A RESOURCE FOR EDUCATORS AND PARENTS

System for School Success

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Accountability System

Q. What is an accountability system? Why is it important?

Statewide accountability systems are designed to celebrate success and identify areas where additional support is needed, with the goal of increasing achievement for all students. A common misunderstanding is that state accountability systems are intended to be punitive, but that is not the case. Just as state standards and assessments set expectations for what students should know and be able to do, state accountability systems set expectations for school performance and school system effectiveness.

Q. How did the state decide to use this system? Were stakeholders involved in the design?

Alaska engaged a wide variety of stakeholders, including parents, administrators, educators, and other community members, to develop its accountability system under ESSA. The Department of Education and Early Development received feedback from more than 4,000 stakeholders over the course of a year and half through online surveys, discussion groups and webinars, community conversations, and an ESSA advisory committee.

School Ratings

Q. What does the Overall School Index Value mean?

The Overall School Index Value is a type of accountability rating and is one way to provide information about how each school is supporting its students. Accountability ratings help stakeholders know where schools are excelling and where they have room to grow. But they aren't the only thing that matters. Beyond these ratings, parents, educators, and other stakeholders know a great deal about how their schools are performing.

Q. What is the Overall School Index Value based on? Only test scores?

The Overall School Index Value is <u>not</u> based only on test scores. It is based on multiple measures of student success, including graduation rates, English learner progress, academic achievement, academic growth, and school quality/student success.

Many stakeholders provided input on the selection of these indicators through the ESSA planning process, and we look forward to continued engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders throughout implementation.

Q. Does the Overall School Index Value mean some schools are "good" and others are "bad?"

Schools that have lower ratings are not necessarily "bad schools," but they are schools that need help and support. Through conversations sparked by the Overall School Index Value, these schools have the opportunity to engage parents and the community in developing a plan to improve the school's performance.

Schools that receive high ratings deserve credit for their accomplishments, and the lessons they have learned need to be shared so that other schools can benefit.

Q. What are the options for my student?

Accountability ratings provide you with information about how your school and the student groups in that school are performing. You can use that information to engage with your school's administrator or your student's teachers to see what supports are available for individual students.

School Identification

Q. How are schools identified for support?

Schools that are identified for support did not achieve one or more of the expectations set in the accountability system. These schools need the most assistance, support, and direction for their students to have the same opportunities for growth and success that exist for students in other schools. Alaska has established four levels of support for its schools: comprehensive (CSI), targeted (TSI), additional targeted (ATSI), and universal.

Q. If my school is identified for support or interventions, what will happen to it?

Schools that are identified for support have the opportunity to engage parents and the community in identifying local school needs and developing a plan for improvement. Each school will collaboratively develop an improvement plan with a school and community leadership team and in conjunction with their district, and will receive additional support from the state and their district.

Q. If my school is identified as CSI or ATSI, will it be given additional resources to support improvement?

Schools that are identified for support are eligible for additional federal funds and may be eligible for additional state or local funding and support. It will be important for your school to think about how it can align the resources it currently receives with its school improvement plan.

Q. If my school is not identified, does that mean it is a "good" school?

Schools that are not identified for support have demonstrated that they are not among the lowest-performing schools in the state. Just as we know that all students, even those that are high performing, can keep growing, our schools can grow, too. These schools should celebrate their performance while continuing to seek gains for all students.