teachers during summer 2013 and administrators during summer 2014.
- Work with RAPPS leadership teams to explore potential school district and State resources to share costs of expanded and sustainability efforts. Any efforts to include additional school district administrators and beyond September 2013 will be based on resources available.

Content Specialists Collaborative Efforts

EED content specialists will work through a variety of avenues to reach all principals in the state to provide professional development to enhance strong instructional leadership. The content specialists have developed the District Leaders Standards Guide (referenced above), which can be used in professional development for administrators. EED's literacy and mathematics content specialists are developing a webinar series specifically tailored to new and experienced principals, and it will be archived for continued use. The Alaska Council of School Administrators, Alaska Association of School Administrators, Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals, and Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals hold annual conferences at which EED content specialists will present informational sessions on the college- and career-ready standards

and work with members to move the standards forward in their school districts. Content specialists will work with representatives of the University of Alaska teacher and administrator preparation programs through EED's Teacher Quality Working Group.

- *Does the SEA propose to develop and disseminate high-quality instructional materials aligned with the new standards? If so, are the instructional materials designed (or will they be designed) to support the teaching and learning of all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students?*

Alaska is a local-control state, and school districts have the ultimate responsibility to determine which instructional materials best meet the needs of their students. EED will work collaboratively with school districts, educational organizations, and Alaska's institutes of higher education on ways to develop and disseminate high-quality instructional materials aligned with the college- and career-ready standards. In particular, EED will act as a team across the Teaching and Learning Support programs such as Special Education, English Language Learners and State System of Support to provide guidance and expertise on how instructional materials can be designed to support learning of all students, especially those special populations needing extra support. These high-quality instructional materials will be both for students and professional development for teachers.

As part of competitive teacher professional development (Title IIA and B) grants, school districts and other educational organizations must ensure that any curriculum and professional development materials produced are aligned with the college- and career-ready standards. Specific workshops on the new standards were included in the technical assistance sessions held in September 2012.

EED, in collaboration with Alaska Staff Development Network, will host a Professional Development Forum in Anchorage during winter 2013 to allow outside educational organizations and professional development providers to become familiar with the new standards, to ensure that developed curriculum and instructional materials are aligned to Alaska's standards. EED will work with publishers conducting alignment studies with Alaska's standards, and will continue to support school districts through Curriculum Alignment Institutes and by gathering feedback for appropriate high-quality instructional materials that will be aligned to the new standards.

EED will provide a process and tools for school districts to review student instructional materials, specifically the work of the Basil Alignment Project, CCSS Mathematics Curriculum Analysis Tool, and professional development materials and publishers' criteria for CCSS from CCSSO. Other topics may include the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards and differentiation, including Response to Instruction, and Universal Design for Learning, as suggested in the CCSS's recommendations for students with disabilities.

Through State and Federal initiatives, planned activities will develop the materials below:

- Instructional resources for Tier II mathematics intervention activities for classroom teachers. These instructional resources will be linked to Response to Intervention ladders created for the Measures of Academic Progress assessment.
- Materials on mathematics topics, including diagnosing student errors, mathematics discourse, and differentiating mathematics instruction for use in professional development.
- Transforming mathematics instruction materials aligned to the new K-8 mathematics standards, including illustrative examples, connections to the mathematics practices, and formative assessment tools.

- Science and literacy instructional materials for K-6 students aligned to the English/ language arts standards with the accompanying teacher professional development.
- Instructional materials around increased text complexity, text-dependent questions, vocabulary acquisition, and the English language learner, and connecting reading and writing in the classroom.
- Materials on rigorous reading instruction though Literacy Institutes, webinar series highlighting the five essential components of reading instruction, and the Alaska Reading Course.
- Instructional materials for 9-12 mathematics providing contextual examples for the new mathematics standards using Career and Technical Education strands.

➢ *Does the SEA plan to expand access to college-level courses or their prerequisites, dual enrollment courses, or accelerated learning opportunities? If so, will this plan lead to more students having access to courses that prepare them for college and a career?*

EED plans to continue its efforts to expand access to college-level courses or their prerequisites, dual-enrollment courses, or accelerated learning opportunities. These plans are implemented through two state initiatives, Alaska's Learning Network and Alaska Performance Scholarship, and two Federal programs, Advanced Placement and Career and Technical Education. These efforts will lead to more students having access to courses that prepare them for college and a career as outlined by program below.

Alaska's Learning Network (AKLN) – http://www.aklearn.net)

Recognizing the importance of ensuring that all students have access to rigorous coursework and understanding the challenges of accessibility for many learners in the state, EED worked with a consortium of all 54 school districts to create Alaska's Learning Network (AKLN). AKLN provides all Alaskan students access to rigorous coursework through distance delivery, blended learning and "flipped" classrooms; using supplemental materials to assist school districts with needs for highly qualified teachers and class structure. School districts work with AKLN staff, in partnership with the University of Alaska, to learn how to effectively teach through distance, as well as build online courses and pilot courses. All AKLN courses are aligned to the college- and career-ready standards. AKLN provides courses for students, resources for students and teachers, and high-quality professional development.

Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) -
http://akadvantage.alaska.gov/Grants_and_Scholarships/Alaska_Performance_Scholarship.aspx

APS is an invitation to excellence for all Alaskan students. Students who complete rigorous coursework are eligible for scholarships to Alaska's postsecondary institutions. The APS is a merit-based scholarship that provides an opportunity for any future Alaska high school graduate who meets a core set of requirements to receive funding to pursue college or career training in Alaska. The requirements include an increased course load with a focus on more rigorous curriculum, tiered award levels for grade point average, college entrance exam scores, and career skills attainment scores. Completion of the APS curricular requirements, in addition to mastery of the college- and career-ready standards, will ensure that high school graduates will be prepared for college-level courses.

Advanced Placement (AP) - http://education.alaska.gov/tls/ap/

EED provides access to AP college-level courses through Federal Advanced Placement Test Fee Reduction and prior training provided through the AP Incentive Program. Since 2001, EED has received Federal AP Test Fee Reduction funds, which offer Alaska's low-income students the

opportunity to take AP exams at no cost. Without Alaska's current Federal funding, these students would have limited economic means to participate in AP exams. In 2009, International Baccalaureate low-income students from all Alaska schools participated in the fee reduction program for the first time. The program is designed to increase the number of low-income students to take AP tests and receive scores for which college academic credit is awarded. Previously, through a partnership with Washington Department of Education, EED received Federal AP Incentive funds to provide teacher professional development in Pre-AP and AP courses as well as vertical teaming. EED is in discussion with the National Mathematics + Science Initiative to enhance teacher training to prepare students to succeed in Pre-AP and AP courses in mathematics and science. This teacher training program is being implemented in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) - http://education.alaska.gov/tls/CTE/

EED will expand support for the Programs of Study development effort that it has funded through the CTE program and the Alaska Tech Prep Consortium. A multi-year effort, it has evolved into a collaborative effort of university campuses, school districts and EED to seamlessly align the standards and performance expectations of CTE programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels with Alaskan employers. The initiative includes review of the university-level general education requirements in order to reduce and eliminate the need for academic remediation. The Programs of Study model is expanding its work to the Alaska Process Industries Career Consortium's development and advocacy of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) activities and, in particular, engineering academies so that students will be prepared for colleges and careers. The Programs of Study model has developed a statewide University of Alaska policy for program articulation that governs the availability of concurrent college credit for high school students, either through a tech-prep model (course offered at the high school with an approved high school teacher) or dual credit (course offered at the college instructed by college faculty). During the 2010-2011 school year, 1,550 secondary students earned 7,360 university credits that were either required or elective for a postsecondary program, providing them a head start toward their career. The Alaska CTE team will be working with school districts during the next three years to review all CTE programs and courses, and incorporate the college- and career-ready standards into the courses. Professional development will continue to be offered, to increase the capacity of instructors to effectively teach or reinforce the concepts necessary for success in their CTE pathway. EED's content specialists will participate to support the collaboration efforts.

- *Does the SEA intend to work with the State's IHEs and other teacher and principal preparation programs to better prepare—*
  - *incoming teachers to teach all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, to the new college- and career-ready standards; and*
  - *incoming principals to provide strong, supportive instructional leadership on teaching to the new standards?*

  If so, will the implementation of the plan likely improve the preparation of incoming teachers and principals?

EED collaborates with various organizations and has special working groups to better prepare

teachers to teach all students, and prepare principals to provide strong, supportive instructional leadership. The Alaska Administrator Coaching Project and the Rural Alaska Principal Preparation and Support Program, including the Alaska State Leadership Institute, are two programs that support principals; similarly the Alaska Statewide Mentor Program supports early-career teachers with less than two years of experience. EED's Teacher Quality Working Group will coordinate efforts between these programs, with the University of Alaska Statewide as lead partner.

Four Alaska institutions of higher education (IHE) offer teacher and administrator preparation programs. To continue the dialog with Alaska's IHEs about preparing teachers and administrators, EED held meetings in October 2012, January 2013, and April 2013. The focus was on preparing teachers and principals so that incoming teachers are prepared to teach all students to the college- and career-ready standards. Each Alaska IHE was invited to bring a team consisting of the deans or chairs of the education and arts and science departments and the lead faculty of the special populations and administrative preparation programs. (See Attachments 1.8 and 1.9)

The meetings reviewed recent changes to regulations that affect teacher and administrator preparation programs; the IHEs shared their alignment efforts to date. Participants identified resources to expand capacity and areas in which IHEs and EED can collaborate to strengthen teacher and administrator preparation. Action plans were created, with responsible parties identified. Additional meetings will be scheduled as necessary.

The following are among the agenda items for the meetings:

- examine national trends in teacher and principal preparation and where Alaska stands;
- review and refine the State's approval process for teacher and administrator preparation programs;
- guidelines and expectations for Alaska's teacher and administrator preparation programs to include the Alaska professional and content standards for teachers and administrators, the State's cultural standards for beginning teachers and professional teachers and administrators, the college- and career-ready standards, extended grade level expectations for severely cognitively delayed students, English language proficiency standards, and the State's Literacy Blueprint;
- review the IHEs' internal processes for teacher and administrator preparation programs, alignment efforts and indicators of success.

EED works with IHEs through Title II Professional Development grants for teachers. By encouraging IHEs to align their professional development offerings with the college- and career-ready standards, the competitive application process encourages changes needed for pre-service teachers. IHEs will be encouraged to attend the Professional Development Forum.

- *Does the SEA plan to evaluate its current assessments and increase the rigor of those assessments and their alignment with the State's college- and career-ready standards, in order to better prepare students and teachers for the new assessments through one or more of the following strategies:*
    - *Raising the State's academic achievement standards on its current assessments to ensure that they reflect a level of postsecondary readiness, or are being increased over time to that level of rigor? (E.g., the SEA might compare current achievement standards to a measure of postsecondary readiness by back-mapping*

from college entrance requirements or remediation rates, analyzing the relationship between proficient scores on the State assessments and the ACT or SAT scores accepted by most of the State's 4-year public IHEs, or conducting NAEP mapping studies.)

- *Augmenting or revising current State assessments by adding questions, removing questions, or varying formats in order to better align those assessments with the State's college- and career-ready standards?*

- *Implementing another strategy to increase the rigor of current assessments, such as using the "advanced" performance level on State assessments instead of the "proficient" performance level as the goal for individual student performance or using college-preparatory assessments or other advanced tests on which IHEs grant course credits to entering college students to determine whether students are prepared for postsecondary success?*

If so, is this activity likely to result in an increase in the rigor of the State's current assessments and their alignment with college- and career-ready standards?

Alaska's new assessment, the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP), will assess students in grades 3-10 in Mathematics and English language arts starting in spring 2015. The AMP results will measure individual student progress toward being college-and career-ready.

Alaska will analyze the scale scores at each achievement level on the future State assessments (AMP) by comparing student scores with the ACT and SAT to find correlations between achievement levels. This analysis will provide statistical evidence to support the alignment between the new standards, the new more rigorous assessments, and expected levels of college readiness. Recent state legislation requires all students to participate in a college- or career-ready assessment in order to be eligible for a high school diploma. The new requirements are effective for the 2014-2015 school year. Alaska will continue to utilize the WorkKeys assessment as the career-ready assessment option. The two college-ready assessments available to students in their last two years of high school will be the ACT and the SAT. The new graduation requirements will significantly increase the number of students that EED will be able to directly correlate test scores for by utilizing the AMP results and the career- and college-ready assessment results.

EED augmented its former state assessments (SBAs) by field testing in spring 2013 new items and new item types that are aligned to the college- and career-ready standards.

- *Does the SEA intend to analyze the factors that need to be addressed in preparing teachers of students with disabilities participating in a State's alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards (AA-MAAS) in order to ensure these students can participate in the assessments that will be aligned with college and career-ready standards?*

Alaska does not have an alternative assessment based on modified academic achievement standards because the state does not have modified standards. Alternative assessments, modifications and accommodations exist for testing of disabled students under the educational standards that address all Alaskan students.

All teachers of students with disabilities will be able to map an instructional pathway, using learning progressions from a student's present levels of performance to be enrolled at grade-level standards.

Training materials have been developed by DLM for teachers to link instruction to the assessment targets.

- *Does the SEA propose other activities in its transition plan? If so, is it likely that these activities will support the transition to and implementation of the State's college- and career-ready standards?*

Alaska's transition plan includes a phased roll out of the AMP assessment system components to familiarize students, teachers, and families with the content and delivery of the new assessments.

In the fall of 2014 AAI and EED will release the Technology Practice Test (TPT). The TPT is designed to provide students with experience with the computer-based test engine and with the types of technology enhanced items (TEs) that will be on the summative assessment in the spring. The TPT will be available in grade bands (3-5, 6-8, and high school) and will have two forms. The first form will provide a general experience; the second form will have the most common accessibility tools activated, such as text-to-speech and masking. This will provide students the opportunity to practice with these tools and teachers the opportunity to observe if the tool is beneficial to the student. Along with TPT, EED will provide teacher guides and lesson plans that offer ideas on how to introduce the TPT to students.

In January 2015 AAI and EED will release the AMP Testlets. The Testlets are optional teacher tools that teachers can use formatively to guide instruction as well as provide students will additional practice on the type of items that will be in the summative assessment. The Testlets are built around individual standards and can be selected and administered directly by the teacher as desired. These assessments will provide fine-grain information to teachers about their students' understanding of individual standards and offer a comparison to the classroom and program assessment they may be currently providing.

In fall 2015 AAI and EED will release the AMP Benchmark Interim Assessment. The computer-based interim assessment is optional to districts. This secure assessment is designed to be administered in the fall and winter; the targets will be aligned to content most likely taught at those benchmarks in the instructional year. This will provide teachers with a measure of growth from fall to winter to spring, when the students participate in the summative assessment. The interim assessments will provide immediate results to teachers that can be used to inform instruction. The items and item types will be similar to those that will be administered in the summative assessments. In addition, they will be scored on the same scale as the summative, allowing for an accurate measure of growth of the course of the instructional year. The interim assessments will begin as fixed form assessments, and transition to block-adaptive in 2017.

EED's Technology Coordinator and Assessment team continue to gather data on the state's capability for administering computerized tests. This began with the Technology Readiness Assessment in the fall of 2014. This work provided EED with a broad overview of the challenges in specific schools across the state. Other data has been added to this, including the number of schools participating in other locally-required online assessments. Additionally, in the 2013-14 school year EED required all districts to administer the WorkKeys Internet Version (WKIV). All districts had at least one school participate in this online administration, with most districts including multiple schools.

For the administration of the computer-based AMP assessment, EED and AAI have developed a proactive outreach strategy to provide support to the districts identified in 2014 as challenged by administering a computer-based assessment. In addition to the AAI technology support team, AAI has hired two Alaska-based technology liaisons to give both remote and on-site assistance to schools in the implementation and administration of AMP. The technology liaisons have extensive experience living, teaching, and providing technical support in our rural schools. In addition to the outreach plan for schools known to have challenges, EED has provided all schools with the option of a Waiver from Computer-based Assessment; the waiver application triggers a solution-seeking support mechanism in order to provide every student with the possibility of participating in the computer-based AMP.

1.C DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER ANNUAL, STATEWIDE, ALIGNED, HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS THAT MEASURE STUDENT GROWTH

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

Option A	Option B	Option C
☐ The SEA is participating in one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition. i. Attach the State's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under that competition. (Attachment 6)	☒ The SEA is not participating in either one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition, and has not yet developed or administered statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs. i. Provide the SEA's plan to develop and administer annually, beginning no later than the 2014–2015 school year, statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs, as well as set academic achievement standards for those assessments.	☐ The SEA has developed and begun annually administering statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs. i. Attach evidence that the SEA has submitted these assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review or attach a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review. (Attachment 7)

At the time of the initially approved ESEA Flexibility waiver in May 2013, Alaska had joined the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and had planned to implement assessments being developed by SBAC. Subsequent to the approval of the initial ESEA Flexibility Waiver, Alaska solicited Requests for Proposals (RFP) through a public bid process beginning in August 2013. The request sought options for a comprehensive assessment system that aligned with Alaska's English

Language Arts and Mathematics Standards and met the unique needs of a full scale assessment system in a state with geographical challenges and a high number of small schools. The Request for Proposals (RFP) included options for custom-developed assessments, commercially available, published or vendor-owned assessments. No proposals were received that included services in support of an assessment from either consortium. The Proposal Evaluation Committee recommended the Achievement & Assessment Institute (AAI) of Kansas develop and administer college- and career-ready (CCRA) assessments for Alaska's public schools beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. The new assessments are named the Alaska Measures of Progress, or AMP for short. The custom assessments will assess students in grades 3-10 with items that are aligned to Alaska's English language arts and mathematics standards. On January 14, 2014 EED publicly announced the selection of a new assessment contractor. At this time EED also announced that Alaska had withdrawn from SBAC.

In addition to the development of summative assessments, AAI is working with EED to provide Technology Practice Tests in fall 2014, Testlets in January 2015, and Benchmark Interim assessments to be available in fall 2015. The interim assessments will be aligned to the same scale as the summative assessments so that incremental growth can be measured throughout the school year.

Alaska is committed to designing computer-based assessments. To support districts in this effort, Alaska will continue to work with districts to determine their technology readiness and coordinate with district technology directors and district test coordinators to problem solve issues and challenges.

Key Components of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP)

- **Process and timeline for development of test blueprints and item specifications:**
  Test blueprints and item specifications are currently being developed and will be presented to the Alaska Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) in October 2014. The spring 2015 summative assessment will be a fixed form, allowing for direct comparison between computerized and paper/pencil deliveries. In spring 2016 the fixed forms will include ELA and math constructed response field test items as well as field test listening items. In 2017 Alaska will transition to a computer-based block-adaptive test design.

- **Review and selection of items for inclusion in the assessments:**
  Alaska is currently in the process of having all assessment items go through content, bias, and sensitivity review by EED staff and Alaska educators; this activity will continue on an annual basis. Two remote item reviews have been conducted by Alaskan educators statewide during the weeks of August 7-13 and August 27-September 2. Two future remote item reviews are scheduled for the weeks of October 8-14 and November 18-24. A statistical review of both operational and field tested items will be conducted in the summer of 2015, following the spring 2015 administration of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) assessment. The same process will be followed in all subsequent years for new and replacement items.

- **Scaling and scoring procedures to be used:**
  Scaling procedures for the 2015 assessment will be vetted with the TAC in October 2014. Tests will include machine-scored multiple choice items and technology enhanced items. Scoring procedures for the technology-enhanced items will be vetted with the TAC in October 2014.

- **Test administration procedures, including election and use of appropriate accommodations:**
  Alaska's transition to computer-based assessment includes revisions to many test administration procedures. The testing window is expanded from 2 weeks to 5 weeks. Within this window districts have greater flexibility with the scheduling of assessments at schools in order to use resources effectively and administer the computer-based assessment within the range of broadband and wireless connectivity available. Test security practices are also modified to address the unique testing environment of computer labs and classrooms with either laptops or tablets. Test Administration manuals are currently being developed and both online and in-person training will occur. EED utilizes a train-the-trainer model; we train the district test coordinators and support them in training district staff.

  To provide students with experience in the new testing environment, EED and AAI will make Technology Practice Tests available in September. There will be two available versions of the TPT; one with common accessibility features available and one without. In addition, students will have the opportunity to use the computer-based test with the release of the Testlets in January 2015. The Testlets are low-security optional teaching tools/formative tools that can be used in small groups to provide guidance and practice to students on both the content and the types of items that they will experience on the summative assessment.

  The Participation Guidelines and guidance documents for accessibility and accommodations for students with disabilities and students who are English language learners have also been revised. The new edition of the Participation Guidelines for Alaska Students in State Assessments (PG) will be presented to the State Board of Education & Early Development on September 18, 2014. All accessibility features and accommodation procedures and options are addressed in the PG document. The revision includes increased accessibility features for students with a documented need in the form of Universal Tools, Accessibility Tools, and Accommodations. If the Board approves the content then the document will be released for public comment, with planned adoption of the revised PG by reference in state regulations at the December 2014 State Board meeting. In addition to the open public comment period, webinars and on-site reviews of the PG are planned to elicit feedback on the revised document.

- **Data analyses proposed to document validity and reliability of the assessments:**
  Differential Item Functioning (DIF), item difficulty, and item-discrimination analyses will be conducted in summer of 2015 all items in the summative assessment and in summer 2016 for the addition of the constructed response and listening items. Changes in reliability because of changes in the assessment blueprint with the enhanced items will be analyzed in summer 2016. Longitudinal studies are planned through 2020 to investigate the validity of the inferences made from the scores, particularly in relation to the claim of college- and career- readiness.

- **An independent evaluation of alignment of the assessments with the State's college- and career-ready standards:**
  An independent alignment study by edCount will be conducted in two phases. The first student of current work is scheduled to be delivered at the end of October 2014. The second phase, which will include the constructed response and listening items, will be delivered in summer of 2016. EED and AAI see the alignment study as an ongoing process as we continue to develop

items that provider greater detail about college-and-career readiness.

- **The process and timeline for setting college- and career-ready achievement standards and the method and timeline to validate those achievement standards:**
  Following guidance received by the TAC in October 2014, EED will work with Alaskan educators and University of Alaska staff to review 2015 assessment results. The review work will occur as part of the standard setting process in July 2015. Statistical procedures will be set to establish preliminary cut scores linking the AMP assessment potentially to the ACT, SAT or WorkKeys. The University of Alaska utilizes the ACCUPLACER and ASSET tests for course placement so those two assessments may also be considered for possible validation tools. EED will also work with the TAC and AAI's psychometric services staff to conduct regression studies linking to earlier grades. In the summer of 2016, scores from the spring 2016 administration of the assessment will be verified and adjusted as needed, particularly given the addition of the constructed response items, using an item mapping procedure. Educators will weigh both statistical and content evidence to set final cut scores. Longitudinal studies will be conducted to watch for trends across grades over the next several years. EED will continue to coordinate with University of Alaska staff to use first year college data to validate the CCR cut scores with grades in first year, credit-bearing courses.

- **Meaningful report formats to communicate results to students, parents, and educators:**
  Reports are being designed for 2015 and will vetted and reviewed by the TAC. New reports will be piloted in 2015 and finalized in 2016 based on focus groups of parents, educators, and administrators as well as TAC feedback.

College- or Career-Ready Assessment

Recent state legislation requires all students to participate in a college- or career-ready assessment in order to be eligible for a high school diploma. The new requirements are effective for the 2014-2015 school year. Alaska will continue to utilize the WorkKeys assessment as the career-ready assessment option. The two college-ready assessments available to students in their last two years of high school will be the ACT and the SAT. The state will pay for one college- or career-ready assessment of the student's choice. No minimum score is required.

Alternate Assessment for Students with Severe Cognitive Disabilities

Alaska has joined the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) consortium to address the needs of students with severe cognitive disabilities. Alaska has participated in regularly scheduled meetings with DLM leadership. Alaska has addressed the following key factors in its work with DLM: articulating college and career readiness; defining the construct relative to the Alternate Assessment on Alternate Achievement Standards and the students it serves; developing communicative competence; delivery of professional development; building capacity to deliver professional development; and developing a strong argument for validity. Alaska will continue to coordinate with its qualified mentors, qualified assessors, and school district test coordinators to ensure that expectations are well-understood for students with severe cognitive disabilities as Alaska transitions to the college- and career-ready standards.

English Language Proficiency Assessment

Alaska has joined the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium to address the needs of English language learners. Alaska adopted WIDA standards in 2011. EED will

work with the consortium to develop and identify resources to meet the needs of the EL population. Alaska uses the ACCESS for ELLs assessment to measure English language development.

Timeline for Implementation of New Assessments

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Summative Assessment	Standards Based Assessment aligned to Grade Level Expectations	Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP); fully aligned to Alaska ELA and math standards	Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP); fully aligned to new Alaska standards
Alternate Assessment (DLM Consortium)	Current Alaska Alternate Assessment aligned to current AA-AAS	New DLM designed Alternate Assessment aligned to new AA-AAS	New DLM designed Alternate Assessment aligned to new AA-AAS
English Language Learner Assessment	ACCESS for ELLs	ACCESS for ELLs	ACCESS for ELLs
College or Career Readiness Assessment	WorkKeys (required for all), ACT or SAT optional	WorkKeys or ACT or SAT (at student choice); required for diploma	WorkKeys or ACT or SAT (at student choice); required for diploma
Interim Assessments	Optional: district-purchased assessments	Optional: district-purchased assessments	Optional: AMP Benchmark Interim assessments (free to districts); district-purchased assessments
Formative Assessments	Optional: district-purchased assessments	Optional: AMP Testlets; district-purchased assessments	Optional: AMP Testlets; district- purchased assessments

PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

2.A DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STATE-BASED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

2.A.i Provide a description of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that includes all the components listed in Principle 2, the SEA's plan for implementation of the differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system no later than the 2013–2014 school year, and an explanation of how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is designed to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

a. *Does the SEA's accountability system provide differentiated recognition, accountability, and support for all LEAs in the State and for all Title I schools in those LEAs based on (1) student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics, and other subjects at the State's discretion, for all students and all subgroups of students identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II); (2) graduation rates for all students and all subgroups; and (3) school performance and progress over time, including the performance and progress of all subgroups?*

Overview of Accountability System

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 through the Alaska School Performance Index (ASPI). Schools will receive a rating for their ASPI score based on 5 stars (highest performing) through 1 star (lowest performing). The ASPI will provide information to parents and the public about the overall performance of the school and will provide incentives to schools to improve to receive a higher star rating.

The ASPI index will include college and career ready indicators for schools with students in elementary and middle (EM) grade levels (K-8) and for schools with students in high school (HS) grade levels (9-12). The indicators will receive different weights in the overall ASPI score as applicable to the different grade spans. Schools with students in a combination of grade levels from K-8 and 9-12, including grades K-12, will receive an index score based on applying the EM and HS indicators proportionately to the percentage of students in those grade levels in the school. The academic achievement, school progress, and attendance rate in the standards-based assessments (SBAs) will apply to all schools. Schools with students in grades 9-12 will have additional indicators of college and career readiness: graduation rate and a college and career ready indicator based on juniors or seniors earning certain levels of scores on their choice of an ACT, SAT, or WorkKeys assessment. The academic achievement indicator measures proficiency on the reading, writing and mathematics standards-based assessments SBAs for the all-students group. The progress indicator is a weighted growth and proficiency index score for the all-students group and for the four primary subgroups of Alaska Native/American Indian (AN/AI), economically disadvantaged (ECD), students with disabilities (SWD), and English learners (EL) as represented in each school.

Alaska will set Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) targets in reading, writing, and mathematics that are ambitious but achievable. Alaska will set state targets for the all-students group and for each of the currently identified subgroups so that they increase in annual increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students (all students and in each traditional subgroup as currently required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB)) who are not proficient within six years in each assessment area. In addition, similar AMO targets will be set for each school and district at the all-students level and each subgroup. The school or district will be considered to have met the AMO target if it meets either its individual school or district target or if it meets the state target for that year. Alaska will publicly report annually on each school's and district's progress in meeting these AMO targets for the all-students group and for all current NCLB-required subgroups. Public reporting of this data will serve as an incentive for schools and districts to address any achievement gaps and strive for improvement. Alaska will reset the AMO targets and the ASPI index rating intervals based on the data from the implementation of the new assessment in 2014-2015.

The State will report the percent of students tested who scored proficient or advanced in each of the SBAs in reading, writing, and mathematics for the all-students group and for the seven required subgroups. The State will report the AMO targets and whether the school met the targets in each group. The State will consider whether the school is making progress toward or meeting the AMO targets as part of its data review of all schools and to identify schools that are Priority schools, Focus schools, Reward schools, or other schools that need to address lack of progress in specific subgroups. The ASPI score will not include points for making or missing the AMO targets.

Alaska will hold districts and schools accountable for improving student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and increasing graduation rates for all students and subgroups through differentiated consequences and interventions based on factors including the school's ASPI score, whether the school is meeting the AMO targets in reading, writing, and mathematics, and whether the school is improving its graduation rate. Alaska will recognize the top 10% of the highest-performing schools and the high-progress schools as reward schools each year and will encourage those schools to serve as models or mentors to other schools. Alaska will provide support to all schools and districts through its State System of Support (SSOS) by using a tiered system differentiated to meet the needs of specific schools and districts. All schools and districts are eligible to receive support from SSOS through resources posted on the state's website, through regular technical assistance and support for statewide initiatives such as new content standards implementation and the online school improvement planning tool called Alaska STEPP, and through specific requests for assistance. Alaska STEPP (Steps Toward Educational Progress and Partnership) is the Alaska customized version of the Indistar online school improvement tool developed by the Center on Instruction and Improvement. (See Attachment 2.3 SSOS Operations Manual for more information about AK STEPP.) School districts with schools at lower-performing levels such as priority and focus schools and those with achievement gaps will receive more targeted or intensive support from SSOS. The State will review all schools in the higher-performing ASPI star ranges (3 stars and above) on the AMO targets and graduation rates for all current NCLB-reported subgroups, and will require schools that are not closing the achievement or graduation gaps to address those gaps in a targeted improvement plan submitted to the school district. The school district will oversee those plans and will be held accountable for ensuring that the schools are receiving support to close the gaps. The State will perform a desk audit (review of the data) of all schools in the lowest star ratings and will work with the school districts to provide appropriate support and interventions to those schools. Of those schools, the State will identify the lowest-performing 5% of Title I schools as priority schools and require those schools to implement the

specified interventions aligned with the turnaround principles for a minimum of three years. The State also will identify the next-lowest-performing 10% of Title I schools as focus schools and will work with the school districts to identify specific interventions aligned with the needs of those schools, especially in areas of subgroups or graduation rates. Details about the accountability and support system and the identification of the reward, priority and focus schools will be found in the remaining sections of Principle 2.

NCLB provisions waived

Alaska will be waiving the following provisions of the current NCLB law:

- Alaska will not report whether schools have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).
- Alaska will not identify schools or districts under the current labels of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.
- Alaska will no longer require the consequences in the current law for schools in improvement, corrective action or restructuring.
- Alaska will no longer require schools to offer public school choice or supplemental educational services (SES) in schools identified for improvement. Districts may offer these options to parents if desired.
- Alaska will no longer require districts to set aside 20% of their Title I allocation to provide SES or transportation to schools of choice. These funds may instead be used, as needed, to provide support to schools identified as Title I priority or focus schools.
- Alaska will no longer require districts to use 10% of their Title I allocation for professional development for districts in improvement.

Alaska School Performance Index

The Alaska School Performance Index (ASPI) represents the overall picture of a school's progress. All schools will receive an overall score on the index. The ASPI is based on an index score that includes college- and career-ready weighted indicators as applicable to the grade span of the school. The overall ASPI score will determine the category or rating of the school. Five-star schools will represent the top-performing schools in the state, while the lowest-performing schools will be rated as 1-star schools.

Each school receives points in the specified indicators, and each indicator is weighted. The overall score will be on a 100-point scale. There are different indicators and weightings of those indicators for elementary/middle schools with students in grades ranging from K-8 and for high schools with students ranging in grades from 9-12. Schools with students that include students from any grades in K-8 and any grades in 9-12 will receive points and weightings on indicators based on the percentage of students enrolled in the school on the first day of testing on the SBAs in April in each grade span. This would include schools with all K-12 grades as well as those with grade spans that cross the grade spans, such as grades 6-12.

All schools include the following indicators in the ASPI score: academic achievement on the reading, writing, and mathematics SBAs, progress in the all-students group and in four primary subgroups as measured by the growth and proficiency index score, and attendance rate. Two additional college- and career-ready indicators are included for schools with students in grades 9-12: the graduation rate and an indicator based on the scores earned at designated levels on the

ACT, SAT, or WorkKeys assessments. These indicators and weightings are explained in further detail below.

- **Academic Achievement indicator**: The State will include scores of all students who take the SBAs in reading, writing, and mathematics in the indicator for academic achievement for the school. All students tested will be included in the assessment results for the academic achievement indicator, not just "full academic year" students. This holds schools accountable for ensuring that students who transfer in later in the year receive the same instructional support as continuing students. The school receives points representing the percentage of students proficient or above across all three assessments. The percentage is calculated by a fraction, the numerator of which is the sum of the number of students proficient in reading plus the number of students proficient in writing plus the number of students proficient in math. The denominator of the fraction is the sum of the students tested in reading plus the number of students tested in writing plus the number of students tested in math. For example, if 100 students tested in each subject, and 74 were proficient in reading, 69 in writing, and 67 in mathematics, the total number of students proficient would be 74+69+67 or 210 and the number tested would be 100 + 100 + 100 or 300. The percentage of students proficient or above on these assessments would be 210/300 or 70% and the academic achievement indicator score would be 70 points. While this indicator represents aggregated data for reading, writing, and math within the ASPI, the performance of all students and all NCLB subgroups will be tracked and reported publicly in each assessment through the progress toward meeting the AMO targets and through the achievement at each proficiency level as reported in the school and district report cards.

- **School Progress indicator**: The growth and proficiency index will be used as the indicator of progress for students in the school. The index is a score that is given to each school that reflects the progress made by individual students in the school.

  Alaska has a long history of using index table models for accountability purposes. The first model was developed to be used in the initial accountability system that Alaska proposed for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under NCLB. Alaska worked collaboratively with The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Inc., known as the Center for Assessment, to present a balanced model consisting of an index table growth model and a status performance model. At the time, growth models were not being considered for AYP so Alaska revised the state accountability plan by removing the index table growth model. Although the model was removed for AYP, Alaska continued to revise it and consider it for state accountability purposes.

  A state initiative in 2006 brought the index table model back into use by adopting and modifying the initial value table to be used for the Alaska State Performance Incentive Program (AKSPIP). This program was designed to reward school staff for increased performance in state-required assessments. The method for identifying growth in schools was well-accepted; however, the program itself was not continued. The AKSPIP ran for three years, ending after the 2008-2009 school year.

  The growth and proficiency index is currently implemented through state regulation 4 AAC 33.500-540 and is used as one measure to identify schools that are lowest-performing and must receive additional analysis by the State to determine the reasons for lack of progress in the school. This index also is used as an indicator of school progress in the definition for the

"persistently lowest achieving schools" for the School Improvement Grant program under 1003g. Alaska used slight modifications of the index table for state accountability purposes following a legal decision (*Moore v. State of Alaska*). The settlement of the case required the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (EED) to provide programs and significant funding to support the lowest performing schools in the state, as measured by the index table. In 2012 Alaska incorporated the modified the index table into regulations; that table will be used as an indicator in the new Alaska accountability system. (See Attachment 2.1)

For the purposes of the growth and proficiency index, the "below proficient" and "far below proficient" proficiency levels of performance on the SBAs are subdivided into "below proficient plus," "below proficient minus," "far below proficient plus," and "far below proficient minus" to in order to measure student progress within the non-proficient performance levels. The "proficient" performance level is subdivided into "proficient" and "proficient plus" in order to recognize continued growth in students that are scoring above the minimum proficient level.

The value number table displays the points from 0 to 230 in each cell in a matrix that reflects whether the student is maintaining at the same performance level, is progressing, or is declining from the previous year's assessment. A student scoring at the proficient level for two years in a row receives 100 points as that student made the expected growth. Students who move from a below proficient level to proficient or increase from proficient to proficient plus or advanced will earn more than 100 points depending on the amount of progress from their previous proficiency level. For example, a student who scored at the proficient level in the previous year and scored at the proficient plus level in the current year would receive 125 points, and a student who moved from the far below proficient plus level to the proficient level would receive 160 points. Students who decline in proficiency from one year to the next receive less than 100 points and may possibly receive zero points, as indicated by a drop from advanced proficient to below proficient minus. A student who drops in proficiency level from one year to the next may still have increased in his or her learning, but did not make the expected growth of one year of progress, thus the points earned are less than 100 but not necessarily zero. A student who declined from below proficient plus to far below proficient plus would receive only 30 points. The following table shows the values represented for each category of student performance on the assessments from the previous year to the current year. The values shaded in green (above the solid border) represent growth in the proficiency level from the previous year. The values shaded in yellow (in the center diagonal between the solid border and the dashed border) represent students who maintained the same proficiency level from the previous year. The values shaded in red (below the dashed border) represent students who declined in the proficiency level from the previous year. Note that it would be highly unusual for students to improve more than one or two categories per year on the growth and proficiency index value table.

Growth & Proficiency Index Value Number Table							
Previous Year Level	**Current Year Level**						
	Far Below Proficient Minus	**Far Below Proficient Plus**	**Below Proficient Minus**	**Below Proficient Plus**	**Proficient**	**Proficient Plus**	**Advanced**
Far Below Proficient Minus	60	90	120	150	180	205	230
Far Below Proficient Plus	40	70	100	130	160	185	210
Below Proficient Minus	20	50	80	110	140	165	190
Below Proficient Plus	0	30	60	90	120	145	170
Proficient	0	10	40	70	100	125	150
Proficient Plus	0	0	20	50	80	105	130
Advanced	0	0	0	30	60	85	110

To determine the school or subgroup growth and index score, all of the individual student point values are totaled and then divided by the total number of students tested during both the previous year and the current year administrations. The previous-year assessment scores are included for all students who took the test, regardless of the school in which the student was enrolled for testing. (Please note that students retained in the same grade are excluded from the growth measure because the system is designed to measure growth from one year's test to the next year's test, and Alaska's current test forms are not scalable. EED will revisit this issue when the new assessment comes online. Retained students' assessment scores are included in the achievement measure, so schools have an incentive to serve these students.) Growth and index scores of 90 or above indicate that a school is showing progress. Growth and index scores of 85 or less show declining achievement. While it is possible for a school to receive a growth and proficiency index score of greater than 100, for the purposes of the ASPI the points received will be capped at 100.

The original index table was designed in 2006 to create an incentive to be above the diagonal line (i.e., make more than one year's growth), and a disincentive to be below the line. In addition, the table creates an incentive to have students be proficient or above. Although conceptually the table could have been designed to have negative numbers below the diagonal, a policy decision was made to not label any students as "negative numbers." In other words, the table could have been normed in a way that resulted in negative numbers below the diagonal, but the resulting index score would be no different. The existing table has been accepted by stakeholders and by an Alaska court in the settlement of a lawsuit over the adequacy of education. Districts have demonstrated that they understand the relative value of points awarded on this table. No stakeholders have suggested that

the table be amended. The department determined that the growth and index table as shown above would be included in the ASPI as a stakeholder accepted measure of student and school progress.

In considering whether to use 100 as a maximum number of points for growth, the state performed impact data analysis. Alaska's concern was that in very small (10-40 tested students) schools, a few very-high-growth students could mask other problems. EED's impact data analysis, however, showed that the masking effect was not prevalent. The impact data also showed that capping the growth score at 100 had little overall effect except to give a few relatively high-performing schools an incentive to improve in areas other than student growth. Alaska determined that capping the growth score within the index at 100 will be a meaningful measure of growth, will provide additional incentives to higher-performing schools to address all areas of the index, and will represent a similar scale (from 0 – 100) as the other elements of the ASPI.

For the State differentiated accountability system, the growth and proficiency index will be calculated for the all-students group and for each of four primary subgroups that are represented in a school with at least five students tested in the subgroup. While Alaska reports AYP results for each of six ethnic subgroups as well as for economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English learners (otherwise known as limited English proficient) students, there are four subgroups that represent either the largest percent of students in the state or those that are the lowest-performing: Alaska Native/American Indian (AN/AI), economically disadvantaged (ECD), students with disabilities (SWD), and English learners (EL). These subgroups will be included in the ASPI if at least five students in the subgroup participated in the SBAs. This ensures that more students in each subgroup will be included in the State's accountability system, as the current minimum size for a subgroup for AYP is 26. It will provide an incentive for schools to ensure that all students' needs are being addressed in order to improve the school progress indicator of the ASPI and therefore raise the ASPI score.

The following chart shows both the percent of the all-students group represented by all currently required Alaska NCLB subgroups and the percent of students in each group at the proficient or advanced level in reading, writing, and mathematics in 2012. The highlighted cells show the lowest-performing subgroups and the subgroups of the most significant size statewide. While some schools will have ethnic subgroups that are not included in the four primary subgroups, the performance of the students in those subgroups will be tracked and reported both for meeting the AMO targets and for the student achievement section of the school district and school report cards.

2011-2012 Statewide Data		% Prof/Advanced		
Group	**% of Student Population**	**Reading**	**Writing**	**Mathematics**
All students	100.0%	80.1	74.2	68.6
African American	3.7%	74.1	67.4	54.4
Alaska Native /American Indian	22.8%	59.0	51.3	48.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	8.8%	76.3	73.2	67.9
Caucasian	50.9%	90.1	84.7	78.7
Hispanic	6.4%	80.3	75.0	66.3
Multi-Ethnic	7.5%	82.4	76.6	70.2
Economically disadvantaged	46.9%	68.9	62.0	56.4
Students with disabilities	13.1%	44.0	38.2	32.2
English learners	10.2%	31.4	27.2	26.7

The school receives points based on the growth and proficiency index score for the all-students group and for each of the primary subgroups that are represented in the school with at least five students tested. For each applicable subgroup in the school, the subgroup score would be 10% of the overall progress points, with the all-students group making up the remaining percentage of the overall points. If the school has no subgroups, the points received are the growth and proficiency index score for the all- students group. If the school has represented subgroups, then the weighting of the overall growth and proficiency index is as follows:

- One subgroup: all students – 90%, subgroup – 10%
- Two subgroups: all students – 80%, subgroups – 20%
- Three subgroups: all students – 70%, subgroups – 30%
- Four subgroups: all students – 60%, subgroups – 40%

Example: School A with no subgroups			
Group	**G&P Index Score**	**Weighting**	**Component of Progress Score**
Alaska Native/Am Indian	N/A	N/A	N/A
Economically disadvantaged	N/A	N/A	N/A
Students with disabilities	N/A	N/A	N/A
English learners	N/A	N/A	N/A
All students	57.78	100%	57.78
School Progress Score	-	100%	**57.78**

Example: School B with 1 subgroup			
Group	**G&P Index Score**	**Weighting**	**Component of Progress Score**
Alaska Native/Am Indian	N/A	N/A	N/A
Economically disadvantaged	N/A	N/A	N/A
Students with disabilities	N/A	N/A	N/A
English learners	69.33	10%	6.93
All students	76.67	90%	69.00
School Progress Score	-	100%	**75.93**

Example: School C with 2 subgroups			
Group	**G&P Index Score**	**Weighting**	**Component of Progress Score**
Alaska Native/Am Indian	N/A	N/A	N/A
Economically disadvantaged	97.44	10%	9.74
Students with disabilities	88.65	10%	8.86
English learners	N/A	N/A	N/A
All students	100.00	80%	80.00
School Progress Score	-	100%	**98.60**

Example: School D with 3 subgroups			
Group	**G&P Index Score**	**Weighting**	**Component of Progress Score**
Alaska Native/Am Indian	N/A	N/A	N/A
Economically disadvantaged	96.28	10%	9.63
Students with disabilities	88.75	10%	8.88
English learners	99.79	10%	9.98
All students	100.00	70%	70.00
School Progress Score	-	100%	**98.49**

Example: School E with 4 subgroups			
Group	**G&P Index Score**	**Weighting**	**Component of Progress Score**
Alaska Native/Am Indian	75.35	10%	7.54
Economically disadvantaged	77.40	10%	7.74
Students with disabilities	70.00	10%	7.00
English learners	80.45	10%	8.05
All students	81.13	60%	48.68
School Progress Score	-	100%	**79.01**

EED ran simulations on the weightings of the subgroups within the growth and performance index score. Our simulations show that substantially increasing subgroup weighting changed the star rating for only a handful of schools. (For example, increasing subgroup weight from 10% to 15% for each subgroup caused only seven schools to change star rating. These changes were because those schools were on the cusp between stars and a decrease of as small as one-tenth of a point caused the change in star rating.) Thus, subgroup performance is highly correlated to overall school performance, and the 10% weighting of the subgroups within the growth and performance index incentivizes schools to improve overall and subgroup performance.

Attendance rate indicator: The school receives points on the attendance rate indicator based on the following chart. The points are structured to provide incentives for schools to maintain or improve their attendance rate to 93% or above.

Attendance rate	Points
96.00% - 100%	100
93.00% - 95.99%	95
90.00% - 92.99%	80
85.00% - 89.99%	50
70.00% - 84.99%	25
Below 70.00%	0

Graduation rate indicator: The school receives points on the graduation rate indicator based on the school's four-year or five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for the all-students group. The graduation rate is calculated based on the adjusted cohort formula in current regulations and the current approved Accountability Workbook. Points are assigned according to the following chart. The school receives the points for either the four-year rate or the five-year rate, whichever results in the higher number of points. The point table is structured to encourage districts to improve their four-year graduation rate.

For schools that have six or fewer students in either the four- or five-year cohort or both for the current year (the denominator of the fraction used to compute the graduation rate), the four- and five- year graduation rates will be calculated by aggregating the graduation rate data for up to three consecutive years so that the aggregated cohort (denominator of the fraction) is greater than six for each of the specified four- and five-year rate.

When there are insufficient data to make a graduation-rate determination with a cohort of at least seven students over three consecutive years in either (but not both) the four- or five-year cohort, the school will receive points based upon the four- or five-year cohort in which the graduation rate can be calculated with at least seven students. In cases when there are insufficient data to make a graduation-rate determination with a cohort of at least seven students over three consecutive years in neither the four- or five-year cohorts, the graduation-rate indicator and its weight in the overall ASPI score will be removed from the calculation.

4-year graduation rate	5-year graduation rate	Points
98.00-100	98.00-100	100
90.00-97.99	93.00-97.99	95
85.00-89.99	89.00-92.99	90
80.00-84.99	85.00-88.99	70
70.00-79.99	80.00-84.99	50
60.00-69.99	70.00-79.99	25
50.00-59.99	60.00-69.99	10
Below 50.00	Below 60.00	0

Note that graduation rates for the all students group and each NCLB required subgroup will be reported in the school and district report cards.

EED ran simulations to determine a reasonable weight for the graduation rate within the ASPI. The simulations showed that increasing graduation rate weight from 20% to 30%, reducing the student achievement from 20% to 15%, and reducing the growth from 35% to 30% changed the star rating for 30 schools, only three of which increased. Approximately one-third of the schools that decreased were alternative schools, which, in EED's view, are special and unique situations. EED noted that increasing graduation rate weight penalized some of the rural schools that have worked extremely hard and made substantial progress in recent years. Recent progress, however, might not be reflected in graduation rate, especially in small rural schools, because some students already left school and may have moved to a different village. As a policy matter, EED believes that weighting graduation rate at 20 percent, and having a steep curve for points awarded for graduation rate, achieves the proper balance for incentives in the index between graduating seniors and improvement for all students.

In the ASPI, the graduation rates are not differentiated. They are calculated in the same manner for all schools and for all of the special populations. Alaska holds all students to the same standard for graduation rates. All schools that serve grade 12 students are held to a 20 percent weighting in the ASPI. EED has been concerned for several years with the effect, in accountability measures, of the graduation rate for extremely small schools. Specifically, EED's concerns were related to schools having graduation cohort groups of less than five students. There was much volatility due to small numbers that could prevent a relatively high-achieving school from meeting AYP. Conversely, a relatively low-achieving school could meet AYP with a modest amount of improvement in its graduation rate, again due to small numbers. The same phenomenon occurs to a much larger scale when considering special populations. EED believes that including graduation rate in the index, instead of making it a stand-alone data point, provides a better method for incentivizing improvement in graduation.

EED has several reasons for not including graduation rate points for each subgroup. First, when graduation rate was disaggregated by subgroups for AYP, it introduced the concept of differentiated graduation rates for certain subgroups. EED prefers to not have differentiated graduation rates. Second, as explained, Alaska has many very small schools for which a graduation rate for subgroups would not be valid. That would lead to some schools having graduation rates for subgroups and others not. EED prefers to be consistent. Third, introducing too many variables into an index makes the index confusing and weakens the impact of each variable. Because data on graduation rate by subgroup will be available, if a school has a significant graduation rate gap EED will take action based on the source data, without regard to whether that variable is included in the index.

As originally proposed to stakeholders, a graduation rate of 50-59 percent would receive zero points. Stakeholders strongly objected because they wanted to incentivize improvement for those schools that have graduation rates below 50 percent. In response to stakeholder input, EED's proposal now provides a nominal point value of 10 for a graduation rate of 50-59 percent, while still awarding zero points for a rate below 50 percent. Finally, as explained elsewhere in this response, several simulations were run using various weightings for graduation, and 20 percent was chosen because it was the best representation without being overly restrictive or over-masking smaller populations.

College and Career Readiness indicator: Beginning in 2014-2015, Alaska requires all students to participate in at least one state approved college- or career-ready assessment of their choice at state expense in their junior or senior year as a requirement for a high school diploma. WorkKeys (WK) assessment administered by ACT is the approved career-ready assessment. Alaska requires the WorkKeys assessments: Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information. Students are encouraged to earn at least a bronze certificate, which represents entry-level qualifications in basic skills for specified jobs and which is recognized by a number of employers in the state. (See State regulation 4 AAC 06.717.) The approved college-ready assessments are either the ACT or the SAT. Alaska includes the optional ACT Writing assessment in the provided assessment. In 2016, Alaska will include the then-optional SAT writing assessment. In addition, the Alaska Performance Scholarship program (APS) provides incentives for students to achieve a level of readiness for college or a career. Students who complete rigorous coursework and meet a core set of requirements are eligible to receive funding to pursue college or career training in Alaska. The requirements include an increased course load with a focus on more rigorous curriculum, and tiered award levels based on grade point average, ACT or SAT scores, and WorkKeys scores. (http://akadvantage.alaska.gov/Grants_and_Scholarships/Alaska_Performance_Scholarship.aspx)

To calculate the College and Career Ready indicator, each high school senior (students enrolled in 12th grade on the first day of the administration of the standards based assessments in April of the school year) who has earned a WorkKeys certificate or received a score on the ACT or SAT college entrance exam that qualifies for one of three APS scholarship levels will earn points according to the chart below. The highest score in any category will count for an individual student. The total points earned by the 12th-graders enrolled at the school will be divided by the total number of 12th-graders from the school who participated in any one or more of the WorkKeys, ACT, or SAT assessments. The assessments may have been taken in either the junior or senior year no matter where the student was enrolled.

WorkKeys Certificate	ACT Score	SAT Score	Points
Gold or Platinum	25	1680	100
Silver	23	1560	95
Bronze	21	1450	80

Elementary/Middle Grade Levels (K-8) ASPI Indicator Weightings

The chart below shows the weighting factors applied to each indicator for students in grades K-8. If a school includes grade levels only from K to 8, then the school receives an ASPI score based only on these weightings.

Category	Weighting
Academic Achievement - % of all students proficient or above (average of % proficient on reading, writing and mathematics SBAs)	35%
School Progress - growth and proficiency index score for all students group and for each primary subgroup (AN/AI, economically disadvantaged, SWDs, and ELs)	40%
Attendance Rate (all students)	25%
Total	100%

High School Grade Levels (9-12) ASPI Indicator Weightings

The chart below shows the weighting factors applied to each indicator for students in grades 9-12. If a school includes grade levels only from 9 to 12, then the school receives an ASPI score based only on these weightings.

Category	Weighting
Academic Achievement - % of all students proficient or above (average of % proficient on reading, writing and mathematics SBAs)	20%
School Progress - growth and proficiency index score for all students group and for each primary subgroup (AN/AI, economically disadvantaged, SWDs, and ELs)	40%
Attendance Rate (all students)	10%
Graduation rate (cohort of all students)	20%
College & Career Readiness Indicator (12th-graders at score levels on WorkKeys, ACT, or SAT)	10%
Total	100%

Schools with Grades K-12

Schools that have students in a mixture of grades between K-8 and 9-12 will receive points and weightings on indicators based on the percentage of students enrolled in the school as reported on the first day of testing for SBAs in April in each grade span. This would include schools with all K-12 grades as well as those with grade spans that cross the grade spans, such as grades 6-12. The following chart shows an example of such a school.

Grade Span	ASPI points earned in grade span	% of students in grade span	ASPI weighted points
K-8	67.89	77.2%	52.41
9-12	51.81	22.8%	11.81
Total for school			**64.22**

Alternative Schools

In 2013-2014, Alaska had 15 alternative schools that have been tailored to exclusively serve high-risk secondary students in grades 7-12. Their students arrive with the following characteristics: credit deficient, below proficient, a history of low attendance, in imminent danger of dropout and/or history of dropout, and with a heightened prevalence of barriers to learning like homelessness, poverty, untreated mental health issues like depression and social anxiety, teen parenting, substance use and abuse, and unaddressed health issues. The original ASPI metric as applied to these schools makes achieving a star rating above 3 mathematically implausible, inaccurately reflects progress the schools attain, and does not accurately differentiate the quality among the state's alternative schools. Beginning with the assessments taken in 2014, schools that meet the definition of an alternative school will receive an ASPI score and star rating based on the following amendments to the ASPI that is used for all other schools. The school's ASPI report and the School Report Card will carry a special designation to indicate that the school's ASPI rating is based on the Alternative ASPI metrics.

Definition of alternative school:

"Alternative school" means a school that has been specifically designed to exclusively serve high-risk secondary students in grades 7-12. Alternative schools are designed to meet the needs of secondary students confronted with barriers to graduation such as credit deficiencies, below-proficient academic performance, a history of low attendance, high drop-out risk or drop-out history, often due to such factors as poverty, homelessness, mental health conditions, substance abuse, and teen parenting. It is important to note that an alternative school is not a program within a larger school, whether a traditional school, charter school, or correspondence school.

Amended ASPI Metric for Alternative Schools: The amended changes are proposed for the grades 9-12 component of the ASPI metric. The grades 7-8 component of the ASPI metric would remain unchanged for these alternative schools.

Attendance rate indicator for alternative schools: The school receives points on the attendance rate indicator based on the following chart. This modification adjusts for the student demographic served and reflects the hardships alternative school students face in attending school regularly (homelessness, teen parenting, poverty, mental health issues, care for siblings, substance abuse etc.) It is the rule rather than the exception for alternative schools to accept students with life challenges that resulted in histories of poor attendance and non-attendance (or dropping out) while enrolled in traditional schools. The attendance rate ranges and point values proposed will set ambitious but achievable attendance goals for these schools. Under the original ASPI metrics most alternative schools earned fewer than 25 of the 100 attendance rate points (fewer than 3 weighted points on the ASPI scale).

Alternative Schools Attendance rate	Points
88.00%-100%	100
83.00-87.99%	95
78.00%-82.99%	80
73.00-77.99%	50
65.00%-72.99%	25
Below 65.00%	0

Graduation rate indicator for alternative schools: The school receives points on the graduation rate indicator based on the school's four-year or five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for the all-students group. The graduation rate is calculated based on the adjusted cohort formula in current regulations and the current approved Accountability Workbook. Points are assigned according to the following chart. The school receives the points for either the four-year rate or the five-year rate, whichever results in the higher number of points. The graduation rate will work to support alternative schools' inclusive and flexible enrollment practices and to prevent alternative school program changes simply to raise ASPI scores. The graduation rates and point values will set ambitious but achievable graduation goals for these schools. Under the original ASPI metrics, 12 of the 15 alternative schools received zero points and none received more than 25 of the 100 possible graduation points (5 out of the 20 possible weighted graduation points on the 100 point ASPI scale).

Alternative Schools Graduation Rate		
4-year rate	**5-year rate**	**Points**
80.00-100	85.00-100	100
70.00-79.99	75.00-84.99	95
60.00-69.99	65.00-74.99	90
55.00-59.99	60.00-64.99	70

45.00-54.99	50.00-59.99	50
40.00-44.99	45.00-49.99	25
35.00-39.99	40.00-44.99	10
Below 35.00	Below 40.00	0

High School Grade Levels (9-12) ASPI Indicator Weightings for Alternative Schools

The ASPI weighting of the School Progress element will be increased from 40% to 50% and the weighting of the academic achievement element will be decreased from 20% to 10%. The school progress component of ASPI reflects the work alternative schools accomplish more accurately than any of the other ASPI metrics: it holds the schools fully accountable for moving students forward academically while empowering them to accept students where they are. School progress is the ASPI element most within the school's control to influence. The subgroups reflect the highest achievement gaps of Alaska students and as such reflect alternative school population needs. School progress measures growth of individual students on a continuous scale.

Reducing the weight of the academic achievement element by 10% offsets the increase in the school progress element by 10%. While student progress better reflects growth and achievement within the alternative schools, academic achievement is a poorer indicator or alternative schools which primarily receive students from traditional schools with a history of being below proficiency.

High School Grade Levels (9-12) ASPI Indicator Weightings for Alternative Schools	
Category	**Weighting**
Academic Achievement - % of all students proficient or above (average of % proficient on reading, writing and mathematics SBAs)	10%
School Progress - growth and proficiency index score for all students group and for each primary subgroup (AN/AI, economically disadvantaged, SWDs, and ELs)	50%
Attendance Rate (all students)	10%
Graduation rate (cohort of all students)	20%
College & Career Readiness Indicator (12th-graders at score levels on WorkKeys, ACT, or SAT)	10%
Total	100%

b. *Does the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system create incentives and provide support that is likely to be effective in closing achievement gaps for all subgroups of students?*

Participation Rate
For schools with a participation rate of less than 95%, non-tested students will be counted as not proficient for the Academic Achievement category of the Alaska School Performance Index. Schools must also have a 95% participation rate for the all students group and all subgroups in order to be identified as a reward school and in order to meet the AMO targets. Small schools with the all students group or subgroups with 40 or fewer eligible students will meet the participation requirement if all but two or fewer students are assessed.

ASPI Star Ratings and School Designations
Alaska will designate ranges of ASPI scores with a rating from 5 stars for the highest-performing schools to 1 star for the lowest-performing schools. The initial performance ranges will be set by reviewing the ASPI scores based on the 2012 assessment data. This will be the baseline year for setting the ASPI ranges and the AMOs. Alaska will identify the range for the 1-star schools as approximately the lowest 10% of the scores, and the 2-star schools will be approximately the next lowest 10% of the scores. The range for the 5-star schools will be approximately 10% of the highest scores. The remaining ranges will represent the 3-star and 4-star schools, which represent the schools in the average to above-average performance ranges. Once these ranges are determined, Alaska anticipates maintaining the corresponding star ratings for each range over the next three years, until the new assessments are implemented. This will provide an incentive to all schools to increase performance in order to raise their star rating. The goal would be for all schools to move out of the 1- and 2-star categories and for more schools to move into the 5-star category. Alaska will review the school performance data, ASPI indicators and scores, and star ratings annually and, if adjustments are needed, will seek to amend its waiver request to adjust the index and ratings to best reflect the overall performance of a school. Alaska will revise the AMO targets and the ASPI index based on data in the year the new assessments are implemented.

Alaska Schools Performance Index

Intervals	ASPI Score	Star Rating
Highest (~10%)	94 - 100	*****
Next Highest (~35%)	85 - 93.99	****
Middle (~35%)	65 - 84.99	***
Next Lowest (~10%)	55 - 64.99	**
Lowest (~10%)	0 - 54.99	*

The following chart shows the proposed ranges for points on the Alaska School Performance Index and the corresponding star rating. It also shows the number of schools in each category by grade span and by Title I status that would receive each star rating.

Summary of Schools with ASPI scores and proposed star ratings

Summary counts	# all schools	% of all schools	ASPI range	Rating	# EM	% EM	# HS	% HS	# K12	% K12	# Title I schools	% Title I in star rating
Highest range	58	11.5%	94 - 100	*****	47	81.0%	0	0.0%	11	19.0%	15	25.9%
Next Range	167	33.0%	85 - 93.99	****	117	70.1%	13	7.8%	37	22.2%	76	45.5%
Next range	179	35.4%	65 - 84.99	***	53	29.6%	25	14.0%	101	56.4%	119	66.5%
Next Lowest 10%	51	10.1%	55 - 64.99	**	3	5.9%	2	3.9%	46	90.2%	43	84.3%
Lowest 10%	51	10.1%	less than 55	*	2	3.9%	15	29.4%	34	66.7%	33	64.7%
Total all schools	**506**	100.0%			**222**		**55**		**229**		**286**	**56.5%**

Key	
Schools with only grades K-8	EM
Schools with only grades 9-12	HS
Schools with both EM & HS	K12

The chart below shows the number of schools in each proposed star rating as compared to the current AYP levels. Note that an AYP level of 0 means that a school made AYP. Each level number refers to the number of consecutive years that a school has missed AYP. An AYP level of 5 means that a school is in restructuring, and may have been at Level 5 for a number of years. The chart shows that while many of the higher-rated star schools are making AYP and many of the lower-rated star schools are at high levels of school improvement, corrective action or restructuring under the current law, there are some schools that are currently making AYP but are still very low-performing, and some schools that are at high levels of not making AYP but are fairly high-performing schools overall.

# Schools in each category compared to AYP levels						
	AYP levels					
Proposed ASPI Star Ratings	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1 star	5	3	6	5	2	30
2 stars	2	7	3	5	5	29
3 stars	63	39	10	13	8	46
4 stars	81	30	18	17	4	17
5 stars	52	4	0	1	0	1

Sample School Charts Showing Overall ASPI Score Calculation

Anytown Elementary School	#	%	
Students in grades K-8	502	100%	
Students in grades 9-12	0	0%	
Grades K-8			
Category	**Points Earned**	**Weight**	**Weighted points**
Academic Achievement - % of all students proficient or above on SBAs)	63.5	35%	22.23
School Progress – growth and proficiency index score for all students group and for each primary subgroup (AN/AI, ECD, SWD, & EL)	93.98	40%	37.59
Attendance Rate (all students	85	25%	21.25
Total		100%	81.07
ASPI Overall Score			**81.07**
Star Rating			*******

Anytown High School	#	%	
Students in grades K-8	0	0%	
Students in grades 9-12	2211	100%	
Grades 9-12			
Category	**Points earned**	**Weight**	**Weighted points**
Academic Achievement - % of all students proficient or above on SBAs	65.82	20%	13.16
School Progress – growth and proficiency index score for all students group and for each primary subgroup (AN/AI, ECD, SWD, & EL)	86.38	40%	34.55
Attendance Rate (all students	50.00	10%	5.00
Graduation rate (cohort of all students)	50.00	20%	10.00
College & Career Readiness Indicator (11th or 12th graders scores on SAT, ACT, or WorkKeys)	73.53	10%	7.35
Total		100%	70.06
ASPI Overall Score			**70.06**
Star Rating			*******

Anytown K-12 School	#	%	
Students in grades K-8	132	77%	
Students in grades 9-12	39	23%	
Grades K-8			
Category	**Points Earned**	**Weight**	**Weighted points**
Academic Achievement - % of all students proficient or above on SBAs	28.06	35%	9.82
School Progress – growth and proficiency index score for all students group and for each primary subgroup (AN/AI, ECD, SWD, & EL)	80.19	40%	32.07
Attendance Rate (all students)	100	25%	25.00
Total		100%	66.89
Grades 9-12			
Category	**Points earned**	**Weight**	**Weighted points**
Academic Achievement - % of all students proficient or above on SBAs	10.42	20%	2.08
School Progress – growth and proficiency index score for all students group and for each primary subgroup (AN/AI, ECD, SWD, & EL)	76.59	40%	30.64
Attendance Rate (all students)	0.00	10%	0.00
Graduation rate (cohort of all students)	70.00	20%	14.00
College & Career Readiness Indicator (11th or 12th graders scores on SAT, ACT, or WorkKeys)	24.00	8%	2.40
Total		100%	49.12
ASPI Overall Score (66.89*77% + 50.64*23%)			**62.81**
Star Rating			***

c. *Did the SEA provide a plan that ensures that the system will be implemented in LEAs and schools no later than the 2013–2014 school year?*

State Level Incentives and Support for All Schools

The State will publicly report the following information for all schools. The overall ASPI score will be reported, along with a chart showing how the score was calculated for each school. The percent of students proficient or advanced in the all-students group and all traditional subgroups on the reading, writing, and mathematics SBAs will be reported, along with whether the school has met the AMO targets in each of those areas. For schools with grade 12 students, the high school graduation rate will be reported for the all-students group and all current NCLB-required subgroups. The schools will have incentives to improve their ASPI score by focusing on the areas where all students or subgroups need additional support.

The State will perform a desk audit to review the above data for each school annually. The ASPI score and corresponding star rating of a school, combined with school data about meeting the AMO targets for achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, and the graduation rate targets for all subgroups will determine the types of supports and interventions that the school will receive.

EED's State System of Support provides resources and support to all schools through a tiered system of support and resources. The tri-tiered model represents SSOS efforts to help districts build their capacity. The work of the SSOS is based on the Alaska Effective Schools Framework. The framework is based on six domains that represent important areas of school functioning: curriculum, assessment, instruction, supportive learning environment, professional development, and leadership. Each domain includes a set of indicators and a rubric against which evidence of implementation is rated – from little or no development or implementation to exemplary level of development and implementation of the indicator. These six domains are the basis of several tools used to determine areas in which schools need to improve and in planning school improvement strategies and actions to increase the school's level of implementation of effective practices in each domain. The Alaska Self-Study Tool and the Alaska STEPP (Steps Toward Educational Progress and Partnership) online school improvement tool both use the Alaska Effective Schools Framework indicators and rubrics to assist schools in completing a needs assessment and developing school improvement plans targeted to fully implementing the six domains. The SSOS system and Alaska STEPP is described more completely in section 2G of this application and in the SSOS Operations Manual attached. (See Attachment 2.3)

Universal supports available to all schools regardless of star status include the following:

- The online continuous improvement planning tool Alaska STEPP (an extension of the Indistar model) is available to all schools in the state regardless of star status. This includes training and quarterly webinars open to all schools in the state.
- The twice yearly Curriculum Alignment Institute provides a forum for training and professional development.
- Support from two coaching programs:
  Alaska Administrative Coaching Project. This coaching program serves new principals in developing leadership for successful school reform. Principals attend cohort institutes and receive follow-up coaching visits to strengthen their work in their school.
  Alaska Statewide Mentor Project. While this project places mentors with new teachers regardless of school performance, schools that would be designated as Priority and Focus often experience high teacher turn-over rates and are more likely than not served by new teacher mentors.

One-star and 2-star designated schools will be held accountable through the district- and school-level audit process. (The State System of Support uses this process each year to review school performance, assess district-level support for school improvement work, and provide directed support and oversight, as required by Alaska regulations. See 4 AAC 06.872.)

Oversight and support provided to 1-star and 2-star schools through this audit process will be the following:

- Mandatory participation of selected schools in **professional development events** such as Curriculum Alignment Institute, Alaska School Leadership Institute, and Anchorage RTI

conference.

- **School Improvement Plan** and District Improvement Plan reviews to check for fidelity of implementation. The Alaska Effective Schools Framework provides guidance for assessing school improvement progress and organizing further action. The online planning tool Alaska STEPP embodies this framework and provides the structure for schools and districts to be continually engaged in their own improvement efforts.
- Upon review of districts' school improvement plans and efforts, the audit process can recommend an **independent onsite audit** of instructional practice to further clarify the school improvement progress and needs of a district and the designated schools.
- **School leadership support** through Alaska Innovative School Leaders Academy (AISLA) targeting experienced principals working in 1-star and 2-star schools. AISLA members will participate in a wide array of face-to-face and web-based activities that provide the knowledge and resources to address the specific challenges of implementing educational reforms. New principals working in 1- and 2-star schools will continue to be served by the Alaska Administrative Coaching Project upon which AISLA is based.
- **State System of Support Coaches** will continue to serve the lowest performing schools and districts – the priority schools. Each coach, assigned to one or two high-needs schools or districts, provides ongoing improvement planning, professional development, and support of School Improvement Plans. This support includes one site-visit (of five days) per month and ongoing distance coaching between visits. (See District Coaching Agreement - pages 24-27 of the State System of Support Operations Manual.)

The Alaska State System of Support provides support and oversight to districts and schools using a three-tiered approach with interventions at each tier level organized around the Alaska Effective School Framework's six domains of Leadership, Professional Development, Instruction, Assessment, Curriculum, and Supportive Learning Environment. The following table (see page 9, SSOS Operations Manual) presents the tiered intervention structure as it currently exists.

Tier I: Universal Access	Tier II: Targeted	Tier III: Comprehensive
•**Description:** Designed to provide **all** districts with access to information about the best practices in the six domains of effective schools (curriculum, assessment, instruction, supportive learning environment, professional development, and leadership). •**Example:** Districts and schools meeting AYP. •**Focus:** Tier I sites use most effective practices to improve student achievement and ask for support when they need it. •**Support Provided by EED:** SSOS is available to help identify and leverage resources for school and district improvement. In addition, EED offers access to our website, audio and web conferences, and regional or State conferences.	•**Description:** Designed to provide districts and schools in **greater need** with additional assistance. •**Example:** Districts and schools not meeting AYP, "872" schools, and most Level 4 Districts in Corrective Action. •**Focus:** Tier II schools and districts submit District Improvement Plans (DIPs), "872" schools and Title I schools at Level 2 or above are required to submit School Improvement Plans (SIPs). •**Support Provided by EED:** SSOS staff ensures that leadership teams identify the evidence of implementation as well as its impact on students. In addition to providing Tier II with a centralized pool of resources, EED may offer expertise provided by contractors who work directly with teachers and administrators on implementing effective instructional practices.	•**Description:** Designed to provide districts in the **highest level of need** with rigorous and explicit interventions. •**Example:** High-needs "872" schools; Districts in Intervention. •**Focus:** Tier III schools and districts focus on key areas that will have an immediate impact on student achievement. Expectations are clearly defined by district and EED. Implementation is monitored by EED. •**Support Provided by EED:** In addition to providing Tier III schools and districts with a centralized pool of resource, SSOS provides support for administrators and teachers in the implementation of effective instructional and leadership practices and systems thorough a SSOS Coach.

The State System of Support will conduct a desk audit of all districts in the state that contain one or two-star schools. This audit process includes a close data survey of district performance and review of the district improvement plan to ensure alignment to the needs of identified schools. It will further identify areas of concern based upon the six domains of effective schools. EED will consult directly with district management to verify district efforts and resource alignment, and assess district capacity and intent to support reform. Districts will then be designated as one of three tiers. Tier I districts have broad latitude in determining effective policy and participate in a broad array of generally available technical assistance on a volunteer basis. These districts clearly have the capacity to support and develop effective schools. Tier II districts receive more directed attention through a desk audit / consultation process which requires district preparation of an improvement plan that aligns to the needs of one and two-star schools. As needed, EED can initiate an onsite instructional audit of Tier II districts to determine if capacity exists to effectively support school improvement. Tier III districts are those that typically have at least 25% of their schools identified as 1- or 2-star schools and are in need of outside assistance in the form of greater EED oversight and support via an onsite school improvement coach. This coach, assigned to a Tier III district or the priority schools within the district, work to provide technical assistance and drive implementation of the district and school improvement plans.

Schools with Average or Above Star Ratings (3- to 5-star schools)

Schools with ASPI ratings of 3 stars will be required to create a plan and timeline addressing key areas of the six domains of the Alaska Effective Schools Framework to improve the performance of the school and all subgroups within the school. Schools with ASPI ratings of 4 or 5 stars, including

Title I schools, that are missing AMO targets in any one subgroup for two years in a row, that have a subgroup that missed the participation rate, or that have a subgroup that missed its graduation rate target (for schools with grade 12) will be required to create a plan and timeline with specific strategies for improving the achievement or graduation rates of the subgroup(s) affected. The plans for 3, 4, and 5 star schools must be submitted to the district for review and approval. The district will be responsible for providing support to those schools, and may request support through the State System of Support. These schools will generally have access to the universal level of SSOS support available to all schools and districts, but may request support in specific areas as needed. The state will identify the highest-performing and high-progress reward schools for recognition from among the 5-star and 4-star schools. The criteria for identification and the recognition process for reward schools are described in section 2.C of this application.

Schools with Lowest Star Ratings (1-star and 2-star schools)
The State will perform a desk audit on all 1-star and 2-star schools. In addition to the ASPI score, the State will use the growth and performance index score for the all-students group and each subgroup, information about whether the school is meeting the AMO targets, information about the graduation rate, and information about the size and characteristics of the schools. For each school district with 1-star and 2-star schools, the State will consider data about the performance of other schools in the district, including the number and percent of schools in each star ranking, information about the previous levels of improvement in the schools in the district including identification as "872" schools, whether the schools and district have been in intervention status, change in key district or school personnel, and any progress being shown by the schools in the district. (Note: "872" schools are low-performing schools that meet the specific criteria as stated in 4 AAC 06.872, a State regulation to identify low-performing schools that require more support and possibly intervention from SSOS. The "872" schools are not required to be Title I schools – it applies to all schools. The regulations are being revised to reflect the 1- and 2-star schools as the lowest performing, rather than calling them "872" schools.) The State will determine the priority schools and focus schools from the 1- and 2-star schools. There will be a minimum of 14 Title I schools identified as priority schools and 29 Title I schools identified as focus schools. The identification criteria and complete description of the priority and focus schools are found in sections 2.D and 2.E of this application. The 1-star schools receive the most-comprehensive support from SSOS in the form of rigorous and explicit interventions. The 2-star schools would receive the targeted level of support from SSOS, such as on-site professional development opportunities or specific content area institutes provided by contractors. School districts that have a larger number or percent of schools with 1-star and 2-star ratings or priority and focus schools will receive comprehensive support.

Superintendents of school districts with 1-star and 2-star schools will be required to participate in a conversation with members of the SSOS team and EED leadership (by phone or in person) to address the areas of low performance in the school(s) and how they are being addressed by the district. The calls will address key areas of the six domains of the Alaska Effective Schools Framework. Based on the information gathered from those phone calls, EED will determine the level of support and interventions required in each school. In providing support and requiring interventions, EED will work with the school district and hold the district accountable for working with the schools. Depending on the level of assistance required and need shown by the desk audit and phone calls with the superintendent, support and interventions may include:

- On-site visit by EED staff to gather further information about needs in the school and district.

- Facilitated support to the school and district in completing the self-study of the Alaska Effective Schools Framework.
- On-site external team to perform an instructional audit of the school, or selected schools in the case of a district with more than one lowest-performing school.
- Required use of the online school improvement planning tool Alaska STEPP.
- Provision of specialized training for the staff and leadership at the school and district.
- Required participation of school and district staff in initiatives such as the Alaska School Leadership Institute, the Curriculum Alignment Institutes, etc.
- Provision of a SSOS on-site coach.
- If identified as a Priority or Focus school, interventions and support as specified in the descriptions in sections 2D-2G of this application.

The State System of Support has been using the above process for identification of the lowest-performing schools in the state and providing direct support through intervention in five school districts since 2007. Since that time, two of the school districts have met the State-defined criteria to exit intervention status. The SSOS support and intervention in schools has evolved over time and continues to change based on feedback from schools and evaluation of the supports that have shown to be effective. The Alaska Legislature recognized the need for more State support to assist low-performing schools and has increased state funding for the SSOS program through additional positions in EED as well as for on-site coaches through contracts.

The new recognition, accountability, and support system proposed by this application will significantly increase the focus and attention on the issue of subgroup performance over what was occurring under AYP. This is because the high-stakes nature of AYP required that Alaska have a minimum N and a confidence interval regarding whether a school or district met AYP for that subgroup. In contrast, inclusion of a point value in an index is not itself a high-stakes matter, even though the overall index point value is high stakes. This allows Alaska to relax the minimum N for inclusion of subgroups into the index to five. In Alaska, the impact of this change will be significant because most of our schools were small to medium-sized schools that were affected by the minimum N/confidence interval for subgroups. In reviewing the proposed ASPI model, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education provided comment in favor of the increased accountability that the minimum N of five will bring to the students with disabilities subgroup. Furthermore, in order to maintain high accountability for subgroups, Alaska has resisted requests to consider a super subgroup or to eliminate duplication for students in more than one subgroup. Thus, the system is designed to close achievement gaps.

In addition, schools are still required to set and meet AMOs for each subgroup. Whether a school has met its AMOs for subgroups will be included as a factor in determining whether a school is a focus or a priority school. This is further evidence that the system is designed to close achievement gaps.

The State System of Support has provided and will continue to provide resources and training on addressing needs of Alaska Natives, English learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students in struggling schools and districts. As described, we work with all schools (not just struggling schools) on achievement gap issues.

2.A.ii Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding information, if any.

Option A	**Option B**
☒ The SEA includes student achievement only on reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools.	☐ If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system or to identify reward, priority, and focus schools, it must: a. provide the percentage of students in the "all students" group that performed at the proficient level on the State's most recent administration of each assessment for all grades assessed; and b. include an explanation of how the included assessments will be weighted in a manner that will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve college- and career-ready standards.

Alaska currently administers separate content assessments in reading and writing as well as mathematics. Reading and writing together have been reported for the language arts adequate yearly progress (AYP) targets. In this waiver proposal, reading and writing would be reported separately, but are considered to comprise the language arts assessment.

2.B SET AMBITIOUS BUT ACHIEVABLE ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Select the method the SEA will use to set new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for the State and all LEAs, schools, and subgroups that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts. If the SEA sets AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, the AMOs for LEAs, schools, or subgroups that are further behind must require greater rates of annual progress.

Option A	**Option B**	**Option C**
☒ Set AMOs in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the "all students" group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years. The SEA must use current proficiency rates based on assessments administered in the 2011–2012 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs. i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.	☐ Set AMOs that increase in annual equal increments and result in 100 percent of students achieving proficiency no later than the end of the 2019–2020 school year. The SEA must use the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2011–2012 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs. i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.	☐ Use another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups. i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs. ii. Provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs in the text box below. iii. Provide a link to the State's report card or attach a copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2011–2012 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the "all students" group and all subgroups. (Attachment 8)

Option A: Did the SEA set its AMOs so that they increase in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the "all students" group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years?

i. Did the SEA provide the new AMOs and the method used to set these AMOs?

The State will set AMO targets based on Option A so that they increase in annual increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students who are not proficient within six years in each assessment area: reading, writing, and mathematics. The targets will be set for each content area assessment separately rather than combining the results of the reading and writing assessments into one language arts target. This will provide more information about the areas of need in reading and in writing and progress from year to year can be determined on the individual content assessments.

ii. Did the SEA use current proficiency rates from the 2011–2012 school year as the base year?

The following chart shows the process of calculating the AMO targets using 2011-2012 proficiency rates as the base year:

AMO Calculation Example	
68.0	2012 % proficient or advanced
32.0	% Not proficient or advanced
16.0	% to reduce not proficient in 6 years
84.0	Target at the end of 6 years
2.7	Equal annual increments
70.7	2012-2013 AMO Target
73.3	2013-2014 AMO Target
76.0	2014-2015 AMO Target
78.7	2015-2016 AMO Target
81.3	2016-2017 AMO Target
84.0	2017-2018 AMO Target

iii. If the SEA set AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, do the AMOs require LEAs, schools, and subgroups that are further behind to make greater rates of annual progress?

AMO targets will be set at both the state level and for each individual school and district. Targets will be set for the all-students group and for each current NCLB subgroup: African American, Alaska Native/American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Caucasian, Hispanic, Multi-ethnic, economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and English learners (formerly known as LEP students). The effect of setting AMO targets for each subgroup means that the lower-performing subgroups that have a lower percentage of students proficient in the baseline year will have a larger percent of not-proficient students and thus larger annual increments for the AMO targets, requiring the subgroup to make a greater rate of progress than the all-students group. Schools and districts will be determined to have met the AMO target in a specific subject and subgroup if they have met either their own target or the state target. Schools and districts that are far below the state targets will need to make more progress from their baseline year to reach their own AMO target, but meeting their own AMO target will be more likely to be achieved than making a jump to the higher level state target. Schools and districts that are already above the state targets will be considered to have met the targets if they remain at or above the state targets.

Because Alaska has chosen to waive the requirement to report schools as making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), the following requirements in the currently approved Accountability Workbook will apply to reporting whether schools and districts meet the AMO targets:

- Participation rate must be 95% for all students and all subgroups.
- Only "full academic year" (FAY) students will be included.
- 1% cap for students with disabilities who take the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards will still apply.
- Recently arrived English learners (ELs or LEP) who take the ELP assessment will count toward the participation rate for the reading/language arts assessment, and the school district may choose not to include the scores of those students on the reading/language arts or mathematics assessments.
- Reading/language arts and mathematics assessment scores for former English learners and students with disabilities may be included for up to two years.
- For the purposes of determining whether a school district met the target for English learners in in reading/language arts and mathematics under Title III (AMAO3), the target would be based on meeting the participation rate, the graduation rate, and the AMO targets for the English learners subgroup.

The following provisions would no longer apply or will be revised for new accountability system.

- The provision of "safe harbor" would no longer apply to meeting AMOs because that is a provision directly related to making AYP.
- The subgroup size for meeting AMO targets will be changed to be a minimum of five students to be included.
- The confidence interval would no longer be applied.

AMO targets will be used for reporting purposes for all schools and NCLB-required subgroups. Whether a school has met the AMO targets will be used as one of the criteria for identification as a reward or priority school, but it will not be a factor in the ASPI score.

The state AMO targets for the all-students group and each subgroup based on 2011-2012 data are shown in the table below. The AMO targets will be in place until the year of the implementation of the new assessments that are aligned with Alaska's college- and career-ready standards 2014-2015. At that time, the targets will be reset using the data on the new assessments as the baseline year.

				AMO Targets					
Group	**Content Area**	**%Prof/ Adv 2011-2012**	**Annual Incre-ment**	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**	**2014-2015**	**2015-2016**	**2016-2017**	**2017-2018**
All students	Reading	80.1	1.7	81.8	83.4	85.1	86.7	88.4	90.1
All students	Writing	74.2	2.2	76.4	78.5	80.7	82.8	85.0	87.1
All students	Mathematics	68.6	2.6	71.2	73.8	76.5	79.1	81.7	84.3
African American	Reading	74.1	2.2	76.3	78.4	80.6	82.7	84.9	87.1
African American	Writing	67.4	2.7	70.1	72.8	75.6	78.3	81.0	83.7
African American	Mathematics	54.4	3.8	58.2	62.0	65.8	69.6	73.4	77.2
Alaska Native/Am Ind	Reading	59.0	3.4	62.4	65.8	69.3	72.7	76.1	79.5
Alaska Native /Am Ind	Writing	51.3	4.1	55.4	59.4	63.5	67.5	71.6	75.7
Alaska Native /Am Ind	Mathematics	48.6	4.3	52.9	57.2	61.5	65.7	70.0	74.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	Reading	76.3	2.0	78.3	80.3	82.2	84.2	86.2	88.2
Asian/Pacific Islander	Writing	73.2	2.2	75.4	77.7	79.9	82.1	84.4	86.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	Mathematics	67.9	2.7	70.6	73.3	75.9	78.6	81.3	84.0
Caucasian	Reading	90.1	0.8	90.9	91.8	92.6	93.4	94.2	95.1
Caucasian	Writing	84.7	1.3	86.0	87.3	88.5	89.8	91.1	92.4
Caucasian	Mathematics	78.7	1.8	80.5	82.3	84.0	85.8	87.6	89.4
Hispanic	Reading	80.3	1.6	81.9	83.6	85.2	86.9	88.5	90.2
Hispanic	Writing	75.0	2.1	77.1	79.2	81.3	83.3	85.4	87.5
Hispanic	Mathematics	66.3	2.8	69.1	71.9	74.7	77.5	80.3	83.2
Multi-Ethnic	Reading	82.4	1.5	83.9	85.3	86.8	88.3	89.7	91.2
Multi-Ethnic	Writing	76.6	2.0	78.6	80.5	82.5	84.4	86.4	88.3
Multi-Ethnic	Mathematics	70.2	2.5	72.7	75.2	77.7	80.1	82.6	85.1
Econ disadvantaged	Reading	68.9	2.6	71.5	74.1	76.7	79.3	81.9	84.5
Econ disadvantaged	Writing	62.0	3.2	65.2	68.3	71.5	74.7	77.8	81.0
Econ disadvantaged	Mathematics	56.4	3.6	60.0	63.7	67.3	70.9	74.6	78.2
Students with disabilities	Reading	44.0	4.7	48.7	53.3	58.0	62.7	67.3	72.0
Students with disabilities	Writing	38.2	5.2	43.4	48.5	53.7	58.8	64.0	69.1
Students with disabilities	Mathematics	32.2	5.7	37.9	43.5	49.2	54.8	60.5	66.1
English learners	Reading	31.4	5.7	37.1	42.8	48.6	54.3	60.0	65.7
English learners	Writing	27.2	6.1	33.3	39.3	45.4	51.5	57.5	63.6
English learners	Mathematics	26.7	6.1	32.8	38.9	45.0	51.1	57.2	63.4

2.C REWARD SCHOOLS

2.C.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools. If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of reward schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g., based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

Table 2 demonstrates that the reward, priority, and focus schools meet the required definitions. The LEA name and school name have been omitted in Appendix 9 until the data model to identify these has been approved. The reward, priority and focus school columns, though, have been completed based on the current model with the criteria listed for the designation and represents actual schools within the state; 72 reward, 14 priority and 29 focus schools.

Did the SEA describe its methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools? If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of reward schools in ESEA Flexibility (but is instead, e.g., based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), did the SEA also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools Meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance?

a. *Is the SEA's methodology for identifying reward schools educationally sound and likely to result in the meaningful identification of the highest-performing and high-progress schools?*

Alaska will identify up to the top 10% of schools in each grade span category (Elementary/Middle, High School, or combination of K-12) that meet the highest-performing or high-progress definition described below as reward schools. The schools will be selected from among all schools that meet the criteria, without regard to Title I status, for State recognition.
Reward schools selection criteria:

- Highest-Performing Schools
  - Rank schools in order of greatest to least ASPI score.
  - Find the top 10% based on the ASPI score of schools that meet the following criteria:
    - Made AYP in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. For future years after the waiver is implemented, the schools must have met the AMO targets and participation rates of at least 95% for two consecutive years in each subject (reading, writing, and mathematics) for all students and for each subgroup.
    - Have at least an 85% graduation rate average over the two most recent consecutive years, if the school includes 12th grade (or, in a school with a two-year graduation cohort of fewer than 10 students, all but one of those students graduates).
- High-Progress Schools
  - Rank schools in order of greatest to least on the school progress indicator (growth and proficiency index for all students).
  - Find the top 10% of schools based on the growth and proficiency index that meet the following criteria:
    - Growth and proficiency index for the all students group average over the most recent 3 consecutive years must be >=95.0.

- Growth and proficiency index for each applicable primary subgroup in the school (AN/AI, ECD, SWD, and EL) must be >= 90.0 for the current year.
- School met participation rate of at least 95% for current year for all students group and each applicable primary subgroup.
- Have at least an 85% graduation rate average over the two most recent consecutive years, if the school includes 12th grade (or, in a school with a two-year graduation cohort of fewer than 10 students, all but one of those students graduates).

2.C.ii Provide the SEA's list of reward schools in Table 2. (See Attachment 9)

2.C.iii Describe how the SEA will publicly recognize and, if possible, reward highest-performing and high-progress schools.

Are the recognition and, if applicable rewards proposed by the SEA for its highest-performing and high-progress schools likely to be considered meaningful by the schools?

- *Has the SEA consulted with LEAs and schools in designing its recognition and, where applicable, rewards?*

All Highest-Performing and High-Progress schools will be recognized on the EED website, through announcement in the EED *Information Exchange* newsletter, through press releases, and with letters of congratulation and/or certificates from the education commissioner and possibly from the governor. Additional recognition options include legislative proclamations, a logo that may be used by the school on newsletters, website, signs, etc., and recognition by the education commissioner or governor at local events. Schools recognized as Highest-Performing or High-Progress will be among the pool of schools asked to present at workshops or serve as models or mentors to other schools. Informal feedback from the State's previous recognition program indicated that the schools were very proud of their congratulatory letters that were received from that program.

Title I Highest-Performing and Title I High-Progress schools with at least 35% poverty may apply to be considered for the Title I Distinguished Schools program. Interested schools will submit applications to be considered. One Title I school will be selected in each category and given financial support (as resources allow) to travel to the National Title I Conference to be recognized and to participate in the professional development opportunities of the conference. Alaska has participated in the Title I Distinguished Schools program since 2007-2008. The schools that have been selected have been very excited about the recognition and have found attendance at the National Title I Conference to be very beneficial. Several schools have presented over the years both at state conferences and at the national conference, sharing their effective strategies with other schools.

EED will recognize reward schools using the following strategies:

- Statewide announcement on EED *Information Exchange* and published list on EED website.
- Annual recognition ceremony (in conjunction with Association of Alaska School Boards' or superintendents' meetings in Juneau).
- Opportunity for photo with Commissioner of Education.
- A public relations packet for schools to use locally that would include: sample press release, parent letter, flyer, and social media messages.
- Based upon available resources, an award banner/pennant schools can display on-site.

2.D PRIORITY SCHOOLS

2.D.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying a number of lowest-performing schools equal to at least five percent of the State's Title I schools as priority schools. If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of priority schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g., based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

Alaska had 286 Title I schools in 2011-12. The state will identify 5%, or at least 14, of those schools as the lowest-performing schools, the priority schools. To identify these schools, the State will begin with the Title I schools with a 1-star rating. There are 33 Title I schools with a 1-star rating. Within this list, the State will choose the 14 Title I priority schools based on consideration of these factors: ASPI score, SBA proficiency rates in the all-students group and in the four primary subgroups over three years, growth and proficiency index scores averaged over three years, and graduation rates less than 60% (in schools with 12th-graders) over three consecutive years. Additional factors of consideration include: schools with current SIG grants; data from the SSOS desk audit and conversations with the superintendent, school district and school leadership about the school improvement strategies and interventions currently in place; schools currently in corrective action school districts under State intervention; the number and percent of other Title I schools on the 1-star list in the same district; and the size and characteristics of the schools. Schools in districts that have a higher number or percentage of 1- and 2-star schools would be an indicator that more support is needed for those schools and districts. Schools of very small size or special populations may not be schools that would best fit the comprehensive interventions required for priority schools. Based on the factors described above, schools will be chosen as priority schools that are identified as having the greatest need for support and within districts having the greatest need for support. For example, a school with 12th-graders may have graduation rates less than 60% for three years, but the graduation rate is showing improvement. Or, the school may have a low percentage of students that are proficient on the SBAs, but the growth and performance index score shows that the school is improving. The schools identified as priority schools will be of sufficient size for the interventions required by the turnaround principles to be meaningfully applied and to have the most likelihood of success. For example, schools with an enrollment of less than 50 students or with only primary grades may not be schools that would benefit the most from interventions aligned with the turnaround principles. Schools with SIG grants will not automatically be identified as priority schools as schools that have made progress may no longer be in the category of the lowest-performing 5% of Title I schools. Title I eligible high schools with less than 60% graduation rates will be considered for priority school identification if the schools earned a 1- or 2-star ASPI rating. Of the Title I high schools (those schools with only grades 9-12) that were identified with a graduation rate of less than 60%, all also received a 1-star ASPI rating, so these schools will be included in the schools from which the priority schools will be determined. (Attachment 2.8)

2.D.ii Provide the SEA's list of priority schools in Table 2. (See Attachment 9)

2.D.iii Describe the meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles that an LEA with priority schools will implement.

Are the interventions that the SEA described aligned with the turnaround principles and are they likely to result in dramatic, systemic change in priority schools?

Priority schools will be required to implement meaningful interventions aligned with all seven of the turnaround principles beginning in the first year and continuing for a minimum of three years. Each identified priority school will complete a needs assessment and an implementation plan with assistance from and approval by a department staff liaison assigned to the school. The plan will include specific interventions based on the school's needs assessment, a timeline for the interventions, and the key dates for reporting and monitoring implementation of the plan. The turnaround principles align with the Alaska Effective Schools Framework. The framework is based on six domains that represent important areas of school functioning: curriculum, assessment, instruction, supportive learning environment, professional development, and leadership. Each domain includes a set of indicators and a rubric against which evidence of implementation is rated – from little or no development or implementation to exemplary level of development and implementation of the indicator. These six domains are the basis of several tools used to determine areas in which schools need to improve and in planning school improvement strategies and actions to increase the school's level of implementation of effective practices in each domain. The Alaska Effective Schools Framework is described in the State System of Support Operations Manual found in the attachments. The following chart shows the specific alignment of required interventions with the six domains of the framework. (Attachment 2.4)

a. *Do the SEA's interventions include all of the following?*
b. *Are the identified interventions to be implemented in priority schools likely to —*
   (i) *increase the quality of instruction in priority schools;*
   (ii) *improve the effectiveness of the leadership and the teaching in these schools; and*
   (iii) *improve student achievement and, where applicable, graduation rates for all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and the lowest-achieving students?*
c. *Has the SEA indicated that it will ensure that each of its priority schools implements the selected intervention for at least three years?*

Turnaround Principle	**Required implementation**
Providing **strong leadership** by: (1) reviewing the performance of the current principal; (2) either replacing the principal if such a change is necessary to ensure strong and effective leadership, or demonstrating to the SEA that the current principal has a track record in improving achievement and has the ability to lead the turnaround effort; and (3) providing the principal with operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget;	(1) The school district will review the performance of the current principal. The performance of the current principal will be based on alignment with the indicators of Domain 6, Leadership of the Alaska Effective School Framework, as well as on performance evaluations of the principal for the employment at the current school (up to the most recent three years if the principal has served the school longer than three years), and student achievement and growth data on the standards based assessments for the most period of the principal's employment at the school (up to the most recent three years). The required indicators in Domain 6

	that will be measured for the principal (instructional leader) in a priority school are: 6.1 Instructional leader facilitates the development of the school improvement goals. 6.2 Instructional leader assists teachers in understanding student achievement data and its use in improving instruction. 6.5 Instructional leader conducts formal and informal observation and provides timely feedback to teachers on their instructional practice. 6.6 Instructional leader has a productive, respectful relationship with parents and community members regarding school improvement efforts. And 6.8 Instructional leader regularly analyzes assessment and other data, and uses the results in planning for the improved achievement of all students. (2) The school district may demonstrate to EED that the current principal has a track record in improving student achievement and the ability to lead the turnaround effort by providing evidence that the principal is operating at the "fully functioning and operational level" or higher of at least 80% of the indicators in Domain 6, that the performance evaluations of the principal for the most recent three years are satisfactory or above, and that the student achievement and growth data at the school is increasing. If the district determines that the principal will be replaced, the district must demonstrate to EED that the district will recruit for a principal with the skills and abilities as referenced in the indicators of Domain 6 and that it will hire the candidate that has been demonstrated through the application process and previous employment references to have those skills and abilities to lead the turnaround effort in the school. (3) The school district will outline what operational flexibility will be provided to the principal in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget and what parameters will be around that flexibility. For example, the district may allow the principal to determine start and stop times of the school day within the week to meet the needs of the local community, but may not allow the principal to shorten the length of time that students are in school.

	Ensuring **that teachers are effective** and able to improve instruction by: (1) reviewing the quality of all staff and retaining only those who are determined to be effective and have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort; (2) preventing ineffective teachers from transferring to these schools; and (3) providing job-embedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support systems and tied to teacher and student needs;	(1) The school district, in conjunction with the principal, will review the quality of all teachers in the school. The indicators of quality will include the most recent performance evaluations of the teachers (up to the three most recent years of employment). If the previous teacher evaluations did not include a measure of data related to student growth, the school district will include, at a minimum, information on the growth in student achievement on the State standards-based reading, writing, and mathematics assessments, if applicable, as well as any other indicators of student academic progress available for each teacher (student benchmark or progress monitoring data, etc.). The school district will retain teachers who, based on the review, have demonstrated that they are effective and are likely to be successful in the turnaround effort. If a teacher is determined not to be effective, the school district will remove that teacher from the school through any of the following means, as required by applicable contract and statute: non-retain the teacher prior to the beginning of the school year; transfer to another school in the school district; or place the teacher on a plan of improvement for the coming school year with a clear timeline and set of criteria for non-retention or dismissal if the criteria for improvement are not met. The school district will identify, in consultation with EED, the skills and abilities that are desired for teachers to be newly hired for the priority school. The school district will recruit and hire teachers with the identified skills and abilities to fill any vacant positions in the school. (2) The school district will require that only teachers that have been determined to be effective in other district schools through the same review process as described in (1) above may transfer to the designated priority school, and only with the concurrence of the school's principal. (3) The school district will ensure that it will provide job-embedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support systems and tied to teacher and student needs. This will be aligned with the indicators in Domain 5, Professional Development, of the Alaska Effective School Framework and will be documented in the school's priority turnaround plan in AK STEPP. Required indicators in Domain 5 include: 5.1. Student achievement data are a primary factor in

	determining professional development priorities, and 5.2 District teacher and principal evaluation processes are aligned with the Alaska Professional Teacher Standards and the Standard's for Alaska's Administrators.
Redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration;	The school district will be required to ensure that the school redesigns the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration. Priority schools must have a minimum of 90 minutes of core reading instruction and 60 minutes of core mathematics instruction per student per day. The schedules must include additional time for Tier II instruction/interventions and additional time for Tier III intensive interventions. The school will provide copies of the school schedules for the prior year and the coming year identifying the changes. These strategies will be demonstrated through these indicators in Domain 4, Supportive Learning Environment and Domain 5, Professional Development: 4.1 Effective classroom management strategies that maximize instructional time are evident throughout the school day. 4.2 School-wide operational procedures are in place to minimize disruptions to instructional time. 4.8 Extended learning opportunities are made available and utilized by students in need of additional support. 5.3 Professional development is embedded into the daily routines and practices of school staff. 5.5 Sufficient time and resources are allocated to support professional development outlined in the school improvement plan.
Strengthening the school's instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards;	The priority school will be required to improve the school's instructional program to ensure that it is based on student needs and that the program is research-based, rigorous and aligned with Alaska academic content standards. This will be demonstrated through an analysis of the current instructional program in Domains 1 and 3 (Curriculum and Instruction) of the Alaska Effective Schools Framework, and by the creation of the timeline, strategies and action steps in the school turnaround plan to implement improvements in the instructional program. Priorities for curriculum and instruction areas of improvement will be based on the analysis of the current

	instructional program and the needs determined through the analysis of student achievement data. The priorities will be informed by the teacher and principal evaluation system data that identify areas in need of improvement. Priority schools will be required to adopt core reading and mathematics programs that are aligned with the Alaska's college- and career-ready standards. The reading program must address the essential elements of reading. Required indicators for the instructional domains in priority schools are: 1.1 The district-approved curricula, which are aligned with Alaska State Content Standards, are being implemented. 1.4 Statewide assessment data are used to identify gaps in the curricula. 3.1 There is a system in place to ensure that classroom instructional activities are aligned with the Alaska State Content Standards. 3.2 A coherent, written, school-wide plan to help low performing students become proficient has been implemented**.** 3.3 The use of research-based instructional practices guides planning and teaching.
Using data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data;	The priority school will be required to use data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement. The school will use a three-tiered Response to Instruction/Intervention model. The priority school will identify appropriate screening assessments to be given to all students three times during the school year, such as AIMSweb or an equivalent tool approved by EED. The results of those screening assessments will be used to determine which students need additional interventions and support in Tier II, and which students will need even more intensive interventions and support in Tier III. The use of data to inform instruction will be demonstrated through indicators in Domains 2 and 3, Assessment and Instruction, of the Alaska Effective Schools Framework. . Indicators from Domains 2 and 3 that are required of priority schools are: 2.1 School-wide assessments are aligned Alaska State Content Standards and district curricula. 2.3 Universal screening assessments are administered multiple times a year, in all SBA-tested content areas. 2.4 School staff review SBA data to evaluate school programs and student performance. 3.4 Teachers regularly measure the effectiveness of

	instruction using formative assessment.
Establishing **a school environment** that improves school safety and discipline and addressing other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, and health needs; and	The priority school will be required to establish a school environment that improves school safety and discipline. It will be required to address other non-academic factors such as student's social, emotional, and health needs to the extent possible in the school/community situation. The school will be required to implement a schoolwide behavior plan, such as Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, CHAMPS or another plan of the school's design, that is comprehensive and implemented school-wide. This will be demonstrated through Domain 4, Supportive Learning Environment, of the Alaska Effective Schools Framework. Indicators from Domain 4 that are required of priority schools are: 4.1 Effective classroom management strategies that maximize instructional time are evident throughout the school. 4.6 The school and classroom environments reflect cultural awareness and understanding of cultural values of the students and community.
Providing ongoing mechanisms for **family and community engagement**.	The priority school will be required to provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement. These mechanisms will be aligned with these indicators of Domain 4, Supportive Learning Environment, of the Alaska Effective Schools Framework 4.6 The school and classroom environments reflect cultural awareness and understanding of cultural values of the students and community. The rubrics for the Alaska Cultural Standards for Educators will be used to determine implementation of these standards by the teachers and principal in the school. A focus on family and community engagement strategies will be expected in the priority school turnaround plan. 4.7 Staff communicates effectively with parents about learning expectations, student progress, and ways to reinforce learning at home.

2.D.iv Provide the timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more priority schools implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each priority school no later than the 2014–2015 school year and provide a justification for the SEA's choice of timeline.

- *Does the SEA's proposed timeline distribute priority schools' implementation of interventions in a balanced way, such that there is not a concentration of these schools in the later years of the timeline?*

All identified priority schools will begin implementation of the meaningful interventions aligned with all of the turnaround principles in 2013-2014. If a school that is identified as a priority school has already been required to implement specific interventions aligned with the turnaround principles through current state intervention support, that school will be required to continue to implement those interventions and to revise and update its needs assessment, turnaround plan, and timeline in AK STEPP. The timeline will specify the priority implementations over a three-year period. If a school is identified as a priority school that has not previously been receiving State support through intervention, the State will work with that school (after the State's ESEA Flexibility Waiver application has been approved) to complete its comprehensive needs assessment during the 2012-2013 school year. The State will collaborate with the school district and the priority school to determine the priorities and timeline for implementation of the required interventions over the three-year period. While some interventions may be phased in over the three year cycle, interventions will be identified for all seven turnaround principles. For example, if the needs assessment shows that the school needs to improve its instructional program in all subject areas, the priority for implementation in the first year would be the adoption and implementation (if needed) of a reading instructional program that includes all the essential elements of reading as identified by research, as well as a 90 minute reading block and a 60 minute math block. The State System of Support staff member assigned to the priority school will assist the school in developing the needs assessment, the required components of each intervention, and the timeline for implementation to ensure that the school is able to implement them successfully and the district is able to provide appropriate resources and support to the priority school. EED will approve and monitor the implementation plan. See the Alaska STEPP District and School Indicators and Expectations for Districts and Schools in Intervention that describe the indicators and rubrics aligned with the six domains of the Alaska Effective Schools Framework at the school and district level, and the current expectations for sites and districts in interventions. These expectations will be those expected of priority schools and districts with priority schools as described in this waiver application. (See Attachments 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7)

2.D.v Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits priority status and a justification for the criteria selected.

i. Do the SEA's criteria ensure that schools that exit priority status have made significant progress in improving student achievement?

- *Is the level of progress required by the criteria to exit priority status likely to result in sustained improvement in these schools?*

A priority school must implement the turnaround plan for a minimum of three years. During this three-year period, the State System of Support staff member assigned to the school and the on-

site coach assigned to the school will regularly monitor both the implementation of the interventions as well as student progress on the universal screenings and the state assessments. At any time, if the interventions are not being implemented according to the plan and timeline, or if student progress is not being made, the state may require changes in the interventions or additional interventions, and will provide more intensive oversight and support to the school and district.

In order to exit priority status, the school must have improved at least 6 points on the ASPI and have a three- year average (consecutive years, including the current year) on the growth and proficiency index score for the all students group and each primary subgroup of at least 90 points to show that progress is being made. A school that meets this target at the end of the first or second year of priority status will be recognized as making progress, but it will not be removed from the list of priority schools until the end of the full three years of implementation of interventions. This will allow the school to continue to qualify for the additional funding and support to continue on the path of improvement. If the priority school is not ready to exit priority status at the end of three years, the State will re-identify the school as a priority school for the next three-year cycle and may take additional actions by requiring the school district to implement specific instructional strategies, by requiring external coaches or providers to support the school in identified areas, or by appointing a trustee or other external contractor to oversee the finances of the district, or by causing the district's funding under ESEA or State funding to be redirected to pay for required actions or to a holding account for the district until the actions are completed. The department has statutory authority to remove administrators who are responsible for the lack of progress. AS 14.07.030(14)(A). The department also has authority to redirect funding for a school or district that does not make progress. AS 14.07.030(14)(B) and 14.07.030(15). Alaska regulations 4 AAC 06.840 (i)-(l) and 4 AAC 06.872 describe the current actions and authority the State may take for school districts in corrective action or low-performing schools that meet certain criteria (known as "872" schools). These regulations are illustrative of the types of actions the state would take with districts that have priority schools that have not exited priority status after three years. These regulations would be revised and incorporated into new regulations based on the provisions of the approved ESEA Flexibility Waiver. (See Appendix C in Attachment 2.3 SSOS Operations Manual)

EED was very deliberate in selecting exit criteria for priority schools. The selection of two different measures, and the requirement that subgroups show significant gains, were intended to ensure that even if one measure was not rigorous for a particular school, the others would be. Also, the requirement that subgroups show significant growth was intended to narrow achievement gaps. (Alaska has a wide range of school size and demographics. One measure might be easy for one school to meet and difficult for another. Therefore, EED has required that schools meet all measures to exit.) EED has done extensive simulations of impact data to study the exit criteria. The simulations show that the exit criteria for priority schools may be somewhat too demanding. Of the 14 schools that would have been identified as priority schools in 2011, five were able to meet the requirement of a six-point gain in the ASPI. Only one school, was able to meet the requirement of a three-year average of 90 on the growth and proficiency index for the school as a whole, but even that school could not demonstrate growth for all four subgroups. This result shows that the exit criteria are sufficiently rigorous. Further analysis will be necessary to determine whether a minimum N is required for subgroups to avoid having a school remain in priority status due to a subgroup population too small to accurately measure.

2.E FOCUS SCHOOLS

2.E.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying a number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State's Title I schools as "focus schools." If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of focus schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g., based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

a. *In identifying focus schools, was the SEA's methodology based on the achievement and lack of progress over a number of years of one or more subgroups of students identified under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) in terms of proficiency on the statewide assessments that are part of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system or, at the high school level, graduation rates for one or more subgroups?*
b. *Is the SEA's methodology for identifying focus schools educationally sound and likely to ensure that schools are accountable for the performance of subgroups of students?*

Alaska had 286 Title I schools in 2011-2012. The state will identify 10%, or at least29, of those schools as focus schools. According to the definition of focus schools in "ESEA Flexibility, June 7, 2012," focus schools are defined to be those that are contributing to the achievement gap in the state. In Alaska, the focus schools will be those that have a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, low graduation rates. These are low-achieving schools overall rather than schools with within-school gaps between high-achieving and low-achieving subgroups. Focus schools will, in general, represent the next-lowest-performing group of Title I schools. After the identification of the Title I priority schools, the remaining Title I schools with a 1-star rating will be identified as focus schools. Next, the State will sort the Title I schools with a 2-star rating from the least to greatest ASPI score and will select the remainder of the 29 focus schools from this ranked list from least to greatest. Schools identified as focus schools will have one or more low-achieving subgroups and/or a low graduation rate because all the Title I schools with a 1- or 2-star rating had one or more of the four primary subgroups as a factor in their ASPI score and most also had graduation rates of less than 60%. (See Attachment 2.8)

2.E.ii Provide the SEA's list of focus schools in Table 2. (See Attachment 9)

2.E.iii Describe the process and timeline the SEA will use to ensure that each LEA that has one or more focus schools will identify the specific needs of the LEA's focus schools and their students. Provide examples of and justifications for the interventions focus schools will be required to implement to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind.

- *Has the SEA demonstrated that the interventions it has identified are effective at increasing student achievement in schools with similar characteristics, needs, and challenges as the schools the SEA has identified as focus schools?*

- *Has the SEA identified interventions that are appropriate for different levels of schools (elementary, middle, high) and that address different types of school needs (e.g., all-students, targeted at the lowest-achieving students)?*

All identified Title I focus schools will begin implementation of interventions targeted to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind in 2013-2014. After the ESEA Flexibility Waiver is approved, the State will work with school districts that have focus schools identified in their districts to complete a needs assessment by the end of the 2012-2013 school year to identify specific areas of need, especially in low-subgroup achievement or graduation rates. The needs assessment will be completed in AK STEPP and will be aligned with the six domains of the Alaska Effective Schools Framework. If a school that is identified as a focus school has been required already, through current State intervention support, to implement specific interventions that are based on a comprehensive needs assessment and aligned with the six domains of the Alaska Effective Schools Framework, that school will be required to continue to implement those interventions and to revise and update its focus school improvement plan and timeline in AK STEPP. The State will collaborate with the school district and the focus school to determine and prioritize the interventions and strategies that will best address the areas of need in the school and the timeline for implementation of the identified interventions. EED will approve the plan and timeline for the specific interventions required of the focus school. The school will be required to use AK STEPP for its plan of improvement for focusing on specific subgroups of concern and for specific indicators including curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development. The SSOS will provide support to focus schools through reading and mathematics content support specialists, and for EL or SWD student subgroups through additional resources and professional development through contracts with external partners for specific areas of need. AK STEPP includes links (called Wise Ways) to resources and strategies that enable the school to target resources and instructional strategies to specific needs, including support for instruction for English learners and students with disabilities.

EED already has in place a robust system for identifying schools and districts that would "benefit from a program for improvement of instructional practices" (See SSOS Operations Manual and 4 AAC 06.872). This process identifies schools (essentially equivalent to the 1-star and 2-star schools that will be designated by the ASPI if this application is granted) based upon student performance criteria.

The specific interventions for focus schools will depend on the need of the school—one size does not fit all. Typically, however, the department has worked collaboratively with the district/school through the needs-identification process of Alaska STEPP, and the interventions include the criteria such as the following:

- A dedicated reading block.
- A dedicated math block.
- Curriculum alignment to ensure that the district's curricula are aligned to State standards and that teachers are trained to engaged in the process.
- Adoption of a reading program that includes all of the essential elements or reading.
- Adoption of a reading program that includes a core curriculum for students who are on grade-level and supplemental curricula materials for struggling students.

- Employment of literacy specialists.
- Dedicated time for teacher collaboration.
- Adoption of student behavior program.

Further descriptions of specific interventions can be found at Attachment 2.7 (Expectations for Sites in Intervention), some or all of which may apply to a focus school. As described elsewhere in this response, the interventions are supported by coaches, mentors, and program specialists from the department (although to a lesser degree than provided to Tier I schools).

The significant interventions for focus schools, including addressing the needs of students with disabilities, English learners, and schools with low graduation rates or large achievement gaps are tailored to the need of the school through the Alaska STEPP process. As schools engage in continuous improvement through the use of Alaska STEPP, they are required to work with identified indicators of effective practice across the domains of the Alaska Effective Schools framework. In addition, schools work with student outcome indicators. These indicators require schools to look at multiple data points and to create SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound) goals. Under the current accountability system, goals must be created for each subgroup that did not make AYP on the most recent State assessment. The SMART goals are linked to actions and tasks within the indicators of effective practice, effectively targeting resources and instructional practices to improve the performance of special populations. The use of Alaska STEPP as a diagnostic tool and a structure for targeting intervention and change to subgroups will be required for focus schools if this application is accepted.

2.E.iv Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits focus status and a justification for the criteria selected.

a. Do the SEA's criteria ensure that schools that exit focus status have made significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps?

- *Is the level of progress required by the criteria to exit focus status likely to result in sustained improvement in these schools?*

A Title I focus school must implement interventions for at least two years and until the school has met the exit criteria. During this two-year period, the State System of Support staff member assigned to the school will regularly monitor both the implementation of the interventions as well as student progress on the universal screenings and on the state assessments. At any time, if the interventions are not being implemented according to the plan and timeline, or if student progress is not being made, the state may require changes in the interventions or additional interventions, and will provide more intensive oversight and support to the focus school and district. In order to exit focus status, the school must show improvement of at least 5 points in the growth and proficiency index (average of three consecutive years, including the most current year) in the all students group and in any specific subgroups in which the school was identified as a focus school. If the school was identified as a focus school for a graduation rate less than 60%, then the graduation rate must improve to greater than 60% (measured as an average over three consecutive years, including the current year). If a Title I focus school exits focus status before the end of

three years from initial identification, the State will review the Title I schools with 1- and 2-star ratings on the current year's data that are not already identified as priority or focus schools, and will use the same process to select replacement focus school(s) to keep the number of Title I focus schools at 29 over the period of three years until the ASPI and AMO targets are reset based on the new assessments.

Alaska's accountability plan requires that all focus schools *must* implement the interventions for at least two years, regardless of how much growth they show in year 1. This requirement is designed to show that the improvement in the school is not a one-year anomaly, but occurs after two years of intervention. To conduct impact analyses, EED reviewed the growth of the schools that would have been identified as focus schools in 2011 and studied their growth and graduation rates in 2012. Disappointingly, none of the schools that were identified as focus schools under the graduation rate requirement would have met the graduation rate required to exit focus status. This indicates that the graduation rate requirement for exit is rigorous. It also indicates one area in which EED needs to focus its interventions. EED notes that only two of these schools would have met the criteria for growth, which indicates that the criteria of a five-point gain in the growth and proficiency index is a rigorous requirement. Of the schools that were not identified under the graduation rate requirement, only two met the growth requirement. EED notes that one of these schools was placed on "watch" status in 2011 (similar to focus status), and EED approved the interventions at that school for 2011. Although EED is pleased with the level of growth in 2012, that school would not have been eligible to exit focus status until 2013. Both of these schools significantly closed the achievement gap by demonstrating more than a five-point gain in the Alaska Native subgroup, based on a rolling three-year average—a very rigorous measure. Finally, the impact data showed that subgroup data for the focus schools closely track the all-students data, and that a school will need to close the achievement gap in addition to making gains in the all-student group in order to exit. In short, the data demonstrate that the exit criteria are rigorous and will result in significant progress in improving student achievement, increasing graduation rates, and narrowing achievement gaps.

The department has statutory authority to remove administrators who are responsible for the lack of progress. AS 14.07.030(14)(A). The department also has authority to redirect funding for a school or district that does not make progress. AS 14.07.030(14)(B) and 14.07.030(15). Although the department has had best success in interventions that are led by the district, the department has appointed a trustee in one district and been deeply involved in personnel and curricular matters in two other districts in which progress has been delayed. In short, the department has many tools in its tool chest, and is able and willing to take extreme action when necessary.

TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

Provide the SEA's list of reward, priority, and focus schools using the Table 2 template. Use the key to indicate the criteria used to identify a school as a reward, priority, or focus school. (See Attachment 9)

TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

LEA Name	School Name	School NCES ID #	REWARD SCHOOL	PRIORITY SCHOOL	FOCUS SCHOOL
Ex. Washington	*Oak HS*	*111111100001*		*C*	
	Maple ES	*111111100002*			*H*
Adams	*Willow MS*	*222222200001*	*A*		
	Cedar HS	*222222200002*			*F*
	Elm HS	*222222200003*			*G*
TOTAL # of Schools:					

Total # of Title I schools in the State: 286

Total # of Title I-participating high schools in the State with graduation rates less than 60%: _____

Key	
Reward School Criteria: **A.** Highest-performing school **B.** High-progress school **Priority School Criteria:** **C.** Among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the State based on the proficiency and lack of progress of the "all students" group **D-1.** Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years **D-2.** Title I-eligible high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years **E.** Tier I or Tier II SIG school implementing a school intervention model	**Focus School Criteria:** **F.** Has the largest within-school gaps between the highest-achieving subgroup(s) and the lowest-achieving subgroup(s) or, at the high school level, has the largest within-school gaps in the graduation rate **G.** Has a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, a low graduation rate **H.** A Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years that is not identified as a priority school

2.F PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS FOR OTHER TITLE I SCHOOLS

2.F Describe how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system will provide incentives and supports to ensure continuous improvement in other Title I schools that, based on the SEA's new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps, and an explanation of how these incentives and supports are likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

i. Does the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system provide incentives and supports for other Title I schools that, based on the SEA's new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps?

ii. Are those incentives and supports likely to improve student achievement, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for all students, including English Learners and students with disabilities?

The State's differentiated recognition, accountability and support system will provide incentives and support for all schools, including Title I schools that are not identified as priority or focus schools. Public reporting of the ASPI scores and star ratings, the academic proficiency rates and progress toward the AMO targets and the graduation rates will provide intrinsic motivation for schools to improve those scores and ratings for all students as well as for students in lower performing subgroups.

The State will review the data for each school annually. The ASPI score and corresponding star rating of a school, combined with school data about meeting the AMO targets for achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, and the graduation rate targets for all subgroups will determine the types of supports and interventions that the school will receive. All schools will have support available at the universal level from the SSOS that includes access to a number of resources in areas such as transition to the Alaska college- and career-ready standards and support for students with disabilities and English learners.

Schools with ASPI ratings of 3 stars will be required to create a plan and timeline addressing key areas of the six domains of the Alaska Effective Schools Framework to improve the performance of the school and all subgroups within the school. Schools with ASPI ratings of 4 or 5 stars, including Title I schools, that are missing AMO targets in any one subgroup for two years in a row, that have a subgroup that missed the participation rate, or that have a subgroup that missed its graduation rate target (for schools with grade 12) will be required to create a plan and timeline with specific strategies for improving the achievement or graduation rates of the subgroup(s) affected. The plans for 3, 4, and 5 star schools must be submitted to the district for review and approval. The district will be responsible for providing support to those schools, and may request targeted support through the SSOS. The SSOS will provide requested targeted support as resources allow, and will prioritize requests for support in assisting students with disabilities and English learners.

Alaska's interventions under 4 AAC 06.850 and 4 AAC 06.872 are designed to drill down into the data and provide support where needed. That is why EED refers to Alaska's system as "diagnostic," why EED performs individualized desk audits, and why a step in the audit includes an interview with the superintendent. One way that EED supports *students* is through the school's use of Alaska STEPP. When a school engages in the Alaska STEPP process, it begins its work by completing a self-assessment using indicators of effective practice. These research-based indicators are spread across the domains of curriculum, assessment, instruction, supportive

learning environment, professional development and leadership. Based upon the assessment results, schools begin to build improvement plans that are specifically designed to target the identified deficiencies. Schools also work through an additional domain that is focused on subgroups. This Data Analysis domain requires school teams to look at multiple data points (including the most current State assessment results) and to create goals that are specific to subgroups that did not meet their AMO target. For example, if the English learners did not meet the AMO target, a school would create a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound) goal that was specific to their need as identified by data analysis. The goals written in the Data Analysis domain are linked to the work within the domains of effective practice. AK STEPP includes links (called Wise Ways) to resources and strategies that enable the school to target resources and instructional strategies to specific needs, including support for instruction for English learners and students with disabilities. By partnering the work within the indicators of effective practice and the outcome indicators in the data analysis domain, schools are able to move the entire school population forward while still paying attention to the specific needs of special populations. If the waiver is granted, schools will be required to create SMART goals for any subgroup that did not meet the AMO.

2.G Describe the SEA's process for building SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning in all schools and, in particular, in low-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps, including through:

i. timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools;
ii. ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools identified under the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources); and
iii. holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools.

Explain how this process is likely to succeed in improving SEA, LEA, and school capacity.

ii. Is the SEA's process for ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools under the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources) likely to result in successful implementation of such interventions and improved student achievement?

iii. Is the SEA's process for holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools, likely to improve LEA capacity to support school improvement?

Capacity building and supports for districts are described throughout this application. A state-level accountability system will necessarily be implemented through the school districts. EED's experience indicates that the best results are achieved when school-level reform is initiated by the district. Accordingly, where EED has identified priority and focus schools, its effort will be to build

capacity in the district and assist the district in leading the interventions in the schools that are described in section 2.A of this waiver application. Where district-level intervention is necessary, as occurred in up to five districts in the past, and as EED is continuing to do in three districts at the present time, EED will intervene as necessary to provide direct support and build the capacity of the district to support improvement in the schools.

Each year the department "conducts a school level desk audit of all schools in the state." The desk audit is defined in Alaska Administrative Code 4 AAC 06.872 and 4 AAC 06.840. These regulations are currently being revised to reflect the new state-developed accountability system as proposed in this waiver. Based upon student learning data, schools are identified, then consultation with each district is undertaken to assess each identified school's performance, assess needs using the Alaska Effective Schools Framework, and review district plans to support each school. Districts will be held accountable through the audit process. 4 AAC 06.840(j). If EED determines that district capacity and support are lacking, an independent onsite instructional audit is conducted to determine if the district should be placed in intervention status. Once in intervention status, the district (and identified schools) are assigned onsite school improvement coach(es) to support and strengthen school turnaround actions.

This school- and district-level audit (needs assessment, onsite instructional audit, leading to possible intervention designation of the district) will be undertaken with all 1-star and 2-star schools as identified using the proposed Alaska School Performance Index. Where needs are identified at the district level, EED will continue to support district capacity through:

- Twice yearly Curriculum & Alignment Institutes to support alignment of curriculum and instructional materials to the newly adopted ELA and math standards.
- Training and tools to use the six domains of the Alaska Effective Schools framework in managing school improvement work.
  - Yearly training and bi-monthly webinar support of the online planning tool Alaska STEPP.
  - District Self-Assessment Tool.
- Title I monitoring visits to districts.
- A website to support the implementation of the new English/language arts and mathematics standards has been developed to support districts. This website has been designed to deliver to districts planning documents and processes, professional development planning tools and frameworks, and provide classroom ready materials for implementation of the new standards.

All Schools

EED's State System of Support provides resources and support to all schools through a tiered system of support and resources. The tri-tiered model represents SSOS efforts to help districts build their capacity. The SSOS provides aligned resources, information, professional development, and technical assistance within the six domains of the Alaska Effective Schools Framework that represent aspects of best practices that substantially influence school and student performance. The six domains are: curriculum, assessment, instruction, supportive learning environment, professional development, and leadership. Depending on which tier a district is in, SSOS provides the district with varying degrees of support within each domain. Although all districts have access to the supports, the districts with schools designated at the lowest-performing levels will have targeted support or may be required to participate in comprehensive support activities. (See Attachment 2.3)

Tier I: Universal Access. At the Universal Access level of support, all districts and schools have access to

information and resources aligned to the six domain areas. Examples of asssitance provided at the Universal Access level are information provided through the Alaska Comprehensive Center and EED websites (visit http://alaskacc.org/ssos or http://education.alaska.gov/), through audio or web conferences, and through regional or state conferences offered to participants from all districts. School districts with schools at the higher-performing levels 4-stars and 5-stars on the ASPI index score and meeting AMOs or showing growth in all traditional subgroups and the graduation rate generally use effective practices to improve student achievement and ask for support when they need it. SSOS is available to help identify and leverage resources for school and district improvement.

Tier II: Targeted Level. The SSOS Targeted level is designed to provide school districts with schools in greater need with additional assistance. At the Targeted level of support (Tier II), SSOS provides increased resources and support available to schools and districts identified in greater need. Examples of this support are on-site professional development opportunities or specific content area institutes provided by contractors. Schools in this category will typically be schools with 2- or 3-star ratings and those that have been identified as focus schools. Districts that have a number of schools with 2-star ratings or focus schools will be supported at the Targeted level.

Tier III: Comprehensive Level. The SSOS Comprehensive level is designed to provide school districts with schools in the highest level of need with rigorous and explicit interventions. At the Comprehensive level of support, SSOS provides focused support for those districts and schools at the highest level of need to assist them in meeting the expectations set out by the State. Examples of this support include the assignment of SSOS coaches and on-site professional development. The schools and districts with the highest level of need will need to focus on key areas that will have an immediate impact on student achievement. Expectations are clearly defined by the district and the state. Implementation is monitored by the State. In addition to providing schools and districts in Tier III with a centralized pool of resources, SSOS provides support for administrators and teachers in the implementation of effective instructional and leadership practices and systems through a SSOS coach. Schools in this category will typically be schools with 1-star and 2-star ratings and those that have been identified as priority schools. Districts that have a number of schools with 1-star and 2-star ratings or priority and focus schools will receive comprehensive support.

The SSOS also works in partnership with the following agencies to provide support and assistance to schools and districts in the state:

iv. Alaska Administrator Coaching Project
v. Alaska Comprehensive Center
vi. Alaska Staff Development Network
vii. Alaska Statewide Mentor Project
viii. Assessment & Accountability Comprehensive Center
ix. Association of Alaska School Boards
x. Center on Innovation and Improvement
xi. Consortium on Reading Excellence
xii. Education Northwest
xiii. Mid-Continent Research for Education & Learning (McRel)
xiv. Measured Progress
xv. Rural Alaska Principal Preparation & Support
xvi. Special Education Service Agency

A primary support tool made available by the state is Alaska STEPP (Steps Toward Educational Progress and Partnership), the Alaska-customized version of the Indistar online school improvement tool developed by the Center for Instruction and Improvement, a member of the Comprehensive Center network funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The State is in the

third year of implementing AK STEPP. The process began through Alaska's participation in the Academy of Pacesetting States. The State has been phasing in the use of the AK STEPP tool through cohorts of schools. The State encouraged the lowest-performing schools to participate and offered the opportunity to additional schools. In the first and second years, the State provided on-site training to all schools in Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 of implementation. The training and support is more than just training for how to use the online tool; it is geared to assist schools in developing and implementing a true collaborative approach to school improvement. The advantage of AK STEPP is that the plan is not a printed plan lost on a shelf in the principal's office, but rather an active plan that is updated regularly and provides a point-in-time picture of implementation of strategies and interventions. All schools in the state may choose to use AK STEPP. Schools identified as Title I priority and focus schools will be required to use the tool and receive training and support for its use. AK STEPP includes links (called Wise Ways) to resources and strategies that enable the school to target resources and instructional strategies to specific needs, including support for instruction for English learners and students with disabilities.

i. Is the SEA's process for ensuring timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools likely to result in successful implementation of these interventions and in progress on leading indicators and student outcomes in these schools?

- *Did the SEA describe a process for the rigorous review and approval of any external providers used by the SEA and its LEAs to support the implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools that is likely to result in the identification of high-quality partners with experience and expertise applicable to the needs of the school, including specific subgroup needs?*

Title I Priority Schools

The State will provide support and technical assistance to districts with priority schools to ensure implementation of the required interventions and to hold school districts accountable for implementing the interventions with fidelity to turnaround their priority schools. The State will identify one or more staff as the priority school liaison to be the primary contact and support for each school. Each priority school will be required to complete a needs assessment and an implementation plan for all seven turnaround principles with assistance from the state's priority school liaison. The plan will include specific interventions based on the school's needs assessment, a timeline for the interventions, and the key dates for reporting and monitoring implementation of the plan. EED will approve the plan of implementation.

During the process of identifying priority schools, the State will perform a desk audit of the school's achievement, progress, and graduation data over the last three years and conduct subsequent discussions with the superintendent and key district leaders. Depending on the results of the desk audit and discussions with the district superintendent, the State may require a priority school to have an instructional audit based on the Alaska Effective Schools Framework by an external review team. If such an instructional audit is performed, the results will inform the comprehensive needs assessment and turnaround plan of the school.

All priority schools will be required to use the AK STEPP online school improvement planning tool. The school will use the tool either to complete a self-assessment of their level of progress on key indicators of the six domains of the Alaska Effective Schools Framework, or to enter the results of the instructional audit as the needs assessment. The school will then use AK STEPP to create its turnaround plan and timeline for implementation by prioritizing, in consultation with and supported by the district and the State priority school liaison, the areas of need identified through the needs assessment and required interventions aligned with the turnaround principles. Priority schools that

have received training and have been using AK STEPP for the immediately preceding one to three year(s) that have already completed a needs assessment will be required to update that needs assessment, to evaluate if their strategies are bringing about the improvement expected, and continue with revisions and implementation of their school turnaround plan. Priority schools that have not yet begun to use AK STEPP will receive on-site training from the State. All priority schools will participate in continued support for the use of AK STEPP and the continuous school improvement process through webinars and individual assistance.

The State will support priority schools by providing a SSOS school improvement coach. The SSOS Coaching Program provides on-site technical assistance to support schools and districts in their efforts to improve systems and structures that increase student achievement. Coaches work collaboratively with educators to assess district and school needs and to design and implement interventions based on education research. The SSOS coach will provide on-site support at the school at least one week per month and additional support by distance through email, Skype, phone, etc. The coach will be provided to each priority school through the SSOS State funds, to the extent resources allow. The State will provide additional support to priority schools through SSOS-supported initiatives such as the Curriculum Alignment Institutes, the annual Alaska School Leadership Institutes, and Cognitive Coaching training. Priority schools will be given first priority in placement of teacher mentors through the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project and principal coaches through the Alaska Administrator Coaching Project. The State may provide support through school board and parent engagement coaches, as resources allow. At its option, the district may engage an external provider to guide the school through the turnaround process for at least three years.

School districts with priority and focus schools that elect to use external providers to provide support to the schools, either as an external partner to guide the turnaround process, or as an external provider providing support or professional development to the school in a specific area, must use a rigorous process for recruiting, screening, and selecting any external providers. The screening process must verify that a provider has a meaningful plan for contributing to the reform efforts in the school, will implement strategies that are research-based, has a record of success in similar schools, has a healthy fiscal history, and has the capacity to implement the strategies it is proposing. The State priority school liaison will be included as a reviewer in the external provider selection process for any turnaround partners and for any providers that will be providing significant support that do not already have a track record of providing effective support to Alaska's low-achieving schools. (External providers may be used to provide technical expertise in implementing various components of the intervention model, such as helping a school evaluate its data and determine changes that are needed, providing job-embedded professional development, assisting in curriculum alignment, designing teacher and principal evaluation systems that rely on student data, etc.)

In addition to support provided to the school through the SSOS program and funds, the State will make SIG 1003g funds available for priority schools as they become available. Current SIG schools from Cohort 2 that are identified as priority schools will have a third year of SIG funds available for 2013-2014. New SIG funds received by the state in 2013-2014 will be available to award to other priority schools upon application by school districts with those schools that choose to implement one of the approved SIG intervention models. The State will make funds from the set-aside from the Title I allocation under 1003(a) for school improvement available for priority and focus schools. Depending upon the amount of funds available in a given year, the State will determine the funding level available to each priority school and will require the priority schools to apply for the funds through a budget and narrative that shows alignment with the required interventions. The State will require a district to use up to 20% of its Title I allocation to serve its priority and focus schools (in lieu of the set-aside required for SES and school choice) as needed, if other funds are not sufficient.

The State will monitor the progress of priority schools regularly by reviewing results of the screening assessments three times per year and reviewing State assessment data annually. The State will monitor progress of implementation of required interventions through review of the online priority turnaround plan in AK STEPP and through discussions with school and district staff at least three times per year through phone calls, video conferences and, when possible, on-site visits. If progress is not being shown and/or there are indications of less than full implementation of the interventions, the State will work more closely with the district and school to require specific strategies and interventions, provide more on-site support, and provide increasing levels of oversight and intervention.

Title I Focus Schools

The State will provide support and technical assistance to districts with Title I focus schools to ensure implementation of the identified required interventions and to hold districts accountable for implementing the interventions with fidelity to increase the graduation rate and/or the achievement rate of the low-performing subgroups. The State will identify a staff member as the focus school liaison to be the primary contact and support for each school. Each focus school will, with assistance from the state's priority school liaison, be required to complete a needs assessment and an implementation plan for interventions to meet the needs of the low performing subgroups and/or graduation rate. The plan will include specific interventions based on the school's needs assessment, a timeline for the interventions, and the key dates for reporting and monitoring implementation of the plan. EED will approve the plan of implementation.

Focus schools will be required to use AK STEPP to complete a comprehensive needs assessment and to create an ongoing focus school improvement plan. Focus schools that have not yet begun to use AK STEPP will receive on-site training from the State. All focus schools will participate in continued support for the use of AK STEPP and the continuous school improvement process through webinars and individual assistance.

The SSOS will provide support to focus schools through reading and mathematics content support specialists, and for EL or SWD student subgroups through additional resources and professional development through contracts with external partners for specific areas of need. Focus schools will be given second-priority (after priority schools) to participate in SSOS State initiatives such as such as the Curriculum Alignment workshops, the annual Alaska School Leadership Institutes, Cognitive Coaching training, the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project, and the Alaska Administrator Coaching Project.

Districts with priority and focus schools that elect to use external providers to provide support to the schools must use a rigorous process for recruiting, screening, and selecting any external providers. The criteria for selecting external providers are described in the section on priority schools above.

The State will make available funds from the set-aside from the Title I allocation under 1003(a) for school improvement for priority and focus schools. Depending upon the amount of funds available in a given year, the State will determine the funding level available to each Title I focus school and will require the focus schools to apply for the funds through a budget and narrative that shows alignment with the identified interventions in its focus school improvement plan. The State will require a district to use up to 20% of its Title I allocation to serve its priority and focus schools (in lieu of the set-aside required for SES and school choice) as needed, if other funds are not sufficient.

The State will monitor the progress of focus schools regularly by reviewing results of any screening assessments identified for implementation at least twice per year and reviewing state assessment data annually. The State will monitor progress of implementing identified interventions through review

of the online focus school improvement plan in AK STEPP and through discussions with school and district staff at least twice per year through phone calls, video conferences and, when possible, on-site visits. If progress is not being shown and/or there are indications of less than full implementation of the interventions, the State will work more closely with the school district and school to require specific strategies and interventions, provide more on-site support, and provide increasing levels of oversight and intervention.

PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

3.A DEVELOP AND ADOPT GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding description and evidence, as appropriate, for the option selected.

Option A	Option B
☒ If the SEA has not already developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide: i. the SEA's plan to develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2012–2013 school year; ii. a description of the process the SEA will use to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines; and iii. an assurance that the SEA will submit to the Department a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2012–2013 school year (see Assurance 14).	☐ If the SEA has developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide: i. a copy of the guidelines the SEA has adopted (Attachment 10) and an explanation of how these guidelines are likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students; ii. evidence of the adoption of the guidelines (Attachment 11); and iii. a description of the process the SEA used to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines.

➢ *i) Is the SEA's plan for developing and adopting guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems likely to result in the successful adoption of those guidelines by the end of the 2012-2013 school year?*

Based on Alaska's previous success in the adoption of statutes and regulations requiring teacher and principal evaluation guidelines and support systems, the more recent work of the Teacher Quality Working Group (TQWG) and the proposed teacher and principal evaluation regulations, we are confident that Alaska will be able to successfully adopt guidelines that will expand our current evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2012-2013 school year to meet the requirements of Principle 3.

In comparing Alaska's current statutes, regulations and guidance to the requirements of Principle 3, many of the elements are included already in our existing system. This is reinforced by the information gathered through the Teacher & Principal Evaluation Survey conducted on behalf of the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (EED) by the Alaska Comprehensive Center in May 2011. (See Attachment 3.7) In a side-by-side analysis

of Alaska's current statutes and regulations with Principle 3 elements, the areas of need are the inclusion of student learning data, an overall rating and reporting system, and the assurance of inter-rater reliability. (See Attachment 3.8)

Historically, Alaska has recognized the importance of teacher and principal evaluation. Since 1975 by regulation, the State Board of Eduction & Early Development (State Board) has required districts to evaluate professional employees, including teachers and principals. As defined in the regulation, the purposes of evaluation were the continuous improvement of instruction and as a method to gather data relevant to subsequent employment decisions. In addition, Alaska regulation 4 AAC 19 Evaluation of Professional Employees allowed for the use of multiple measures, required a formal written evaluation at least once per contract year, and mandated in-service training in evaluation techniques for all certified staff. School districts also were required to submit their evaluation procedures to EED for review.

In 1996, the State enacted House Bill 465 to strengthen the Alaska teacher and principal evaluation system and to allow for non-retention of tenured teachers based on the teacher evaluation system. Alaska Statute 14.20.149 requires each district to align its evaluation system to the professional performance standards adopted by the State Board and incorporate information from all stakeholders—students, parents, and community members, as well as education professionals—in the plan's design and implementation. The district evaluation system also must collect information on performance from a variety of sources, contain provisions for improvement of sub-standard performance, and provide training for those employees subject to the evaluation system, as well as, the principals who conduct evaluations. HB 465 revised the portion of AS 14.20.175 that provides guidelines for the non-retention of a tenured teacher who failed to meet the performance objectives set out in a plan of improvement. (See Attachment 10)

In order to assist districts in the designing and installing an evaluation system that incorporated all the requirements set forth in House Bill 465, EED and the Association of Alaska School Boards co-sponsored the Professional Evaluation Project Committee from June to December 1996. These organizations were joined by representatives of the Alaska Council of School Administrators, NEA-Alaska and the Alaska Parent Teacher Association. At the request of the committee, EED assembled information on certificated employment evaluation from around the state and the nation. The information was compiled, synthesized, and presented in a manner that would be useful to districts as they revised, modified and strengthened their existing evaluation system to meet the new requirements. (See Attachment 3.1)

At the direct result of Alaska's 2009 Education Summit, the Teacher Quality Working Group (TQWG) was established to work on issues related to teacher quality, including teacher education and certification, teacher employment, and teacher and principal evaluation. The work of the TQWG has resulted in action by the State Board and EED. Based on recommendations from the TQWG, the State Board adopted regulations that require districts to make available to the public a blank copy of the form, template, or checklist that the district uses to evaluate teachers and principals. This includes posting the form, template or checklist on a district website. At the TQWG's suggestion, EED produced and published an e-Learning module on teacher and principal evaluation to assist districts with the required teaching and principal evaluation training.

From the 2010-2011 school year to the present, the TQWG has focused its discussions and

work on teacher and principal evaluations. The working group began by reviewing Alaska statutes and regulations regarding teacher and principal evaluations. (See Attachment 10). The working group also reviewed research on teacher and principal evaluation and sought information concerning the use of student assessment data in teacher and principal evaluation. (See Attachment 3.9)

On May 18, 2011, the Alaska Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) discussed the use of Alaska's standards-based assessment (SBA) data to evaluate teachers and principals. The TAC recommended that Alaska's current SBAs, which are not on a vertical scale, be used only as one of many data points to define student growth and achievement when evaluating teachers and principals. The TAC also recommended that teachers and principals be included in the decision-making process as Alaska determined how to incorporate student assessment data into its teacher and principal evaluation system. The TAC's recommendations were shared with the TQWG and helped to frame the working group's discussion in this area. (See Attachments 3.10 and 3.11)

In March 2012, the TQWG made recommendations to the State Board regarding teacher and principal evaluations. (See Attachments 3.4 and 3.5). The recommendations included:

- Allowing school districts to either choose to revise their current teacher and principal evaluation framework, system or model to incorporate specific criteria or use a research-based model that meets the same criteria.
- Working with stakeholders to develop a communications plan to inform all individuals who will be impacted by changes to teacher and principal evaluation.
- Using the term "student learning data" instead of student achievement or student growth data to allow for pre/post-tests; end-of-course tests; student work samples; and performance (e.g., music, drama, speech) in addition to standardized tests to be included in determining a teacher's or principal's overall performance rating. The term "student learning data" was recommended to provide school districts the greatest possible flexibility in the types of assessments they may select to substantiate the effectiveness of teachers and principals. It also provided accommodations for the teachers of special needs students, English language learners, and students in non-tested subjects.
- Working with a group of stakeholders to develop and provide guidance for school districts as the new evaluation system is implemented.
- Revising the existing regulations to reflect current knowledge of teacher and principal evaluation.
- Expanding the professional development requirements of teachers and principals who are performing below proficient on any performance standard.

At the direction of the State Board, EED began working with the Alaska Attorney General's Office to draft revisions to the regulations for teacher and principal evaluation for public comment.

The process to determine the percentage and weight of student learning data began in January 2012. Between January and April 2012, TQWG members discussed the issues with their constituencies and brought back that information to the working group. At its April meeting, the TQWG made the final determination on the percentage of weight that student learning data would account for in

teacher and principal evaluations. The TQWG determined that student learning data would account for 20% of a teacher's or principal's evaluation and that the four performance levels the districts would report to EED were: unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and exemplary. In addition, it recommended that a teacher or principal not be given an overall rating of proficient or exemplary if any one performance area, including the student learning data component, was rate as below proficient.

In addition to these recommendations, the TQWG felt that it was appropriate for districts to have time between the adoption of their evaluation procedures that incorporated student learning data into the evaluation process and the use of that information in the overall rating of teachers and principals. The group members also felt strongly that there should be a review and evaluation of the new system after it had been in place to determine if the goal of increasing student achievement had been met by increasing the use of student learning data in the teacher and principal evaluations.

At its June 2012 meeting, the State Board opened a period of public comment on changes to 4 AAC 04.200(f) professional content and performance standards; 4AAC 04.205(b)(c)(d) District performance standards; 4 AAC 19.010 Purpose and scope of evaluation; 4AAC 19.020 Scope of evaluation; 4 AAC 19.030 Evaluation procedures; 4 AAC 19.040 Confidentiality of the evaluation; 4AAC 19.050 Reporting of evaluation results and local incorporation of student learning data; 4AAC 19.060 Evaluation training; and 4 AAC 19.099 Definitions.

The proposed regulations provide the following:

- School districts must provide evaluator training that assures inter-rater reliability;
- School districts must report to EED at the end of the 2015-2016 school year the number and percentage of teachers and principals at each overall performance rating;
- Plans for professional growth for teachers and principals who receive a rating of basic level in one or more performance area;
- Definitions of the terms "student learning data," "measurements," "measurements of student growth," and "objective, empirical, and valid measurements"; and
- The percentage and timeline for the inclusion of student growth in teacher and principal evaluations.

These regulations were open for public comment until November 2012 and were scheduled for final consideration and adoption at the State Board's December 2012 meeting. (See Attachment 3.6). Based on public comments and further review by the department, the SBOE revised and re-noticed the regulations on October 29, 2012 (Attachment 3.12). Taking into consideration the comments received between October 29 and November 30 (available at http://education.alaska.gov/State_Board/pdf/12dec_add.pdf and http://education.alaska.gov/State_Board/pdf/public_comment_after_11_16_2012.pdf), the State Board made additional changes prior to adopting the new regulation on December 7, 2012. The adopted teacher and principal evaluation regulations are available at http://education.alaska.gov/regs/adopted/4_AAC_04.200(f).pdf. Summaries of the changes made to the original proposed regulations are available in attachment 3.16 & 3.17.*ii)*

- *Does the SEA's plan include sufficient involvement of teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines?*

Convened by EED in November 2009, the TQWG brought together a variety of stakeholders from throughout Alaska who were interested in working on issues related to teacher quality. The working group has met regularly to address issues including teacher preparation, teacher certification requirements, and teacher and principal evaluation, and it has made recommendations to EED and the State Board. During the 2010-2011 and the 2011-2012 school years, the TQWG focused solely on the improvement of Alaska's teacher and principal evaluation systems. Stakeholders included representatives from NEA-Alaska, teachers, human resource directors and representatives from school districts, faculty and deans from the state university system and Alaska's private university, members of the Alaska Council of School Administrators, mentors from the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project, and representatives from the Alaska secondary school and elementary school principal associations. (See attachment 3.2) Additionally, a representative the Alaska Comprehensive Center served as a member and provided access to resources on evaluation being used in other states. The stakeholders presented the viewpoints of the groups they represented and sought input from their constituencies between meetings to help inform the work of the TQWG. Information from stakeholder groups was used to ensure that work being done by the TQWG met the unique needs of Alaska.

Additionally, the proposed teacher and principal evaluation regulations were out for public comment until November 2012. This extended comment period allowed for individual stakeholders to have additional input prior to the State Board took final action on the proposed Alaska's revised teacher and principal evaluation regulations. During September and November 2012, EED shared the proposed regulation with all stakeholder groups at scheduled meetings and conferences. (See Attachment C.14)

With the adoption of the evaluation regulations in December, changes to the districts' teacher and principal evaluations system are now required of every Alaska school district. EED is moving forward to create more detailed guidelines and develop a technical assistance plan to assist school boards, administrators and teachers as they begin the process of reviewing and revising their current district evaluation systems to comply with the new requirements. With the assistance of the Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center, Education Northwest, EED will reorganize and reconvene the Teacher Quality Working Group to assist with the formation of the more detailed guidelines, the development of tools to support smaller districts, and the development of a peer review process (See Attachment 3.13).

The department is distributing information concerning the new requirements through the department's website, http://education.alaska.gov/, and the *Information Exchange*, its electronic newsletter. The department has developed an FAQ that has been emailed to all district superintendents and is available online at http://education.alaska.gov/TeacherCertification/pdf/evaluation_reg_faqs.pdf. The FAQ will be sent directly to administrators, teachers, and their state organizations. A specific webpage will be established to house resources that districts can use as they begin to update their current evaluation to satisfy the new requirements.

At the local level, according to state law, AS 14.20.149(a) (See Attachment 10), the school board of each district must consider information from all stakeholders, including classroom teachers, affected collective bargaining units, and administrators, in the design and periodic review of the district's teacher and principal evaluation system. Additionally, the new regulations require that

the district work directly with educators to develop the student learning data component that will account for 20% of the evaluation in the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years, 35% in the 2017-18 school year and 50% in the 2018-2019 school year and beyond. (See newly adopted regulations at http://education.alaska.gov/TeacherCertification/docs/recent_changes_4aac_04_200_04_205_4aac_19.docx

- *iii) Has SEA indicated that it will submit to the Department a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2012–2013 school year?*

Alaska will submit to the Department for peer review and approval a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

3.B ENSURE LEAS IMPLEMENT TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

3.B Provide the SEA's process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, including mechanisms to review, revise, and improve, high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA's adopted guidelines.

- *Is the SEA's process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA's adopted guidelines likely to lead to high-quality local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems?*

From the 2010-2011 school year to the present, the TQWG has focused its discussions and work on teacher and principal evaluations. The group reviewed the existing Alaska statutes and regulations regarding teacher and principal evaluations. Forty-four of Alaska's 54 school districts responded to an Alaska Comprehensive Center survey about their evaluations of teachers and principals. Items included the purpose of the district's evaluation, the use of Alaska professional content and performance standards, evidence used in the evaluation of teachers and principals, and the levels of proficiency used in the evaluation system. The group reviewed those results. (See Attachment 3.7)

The regulations contain a provision to ensure that each school district works with teachers and principals to develop the process for incorporating student learning data that will be used in the district evaluation system. By July 1, 2015, each school district must have adopted procedures that incorporate student learning data in its teacher and principal evaluations. Districts are required to use student scores on State assessments for grades and subjects in which the assessments directly related to the subject and grade level of the educator as one of the pieces of student learning data. The other assessments used as student learning data may not be used in greater percentage of the overall student growth standard than the state assessment when determining an educator's performance in the student learning area. EED will work with school districts to help develop their process for incorporating student learning data. During winter 2012, EED developed detailed communication plan and guidance for school districts.

AS 14.20.149.(g) Employee evaluation states, "The department may request copies of each school district's certificated employee evaluation system and changes the district makes to the systems." Current regulations require districts to post the forms used in their evaluation systems. By July 1, 2015, each district will have adopted a teacher and principal evaluation system that meets the requirements, including the use of student learning data, set by the State Board. As districts revise their systems to meet new requirements, EED is asking each district to submit a copy of its evaluation system for review by EED. The department will work with districts on a peer review process for districts to request feedback on their evaluation system prior to the submission of their evaluation system for department approval.

Additionally, beginning in 2016, each district is required report to EED by July 10 the number and percentage of teachers and principals scoring at the four performance levels for the preceding school year.

The adopted regulations contain a provision to ensure that each district works with teachers and principals to develop the process for incorporating student learning data in the district evaluation

system. School districts that are further along in the process will serve as models to other districts in how to collaborate with the variety of stakeholders with a vested interest in teacher and principal evaluation. EED plans to hold a meeting at which districts piloting a new system could take the lead in helping other school districts as they begin to revise their teacher and principal evaluation systems. Pilot school districts will work with EED and the TQWG on guidance that will be available to all districts.

As a requirement of submitting their revised evaluation systems, school districts will need to document that they have involved teachers and principals in developing, piloting, and implementing their systems. Once plans have been received by EED, staff will review the plans and assurances of collaboration.

- *Did the SEA describe the process it will use to ensure that all measures used in an LEA's evaluation and support systems are valid, meaning measures that are clearly related to increasing student academic achievement and school performance, and are implemented in a consistent and high-quality manner across schools within an LEA (i.e., process for ensuring inter-rater reliability)?*

The adopted regulations require that two to four measures of student growth be used to determine a teacher's or principal's overall rating. The department will ensure that all measures are valid and are implemented in a consistent and high-quality manner across schools within a district and among districts using a couple of mechanisms. The department will develop guidelines that will provide a recommended list of measures and procedures for the incorporation of student learning data into the teachers' and administrators' evaluation. The peer review process will evaluate the measures being used to determine if they are consistent with the definitions provided in the regulation. If the measures are questioned through the peer review, the department will work with a district to revise its selected measures to satisfy the criteria established by regulations.

The adopted regulations require districts to use data from the statewide assessment selected by the commissioner of education as a measure of student growth if the assessment employs measurements of achievement that are comparable across grade levels. Currently, Alaska's English/language arts and mathematics assessments are not vertically aligned and do not provide a valid and reliable measure of student growth. However, it is anticipated that the new assessment system based on Alaska's new ELA and mathematics standards will satisfy these requirements. When that system is available, teacher and principal evaluations will be required to incorporate the data generated from that assessment for the grades in which those assessments are administered. See 4 AAC 04.205(e)(3) available at the following link:
http://education.alaska.gov/TeacherCertification/docs/recent_changes_4aac_04_200_04_205_4aac_19.docx
The regulations contain the provision that within the evaluation training each district must provide an assurance of inter-rater reliability. EED is researching information on the use of valid measurements and will work with districts and the TQWG to develop a process for ensuring inter-rater reliability. As a process is developed, EED will provide additional guidance to districts.

EED will work with the Alaska Administrator Coaching Project, the Alaska School Leadership Institute, and Alaska's new comprehensive center to identify inter-rater reliability systems that can serve urban and rural districts. (See Attachments 1.4 and 1.7)

- *Does the SEA have a process for ensuring that teachers working with special populations of students, such as students with disabilities and English Learners, are included in the LEA's teacher and*

principal evaluation and support systems?

Teachers of students with disabilities and English learners were included in the Teacher Quality Working Group (Attachment 3.15) and will continue to be involved at the state and district levels as the new evaluation systems are created.
All teachers of special populations are required to be certified in order to teach in the state. Alaska's teacher evaluation system applies to all certificated teachers regardless of the population of students the teachers teach. Within the Alaska Administrative Code there is provision for districts to use up to 10 days as in-service days for professional development for educators. School districts may determine, according to their needs, such professional development. Within these parameters each district provides professional development and support to its teachers in a variety of areas and will support teachers of special populations as new systems are implemented.

- *Is the SEA's plan likely to be successful in ensuring that LEAs meet the timeline requirements by either (1) piloting evaluation and support systems no later than the 2014–2015 school year in preparation for full implementation of the evaluation and support systems consistent with the requirements described above no later than the 2015–2016 school year; or (2) implementing these systems no later than the 2014–2015 school year?*

According to Alaska Statute 14.07.070, "state funds may not be paid to a school district or teacher that fails to comply with the school laws of the state or with the regulations adopted by the department." The State directly funds K-12 education each year. For fiscal year 2013, the total State support for the K-12 public school foundation program was approximately $1.2 billion. Districts are obligated to adhere to State statute and regulations; if they fail to comply, they jeopardize their State funding.

By adopting the new educator evaluation regulations, the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development has mandated that every Alaska district develop, adopt, pilot, and implement an evaluation and support system consistent with the requirements set forth in the regulations. In order to satisfy the timelines set forth in the regulations, all Alaska districts will need to begin immediately to revise their current evaluation systems to be in compliance.

EED will use funds made available through Title II technical assistance to support the Teacher Quality Working Group and districts' training.
Recognizing the scope of changes that the TQWG felt were necessary to ensure that Alaska's teachers and principals were effective, improved student learning, and continued to grow as professionals, work to date has been deliberative and has had input from a variety of stakeholders. As the work has moved forward, new stakeholders have been added to the TQWG. Working with EED, the TQWG developed a timeline for implementing the new teacher and principal evaluation process: The timeline has been revised to reflect the requirements of the newly adopted regulations; as well as, recent work with Alaska's comprehensive center.
2012-2013 School Year

- **December 2012** State Board adopted proposed teacher and principal evaluation regulations.
- **December 2012** Begins working with Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center (NWRCC) to develop a communication and dissemination plan, convene and train peer reviewers for district evaluation proposals, identify valid and reliable methods for

measuring effectiveness, and develop tools to support small districts. EED continues to research other states' guidance that the TQWG can use to develop more detailed guidance for the new evaluation system. EED increases stakeholder's awareness, continues to gather public comment, and recommends modifications of proposed regulation to the State Board.

- **December 2012** EED develops FAQ for website. Begins construction of webpage that will house technical assistance and guidance documents.
- **January-June 2013** EED works with the testing contractor to ensure that the new statewide assessment system can provide data that can be used in teacher and principal evaluations.
- **January-March 2013** EED Monthly meetings continue with Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center (NWRCC) to finalize communication and dissemination plan. The Teacher Quality Working group is reorganized and reconvened with support from NWRCC to develop a guidance document that includes peer review criteria, a list of valid and reliable methods for measuring effectiveness, and tools that will address specific needs of Alaska's smaller districts. EED begin to develop peer review and feedback protocol. **February 2013** Pilot schools identified. The Kenai, Anchorage and Kodiak school districts have already begun the process of reviewing and revising their teacher and principal evaluation systems. Four Alaska school districts, Bering Strait, Matanuska-Susitna, Yupiit, and Yukon-Koyukuk, have schools with School Improvement Grants and have begun the process of revising their evaluation systems to include student learning. Collectively, these districts include rural and urban schools and represent the range of school sizes seen across Alaska. These districts will be the first districts invited to identify pilot schools that can be used to model the use of student learning data and develop a process to assure inter-rater reliability.
- **March 2013** Draft guidance is available to school districts for use and feedback. Guidance will continue to be available to school districts in succeeding years. As feedback and new information become available, the guidance will be updated. The guidance document will be made available on EED's website.
- **April 2013** EED will begin holding workshops for pilot districts and their selected schools that will address the following: setting performance standards for student learning data, incorporating student learning data into the overall rating for teacher and principals, identifying valid reliable measures, and inter-rater reliability. Peer review training will also be conducted through EED workshops.
- **June 2013** EED will submit finalized teacher and principal evaluation guidance to USED for final approval.

2013-2014 School Year

Throughout the school year, districts identify additional valid and reliable measures and establish procedures to use student learning data as a criterion in their teacher and principal evaluations. EED continues to work with the testing contractor to ensure that new statewide assessment system can provide data that can be used in teacher and principal evaluations. EED provides technical assistance to school districts as requested. A peer review process for school districts to request feedback on their evaluations is available. Additionally, EED will meet with school districts to determine other needs regarding implementation.

- **August-December 2013** All Alaska districts begin the review and revision of their evaluation systems and begin to incorporate the new requirements. Additional workshops described above are conducted for all districts as needed.

- **August 2013** The peer review and department approval process is available to districts that have adopted a revised evaluation system. EED will provide technical assistance to districts that submit revised evaluation systems that are non-compliant.
- **December 2013-May 2014** EED collects and compiles feedback/data from school districts on the evaluation processes being used.

June 2014 EED reports to the State Board on progress being made with school districts and the new evaluation system.**2014-2015 School Year**

Throughout the school year**,** pilot schools within all districts use available student learning data as a criterion in their teacher and principal evaluations. EED provides technical assistance to school districts as requested. EED will meet with school districts to determine other needs for implementation.

- **August 2014-May 2015** All school districts pilot their proposed evaluation system that includes student learning data and inter-rater reliability. Districts continue to submit revised teacher and principal evaluation systems for peer review and department approval.
- **November 2014-April 2015** Districts collect data on the use of student learning in their teacher and principal evaluations at their pilot sites. EED works with school districts to review data and provide information to the State Board.
- **April 2015** If the new student assessment system is in place, the student assessment data will provide baseline information that can be used in the 2015-2016 school year teacher and principal evaluations.
- **June 2015** EED reports to the State Board on teacher and principal evaluations.
- **July 1, 2015** All school districts will have adopted a teacher and principal evaluation system that meets the requirements, including the use of student learning data. The district's adopted teacher and principal evaluation systems will be available on the district website. Through peer review and department approval, all districts will be in compliance with teacher and evaluation regulations adopt by the State Board in December, 2012.

2015-2016 School Year

EED provides technical assistance to school districts as requested. EED will meet with school districts to determine other needs for implementation.

- **April, 2016** EED and stakeholders meet to examine the validity and reliability of the student learning data from the new student assessment system in regard to teacher and principal evaluation. The commissioner of education determines if data satisfies definitions provided in the newly adopted regulation. If so, the data will be included as one of the measures of student growth for the appropriate teachers and for principals in the area of student learning data.
- **July 10, 2016** School districts report to EED and the public the number and percentage of teachers and principals at each performance level for the 2015-2016 school year. Student learning data must account for at least 20 percent of the teacher's or principal's overall performance rating.

2016-2017 School Year

- **July 10, 2017** School districts report to EED and the public the number and percentage of teachers and principals at each performance level for the 2016-2017 school year. Student learning data must account for at least 20 percent of the teacher's or principal's

overall performance rating

2017-2018 School Year

- **July 10, 2018** School districts report to EED and the public the number and percentage of teachers and principals at each performance level for the 2017-2018 school year. Student learning data must account for at least 35 percent of the teacher's or principal's overall performance rating.

2018-2019 School Year

- **July 10, 2019** School districts report to EED and the public the number and percentage of teachers and principals at each performance level for the 2018-2019 school year. Student learning data must account for at least 50 percent of the teacher's or principal's overall performance rating.

The timeline allows school districts the time necessary to be able to collaborate with their teachers and principals and other education stakeholders on a new evaluation system. The timeline allows EED to work with the TQWG and interested school districts to develop a peer review process that can be used to help school districts improve their evaluation systems and comply with adopted teacher and principal regulations. The timeline allows districts to request and receive peer feedback in order to strengthen their evaluation systems. As the process within districts moves forward and feedback is received from districts, the State Board and other stakeholders, the timeline may need to be adjusted.

- *Is the SEA plan for providing adequate guidance and other technical assistance to LEAs in developing and implementing teacher and principal evaluation and support systems likely to lead to successful implementation?*

In Alaska's Work Plan developed with the Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center (NWRCC), EED has identified development of a continuum of supports to help districts implement the new regulations for evaluating teacher and principal evaluation systems as one of its two priorities. (Attachment 3.13) NWRCC will provide the technical assistance the department needs to develop a communication and dissemination plan, convene and train peer reviewers for district evaluation proposals, identify valid and reliable methods for measuring effectiveness, and develop tools to support small districts. The first meeting between NWRCC and the department was November 30. The next meeting will occur on January 4.

See the timeline above for additional information concerning EED's plan for guidance and technical assistance.

- *Is the pilot broad enough to gain sufficient feedback from a variety of types of educators, schools, and classrooms to inform full implementation of the LEA's evaluation and support systems?*

Teachers of students with disabilities and English learners were included in the Teacher Quality Working Group (Attachment 3.15) and will continue to be involved at the state and district levels as the new evaluation systems are created. Guidance developed with the assistance of the Teacher Quality Working Group will contain specific information concerning the use of student learning data when evaluating teachers of students with disabilities and English learners.

The Kenai, Anchorage and Kodiak school districts have begun the process of reviewing and

revising their teacher and principal evaluation systems. Four Alaska school districts, Bering Strait, Matanuska-Susitna, Yupiit, and Yukon-Koyukuk, have schools with School Improvement Grants and have begun the process of revising their evaluation systems to include student learning. Collectively, these districts include rural and urban schools and represent the range of school sizes seen across Alaska. These districts will be invited to identify pilot schools that can be used as to model the inclusion of student learning data in teachers' and principals' overall ratings.

During the development and adoption of a new or revised evaluation system, districts are required to comply with the applicable statutes governing the revision of their evaluation system (Attachment 10). The statute requires that the district consider input from all of their stakeholders, including teachers of students with disabilities and English learners. The new regulations require that teachers and administrators are consulted in the development of the performance standard for the student learning component and the development of the procedures used to incorporate the student learning data into the overall rating of teachers and administrators.

Districts' revised evaluation systems must include evidence that input from teachers of students with disabilities and English learners was considered in the construction of the evaluations system.