



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

JUN 05 2014

The Honorable Michael Hanley
Commissioner
Department of Education and Early Development
PO Box 110500
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Commissioner Hanley:

I am writing in response to Alaska's request to amend its approved ESEA flexibility request. On May 20, 2013, the Department of Education (ED) approved Alaska's flexibility request. On March 13, 2014, Alaska submitted an amended request including three changes.

I am pleased to approve Alaska's amended request through the 2014–2015 school year. Alaska's amended request will be posted on ED's website. A summary of Alaska's amendments is enclosed with this letter. While I am approving each of Alaska's amendments, please note that Alaska may be asked to address its Alternative School Index further through its request for renewal of ESEA flexibility. Any further requests to amend Alaska's ESEA flexibility request must be submitted to ED for review and approval.

Alaska continues to have an affirmative responsibility to ensure that it and its districts are in compliance with Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age in their implementation of ESEA flexibility as well as their implementation of all other Federal education programs. These laws include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

I am confident that Alaska will continue to implement the reforms it proposed under its approved ESEA flexibility request and advance its efforts to hold schools and school districts accountable for the achievement of all students. If you need any additional assistance to implement your ESEA flexibility request, please do not hesitate to contact Emily Bank of my staff at: emily.bank@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Deborah S. Delisle".

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary

Enclosure

cc: Margaret MacKinnon, Title I/ESEA Administrator

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202
<http://www.ed.gov/>

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

Amendments to Alaska's Approved ESEA Flexibility Request

The following is a summary of amendments to Alaska's approved ESEA flexibility request. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) approves the following amendments through the 2014–2015 school year because Alaska's ESEA flexibility request, as amended, continues to be aligned with the principles of ESEA flexibility. Please refer to ED's website (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/index.html>) for Alaska's complete ESEA flexibility request.

2.A: State Developed System of Differentiated Recognition, Accountability and Support

Revision: Alaska will modify the calculation for the Alaska School Performance Index (ASPI) graduation rate indicator for schools with small size graduation cohorts. The indicator will be based on a cohort size of at least seven students and will use data aggregated up to three years to reach this cohort size.

Revision: Alaska will remove the decline in growth and proficiency index as criteria for triggering the need for a school improvement plan. In addition, all schools with a 3-star rating ASPI will be required to submit a school improvement plan to the district. The revision also appears in section 2.F: Provide Incentives and Supports for Other Title I Schools.

Revision: Alaska will modify elements of the ASPI for application to Alternative Schools, rather than apply the index uniformly to all types of schools. Alaska will modify the points received in the ASPI by Alternative Schools for attendance, graduation rate, and WorkKeys participation rate. Alaska will also reduce the weighting of the academic achievement indicator from 20 percent to 10 percent, and increase the weighting of the school progress indicator from 40 percent to 50 percent, when applying the ASPI to Alternative Schools.