Alaska Department of Education
and Early Development

Alaska's 2nd Draft Application for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Note to Alaska Stakeholders:

This is the second draft of Alaska's ESSA State Application. While this draft has been shaped by thousands of stakeholder comments and formal stakeholder feedback, DEED recognizes that there may still be additional revisions needed prior to submitting this application to the U.S. Department of Education. Suggestions from the State Board of Education and the Governor's office, as well as additional feedback from you, will continue to inform this work and lead to additional revisions.

July 13, 2017

Dear Alaskans,

The Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) has completed the second draft of Alaska's State Application for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the new federal education law. All states must submit State applications to the U.S. Department of Education (US ED) to demonstrate compliance with the new law and to access the federal funding provided to implement it. ESSA provides states with greater flexibility than the No Child Left Behind Act it replaces.

To ensure Alaska's application takes full advantage of this additional flexibility, and is fully aligned to Alaska's unique educational needs and priorities, DEED is seeking your input to strengthen its application. The draft to follow has been created by DEED using guidance provided by the US ED and shaped by over 4,000 stakeholder comments provided by nearly 1,000 stakeholders at the more than 40 meetings and conferences conducted across the state over the last year. Additionally, DEED considered the feedback provided by stakeholders on the first draft of Alaska's State Application for ESSA.

Alaska's ESSA application will support Alaska's public education mission to provide an excellent education for every student every day. DEED is committed to supporting districts in providing a public education system that ensures all students can succeed in their education and work, shape worthwhile and satisfying lives for themselves, exemplify the best values of society, and be effective in improving the character and quality of the world about them.

Given Alaska's diversity, achieving its educational vision and mission requires support for locally relevant, informed, and innovative solutions. To ensure that Alaska's State Application is aligned with what Alaskans value, DEED invites parents, tribal leaders and members, education practitioners, community partners, and state leaders to review this draft and provide feedback to inform the final drafts.

When reviewing the second draft, it is important to understand what it is and what it is not.

What the ESSA Draft Application IS….	**What the ESSA Draft Application IS NOT….**
1. Truly a second draft.	1. Complete or final.
2. Alaska's draft application for federal funds authorized under ESSA.	2. Restricting the State's or districts' allowable use of federal funds beyond what is stated in law.
3. Reflective of the broader system within which Alaska will function to support ESSA.	3. Inclusive of all the detail needed for schools to implement ESSA (this will be provided in guidance and technical assistance).

What the ESSA Draft Application IS….	What the ESSA Draft Application IS NOT….
4. Based on feedback collected across our ESSA Advisory Committee, focus groups, and other stakeholder feedback groups.	4. Inclusive of all feedback. DEED is continuing to compile, summarize, and consider feedback within ESSA requirements.
5. Developed by working closely with stakeholders.	5. Limiting additional stakeholder feedback or engagement.
6. Open for additional feedback, which will be reflected in the final draft of the state application when released in August 2017.	6. All that is important to Alaska's public education system.
7. The second draft of the application that will be submitted to US ED on September 18, 2017 (US ED then has a 120-day review period to approve state applications).	7. Limiting the State's ability to revise the application in future submissions to US ED for approval.

Draft Timeline

DEED has indicated to US ED that Alaska will submit its ESSA State Application by the September 18, 2017, submission deadline.

Time Period	Application Development Activities

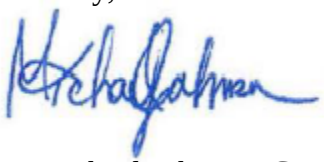
May 21 – July 22, 2017	• Review and consideration of stakeholder feedback from initial draft by DEED staff.
	• Second draft released to stakeholders for feedback via two methods:
	  • Webinar; and
	  • DEED's ESSA website with executive summary and survey.

July 31, 2017	• DEED revises the second draft application based on stakeholder feedback.
August 1, 2017	• Draft of State Application presented to the State Board of Education and Governor for review.
September 18, 2017	• State Application submitted to US ED.

DEED will be gathering stakeholder feedback on this second draft application through July 31, 2017. Please take time to provide your thoughts by going to Alaska's ESSA online feedback form. The State Board of Education will also gather public comment concerning the State Application at its regularly scheduled meetings. Your feedback is valuable, and it will be considered in the final ESSA State Application that will be submitted to US ED.

Thank you for your continued input, support, and collaboration on the development of our ESSA State Application. Together, Alaskans can fulfill our mission – an excellent education for every student every day.

Sincerely,



Dr. Michael Johnson, Commissioner
Alaska Department of Education and Early Development

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Contact Information and Signatures	
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By signing this document, I assure that: To the best of my knowledge and belief, all information and data included in this application are true and correct. The SEA will submit a comprehensive set of assurances at a date and time established by the Secretary, including the assurances in ESEA section 8304. Consistent with ESEA section 8302(b)(3), the SEA will meet the requirements of ESEA sections 1117 and 8501 regarding the participation of private school children and teachers.	
Authorized SEA Representative (Printed Name) Dr. Michael Johnson Commissioner Alaska Department of Education and Early Development	Telephone: (907) 465-2800
Signature of Authorized SEA Representative	Date:
Governor (Printed Name) The Honorable Bill Walker Governor of Alaska	Date SEA provided application to the Governor under ESEA section 8540:
Signature of Governor	Date:

Programs Included in the Consolidated State Application

Instructions: Indicate below by checking the appropriate box(es) which programs the SEA included in its consolidated State plan. If an SEA elected not to include one or more of the programs below in its consolidated State plan, but is eligible and wishes to receive funds under the program(s), it must submit individual program plans for those programs that meet all statutory and regulatory requirements with its consolidated State plan in a single submission.

☐ Check this box if the SEA has included all of the following programs in its consolidated State application.

or

If all programs are not included, check each program listed below that the SEA includes in its consolidated State plan:

☒ Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies

☒ Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children

☒ Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk

☒ Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction

☒ Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement

☒ Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

☒ Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers

☐ Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program

☒ Title VII, Subpart B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (McKinney-Vento Act)

Instructions

Each SEA must provide descriptions and other information that address each requirement listed below for the programs included in its consolidated State plan. Consistent with ESEA section 8302, the Secretary has determined that the following requirements are absolutely necessary for consideration of a consolidated State plan. An SEA may add descriptions or other information, but may not omit any of the required descriptions or information for each included program.

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Introduction

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) is pleased to provide the second draft of its Consolidated Plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA was signed into federal law on December 10, 2015, replacing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). ESSA requires states to develop plans that address standards, assessments, school and district accountability, and support for struggling schools, giving states more flexibility in the process of how to hold schools accountable and how to provide support to schools in the greatest need of support.

This document represents over a year's worth of stakeholder engagement and department preparation in creating a plan to implement ESSA requirements within the unique context of Alaskan education. The elements of Alaska's ESSA State Plan are designed to support the broader work of improving Alaska's education system.

The State Board of Education and Early Development (State Board) has adopted a statewide mission and vision for public education. The State Board has also adopted five strategic priorities for the Alaska education system.

- *Mission:* An excellent education for every student every day.
- *Vision:* All students can succeed in their education and work; shape worthwhile and satisfying lives for themselves; exemplify the best values of society; and, be effective in improving the character and quality of the world around them.

- *Five Strategic Priorities:*
    - Amplify student learning
    - Inspire community and tribal ownership of educational excellence
    - Modernize the education system
    - Ensure excellent educators
    - Promote safety and well-being

As the draft of this plan is written, work is also being conducted through the committees of Alaska's Education Challenge. The Education Challenge is seeking ways to transform education in Alaska under the five strategic priorities adopted by the State Board.

Alaska's ESSA plan is a description of the system to help schools and districts measure their performance on key indicators, identify solutions for improvement, and target resources and support for all students to receive an excellent education and be prepared for college or career after high school. Moving forward, it is anticipated that Alaska's ESSA plan will be modified to support the recommendation of the Education Challenge.

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A. Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies

1. Challenging State Academic Standards and Assessments *(ESEA section 1111(b)(1) and (2) and 34 CFR §§ 200.1–200.8.)*[2]

Alaska adopted more rigorous standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics in 2012 to ensure our students would be prepared for college and/or careers after high school. Stakeholder feedback indicated Alaska should keep the new ELA and Mathematics Standards, but consider reviewing them in the future to determine if any revisions are needed.

These standards were first assessed in 2015 with the Alaska Measures of Progress Assessment. Due to technical issues and a construction accident that severed the internet connection in 2016, that assessment was cancelled. Alaska administered the Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools (PEAKS) assessment in 2017 to all students in grades 3-10. Alaska will continue to administer the PEAKS assessment to students in grades 3-8 and at least one grade in high school in 2018 and beyond. DEED will work with stakeholders to determine whether to make a transition from testing in one high school grade with an end-of-grade test, to testing students with an end-of-course test in the grade in which they take the particular course.

Alaska's Science Standards and Grade Level Expectations were last revised in 2006. Students in grades 4, 8, and 10 take the Alaska Science Assessment. The Science Standards will be considered for revision during the 2017-2018 school year. A plan will be created to transition to a new assessment to measure the new Science Standards after new standards are adopted by the Alaska State Board of Education.

2. Eighth Grade Math Exception (*ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C) and 34 CFR § 200.5(b)(4)*):

i. Does the State administer an end-of-course mathematics assessment to meet the requirements under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I)(bb) of the ESEA?

☒ Yes
☐ No

Alaska has administered assessments to students in grades 9 and 10 in high school through 2016-2017. The State has proposed a regulation change that will allow the State flexibility to administer an assessment in only one grade in high school, and to move to end-of-course assessments in high school. As of this draft, the State is considering piloting a high school mathematics Algebra I end-of-course assessment in 2018. Based on that possibility, the State is responding with a "yes" answer to this question.

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ii. **If a State responds "yes" to question 2(i)**, does the State wish to exempt an eighth-grade student who takes the high school mathematics course associated with the end-of-course assessment from the mathematics assessment typically administered in eighth grade under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I)(aa) of the ESEA and ensure that:

a. The student instead takes the end-of-course mathematics assessment the State administers to high school students under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I)(bb) of the ESEA;

b. The student's performance on the high school assessment is used in the year in which the student takes the assessment for purposes of measuring academic achievement under section 1111(c)(4)(B)(i) of the ESEA and participation in assessments under section 1111(c)(4)(E) of the ESEA;

c. In high school:

1. The student takes a State-administered end-of-course assessment or nationally recognized high school academic assessment as defined in 34 CFR § 200.3(d) in mathematics that is more advanced than the assessment the State administers under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I)(bb) of the ESEA;

2. The State provides for appropriate accommodations consistent with 34 CFR § 200.6(b) and (f); and

3. The student's performance on the more advanced mathematics assessment is used for purposes of measuring academic achievement under section 1111(c)(4)(B)(i) of the ESEA and participation in assessments under section 1111(c)(4)(E) of the ESEA.

☒Yes
☐No

Alaska is answering this question with a "yes" in anticipation of offering end-of-course assessments in mathematics in the future, and including the flexibility to offer the end-of-course high school mathematics test to eighth graders and exempting those students from the 8th grade assessment.

iii. **If a State responds "yes" to question 2(i**i), consistent with 34 CFR § 200.5(b)(4), describe, with regard to this exception, its strategies to provide all students in the State the opportunity to be prepared for and to take advanced mathematics coursework in middle school.

When Alaska offers high school end-of-course (ECO) assessments in mathematics, and allows 8th graders to be exempted from the 8th grade math assessment to take the high school ECO assessment, the State will include strategies to provide all students in the state with the opportunity to be prepared for and to take advanced mathematics coursework in middle school. Possible strategies will include:

- Providing guidance and technical assistance to implement the middle school mathematics standards that support preparation for Algebra I
- Providing or partnering with organizations in the state to provide cohesive professional development for middle school teachers to be prepared to teach the mathematics standards and possibly Algebra I

- Offering an endorsement to middle school teachers for Algebra I
- Ensuring options for students in small schools to have access to advanced math courses through virtual/distance delivered courses
- Including an incentive in the accountability system to schools offering Algebra I in middle school

3. Native Language Assessments *(ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(F) and 34 CFR § 200.6(f)(2)(ii)) and (f)(4)*:

i. Provide its definition for "languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population," and identify the specific languages that meet that definition.

Yup'ik languages represent over 40 percent of the state's languages other than English, and this includes all dialects. Spanish represents about ten percent of the languages, followed by Inupiaq and Filipino at over nine percent each. Alaska will work with stakeholders to determine the final definition of languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population in grades 3-10.

ii. Identify any existing assessments in languages other than English, and specify for which grades and content areas those assessments are available.

There are currently no existing State content assessments in languages other than English.

iii. Indicate the languages identified in question 3(i) for which yearly student academic assessments are not available and are needed.

This will be determined with stakeholders.

iv. Describe how it will make every effort to develop assessments, at a minimum, in languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population including by providing

a. The State's plan and timeline for developing such assessments, including a description of how it met the requirements of 34 CFR § 200.6(f)(4);
b. A description of the process the State used to gather meaningful input on the need for assessments in languages other than English, collect and respond to public comment, and consult with educators; parents and families of English learners; students, as appropriate; and other stakeholders; and
c. As applicable, an explanation of the reasons the State has not been able to complete the development of such assessments despite making every effort.

a. Alaska will work with stakeholders to determine in which languages content assessments are needed and are feasible, and will work with the testing contractor to develop assessments in those languages. The timeline has not yet been identified, but it will reflect the need to work with indigenous language experts.
b. The process for consultation will begin as early as fall 2017.
c. Because of the timeline for administering the State's newest tests, stakeholder discussions and plans for potentially testing in languages other than English have not yet been developed.

4. Statewide Accountability System and School Support and Improvement Activities (ESEA section 1111(c) and (d)):

i. **Subgroups** *(ESEA section 1111(c)(2))*:

a. List each major racial and ethnic group the State includes as a subgroup of students, consistent with ESEA section 1111(c)(2)(B).

The nine subgroups identified by the State for inclusion in the accountability system are:

- students with disabilities
- economically disadvantaged students
- English learners
- Caucasian
- Alaska Native/American Indian
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- African-American
- Hispanic
- Two or more races

These subgroups are the subgroups required under ESSA.

b. If applicable, describe any additional subgroups of students other than the statutorily required subgroups (*i.e.*, economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and English learners) used in the Statewide accountability system.

None

c. Does the State intend to include in the English learner subgroup the results of students previously identified as English learners on the State assessments required under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I) for purposes of State accountability (ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(B))? Note that a student's results may be included in the English learner subgroup for not more than four years after the student ceases to be identified as an English learner.

☒Yes

☐No

Alaska has included students formerly identified as English learners for two years in the accountability system under NCLB. The State will take advantage of the option to include formerly identified English learners in the accountability system for four years. Stakeholders have indicated over the years that it is important to recognize the progress made by English learners and to include their assessment results for a period of time after they have become proficient in English.

d. If applicable, choose one of the following options for recently arrived English learners in the State:

☒ Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(i); or

☐ Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(ii); or

☐ Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(i) or under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(ii). If this option is selected, describe how the State will choose which exception applies to a recently arrived English learner.

Note that the exception chosen is consistent with current practice in Alaska. Exception 1111(b)(3)(A)(i) allows recently arrived English learners to be exempt from one administration of the ELA assessment. EL students must take the math assessment and the ELP assessment. The math assessment score is not included in the accountability system for the first year. In the following years, the EL student takes the ELA and math assessments and those scores are included in the accountability system.

The exception allowed under 1111(b)(3)(A)(ii) would require recently arrived ELs to take both the ELA and math assessments in the first year, but those scores would not be included in the accountability system. In the following years, student growth on the ELA and math assessments would be included in the accountability system.

ii. **Minimum N-Size** *(ESEA section 1111(c)(3)(A))*:

a. Provide the minimum number of students that the State determines are necessary to be included to carry out the requirements of any provisions under Title I, Part A of the ESEA that require disaggregation of information by each subgroup of students for accountability purposes.

Alaska proposes ten as the minimum number of students (minimum *n*-size) necessary to be included for accountability purposes. As has been the case in Alaska, the minimum *n*-size represents a balance between recognizing the small size of many subgroups and schools, prioritizing and ensuring student privacy, and incorporating actionable data into the accountability system.

b. Describe how the minimum number of students is statistically sound.

In proposing a minimum *n*-size of ten, Alaska considered the number of students in the all students group as well as those in subgroups that would be included in the accountability system for academic achievement. Approximately 87 percent of Alaska's schools would be included in the academic achievement indicator with a minimum n-size of ten. Alaska had *n*-sizes of five and six under its previous accountability system. An *n-size* of ten would capture most subgroups in most schools while minimizing the extreme effect of the performance of one student on a smaller *n*-size.

c. Describe how the minimum number of students was determined by the State, including how the State collaborated with teachers, principals, other school leaders, parents, and other stakeholders when determining such minimum number.

Specific stakeholder input was gathered from the Alaska Principals' Pre-Conference activity and from the State's ESSA Advisory Committee. General feedback was received from the public on the first draft of the state plan. Many responses were in the range of an *n*-size of five or somewhere between five and ten, with rationale being that Alaska should hold the most schools accountable. Others were on the higher end of ten or 20, with the rationale that there can be greater variability in smaller subgroups. Stakeholders indicated a preference for aggregating data over three years for schools with less than ten students in order to include more schools and subgroups. Alaska will continue to collaborate with stakeholders including teachers, principals, other school leaders, and parents in determining the minimum number.

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d. Describe how the State ensures that the minimum number is sufficient to not reveal any personally identifiable information.

(Consistent with ESEA section1111(i), information collected or disseminated under ESEA section 1111 shall be collected and disseminated in a manner that protects the privacy of individuals consistent with section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g, commonly known as the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974"). When selecting a minimum n-size for reporting, States should consult the Institute for Education Sciences report "Best Practices for Determining Subgroup Size in Accountability Systems While Protecting Personally Identifiable Student Information" to identify appropriate statistical disclosure limitation strategies for protecting student privacy.

DEED employs suppression rules in public reporting to protect student privacy. These rules are based on an *n*-size of five whether there are two or four reporting categories. The suppression rules are most often applied to assessment results to prevent the linkage of a particular performance level to a specific student. These rules also serve as a starting point when there is a need to suppress non-assessment datasets, including special education child counts and discipline statistics. DEED consults with the US ED's Privacy Technical Assistance Center when unique suppression-related challenges emerge.

DEED uses a multi-step approach to data suppression that considers both the count of students and the distribution of students among the reporting categories. DEED's two-way suppression rules specifically for assessment reporting are:

1. If the count of tested students is less than five, no results are reported.
2. If the count of tested students is five or higher, and one of the reporting categories (Proficient or Not Proficient) has zero, one, or two student(s), percentage ranges are reported instead of the actual percentages. Otherwise, the actual percentages are reported.
3. If a percentage range needs to be reported, the range depends on the count of tested students:

Number of Tested Students	**Percentage Range Published**
5-7	>=60% or <=40%
8-9	>=75% or <=25%
10-19	>=80% or <=20%
20-39	>=90% or <=10%
40 or more	>=95% or <=5%

e. If the State's minimum number of students for purposes of reporting is lower than the minimum number of students for accountability purposes, provide the State's minimum number of students for purposes of reporting.

Alaska's minimum number of students for purposes of reporting has been five. As noted in Section A.4.ii.d., Alaska's suppression rules are based on an *n*-size of five whether there are two or four reporting categories.

iii. **Establishment of Long-Term** Goals *(ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A))*:

a. Academic Achievement. *(ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(i)(I)(aa))*

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1. Describe the long-term goals for improved academic achievement, as measured by proficiency on the annual statewide reading/language arts and mathematics assessments, for all students and for each subgroup of students, including: (i) baseline data; (ii) the timeline for meeting the long-term goals, for which the term must be the same multi-year length of time for all students and for each subgroup of students in the State; and (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious.

Alaska proposes a long-term goal of reducing by half the percentage of students not reaching the proficient or advanced achievement levels on the State Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools (PEAKS) assessment in English language arts (ELA) and in mathematics over ten years (by the school year 2026-27). This fits with the mission of the State Board of Education of "an excellent education for every student every day."

The baseline data for the long-term academic goal will be the results from the 2016-17 PEAKS assessment. Alaska administered its new assessment, PEAKS, in grades 3-10 for the first time in spring 2017. US ED granted Alaska a waiver from the administration of the State assessment in 2016 due to technical issues. As such, the first and only measure of student performance on the new State standards in ELA and mathematics was in spring 2015. While the PEAKS 2017 data is not yet available, the data from the 2015 assessment is being used as a placeholder for the new baseline.

The long-term goal is ambitious. The percentage of students meeting the standards on the first assessment of Alaska's new standards in 2015 for all students was 35.4 percent for ELA and 31.9 percent for math. While Alaska expects to see improvement in student performance in 2017 after two more years of instruction based on the new standards, there is still much room for improvement. Measures of interim progress will be uniform annual increases in the percentage of students reaching the proficient or advanced level on PEAKS. The annual increase needed for the all students group will be 3.3 percent in ELA and 3.4 percent in math. Some subgroups at the state level may see annual increases in measures of interim progress that could be as high as 4.8%.

One rationale for choosing the long-term goal of reducing by half the percentage of students not proficient over ten years is to provide a realistic goal and measures of interim progress for all students and all subgroups based on their starting points. At the end of ten years, the long-term goal for ELA for all students will be 67.4 percent proficient or advanced and in math it will be 65.6 percent proficient or advanced. This long-term goal correlates in part on predictions in the percentage of jobs both nationally and in Alaska that will need postsecondary education. According to the publication *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020* by Georgetown University, the percentage of jobs both nationally and in Alaska that will need any type of postsecondary education is 66 percent. The PEAKS assessment measures student achievement on the state's college-and-career ready standards. While it is important for all students in Alaska to be prepared for their future upon graduation, the long-term goal of 66-67 percent of students reaching proficiency recognizes that not all jobs will require postsecondary education upon graduation by 2026. The State will re-set the long-term goal in the future.

2. Provide the measurements of interim progress toward meeting the long-term goals for academic achievement in **Appendix A**.

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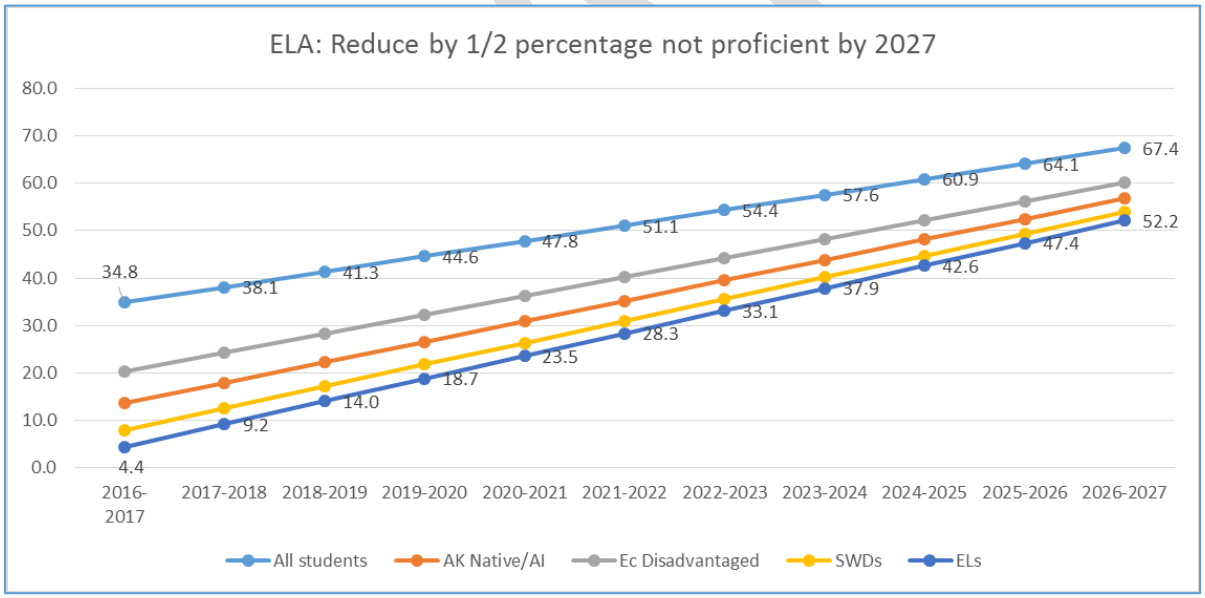
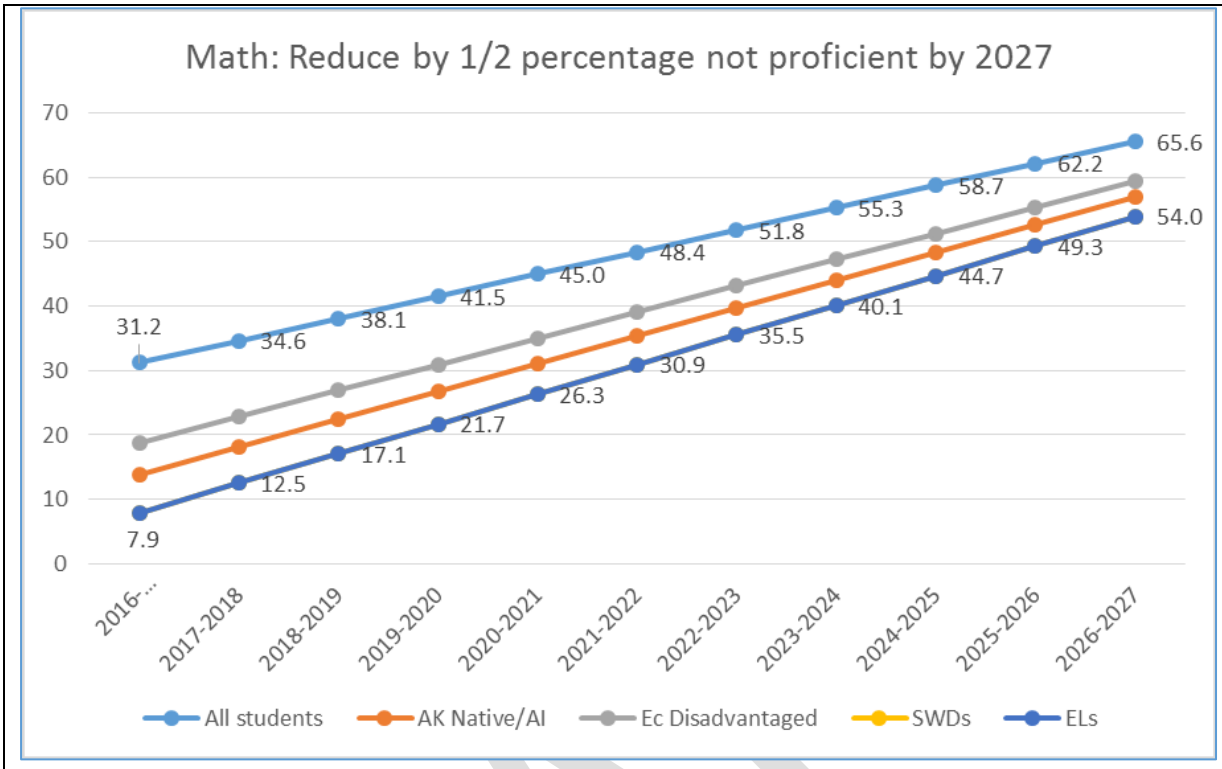
See Appendix A

The statewide measures of interim progress for all students and all subgroups are outlined in Appendix A. In addition to the state level, Alaska will set measures of interim progress toward the long-term goals for each school and district for all students and for each subgroup of students based on the baseline data for the school and district. This practice recognizes stakeholder input that it is important to recognize the difference between schools and to give schools credit and incentives for increasing the achievement of all students.

3. Describe how the long-term goals and measurements of interim progress toward the long-term goals for academic achievement take into account the improvement necessary to make significant progress in closing statewide proficiency gaps.

Alaska proposes to set uniform annual measures of interim progress toward the long-term goals for academic achievement at the state level for all students and for each subgroup of students. Because the lower-performing subgroups are further from the long-term goal, the annual increases in the measures of interim progress will be greater. These groups will have to make significant progress annually to close the statewide proficiency gaps. The following charts show that the lowest-performing subgroups in the state (Alaska Native/American Indian, Economically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, and English Learners) all have to make more progress annually than the all students group in order to make significant progress in closing statewide proficiency gaps. Some subgroups at the state level may see annual increases in measures of interim progress that could be as high as 4.8 percent.





b. Graduation Rate. *(ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(i)(I)(bb))*

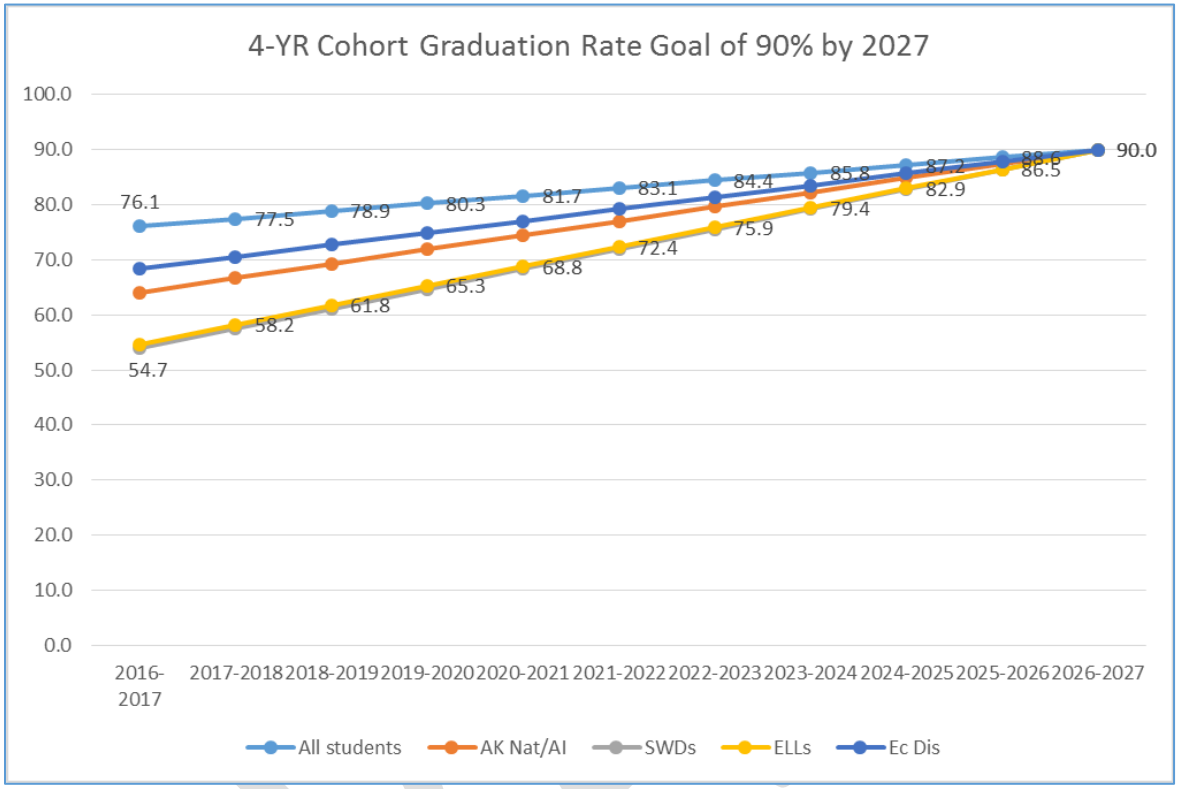
1. Describe the long-term goals for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for all students and for each subgroup of students, including: (i) baseline data; (ii) the timeline for meeting the long-term goals, for which the term must be the same multi-year length of time for all students and for each subgroup of students in the State; and (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious.

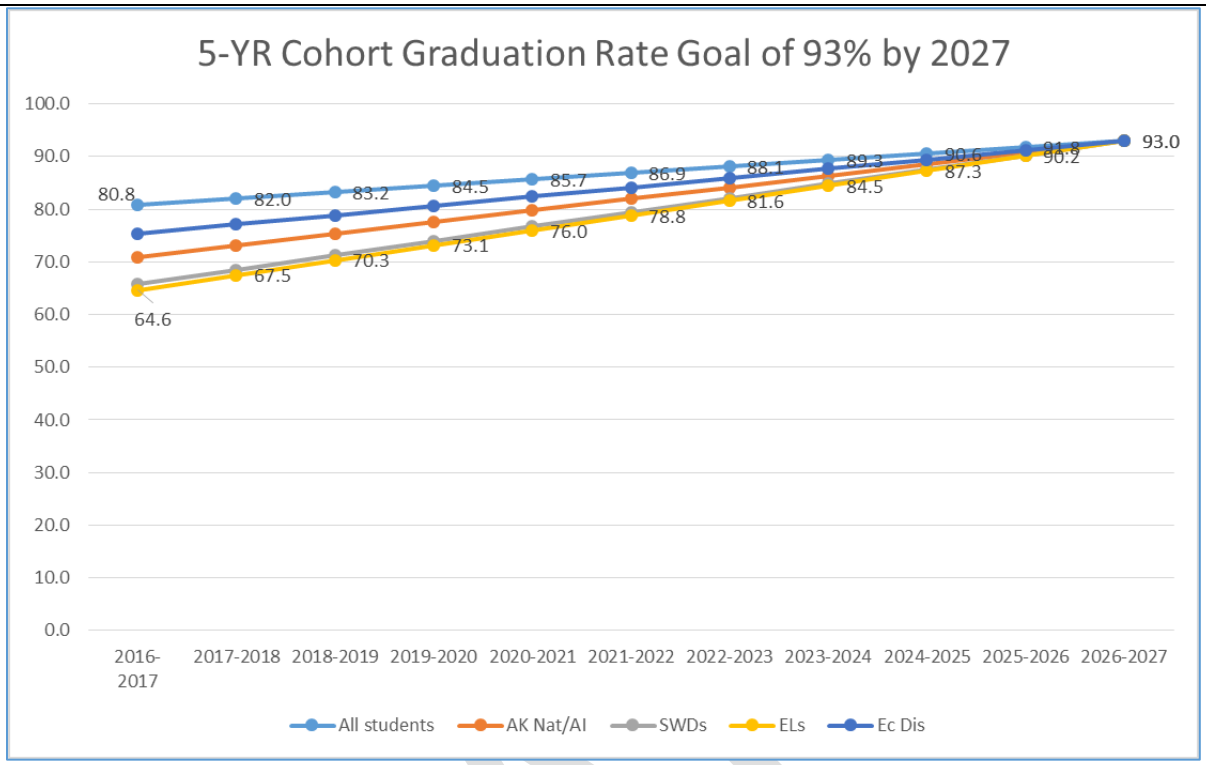
Alaska proposes a long-term goal of 90% for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for all students and for each subgroup of students by the school year 2026-27. This will be the same goal for all students and for each subgroup of students. This fits with the vision of the State Board of Education that "all students can succeed in their education and work." While it is important for every student to leave high school prepared for work or postsecondary education, the long-term goal of 90 percent recognizes the reality that some students will take longer than four years to earn a diploma, and others may earn alternate credentials such as a GED. The baseline data will be the graduation rate from the 2016-2017 school year. While Alaska has had a goal of 90 percent for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate previously, the long-term goal is ambitious because the statewide graduation rate for all students was 76.1 percent in 2016. The four-year graduation rate in 2016 was 53.9 percent for students with disabilities and was 54.7 percent for English learners.

2. If applicable, describe the long-term goals for each extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, including (i) baseline data; (ii) the timeline for meeting the long-term goals, for which the term must be the same multi-year length of time for all students and for each subgroup of

students in the State; (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious; and (iv) how the long-term goals are more rigorous than the long-term goal set for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.
Alaska proposes a long-term goal of 93 percent for a five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for all students and for each subgroup of students by the school year 2026-27. This will be the same goal for all students and for each subgroup of students. This fits with the vision of the State Board of Education that "all students can succeed in their education and work." While it is important for every student to leave high school prepared for work or postsecondary education, the long-term goal of 93 percent recognizes the reality that some students will take longer than five years to earn a diploma, and others may earn alternate credentials such as a GED. The baseline data will be the graduation rate from the 2016-17 school year. Alaska has used a five-year adjusted cohort rate in its previous accountability system. Under that calculation, a school would have required a 93 percent five-year graduation rate to earn the same number of points as a four-year graduation rate of 90 percent. The 93 percent long-term goal is ambitious because the statewide five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for all students was 80.8 percent in 2016. The five-year graduation rate in 2016 was 65.8 percent for students with disabilities and was 64.6 percent for English learners.
3. Provide the measurements of interim progress toward the long-term goals for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and any extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in **Appendix A.**
See Appendix A The statewide measures of interim progress for all students and all subgroups are outlined in Appendix A. In addition to the state level, Alaska will set measures of interim progress toward the long-term goals for each school and district for all students and for each subgroup of students based on the baseline data for the school and district. This practice recognizes stakeholder input that it is important to recognize the difference between schools and to give schools credit and incentives for increasing the graduation rate of all students.
4. Describe how the long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and any extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate take into account the improvement necessary to make significant progress in closing statewide graduation rate gaps.
Alaska proposes to set annual uniform measures of interim progress toward the long-term goals for the four-year adjusted cohort and the five-year adjusted cohort graduation rates at the state level for all students and for each subgroup of students. In addition to the state level, Alaska will set measures of interim progress toward the long-term goals for each school and district for all students and for each subgroup of students based on the baseline data for the school and district. This practice recognizes stakeholder input that it is important to recognize the difference between schools and to give schools credit and incentives for increasing the achievement of all students. Because the lower-performing subgroups are further from the long-term goal, the annual increases in the measures of interim progress will be greater. These groups will have to make significant progress annually to close the statewide proficiency gaps. The following charts show that the lowest-performing subgroups in the state (Alaska Native/American Indian, Economically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, and English Learners) all have to make more progress annually than the all students group in order to

make significant progress in closing statewide proficiency gaps. While the annual increase needed for all students in the four-year cohort graduation rate is 1.4 percent, the annual increases needed for subgroups will be as high as 3.6 percent.





c. English Language Proficiency. *(ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii))*

1. Describe the long-term goals for English learners for increases in the percentage of such students making progress in achieving English language proficiency, as measured by the statewide English language proficiency assessment including: (i) baseline data; (ii) the State-determined timeline for such students to achieve English language proficiency; and (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious.

Alaska proposes a long-term goal of 80 percent for English learners making progress in achieving English language proficiency as measured by the statewide English language proficiency assessment. This will continue the pattern of improvement in the percentage of ELs making progress that was set by the State in 2012 for the districts that received Title III funding. Those targets were set with an annual increase of 3.3 percent and if the pattern continues through the 2026-27 school year, the goal would be about 80 percent. This is an ambitious goal as the percentage of ELs making progress in 2015 was 47.6 percent. The baseline data will be determined from the 2016-17 ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 State ELP assessment.

2. Provide the measurements of interim progress toward the long-term goal for increases in the percentage of English learners making progress in achieving English language proficiency in **Appendix A**.

See Appendix A

iv. **Indicators** *(ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(B))*

a. Academic Achievement Indicator. Describe the Academic Achievement indicator, including a description of how the indicator (i) is based on the long-term goals; (ii)

is measured by proficiency on the annual Statewide reading/language arts and mathematics assessments; (iii) annually measures academic achievement for all students and separately for each subgroup of students; and (iv) at the State's discretion, for each public high school in the State, includes a measure of student growth, as measured by the annual Statewide reading/language arts and mathematics assessments.

Alaska proposes to measure the percentage of students scoring at the proficient or advanced achievement levels on the statewide assessment in ELA and mathematics for the all students group and for all subgroups present in a school. Alaska will calculate the percentage of students scoring at the proficient or advanced level by comparing the number of students scoring at proficient or advanced to the greater of the number of students tested, or 95 percent of the full academic year students were eligible to test. Schools will earn points for the all students groups based on identified performance levels with ELA and mathematics being weighted equally. While the long-term goal for all students by 2026-2027 is expected to be about 66 percent, the performance levels include an incentive for schools to reach beyond the ten-year goal in academic achievement. Schools will also earn additional points if subgroups are meeting their measures of interim progress.

This indicator will be used for all grade spans. The following tables reflect the points earned for each performance level on ELA and mathematics.

		Grades K-8		**Grades 9-12**	
Level	**Academic Achievement**	**Points in ELA**	**Points in Math**	**Points in ELA**	**Points in Math**
Level 5	80% or higher	14	14	16	16
Level 4	60 – 79.9%	12	12	14	14
Level 3	40 – 59.9%	9	9	11	11
Level 2	20 – 39.9%	6	6	7	7
Level 1	5 – 19.9%	3	3	3	3
Level 0	Less than 5%	0	0	0	0

Additional points for subgroup meet/exceed measures of interim progress or long-term goal	**Point in ELA**	**Points in Math**
All students group	1	1
Subgroups (choose one): • All subgroups – 3 • All major subgroups – 2 • At least 1 subgroup – 1 • No subgroups – 0	Up to 3	Up to 3

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- *Max 4 points – up to 3 for subgroups and 1 for all students group*
    - *if no subgroups, 4 points for all students group*
    - *if only one subgroup is present, school earns 3 points if that subgroup meets or exceeds measures of interim progress or long-term goal*
- *To be included, subgroup must meet minimum n size*
- *Major subgroups are Alaska Native/American Indian, Economically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, and English Learners; others are other racial/ethnic subgroups*

b. Indicator for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools that are Not High Schools (Other Academic Indicator). Describe the Other Academic indicator, including how it annually measures the performance for all students and separately for each subgroup of students. If the Other Academic indicator is not a measure of student growth, the description must include a demonstration that the indicator is a valid and reliable statewide academic indicator that allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance.

Alaska will use academic growth on the statewide assessment for ELA and mathematics (PEAKS) for students in grades 4-8 as the Other Academic indicator. An academic growth score will be calculated for the all students group and for each subgroup in the school that reflects the aggregated growth made by individual students. Growth will be measured for individual students in the school according to a value table. The table assigns values to the achievement level change in a student's assessment score from the previous year to the current year. While the assessment scores are reported on four achievement levels of Far Below Proficient, Below Proficient, Proficient, or Advanced, the growth value table measures changes in student performance within each achievement level. In the growth value table, the "below proficient" and "far below proficient" achievement levels on the PEAKS assessment are subdivided into "below proficient plus (BP+)," "below proficient minus (BP–) ," "far below proficient plus (FBP+)," and "far below proficient minus (FBP–)" in order to measure student growth within the non-proficient achievement levels. The "proficient" and "advanced" achievement levels are subdivided into "proficient (P)" and "proficient plus (P+)" and "advanced (A)" and "advanced plus (A+)" in order to recognize and incentivize continued growth in students that are scoring above the minimum proficient level.

The growth value table has been used in Alaska for a number of years. It was used to determine schools with growth in student performance in order for school staff to receive a financial reward under the Alaska State Performance Incentive Program. Most recently, the growth value table has been used for the growth and proficiency index and was included in the Alaska School Performance Index (ASPI) as the school progress indicator.

The growth value table displays the points in each cell in a matrix that reflects whether the student is maintaining at the same achievement 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 to advanced plus 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 achievement on the assessments from the previous year to the current year. The values shaded in green (above the solid border) represent growth in the achievement 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 achievement level from the previous year. The values shaded in red (below the dashed border) represent students who declined in achievement level from the previous year.

	Growth & Proficiency Index Value Number Table							
Previous Year Level	**Current Year Level**							
	FBP–	**FBP+**	**BP–**	**BP+**	**P**	**P+**	**A**	**A+**
FBP–	60	90	120	150	180	205	230	255
FBP+	40	70	100	130	160	185	210	235
BP–	20	50	80	110	140	165	190	215
BP+	0	30	60	90	120	145	170	195
P	0	10	40	70	100	125	150	175
P+	0	0	20	50	80	105	130	155
A	0	0	0	30	60	85	110	135
A+	0	0	0	10	40	65	90	115

To determine the school or subgroup growth score, all of the individual student point values are totaled and then divided by the total number of students for whom growth can be calculated (those who received valid scores during both the previous year and the current year test administrations and who were enrolled for the full academic year). 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. Retained students' assessment scores are included in the achievement measure, so schools have an incentive to serve these students.)

The following table identifies the performance levels for the growth indicator and points associated with each level.

Level	Academic Growth	Points for ELA	Points for Math
Level 5	> ##	20	20
Level 4	## - ##	17	17
Level 3	## - ##	13	13
Level 2	## - ##	10	10
Level 1	## - ##	5	5
Level 0	< ##	0	0

Values to be determined

c. Graduation Rate. Describe the Graduation Rate indicator, including a description of

(i) how the indicator is based on the long-term goals;

(ii) how the indicator annually measures graduation rate for all students and separately for each subgroup of students;

(iii) how the indicator is based on the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate;

(iv) if the State, at its discretion, also includes one or more extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rates, how the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is combined with that rate or rates within the indicator; and

(v) if applicable, how the State includes in its four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and any extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rates students with the most significant cognitive disabilities assessed using an alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(D) and awarded a State-defined alternate diploma under ESEA section 8101(23) and (25).

Alaska proposes to measure both the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and the five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for the all students group and for all subgroups present in a school. Schools will earn points based on the indicated performance levels of the four-year graduation rate, with the greatest number of points being earned for a four-year graduation rate that meets or exceeds the long-term goal of 90 percent. Additional points will be earned based on performance levels for a five-year rate, with the greatest points earned for a rate that meets or exceeds the long-term goal of 93 percent. At this time, Alaska does not propose creating or awarding a State-defined alternate diploma to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Level	Graduation Rate 4-year cohort	Points	Graduation Rate 5-year cohort	Points
Level 5	90% or higher	15	93% or higher	10
Level 4	75 – 89.9%	12	78 – 9.9%	8
Level 3	60 – 74.9%	9	63 – 77.9%	6
Level 2	45 – 59.9%	6	48 – 62.99%	4
Level 1	25 – 44.9%	3	28 – 47.9%	2
Level 0	< 25%	0	< 28%	0

Additional points for subgroup meet/exceed measures of interim progress or long-term goal	4-year graduation rate	5-year graduation rate
All students group	2	2
Subgroups (choose one): • All subgroups – 3 • All major subgroups – 2 • At least 1 subgroup – 1 • No subgroups - 0	Up to 3	Up to 3

- *Max 5 points – up to 4 for subgroups and 1 for all students group*
  - *if no subgroups, 5 points for all students group*
  - *if only one subgroup is present, school earns 4 points if that subgroup meets or exceeds measures of interim progress or long-term goal*
- *To be included, subgroup must meet minimum n size*
- *Major subgroups are Alaska Native/American Indian, Economically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, and English Learners; others are other racial/ethnic subgroups*

d. Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency (ELP) Indicator. Describe the Progress in Achieving ELP indicator, including the State's definition of ELP, as measured by the State ELP assessment.

Alaska proposes to measure the percentage of English learners in each school that meets the definition of making progress in achieving proficiency in English, as measured by the state ELP assessment, ACCESS for ELLs 2.0. Schools that include an English learner subgroup will earn points based on five levels of attainment of English learner progress, with the greatest number of points earned for meeting or exceeding the long-term goal of 80 percent of ELs making progress. The following chart shows how the points for the Progress in English Language Proficiency Indicator will be calculated.

Level	English Learner (EL) Progress in learning English	Grades K-8 Points	Grades 9-12 Points
Level 5	Meets/exceeds the long term goal for EL progress	14	15

Level 4	Meets/exceeds the measure of interim progress.	12	12
Level 3	Does not meet measure of interim, but showed improvement of at least two percent from prior year.	8	8
Level 2	Does not meet measure of interim progress but has maintained within two percent from previous year.	4	4
Level 1	Does not meet measure of interim progress and has declined more than two percent but less than four percent from previous year.	1	1
Level 0	Does not meet measure of interim progress and has declined more than four percent from previous year	0	0

Alaska defines an English learner (EL) as one who meets the criteria to be considered as an English learner under ESEA as amended by ESSA section 8101(20) and Alaska regulation 4 AAC 34.090(2) *and* who has been determined through a screener assessment to not be proficient in English. Alaska administers the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment as a measure of English language proficiency (ELP) for students identified as English Learners (EL). The ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 measures proficiency in four domains: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. There are six levels, which include (1) Entering, (2) Emerging, (3) Developing, (4) Expanding, (5) Bridging, and (6) Reaching.

Students have been considered proficient in the English language when they achieve a composite (overall) score of 5.0 (Bridging) or higher on the summative ELP assessment and at least a 4.0 in each of the four domains, but the exit procedures and criteria will be reconsidered after analysis of the 2017 ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 data has been received. Students remain identified as English learners until the end of the school year in which they reach the proficiency level on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment and may be exited from EL status.

Alaska proposes to use seven years as the state-determined timeline for all English learners to attain proficiency (see Hakuta, Goto Butler, & Witt, 2000; Robinson- Cimpian, Thompson, & Umansky, 2016; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). Alaska's current definition of attaining English language proficiency and exiting EL status is based on scoring a 5.0 Composite Proficiency Level (CPL) on the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs assessment, along with a minimum of 4.0 on each domain (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Alaska will be revisiting the exit criteria after reviewing the results from the 2016-2017 ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment.

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Composite Proficiency Level (CPL) scores are reported as decimals to the tenth place, from 1.0 to 6.0. Alaska's current definition of making progress in learning English is a gain of at least 0.4 on the CPL from the previous year. Based on the current exit criteria of 5.0 CPL, a student who was initially identified as an English learner and scored at the lowest level on the ELP assessment, a 1.0, would not reach proficiency in seven years if making only 0.4 gain in the CPL annually. Alaska will likely propose one of two options for a definition of making progress in learning English, after reviewing the data from the most recent ELP assessment:

- Option 1: After determining the proposed exit criteria, determine the change in annual change in CPL needed to reach proficiency if an EL scored a 1.0 at initial identification as an EL, and use that amount to apply to all ELs. An EL would be considered to have made progress

in attaining English if the student earned at least a 0.4 increase in the CPL from the previous year and/or met the criteria for attaining proficiency.

- Option 2: After determining the proposed exit criteria, determine the change in CPL needed for each individual student based on the score at the initial level of identification and the expected number of years needed to reach proficiency. A student who scored at a higher level of English proficiency on initial identification would be expected to attain proficiency in less than seven years. The chart below indicates in broad terms how a student would be expected to move from the initial level of identification to a level of proficiency over a reasonable number of years. Scores at each level range from 1.0 to 1.9, 2.0 to 2.9, etc. Research shows that students identified at lower levels of proficiency will make gains more quickly than those identified at higher levels of proficiency. An EL student will be considered to have made progress if the student earned at least the expected increase in the CPL from the previous year and/or met the criteria for attaining proficiency.

Initial ELP Level	Years Identified as an English Learner					
	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4	Proficient
Level 2	Level 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4	Proficient	
Level 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4	Proficient		
Level 4	Level 4	Level 4	Proficient			
Level 5 or 6						

e. School Quality or Student Success Indicator(s). Describe each School Quality or Student Success Indicator, including, for each such indicator:
   (i) how it allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance;
   (ii) that it is valid, reliable, comparable, and statewide (for the grade span(s) to which it applies); and
   (iii) of how each such indicator annually measures performance for all students and separately for each subgroup of students. For any School Quality or Student Success indicator that does not apply to all grade spans, the description must include the grade spans to which it does apply.

Alaska is proposing three School Quality or Student Success (SQSS) indicators for students enrolled in grades K-8 and three for students enrolled in grades 9-12. The total possible points for all three SQSS will be ten. If stakeholder feedback suggests fewer SQSS indicators, the points for the remaining indicators will be adjusted to equal a maximum of ten. The SQSS indicators will be measured for all students and all subgroups. The points will be applied to the all students group.

The indicators proposed are all designed to encourage schools to improve both the quality of instruction and the quality of the school climate and student engagement. Some will require a new data collection. Alaska will continue to work with stakeholders to determine additional possibilities for SQSS indicators that can measure qualities of a successful school such as student access to a well-rounded curriculum and college and career pathways. For any future possible SQSS indicators, DEED will pilot the indicators by collecting data for at least two years and then incorporating the indicator into the accountability system. The proposed SQSS indicators are listed below.

- **Grades K-8**

- **Chronic absenteeism**
  - Data is required to be reported beginning in 2016-2017
  - Research indicates that schools with lower rates of chronic absenteeism correlate generally with higher academic achievement
  - Measure based on percentage of students absent for ten percent or more of the enrolled school days (minimum of ten days)

Level	Chronic Absenteeism	Points
Level 4	< 10%	4
Level 3	10% - 14.9%	3
Level 2	15% - 19.9%	2
Level 1	20% - 29.9%	1
Level 0	30% or higher	0

- **District-selected interim assessments** administered to all students in grades 1-8
  - Requires a new data field for collection in Summer OASIS for 2017-18
  - Select from DEED approved list of interim assessments
  - Administer at least twice per year (fall and winter) to all enrolled students
  - Measure percentage of students who participated compared to students enrolled on October 1, not results

Level	Interim Assessments participation	Points
Level 4	85% or higher	4
Level 3	70% - 84.9%	3
Level 2	50% - 69.9%	2
Level 1	30% - 49.9%	1
Level 0	Less than 30%	0

- **Grade 3 Literacy**
  - Data available from state assessment in ELA
  - Research shows that students who can read on grade level by 3rd grade are much more likely to be successful and less likely to drop out of school
  - Measure percentage of students attaining proficient or advanced in grade 3 ELA

Level	Grade 3 Literacy	Points

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Level 2	80% or higher	2
Level 1	60% - 79.9%	1
Level 0	Less than 60%	0

Grades 9-12

- **Chronic absenteeism**

Level	Chronic Absenteeism	Points
Level 4	< 10%	4
Level 3	10% - 14.9%	3
Level 2	15% - 19.9%	2
Level 1	20% - 24.9%	1
Level 0	30% or higher	0

- **Freshman on-track credit accumulation**
  - Requires a new data element for collection in Summer OASIS in 2017-18
  - Research shows that students who are on-track by the end of their freshman year are much less likely to drop out of high school
  - Percentage of first-time 9th graders who earn at least ¼ of their required credits by the end of their first year in high school (or at least six credits based on state minimum of 21 and many districts with at least 24 credits required for graduation)

Level	% of Freshman on track for graduation	Points
Level 4	85% or greater	4
Level 3	65 – 84.9%	3
Level 2	40 – 64.9%	2
Level 1	20 – 39.9%	1
Level 0	Less than 20%	0

- **APS scholarship eligibility**
  - Data already reported to DEED in Summer OASIS
  - Encourages schools to offer access to college and career course options to earn a scholarship
  - Measure percentage of graduating seniors that qualify for any level of the Alaska Performance Scholarship

Level	% of Graduates Eligible for APS	Points
Level 2	80% or higher	2

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Level 1	60% - 79.9%	1
Level 0	Less than 60%	0

v. **Annual Meaningful Differentiation** *(ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(C))*

a. Describe the State's system of annual meaningful differentiation of all public schools in the State, consistent with the requirements of section 1111(c)(4)(C) of the ESEA, including a description of

(i) how the system is based on all indicators in the State's accountability system,

(ii) for all students and for each subgroup of students. Note that each state must comply with the requirements in 1111(c)(5) of the ESEA with respect to accountability for charter schools.

Alaska proposes to use an index system based on 100 points for annual meaningful differentiation of all public schools. A similar type of system was used in Alaska's previous accountability system.

All accountability indicators will be included in the index. Students will be included in the applicable accountability indicators (except graduation rate) if they have been enrolled continuously in a school for a full academic year of October 1 through the first day of testing. Performance levels will be identified for each indicator. Schools will earn points based on their performance level on each indicator for the all students group. Schools will earn additional points on the academic achievement and graduation rate indicators for subgroups that meet or exceed the measures of interim progress or long-term goals.

Each school will receive an overall score from 0 to 100. Performance on all indicators will be reported on a dashboard type of display, along with the school's overall score.

Each school will receive a designation:

- Superior performance
  - Overall score of 85 or higher,
  - At least Level 4 on every academic indicator and all subgroups must meet measures of interim progress, and
  - At least 95 percent participation rate on assessments for all students and all subgroups
- Satisfactory performance
  - Overall score of 70 or higher,
  - At least Level 3 on every academic indicator, and
  - At least 95 percent participation rate on assessments for all students
- Needs improvement
  - Overall score of less than 70, and
  - Not identified as Targeted Support or Comprehensive Support,
    - Or
  - Any overall score, and
  - Less than 95 percent participation rate for all students
- Targeted Support (as defined in Section vi)

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- Comprehensive Support (as defined in Section vi)

Schools will receive the designations for 2018-2019 based on the 2017-2018 accountability system data. In future years, schools will receive an additional designation as improving, maintaining, or declining, based on the trend in the change of the accountability index score for the two previous school years.

b. Describe the weighting of each indicator in the State's system of annual meaningful differentiation, including how the Academic Achievement, Other Academic, Graduation Rate, and Progress in ELP indicators each receive substantial weight individually and, in the aggregate, much greater weight than the School Quality or Student Success indicator(s), in the aggregate.

Alaska proposes the following weights for the indicators in the accountability system for schools with students in grades K-8 and schools with students in grades 9-12. For any school in which the subgroup size is not met, the indicator will be included for that school. The remaining indicators will be prorated so that the indicators carry the same relative weights as other schools.

Accountability Indicator Weights

Indicator	Grades K-8	Grades 9-12
Achievement in ELA & Math	36	40
Growth in ELA & Math	40	-
English learner progress on ELP	14	15
Graduation rate	-	35
SQSS indicator(s)	10	10
Total Points Possible	**100**	**100**

Schools with variant grade spans:

If a school includes grade levels only from K to 8, then the school receives an index score based only on the points in grades K-8. If a school includes grade levels only from grades 9-12, then the school receives an index score based only on the points from grades 9-12. 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 PEAKS 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.

Example Calculation:

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Grade Span	Index points earned in grade span	% of students in grade span	Calculation of Total Points
K-8	68	70%	47.6
9-12	52	30%	15.6
Total for school			63.2

c. If the State uses a different methodology or methodologies for annual meaningful differentiation than the one described in 4.v.a. above for schools for which an accountability determination cannot be made (*e.g.*, P-2 schools), describe the different methodology or methodologies, indicating the type(s) of schools to which it applies.

Alaska proposes the following methodologies for annual meaningful differentiation of schools for which the determinations above are not applicable.

Schools with no tested grades (K-2): These schools will be measured on the academic achievement indicator and the EL progress indicator by measuring the performance of the students in the third grade of the school in which the K-2 school sends their graduates. There will not be a growth measure for these schools.

Newly opened schools: In the first year of operation, a newly opened school will have data reported on the applicable indicators of the accountability system, but will not receive an overall score or designation. After the 2nd year of operation, the school will receive an accountability index score.

Schools with less than the minimum *n* of ten in the all students group: For these schools, data will be aggregated from up to the two immediately previous school years and the current school year in order to measure the school's performance on the indicators.

Alternative schools, including juvenile justice facilities: After the first year of implementation of the new accountability system, Alaska will consider adjustments to reflect these schools. These schools will not be considered for comprehensive support for 2018-2019.

Schools with special populations such as schools for deaf and blind students or those focused solely on students with disabilities or English learners: After the first year of implementation of the new accountability system, Alaska will consider adjustments to reflect these schools. These schools will not be considered for comprehensive support for 2018-2019.

vi. **Identification of Schools** *(ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D))*

a. Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools. Describe the State's methodology for identifying not less than the lowest-performing five percent of all schools receiving Title I, Part A funds in the State for comprehensive support and improvement, including the year in which the State will first identify such schools.

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Alaska will rank all Title I schools in order based on the overall index score. The State will first consider those schools in the bottom five percent of the overall scores. If a school in the bottom five percent has met the measures of interim progress for all subgroups in the school in the academic, graduation rate, and English learner progress indicators, the school would not be selected for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and the State would consider the next lowest-ranked school. The State will also include consideration of each school's academic achievement, growth, English learner progress, and graduation rates over the previous three school years, as well as the size and special characteristics of a school. Schools will be designated for comprehensive support that will be the most likely to benefit from a comprehensive program of support and improvement. The State will use data from the 2017-2018 accountability system to identify schools for CSI for the 2018-2019 school year.

b. Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools. Describe the State's methodology for identifying all public high schools in the State failing to graduate one third or more of their students for comprehensive support and improvement, including the year in which the State will first identify such schools.

Alaska will identify all public high schools in the state failing to graduate one-third or more of their students for CSI. This designation will only be applied to schools with students in any of grades 9-11 and in grade 12. The State will consider all schools with a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate to identify schools for CSI. The State will use the option for very small schools under Sections 8101(23) and (25) by proposing that a minimum number of ten students must be included in the cohort for the graduation rate, below which the school would be exempt from differentiation and identification as a comprehensive support and improvement school for graduation rate. The State will use data from 2017-18 to identify schools for CSI for the 2018-19 school year.

c. Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools. Describe the methodology by which the State identifies public schools in the State receiving Title I, Part A funds that have received additional targeted support under ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C) (based on identification as a school in which any subgroup of students, on its own, would lead to identification under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I) using the State's methodology under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)) and that have not satisfied the statewide exit criteria for such schools within a State-determined number of years, including the year in which the State will first identify such schools.

Title I schools previously identified for Additional Targeted Support and Improvement for a subgroup that have not shown improvement and met the exit criteria will be identified as comprehensive support schools. These schools would be reviewed in 2020-21 to see if the exit criteria had been met. If not, they would be identified as CSI schools for the 2021-22 school year.

d. Frequency of Identification. Provide, for each type of school identified for comprehensive support and improvement, the frequency with which the State will, thereafter, identify such schools. Note that these schools must be identified at least once every three years.

Alaska will identify schools for comprehensive support at least once every three years. DEED will annually review school level data to determine if increasing the frequency of identification to every two years would be appropriate for Alaska. The first year of identification will be 2018-19 based on data from 2017-18. In future years, identification as a comprehensive support school will include all factors in the methodology for the first identification as a comprehensive support school, and will also

consider whether the school has been improving for the previous three years in the accountability score. A school that has improved at least one level in the academic achievement, graduation rate, and English learner progress indicators, and at least five points per year in the overall score will not be identified as a comprehensive support school at that time.

e. Targeted Support and Improvement. Describe the State's methodology for annually identifying any school with one or more "consistently underperforming" subgroups of students, based on all indicators in the statewide system of annual meaningful differentiation, including the definition used by the State to determine consistent underperformance. *(ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(C)(iii))*

Alaska will identify a consistently underperforming subgroup as one which is consistently underperforming on all indicators (at Level 1 or below) for two consecutive years and has not met any of the measures of interim progress on academic achievement, graduation rate, or progress in learning English nor has shown any improvement on any indicator in the accountability system for the previous two consecutive years. Schools that have one or more subgroups that meet this criteria will be identified annually for targeted support and improvement. The first year of identification for targeted support and improvement will be 2019-20 based on the data from 2018-2019.

f. Additional Targeted Support. Describe the State's methodology, for identifying schools in which any subgroup of students, on its own, would lead to identification under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I) using the State's methodology under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D), including the year in which the State will first identify such schools and the frequency with which the State will, thereafter, identify such schools. *(ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C)-(D))*

Alaska will first identify all Title I schools that qualify for comprehensive support and improvement. Alaska will determine the level of performance on each indicator of the highest-performing CSI school (the school with the highest accountability index score). Alaska will then compare the performance of subgroups in other schools to the level of performance on each indicator for the highest-performing CSI school. Any schools with subgroups that have lower performance in all indicators than the highest-performing CSI school will be identified for additional targeted support. The first year of identification for additional targeted support will be 2018-19 based on 2017-18 data. Alaska will then identify schools for additional targeted support at least every three years, on the same cycle as the schools identified for comprehensive support. DEED will annually review school level data to determine if increasing the frequency of identification to every two years would be appropriate for Alaska.

g. Additional Statewide Categories of Schools. If the State chooses, at its discretion, to include additional statewide categories of schools, describe those categories.

Each school will receive a designation based on the overall score on the accountability index and additional criteria:

- Superior performance
  - Overall score of 85 or higher,
  - At least Level 4 on every academic indicator and all subgroups must meet measures of interim progress, and
  - At least 95 percent participation rate on assessments for all students and all subgroups
- Satisfactory performance

- Overall score of 70 or higher,
- At least Level 3 on every academic indicator, and
- At least 95 percent participation rate on assessments for all students

- Needs improvement
  - Overall score of less than 70, and
  - Not identified as Targeted Support or Comprehensive Support,
    - Or
  - Any overall score, and
  - Less than 95 percent participation rate for all students
- Targeted Support (as defined in Section vi)
- Comprehensive Support (as defined in Section vi)

vii. **Annual Measurement of Achievement** *(ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(E)(iii))*: Describe how the State factors the requirement for 95 percent student participation in statewide mathematics and reading/language arts assessments into the statewide accountability system.

Alaska law specifies that parents have the right to exclude their students from participation in specific instructional activities and statewide assessments. Schools may not coerce parents or their students into participating in the assessments. Alaska recognizes the importance of statewide testing to inform the public about the performance of schools, to provide information so that schools can improve, and to ensure that all students are receiving an excellent education. In order for these purposes to be met, it is important to test most or all of the students enrolled in a school. Alaska expects districts and schools to communicate with teachers and parents about the importance of testing and to provide every encouragement to students to participate and do their best on the assessments.

Alaska will calculate the percentage of students scoring at the proficient or advanced level by comparing the number of students scoring at proficient or advanced to the greater of the number of students tested, or 95 percent of the full academic year students that were eligible to test. This calculation will be made for the all students group and all subgroups. Schools that do not meet the participation rate will not be eligible to be designated as superior performance or satisfactory performance. Schools that do not meet the participation rate for the all students group or any subgroup must submit an improvement plan to the State. The plan must include documentation of the communication and other efforts the school made to inform parents of the importance of participating in the State assessments, while recognizing parents' rights under State law regarding their child's participation in assessments. The plan must also document training that teachers have received in the importance of the tests and how to communicate with parents and students regarding the assessments. The plan must document efforts made to encourage participation by all students in all subgroups, and that no students have been systematically excluded from testing. The plan must include steps the school will take to increase the participation rate in future years. The plan must include the strategies and samples of the materials that will be used by the district to educate parents about the importance of assessments and their role in student learning.

viii. **Continued Support for School and LEA Improvement** *(ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A))*

a. Exit Criteria for Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools. Describe the statewide exit criteria, established by the State, for schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement, including the number of years not to exceed four) over which schools are expected to meet such criteria.

Alaska will review the performance of the schools identified for comprehensive support three years after the initial identification. The following exit criteria is proposed for consideration:

- For schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement based on the lowest five percent of Title I schools, the school must have performed at least one level higher in each indicator than it performed upon initial identification. The school would meet the exit criteria even if the school is in the lowest five percent of the Title I schools based on the data at the end of three years.
- For high schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement based on a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate of less than 67 percent, the school must have improved the graduation rate to greater than 67 percent.

b. Exit Criteria for Schools Receiving Additional Targeted Support. Describe the statewide exit criteria, established by the State, for schools receiving additional targeted support under ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C), including the number of years over which schools are expected to meet such criteria.

Alaska will review the performance of the schools identified for additional targeted support three years after the initial identification. The following exit criteria is proposed for consideration: The performance of the subgroup for which the school was identified must have improved at least one level from the level of performance at which the school was initially identified for each indicator in the accountability system. DEED will continue to monitor schools who have met the exit criteria to ensure that schools continue to meet interim targets for student subgroups.

c. More Rigorous Interventions. Describe the more rigorous interventions required for schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement that fail to meet the State's exit criteria within a State-determined number of years consistent with section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)(I) of the ESEA.

In addition to the existing system of differentiated support and oversight of struggling schools, DEED will facilitate collaboration and engagement among school staff, districts, community stakeholders, DEED staff, and the Commissioner of Education. Schools are held accountable to a rigorous improvement process, supported by district and State resources and support, with reporting of results to stakeholders.

Mid-course interventions and supports will be implemented for those schools at risk of not exiting comprehensive support and intervention status. The State and district will assess progress and support school level engagement in continuous improvement throughout the school year.

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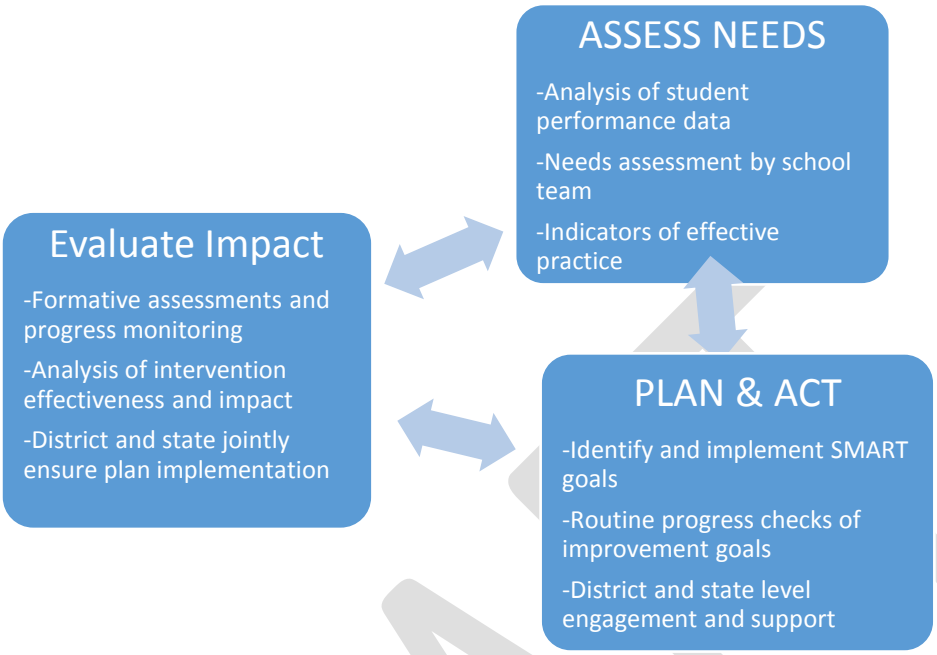
Continuous Improvement Planning Cycle



Upon failure to exit comprehensive support and intervention status after four years, DEED will initiate differentiated interventions based on need leading to increased levels of State oversight. These interventions may involve any of the following actions in alignment with existing State statute and regulation:

- Convening a strategic planning and support team that could include the Commissioner of Education or designee, DEED program staff, district staff, school staff, parents, tribal representatives, and other stakeholders (community members, parents, and regional school boards). This team will be given authority to recommend and direct the following types of interventions based upon need and readiness of struggling schools, as appropriate and as resources allow:
    - External and/or internal independent review of student achievement data, curriculum effectiveness, instructional practices, school improvement priorities, behavioral supports, and community engagement efforts. Virtual audit of resource allocation at the district and/or school level.
    - On-site review of school improvement practices and/or mandatory off-site school improvement work sessions/interviews.
    - Periodic distance or onsite stakeholder and DEED "check-ins" to assess and support school improvement efforts.
    - New comprehensive strategic plans written with DEED input/oversight.
    - Assignment of School Improvement Coach to district or school.
    - More focused training and/or technical assistance.
    - District and State level direction of 1003(a) school improvement funds toward required cohesive professional development and leadership development.

- Replacement of teachers and principals.
- State governance of schools and/or district.

Current State statutes and regulations that support these actions are AS 14.07.020.16, AS 14.07.030.14-15, and 4 AAC 06.864(b).

d. Resource Allocation Review. Describe how the State will periodically review resource allocation to support school improvement in each LEA in the State serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement.

DEED will allocate 1003(a) funds based on a formula or competitive process for Comprehensive Support and Intervention and Targeted Support and Intervention Support schools.

District and school planning teams collaborate to create school improvement plans based on a comprehensive needs assessment. This collaborative plan includes:

- Interim and long-term goals
- Tasks and interventions designed to meet these goals
  - Evidence-based
- A process to assess, monitor, and evaluate progress (DEED provides a continuous school improvement online tool that satisfies these criteria)

Schools and districts submit a budget that aligns with the goals of the school improvement plan for review by the district and the State. Budgets must include:

- Cohesive professional development opportunities, and
- Interventions

DEED reviews the school improvement plans annually. School improvement plans and documents will also be reviewed in scheduled monitoring visits.

End-of-year evaluations of programs reviewed by district for effectiveness and shared with DEED.

For schools failing to make progress, an inter-departmental review will be conducted as needed on an annual basis to ensure alignment of diverse resources.

e. Technical Assistance. Describe the technical assistance the State will provide to each LEA in the State serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement.

DEED commits to help districts lead for success by providing:

- Technical assistance for districts, schools, and teachers
- Support with the alignment of resources
- Investing in change that is sustainable
- Clearly communicating that change is not only necessary but attainable

Desired attributes of districts:

- districts must prioritize low performing schools
- provide differentiated support aligned with the unique needs of the students
- identify resource inequities
- create an instructional infrastructure that utilizes data to drive decisions

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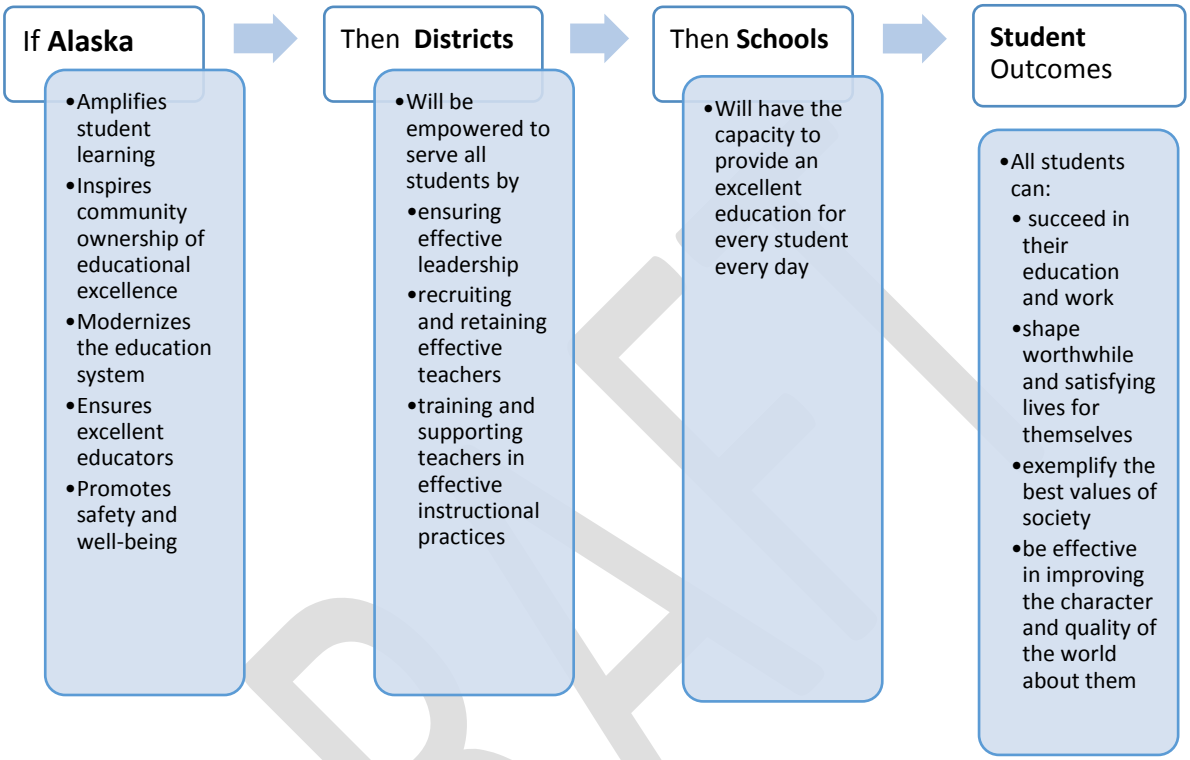
- have the capacity to adapt instruction to match the identified needs

The main strategic goal of DEED is to provide support to districts to amplify student achievement based on these district attributes. All training and professional development provided to districts, schools, and teachers supports the commitment DEED has made to Alaska's students.



Technical Assistance Strategies include:

- Support regarding the school improvement planning process. Distance delivery or on-site training from DEED staff and experts with prioritized responses based on available resources.
    - Comprehensive needs assessment
    - Gap analysis and root cause training
    - Strategic planning based on identified needs and root causes
    - Measureable goals and tasks to support designated needs
    - Evaluation, feedback, and reflection
    - Leadership support and development

- Technical Assistance on evidence-based interventions
    - Awareness training regarding evidence-based practices
    - Determining the best intervention to match need as identified in comprehensive needs assessments
    - Strategies to create measureable goals using the strategies to meet the needs addressed in a comprehensive needs assessment

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- Funding and support to allow district teams to attend statewide conferences that focus on evidence-based practices and effective strategies to build leadership and pedagogy within a school, such as the annual statewide Response To Intervention (RTI) Conference and the Alaska School Leadership Institute (ASLI) designed for rural schools. Alaska remains committed to deliver training via distance technology such as ongoing online, individualized professional learning opportunities.

- Training and support on Alaska's continuous school improvement planning tool (or other comparable planning tool implemented by the district) and webinar support throughout the year.

- Coaching support through the State System of Support (SSOS) coaching program prioritized to schools with the highest need.

- Continued technical assistance during scheduled Title program monitoring visits to districts and schools.

    - Parent and community involvement strategies
    - Schoolwide planning
    - Guidance for leveraging federal funding streams to promote student achievement
    - Tools and templates
    - Programmatic planning guidance
    - Interstate collaboration opportunities

- Intentional collaboration of diverse resources

    - The State will coordinate and better utilize experts from within DEED, external partners, SSOS coaches, and teachers/leaders in the field.
        - Early Childhood Education
        - Career and Technical Education
        - English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science Standards
        - Health and Safety/School Climate initiatives
        - Special Education
        - English Learners and Language Acquisition
        - Instructional Best Practices

    - DEED website resources that include fact sheets, Power Point presentations (static and recorded), professional learning modules, tool kits, lists of resources (What Works Clearinghouse, Regional Educational Laboratories), etc.

f. Additional Optional Action. If applicable, describe the action the State will take to initiate additional improvement in any LEA with a significant number or

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percentage of schools that are consistently identified by the State for comprehensive support and improvement and are not meeting exit criteria established by the State or in any LEA with a significant number or percentage of schools implementing targeted support and improvement plans.

N/A

5. **Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators (*ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(B)*):**
Describe how low-income and minority children enrolled in schools assisted under Title I, Part A are not served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers, and the measures the SEA will use to evaluate and publicly report the progress of the SEA with respect to such description.

(Consistent with ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(B), this description should not be construed as requiring a State to develop or implement a teacher, principal or other school leader evaluation system.)

Alaska Definitions

DEED will use the following definitions to determine Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators for low-income and minority children enrolled in schools assisted under Title I, Part A in Alaska:

- **Low-income student (Economically Disadvantaged Student)** – A student who is eligible for free or reduced-price school meals under the federal Alaska Income Eligibility Guidelines for Free and Reduced Meals Program, as defined in 4 AAC 06.899.(5).
- **Minority Student (Students of Color)** – A student identified as a member of a minority race or ethnicity (i.e., African American, Alaskan Native, American Indian, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or two or more races, as defined in 4 AAC 06.899).
- **Inexperienced Teacher** (First Year Teacher) – A teacher in their first year of practice, having no previous experience leading classroom instruction other than student teaching or similar preparation experiences. Also, inexperienced principals and other school leaders would be in their first year of leading.
- **Out-of-field teacher** - A teacher teaching in a subject area in which they do not hold an Alaska endorsement. This updates the definition from "not highly qualified." An endorsement can be added with a passing score on a content exam and two years of experience.
- **Ineffective Teacher** –
    - A non-tenured teacher who was on a plan of improvement under 4 AAC 19.010(g), or was notified that their continued employment in the district was contingent on the implementation of a plan of improvement and resigned, or
    - A tenured teacher who was receiving district support on a plan of professional growth under 4 AAC 19.010(h); or either of the Levels of Support indicated for a non-tenured teacher.

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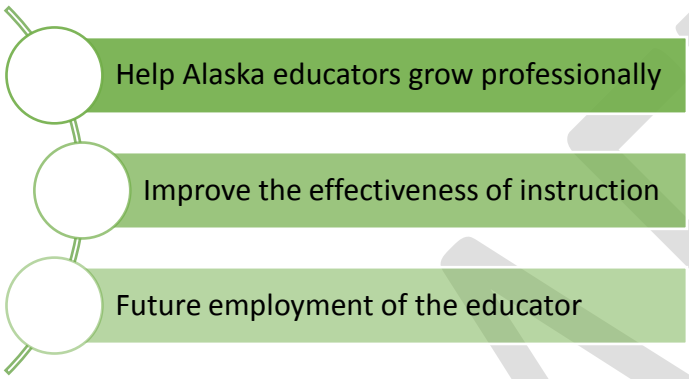
A professional growth plan (district support) is required when a district's educator evaluation and support system determine that a teacher is basic on two or more of the Alaska Teacher Standards. An improvement plan is required when a district's educator evaluation and support system determine that a teacher is unsatisfactory on one or more of the Alaska Teacher Standards.

This section refers exclusively to required Levels of Support that are the result of the district's educator evaluation and support system as outlined in 14.20.149 Employee evaluation and 4 AAC 19.010 - Purpose and scope of evaluation. For example: A voluntary plan of professional growth (e.g. changing of grade levels) would not be used to determine the reported level of support.

Purposes of Alaska's Educator Evaluation and Support Systems



All districts are encouraged to use plans of professional growth to help all educators grow professionally and improve the effectiveness of instruction at schools.

Alaska Measures

DEED will use the following measures to evaluate progress on Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators for low-income and minority children enrolled in schools assisted under Title I, Part A:

- The percentage of teachers categorized as inexperienced in Title I, Part A schools
- The percentage of teachers categorized as inexperienced in non-Title I, Part A schools
- The percentage of teachers categorized as out-of-field in Title I, Part A schools
- The percentage of teachers categorized as out-of-field in non-Title I, Part A schools.
- The percentage of teachers categorized as ineffective in Title I, Part A schools
- The percentage of teachers categorized as effective in non-Title I, Part A schools
- The percentage of teachers categorized as inexperienced in high minority schools*
- The percentage of teachers categorized as inexperienced in low-minority schools**
- The percentage of teachers categorized as out-of-field in high minority schools
- The percentage of teachers categorized as out-of-field in low-minority schools
- The percentage of teachers categorized as ineffective in high minority schools
- The percentage of teachers categorized as effective in low-minority schools.

*high minority schools would be schools in the top quartile of minority students
**low minority schools would be schools in the bottom quartile of minority students

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Public Reporting of Progress

On the State Report Card, DEED will report the professional qualifications of teachers including the number and percentage of:

- inexperienced teachers, principals, and other school leaders
- out-of-field teachers

The information will be presented in the aggregate and disaggregated by Title I, Part A status, and by high-minority compared to low-minority schools. Likewise, the district report cards will report similar information on professional qualifications of teachers, principals, and other school leaders.

Current Context

In 2015, DEED developed the *Equitable Access to Excellent Educators Plan for Alaska (Alaska Equity Plan).* The following data from that plan paint a picture of Alaska's Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators for low-income and minority children:

- **Economically Disadvantaged (Low-Income) Students are**
  1.8 times more likely to be placed with first-year teachers
- **Students of Color (Minority) are**
  Two times more likely to be placed with first- year teachers
- **Economically Disadvantaged (Low-Income) Students are**
  Almost twice as likely to be taught a core content course by a teacher who is not highly qualified
- **Students of Color (Minority) are**
  Two times more likely to be taught a core content course by a teacher who is not highly qualified

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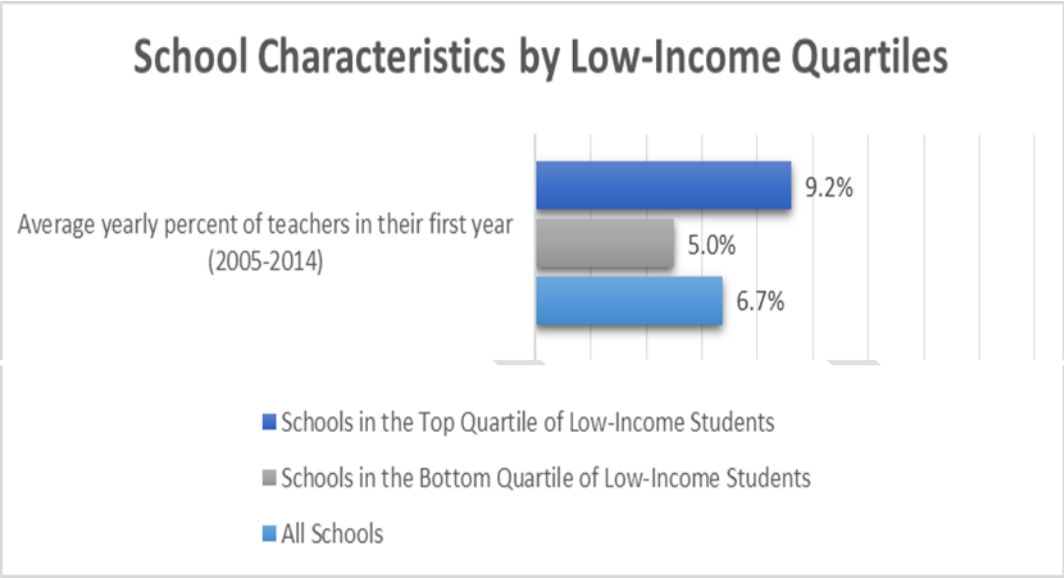
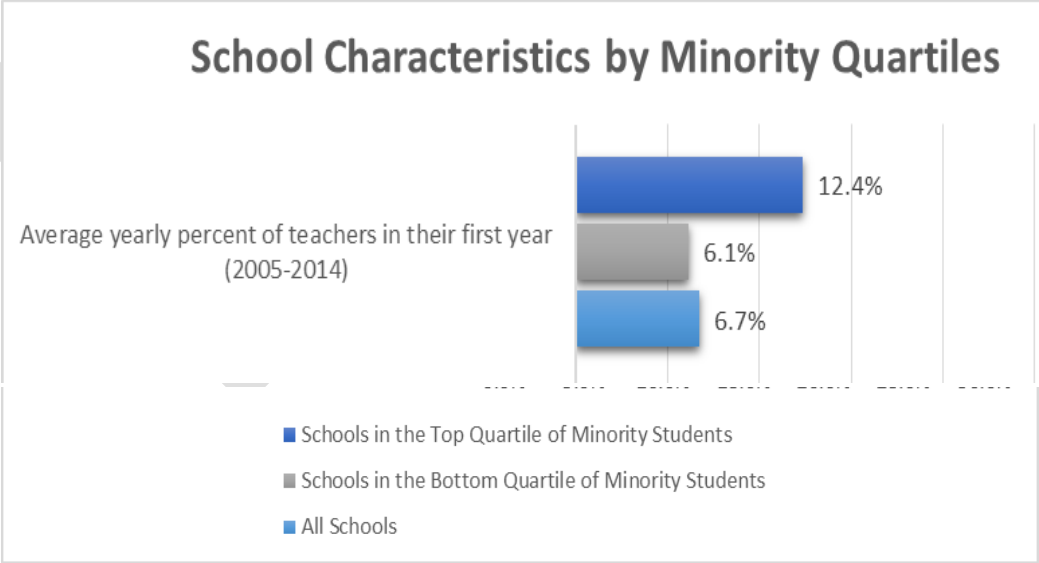
The Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators are displayed in the graphs that follow.

Economically Disadvantaged (Low Income) Students Disproportionate Rate of Access to Inexperienced Teachers

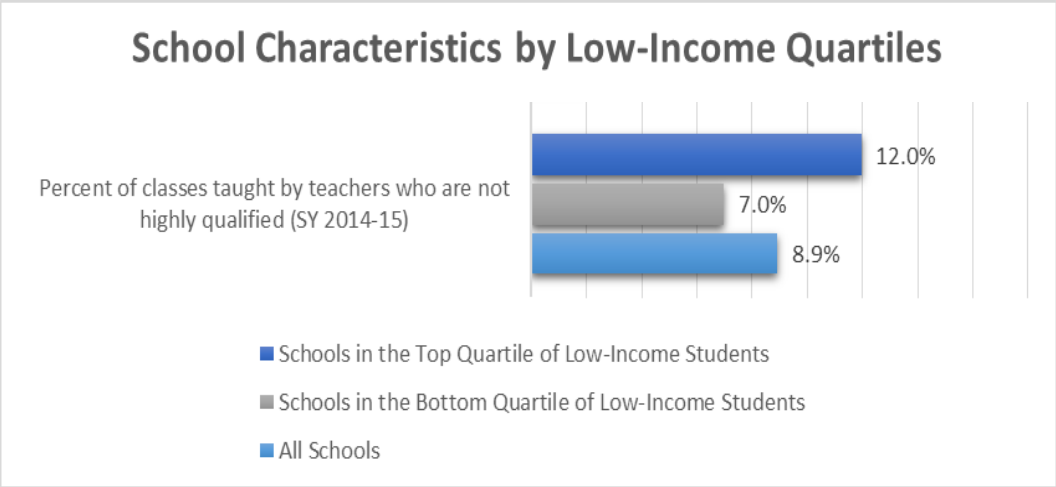


Students of Color (Minority) Disproportionate Rate of Access to Inexperienced Teachers

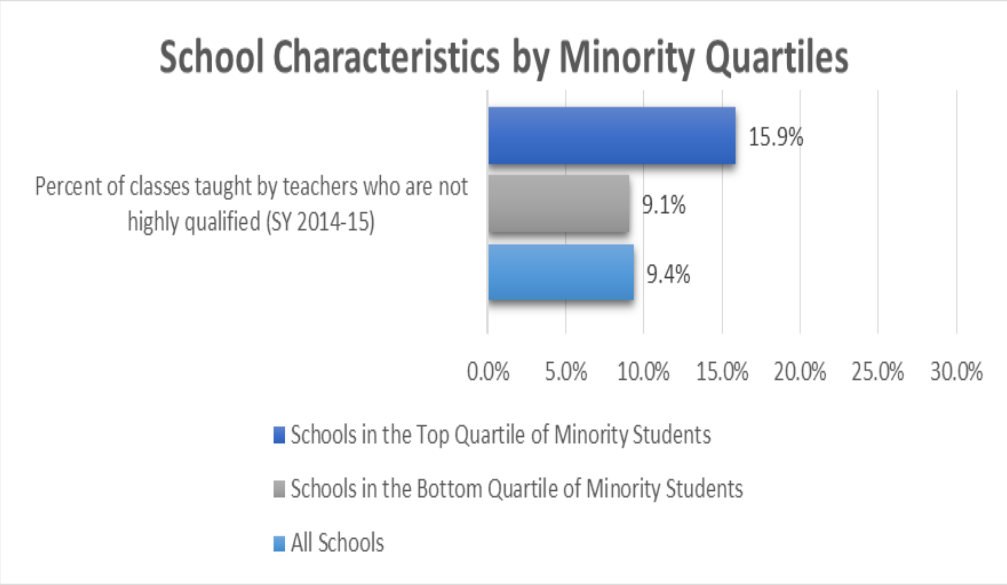


The Disproportionate Rates of Access to Out-of-Field Teachers shown below are based on the previous definition in the Alaska State Equity Plan (2015) and not the current proposed definition.

Economically Disadvantaged (Low Income) Students Disproportionate Rate of Access to Out-Of-Field Teachers



Students of Color (Minority) Disproportionate Rate of Access to Out-Of-Field Teachers

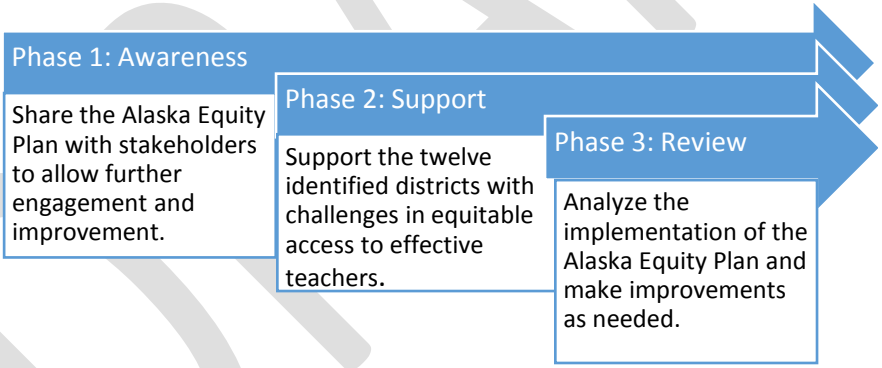


Disproportionate Rate of Access to Ineffective Teachers Plan of Action

DEED is not able to report the Disproportionate Rates of Access to Ineffective Teachers as the data is not available. The reporting on Ineffective Teachers will require regulatory changes. Alaska currently collects only district-level data on the Level of Supports for tenured and non-tenured teachers, special service providers, and administrators. Upon acceptance of Alaska's ESSA plan, DEED will propose to the State Board of Education a change in Alaska regulation 4 AAC 19.055 Reporting of evaluation results. This regulation change would request data at the school level for tenured and non-tenured educators and would at the earliest go into effect in 2018. The first reporting of evaluation results to DEED could be for the 2017-18 school year depending on a smooth regulatory process. At that time, DEED will determine how best to publically report this information whether on report cards or otherwise.

Approach to Address Disproportionality

Clearly, there are disproportionality rates of access to inexperienced and out-of-field teachers. After the data is available, Alaska will address any disproportionality rates of access to ineffective teachers. In Title II, Part A, there are actions planned to improve equitable access to Effective Teachers in Title 1, Part A Schools, as described below.



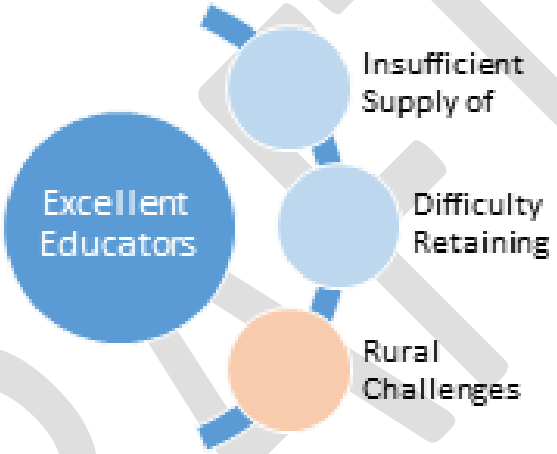
As outlined in Alaska's Equity Plan (2015), DEED will be using the multi-phase approach to address any of Alaska's Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators for low-income and minority children enrolled in schools assisted under Title I, Part A.

- Phase 1: Awareness - Share Alaska's Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators for low-income and minority children enrolled in schools assisted under Title I, Part A.
- Phase 2: Support – Identify districts with challenges in Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators for low-income and minority children and provide support.
- Phase 3: Review - Review the Alaska Equity Plan and make necessary adjustments, and engage stakeholders to review the initial root causes and strategies for improving Alaska's Disproportionate Rate of Access to Educators for low-income and minority children

enrolled in schools assisted under Title I, Part A. This review process will likely be informed by the work of the Ensure Excellent Educators committee of the Alaska's Education Challenge as outlined below and in the Title II, Part A section.

Background: Initial Root Cause Analysis

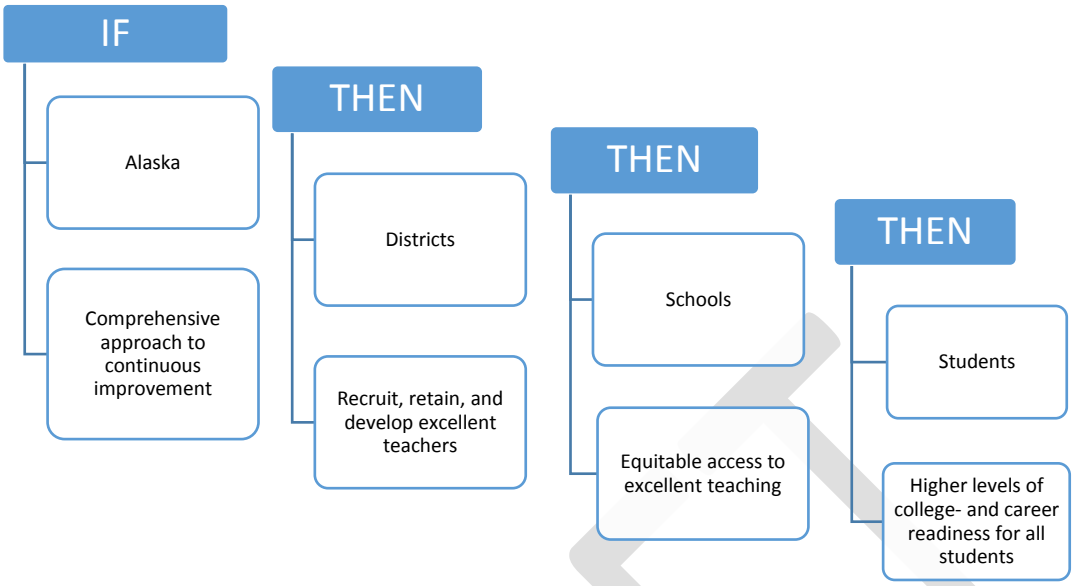
Stakeholder work in 2015 to develop the Alaska Equity Plan identified an initial picture of the challenges in Alaska. Through the analysis of data, information gathered from meetings, conversations with stakeholders, and various research studies, DEED identified root causes in three areas.



DEED will continue to work with districts and stakeholders to reassess root causes for disproportionate access to educators. and will focus on strategies to address the causes identified in the blue areas that can be affected more directly by districts and schools.

Strategies to Address Root Causes and Eliminate Equity Gaps

Alaska recognizes that ensuring students' equitable access to excellent teachers is a long-term issue, and achieving our teacher equity goals will require implementation of strategies in collaboration with our school districts. Alaska's Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators, therefore, is built on the following theory of action.



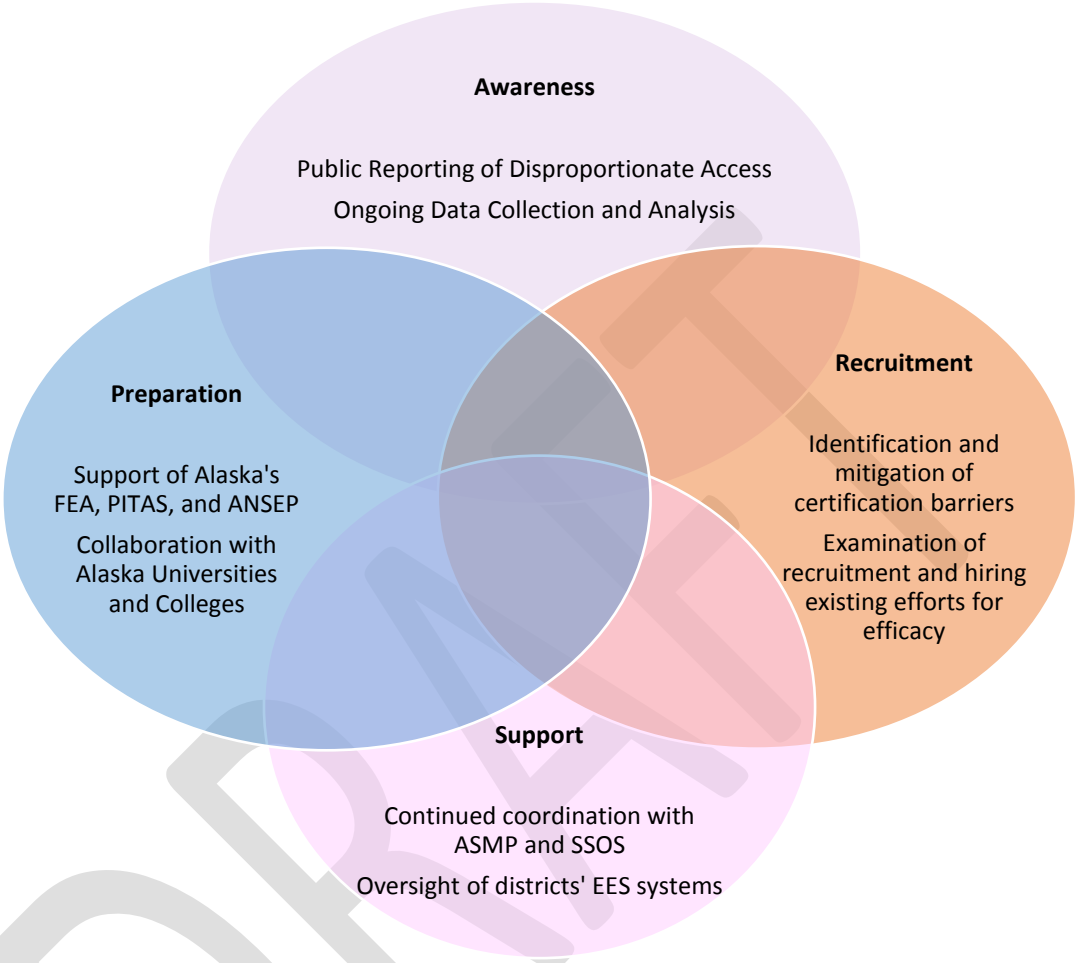
Our theory of action is based on the following principals and key beliefs:

- Research shows that teachers have a greater impact on student achievement than any other in-school factor. Students in many of our high-needs schools and districts do not have the same access to excellent teaching as other students.
- There are a number of factors that impact a district's supply of excellent teachers and students access to those teachers. To address these issues, DEED needs to continue working with districts to improve and tailor talent management, including identifying and addressing critical shortage areas. These are likely to include:
    - Ways to recruit and retain teachers of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math fields as well as teachers of students receiving special education services. DEED will leverage best practices from the research (e.g., recruiting math, science, and special education teachers) and practice in Alaska to support districts in those areas as needed.
    - Continuing technical assistance to improve talent management for all districts. Using resources such as Increasing Equitable Access to Excellent Educators Opportunities: A Talent Management Guide for School Districts produced by the Equitable Access Support Network.
- Providing improved access to meaningful data will likely lead to improved district-level decisions-making in the area of talent management. DEED will continue to provide data on rates of access to inexperienced, out-of-field, and eventually ineffective teachers.
- Stakeholder engagement is a critical component of reviewing Alaska's Equity Plan.

Key Strategies: Awareness, Preparation, Recruitment and Support

DEED has identified four strategic areas: awareness of access to excellent teachers, preparation of teachers, recruitment of teachers, and support of teachers and leaders (retention). DEED will continue to seek out and share strategies that have been demonstrated to improve teacher retention

rates working collaboratively with our districts and other stakeholder groups. The following are key strategies and two sample activities that will be used to increase equity across Alaska:



Notably, this year, DEED launched the *Alaska's Education Challenge* to address our student achievement gaps and increase our graduation rates by making sure that every student across our state has an equal opportunity to learn and succeed. Through a process of gathering public input, the State Board of Education has already identified five priorities for Alaska's public education system: Improve Student Learning, Ensure Excellent Educators, Modernize the Education System, Inspire Tribal and Community Ownership, and Promote Safety and Well-Being.

Ensuring excellent educators is critical both as an impact on student learning, but more importantly on success in meeting Alaska's vision for public education.

Vision: All students can succeed in their education and work; shape worthwhile and satisfying lives for themselves; exemplify the best values of society; and, be effective in improving the character and quality of the world about them.

6. **School Conditions (*ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(C)*):**

Describe how the SEA agency will support LEAs receiving assistance under Title I, Part A to improve school conditions for student learning, including through reducing: (i) incidences of bullying and harassment; (ii) the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom; and (iii) the use of aversive behavioral interventions that compromise student health and safety.

(i) **Incidences of bullying and harassment:**

DEED assists districts in their efforts to reduce bullying, harassment, and intimidation by providing districts with technical assistance on Alaska's collection of laws that promote positive school climate and address school discipline; through data collection and analysis; training; and support of the implementation of a constellation of evidence-based programs and strategies that reduce bullying.

Statutes:

Alaska has a collection of complementary laws that explicitly prohibit the harassment, intimidation, and bullying of any student on school premises or on school transportation systems.

- AS 14.33.200 requires Alaska districts to have written policies on how they will promote positive character traits and address bullying when it occurs.
- AS 14.33.210 requires school personnel, volunteers, and students to report all suspected bullying to school officials.
- AS 14.33.230 protects reporters of school-based bullying, harassment, and intimidation from reprisals.
- AS 14.33.230 protects reporters of school-based bullying, harassment, and intimidation from suit.

Data Collection and Analysis

- Youth Risk Behavior Survey – DEED partners with the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services to administer and report out on this Center for Disease Control (CDC) survey that includes bullying and school climate measures.
- DEED collects and reports out on suspensions and expulsions for bullying, harassment, and intimidation annually.

Training/Technical Assistance

- DEED delivers distance-delivered training it has created to thousands of district personnel annually on bullying, harassment, and intimidation in partnership with the Western Educational Equity Assistance Center within the Metropolitan State University of Denver.
- Examples of evidence-based programs, activities, and trainings DEED supports are:
    - ✓ Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Supports
    - ✓ Fourth R
    - ✓ Mentoring Programs like Big Brothers/Big Sisters
    - ✓ Restorative Justice
    - ✓ Sources of Strength

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- ✓ Suicide Prevention Program
- ✓ Project AWARE, Alternative School Initiative
- ✓ Youth Mental Health First Aid Mental Health Assessment and Referral
- ✓ Crisis Response, de-escalation training for staff
- ✓ Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper training
- ✓ Alaska Safe Children's Act training.

(ii) The overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom:

DEED continues to expand its efforts to support districts in reducing their utilization of discipline actions that remove students from the classroom through technical assistance on germane State laws, data collection and analysis, and through technical assistance and training on a host of relevant topics.

Statutes:

- AS 14.33.120 requires all districts to have (and regularly update) written school disciplinary and safety programs that were created through collaboration of both school and community stakeholders to ensure the programs reflect community values and norms. These disciplinary and safety policies must include standards for:
  - ✓ honesty and respect within schools
  - ✓ behavioral expectations
  - ✓ consequences for misbehavior
  - ✓ policies for student conflict resolution strategies
  - ✓ established discipline and safety programs addressing bullying, discipline practices, and behavioral interventions with students

Data Collection and Analysis:

- DEED recently constructed a new statewide discipline data collection system (State Report Manager) that captures data on all school suspensions and expulsions. The benefits are:
  - ✓ Improved data fidelity
  - ✓ Greater ease for the State and districts to organize and analyze disciplinary data
  - ✓ Improved district ability to unpack the data and better hypothecate underlying student needs that drive student behaviors resulting in suspension or expulsion
  - ✓ Data can be examined to determine if disproportionality in discipline is occurring in any student subpopulations.

Training/Technical Assistance:

- DEED cosponsors an annual statewide School Health and Wellness Institute that delivers information/training on positive school climate, school safety, classroom management, and prosocial evidence-based school programs.

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- DEED delivers training to thousands of educators annually on Gender and Race Equity.
- DEED's Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect course includes information on Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma Aware Schools.
- DEED is finalizing content for a more in-depth Trauma Sensitive Schools training. The Trauma Sensitive Schools model, with its focus on building educator understanding that students' challenging behaviors are often the expression of trauma and grief, is fostering a reduction in the removal of students from classrooms for disciplinary issues in schools that utilize trauma informed policies, practices, and strategies.
- Examples of evidence-based programs, activities, and trainings DEED supports listed above to address bullying also support decreased student removal from the classroom for discipline.

(iii) The use of aversive behavioral interventions that compromise student health and safety:

Alaska's public schools are not allowed to use behavioral interventions that are aversive or compromise students' health and safety. In 2014, Alaska enacted legislation dramatically limiting the use of student restraint and seclusion in our schools. This legislation requires essential safety protocols be in place when these interventions are unavoidable, prohibits the use of chemical and/or mechanical restraints, requires all incidents of restraint or seclusion that do occur to be reported to DEED, and requires a sufficient number of staff from each school to receive periodic training in de-escalation and restraint techniques.

School staff trained in de-escalation, restraint, and seclusion are also required to be trained in First Aid and CPR. DEED maintains a list of evidence-based trainings for districts to select from that utilize techniques proven to keep students and staff safe, and delivers ongoing technical assistance to districts regarding training and reporting requirements.

7. School Transitions *(ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(D))*:
Describe how the State will support LEAs receiving assistance under Title I, Part A in meeting the needs of students at all levels of schooling (particularly students in the middle grades and high school), including how the State will work with such LEAs to provide effective transitions of students to middle grades and high school to decrease the risk of students dropping out.

DEED's goal is to have a comprehensive, robust educational system that provides all students the opportunity for a well-rounded and equitable education. The system has many embedded elements that promote successful transitions for students throughout their education, and directs additional supports where appropriate to ensure the needs of all students are met. DEED is driven by our State Board of Education's Vision and Mission for public education: to ensure <u>all</u> of Alaska's students have the opportunity to receive an excellent education every day; that <u>all</u> students can succeed in their education and work, shape worthwhile and satisfying lives for themselves, exemplify the best values of society, and be effective in improving the character and quality of the world about them.

DEED's educational system is composed of a broad constellation of interwoven, complementary structures, systems, programs, and strategies that operate in concert at all levels of schooling, and encompass districts receiving assistance under Title I, Part A. Supports designed to ensure the

educational needs of all students are met, and that their transitions across educational milestones are successful are embedded in the following components of DEED's educational system: Assessment, Accountability, Student Content and Performance Standards, Finance/Accounting, Teacher Certification, Special Education, Early Learning, Child Nutrition, Health/Mental Health, School Safety, Career and Technical Education, Afterschool Programming, and Professional Development for District Personnel.

Beyond these foundational supports, additional levels of assistance for students in middle and high school, where the risk of dropping out is greatest are also provided. Examples of these supports are:

- Alternative Schools: DEED concurrently administers two alternative high school initiatives, which provide innovative mental health supports, cohesive professional development, additional staffing, and funding for evidence-based curriculum, programs, and activities to the majority of Alaska's alternative schools. These specialized secondary schools serve thousands of Alaska's most at-risk students and are an excellent complement to traditional schools. Alaska's alternative schools constitute a safety net for students at-risk of dropping out and for students who have dropped out – reconnecting them to their education and the goal of graduation.
- Neglected and Delinquent: DEED couples state Youth In Detention funding with its federal Title I Part D Neglected and Delinquent funding to strengthen transitional supports to detained youth. Transition planning must include the following: personal, career, technical, and academic counseling; placement services designed to place the youth in a university, college, or junior college program; information concerning, and assistance in obtaining, available student financial aid; counseling services; and job placement services. Detained students are provided the opportunity to meet the same challenging State Standards as all other district student populations.

Alaska Performance Scholarship: The Alaska Performance Scholarship provides an opportunity for Alaska high school students to earn a scholarship to help cover the cost of an Alaska postsecondary education. This program delivers financial support that makes postsecondary education a reality for some students that could not otherwise afford to attend. Alaska high school students who take a more rigorous curriculum, get good grades, and score well on college placement or work ready exams can earn an Alaska Performance Scholarship to qualified Alaska colleges, universities, or vocational/technical programs.
http://acpe.alaska.gov/FINANCIAL_AID/Grants_Scholarships/Alaska_Performance_Scholarship

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B. Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children

1. **Supporting Needs of Migratory Children** *(ESEA section 1304(b)(1))*: Describe how, in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and projects assisted under Title I, Part C, the State and its local operating agencies will ensure that the unique educational needs of migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, are identified and addressed through:
    i. The full range of services that are available for migratory children from appropriate local, State, and Federal educational programs;
    ii. Joint planning among local, State, and Federal educational programs serving migratory children, including language instruction educational programs under Title III, Part A;
    iii. The integration of services available under Title I, Part C with services provided by those other programs; and
    iv. Measurable program objectives and outcomes.

Since Title I, Part C, Education of Migratory Children funds are supplementary and cannot supplant, it is necessary to ensure migratory children and youth are receiving access to all State and federal funds they are entitled to before being provided support with Title I, Part C funds. At DEED, the Migrant Education Program (MEP) is part of the Student Learning Division. The division works collaboratively to ensure there is an understanding of the services provided by each program. Additionally, the Migrant Education Program is a part of two sub-teams within the division: the ESEA Federal Programs Team and the Early Learning Team.

The ESEA Federal Programs Team meets regularly to discuss services and activities provided by their programs, and works collaboratively to review and approve ESEA Consolidated Applications and to monitor ESEA programs together.

- Districts that receive Title I-C funds complete their application process through the ESEA Consolidated Application annually. The ESEA Consolidated Application includes Title I-A, Title I-C, Title I-D, Title II-A, and Title III-A grant planning. The application requires districts to describe how they coordinate their various ESEA funding sources. The Consolidated Application allows for DEED to check for efficiencies and to ensure funds are not supplanting one another. The ESEA Consolidated Application requires district program personnel to coordinate with one another when planning services, and for DEED ESEA Program Leads to meet regularly to review ESEA Consolidated Applications together. Additionally, if they meet all eligibility criteria, schools can apply to consolidate their Title I-C funds into the Title I-A Schoolwide Program using the Consolidated Application.
- Districts receiving ESEA funds are monitored. Title I-A, Title I-C, Title I-D, Title II-A, Title III-A, and McKinney-Vento programs monitor districts for compliance together. Districts are required to gather evidence that MEP students are receiving all the district, State, and federal services available to the district.

The Early Learning Team works together to ensure preschool migratory children are receiving local, State, and federal-funded preschool opportunities available to them. The Migrant Education Program is supervised by the Early Learning Administrator.

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The Migrant Education Program provides districts with a Migrant Summative Data Report in the spring annually. This report is a tool for districts to use to evaluate the effectiveness of their program and to help guide their needs assessment for the following year.

DEED develops a statewide comprehensive needs assessment (CNA) that includes the identification and an assessment of:

- The unique educational needs of migrant children that result from the children's migrant lifestyle.
- Other needs of migrant students that must be met in order for them to participate effectively in school.

For the CNA process, DEED contracts with consultants to assist with the CNA update. DEED Migrant Education Program staff, with the assistance of the consultants, use various platforms to gather data on migrant student achievement and outcomes, disseminate and collect surveys documenting the perception of migrant staff and parents related to migrant students' needs, and identify relevant demographic and evaluation data. The data collected is used by the CNA committee, a group of migrant education stakeholders, to formulate a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of the migrant student population in Alaska. A profile of Alaska migrant students is developed based on the most recently available information. The CNA committee uses the profile and other collected data to develop concern statements, needs indicators, needs statements, and solutions strategies. The CNA guides the design of the Alaska Migrant Education Program.

Based on the most recent CNA, DEED, with the assistance of consultants and stakeholders, created a Service Delivery Plan (SDP). The SDP committee was composed of representatives who are parents and community members; MEP educators and administrators, recruiters, and DEED representatives. These individuals have expertise and/or experience in reading, mathematics, migrant student graduation strategies, cohesive professional development, identification and recruitment (ID&R), data management, inter-agency coordination, parent involvement, and/or early childhood education. Members of the SDP committee also served on the Alaska MEP CNA committee to provide continuity to the overall comprehensive process that was carried out in Alaska. This helped to ensure systems are aligned to meet the unique educational needs of Alaska migrant students. Through the State SDP process, DEED creates Measurable Program Objectives and Outcomes and evaluates the progress.

2. **Promote Coordination of Services** (*ESEA section 1304(b)(3)*): Describe how the State will use Title I, Part C funds received under this part to promote interstate and intrastate coordination of services for migratory children, including how the State will provide for educational continuity through the timely transfer of pertinent school records, including information on health, when children move from one school to another, whether or not such move occurs during the regular school year.

DEED participates in several multistate consortia that seek to improve the identification and recruitment, policies, pertinent record transfer, and educational services for migrant students:

- **The Interstate Migrant Education Council (IMEC)** – An independent organization established to advocate policies that ensure the highest quality education and other needed services for migrant children, and facilitate opportunities for members to examine policy issues at all levels of government related to coordination between public and private agencies to benefit migrant students and programs.

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- **National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education (NASDME)** – This association provides the largest national conference for the migrant program. State directors meet to discuss issues affecting migrant students and families, and over 170 sessions are held to highlight best practices in migrant programs.
- **Title I-C Migrant Education Program Directors' Meeting** – Annual meeting for Title I-C Directors that: 1) facilitates opportunities for Directors to network and share best practices and resources, 2) provides Directors with information pertinent to the State administration and operation of the Migrant Education Program (MEP), 3) promotes the understanding of, and coordination with, other ED initiatives and programs, and 4) provides Directors and Office of Migrant Education (OME) personnel with opportunities to coordinate on issues important to the successful design and implementation of programs and services that benefit migrant students.
- **MIS2000** – Alaska's Migrant Education Student Database created by Management Services for Education Data (MS/EdD). MIS2000 houses Alaska's migrant student information and connects to MSIX, the national student exchange system.
- **National Migrant Student Exchange System (MSIX)** – This database allows States to share educational and health information on migrant children who travel from state to state and who as a result, have student records in multiple States' information systems. MSIX works in concert with the Alaska Migrant Student Database, MIS2000, to fulfill its mission to ensure the appropriate enrollment, placement, and accrual of credits for migrant children nationwide.

During district level monitoring, DEED verifies that the district promotes interstate and intrastate coordination of services for migrant students including:

- providing for the educational continuity of migrant students through the timely transfer of pertinent student records, including health records (whether or not the move occurs during the regular school year); and
- establishing a procedure to coordinate services and records transfers with surrounding districts or districts that migrant students move to/from, and meeting all deadlines for the submission of student records and data in MIS2000.

3. Use of Funds *(ESEA section 1304(b)(4))*: Describe the State's priorities for the use of Title I, Part C funds, and how such priorities relate to the State's assessment of needs for services in the State.

Grants under Title I, Part C, Education of Migratory Children are issued to districts through an allocation, not through a competitive process. The allocation formula is largely based on the number of migrant eligible students, services provided to migratory children and youth, number of students identified as "priority for services", and academic needs according to a weighted formula.

District Title I-C grant planning is included in the ESEA Consolidated Application that districts submit to DEED annually. Districts submit their applications in the summer of each year, and after approval, they receive a grant award for operation of the program as outlined in their application.

DEED works with stakeholders to create a State CNA of the migratory children in Alaska. The CNA guides the design for the Alaska Migrant Education Program. Based on the State CNA, DEED, with the assistance of consultants and stakeholders, creates a Service Delivery Plan (SDP) to meet the identified needs from the CNA. Districts are required to create local needs assessments and service delivery plans that align to the State guiding documents.

Each district's sub-grant must be aligned with the State CNA and SDP. Districts provide services specified in the plan in communities where migrant families are living. Supplemental education and support services are provided to respond to the unique needs of migrant children and youth. These needs are not addressed through existing State, local, and federal educational programs. These supplemental services are designed to provide continuity of instruction for students who move from one school district or state to another.

The Title I, Part C grant application requires locally funded districts to describe how they give priority for service to children and youth identified as "priority for services", and how they provide services that address the unique needs of migratory children in accordance with the Alaska SDP.

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C. Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk

1. Transitions Between Correctional Facilities and Local Programs *(ESEA section 1414(a)(1)(B))*: Provide a plan for assisting in the transition of children and youth between correctional facilities and locally operated programs.

DEED actively supports the provisions of a high-quality education to neglected, delinquent, or at-risk students in juvenile justice and correctional facilities. DEED understands that students who move between correctional facilities and locally operated programs face many challenges, including delayed academic record transfer and limited access to specific programs and services necessary to meet students' unique educational needs.

DEED will require all districts to:

- Designate a single point of contact responsible for issues relating to the transition of children and youth between the State-operated correctional facility and schools, alternative educational opportunities, and other locally operated programs. This person will be responsible for communicating with local detention and other treatment facilities regarding student placement, assisting in transitioning student records (including IEPs), transferring of credits, and serving as a liaison between the districts and the local juvenile court.

- Describe in their application the supports the district has in place for youth that transition between the juvenile justice system and their home district. The description must include the following: personal, career, technical, and academic counseling; placement services designed to place the youth in a university, college, or junior college program; information concerning, and assistance in obtaining, available student financial aid; counseling services; and job placement services.

2. Program Objectives and Outcomes *(ESEA section 1414(a)(2)(A))*: Describe the program objectives and outcomes established by the State that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the Title I, Part D program in improving the academic, career, and technical skills of children in the program.

Program Objectives

The purpose of Title I, Part D is to support the operation of State facilities, correctional facilities, delinquent programs, neglected programs, or local educational agency programs that involve collaboration with locally operated correctional facilities:

- To carry out high-quality education programs to prepare youth for regular high school diploma, career and technical training, employment, or further education;
- To provide activities to facilitate the transition of such youth between districts and correctional programs to further education, provide career and technical education skills, or facilitate employment;
- To provide comparable services to neglected children or institutional delinquent children and neglected and delinquent children in community day-school and long-term programs;

- To prevent at-risk youth from dropping out of school and to provide dropouts and children and youth returning from correctional facilities or institutions for neglected or delinquent youth, with a support system to ensure their continued education; and

  To provide transitional services between local schools and correctional facilities for at risk youth returning from correctional facilities and programs.

Program Outcomes

DEED administers the Title I, Part D program and utilizes a variety of elements to assess program effectiveness, including:

- Annual review of district application that contains assurances, narrative descriptive questions, and budget information. Upon receipt at DEED, applications are reviewed.
- Annual review of district end-of-year report that summarizes both budget and program information (to include transition activities, academic, career and technical skills) from the year.
- Periodic monitoring of districts on the required components to assure they are implementing correct programing to include transition activities, academic, and career and technical skills with the funds.
- Program effectiveness will be based on student outcomes. State assessment scores from neglected and delinquent students will be gathered and analyzed. Students in these facilities will be held to the same high standards of quality that all students within Alaska are held.

Accountability

- Districts are required to show progress in the number of children and youth attaining a regular high school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
- After receiving assistance under this subpart for three years, districts need to show that there has been an increase in the number of youth returning to school, attaining a regular high school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or attaining employment after such children and youth are released.
- District will be required to conduct a needs assessment for future program planning, disaggregating data on participation by gender, race, ethnicity, and age, while protecting individual student privacy, to determine the program's impact.
- DEED will evaluate Title I-D programs:
  - To maintain and improve educational achievement and to graduate from high school in the number of years established by the State under either the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate or the extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, if applicable;
  - To accrue course credits that meet State requirements for grade promotion and high school graduation;
  - To make the transition to a regular program or other education program operated by a local educational agency or school operated or funded by the Bureau of Indian Education;
  - To complete high school (or high school equivalency requirements) and obtain employment after leaving the correctional facility or institution for neglected or delinquent children and youth; and
  - To participate, as appropriate, in postsecondary education and job training programs.

D. Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction

1. Use of Funds *(ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(A) and (D))*: Describe how the State educational agency will use Title II, Part A funds received under Title II, Part A for State-level activities described in section 2101(c), including how the activities are expected to improve student achievement.

Educator Growth and Development Systems has been the area of focus for DEED's use of Title II, Part A funds. Current activities focus primarily on the development of effective educators, recognition of excellent teachers, and the provision of technical assistance to districts in this area. DEED is considering activities in induction and advancement for teachers, principals, and other schools leaders.

Continuing Activities

DEED will use Title II, Part A funds this next year to support State-level activities that are in progress. These activities include an online cohesive professional development network; programs to recognize excellent teachers; guidance in using Educator Evaluation and Support System results and meeting educator qualifications; and technical assistance on Title II, Part A district applications and monitoring.

DEED is currently using Title II, Part A funds to support a project to develop an online professional development network that allows teacher teams to support personalized professional learning. Learning paths for both English Language Arts and Mathematics have been developed using open-source videos with interactive and discussion activities. Using this online environment, the project partner has enhanced online courses and extended the learning from statewide conferences. Creating additional learning paths on effectively integrating technology, digital literacy, and identifying and meeting students' specific learning needs will be explored during the next year of this project.

DEED will continue to assist with the dissemination of the lessons learned from a state-funded initiative that focused on the delivery of high-quality, interactive blended learning models. This project focused on removing barriers, providing specific technology enhancements, and strengthening current technology-based instructional programs. DEED looks to learn from these projects and the work of other Alaska districts' initiatives on how educators are embracing personalized learning and how it benefits their students.

As defined by the U.S. Department of Education, personalized learning refers to instruction in which the pace of learning and the instructional approaches and instructional content (and its sequencing) all may vary based on learner needs. In addition, learning activities are meaningful and relevant to learners, driven by interests, and often self-initiated.

DEED has been collaborating with partners on considering micro credentials for recertification and university credit based on an inquiry from the University of Alaska. They have been gathering information from Digital Promise, BloomBoard, the Tennessee Department of Education, and Kettle Moraine School District in Wisconsin. Increasing knowledge and usage of the Professional Development definition and the Professional Learning Standards from Learning Forward will be emphasized again this year. Learning Forward Alaska has been instrumental in working with DEED to present this information in the last few years. DEED will explore building awareness of the recently revised national Library and Technology standards.

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Activities Under Consideration

DEED will be considering an Induction Initiative to help with high rates of teacher turnover in Alaska. The cost of teacher turnover in Alaska, a study by the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research at the Institute of Social and Economic Research (http://www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu/Publications/2017-CostTeacher.pdf), estimates a cost of $20 million per year to school districts. DEED will begin with a review of other State guidelines (e.g., Hawaii, which has similar geographical challenges). The review will identify promising practices that can be adapted to Alaska. Additionally, DEED will examine Alaska districts' existing induction programs for practices that can be replicated throughout Alaska.

DEED will be exploring establishing a Teacher Leader program to allow opportunities for teachers to exercise leadership roles without leaving the classroom entirely. Sharing the Teacher Leader Model Standards with districts will be one of the first steps. DEED will also leverage promising practices in Alaska and recommendations from the research in this area, especially as DEED leadership provided input into this research (i.e., teacher career advancement initiatives).

DEED will be looking at initiatives to support Principals and Other Schools Leaders through partnerships. It will reserve the optional three percent funds of the allowable Title II, Part A funds in anticipation. DEED may consider reserving two percent of the Title IIA State level activities to explore the creation of teacher/leader academies in conjunction with funds mentioned above. By having academies specific to Alaska, the Guidelines for Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers for Alaska's Schools, published by the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, revised as of February 2, 1999, can be embedded in the design.

DEED will be using Title II, Part A funds to address Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators as outlined earlier under Title I and below in D.2. DEED uses teacher certification receipts to support the Certification and Licensure Systems and Educator Preparation Program Strategies as outlined below.

Activities informed by Alaska's Education Challenge

DEED has also started the Alaska's Education Challenge to address our student achievement gaps and increase our graduation rates by making sure that every student across our state has equal opportunities to learn and succeed. Through a process of gathering public input, the State Board of Education has already identified five priorities for Alaska's public education system: Improve Student Learning, Ensure Excellent Educators, Modernize the Education System, Inspire Tribal and Community Ownership, and Promote Safety and Well-Being. Future Title II, Part A activities will be informed by the transformational ideas that are proposed by the Ensure Excellent Educators committee.

The responsibility of DEED is to identify appropriate federal funds to launch high-quality, cohesive professional development initiatives available to districts to support the implementation of college- and career-ready standards, school climate and culture, special populations, and school planning and support. These activities may consist of foundational professional development opportunities that would be available to all educators and address key areas of policy and practice, and specialized, professional development opportunities anchored in communities of practice which focus on particular areas of practice. They may target classroom teachers, teacher leaders, school and/or

district leaders, and community partners as appropriate. Training and programming would be informed by stakeholder input, student achievement data, and priority implementation areas.

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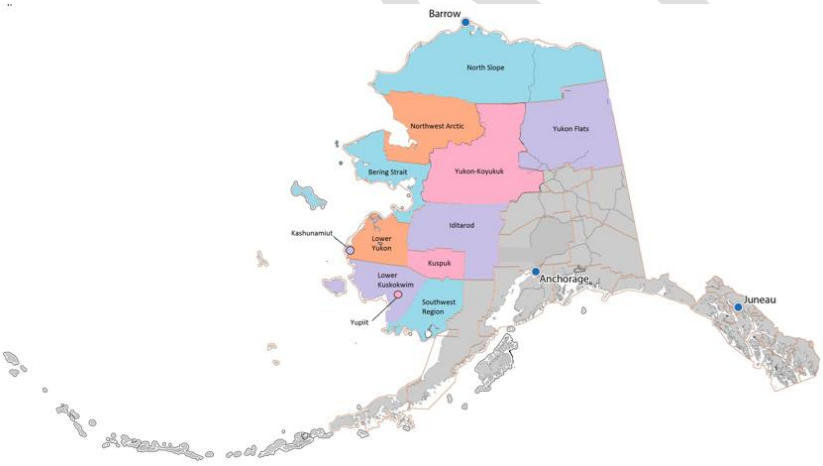
2. Use of Funds to Improve Equitable Access to Teachers in Title I, Part A Schools *(ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(E))*: If an SEA plans to use Title II, Part A funds to improve equitable access to effective teachers, consistent with ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(B), describe how such funds will be used for this purpose.

DEED will be using Title II, Part A funds to improve equitable access to effective teachers for low-income and minority students enrolled in schools assisted under Title I, Part A. The following activities will need to be conducted:

- DEED will work with the State Board of Education to make a regulatory change in 4 AAC 19.055 Reporting of evaluation results upon acceptance of Alaska's ESSA State Plan. This regulation change would require districts to report evaluation data at the school level for tenured and non-tenured educators.
- Once the regulation becomes effective, DEED will provide technical assistance to districts in understanding the Ineffective Teacher definition and focus on supporting districts in their submission of school level evaluation results.
- DEED will continue its multi-phase approach that was outlined in Alaska's Equity Plan (see section A.5). This approach will include increasing awareness of educator equity gaps, particularly focusing on the Ineffective Teachers definition. DEED will support the districts below, which have the most disproportionate rates of access to excellent educators from our 2015 equity plan. Once data using the new definitions has been collected, Alaska will recalculate the disproportionate rates.



- DEED will provide technical assistance to all districts using the results of their Educators Evaluation and Support systems. This technical assistance will be using Title II, Part A funds to meet the following purposes of the Title IIA program:
  1) Improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders;
  2) Increase the number of teachers, principals, and other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement in schools; and
  3) Provide low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders.

3.	**System of Certification and Licensing** *(ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(B))*: Describe the State's system of certification and licensing of teachers, principals, or other school leaders.
	DEED has the statutory authority to certify teachers, principals, superintendents, special service providers, and other school leaders. Alaska certification statutes and regulations ensure that students are served by quality educators who must meet high standards. A teaching certificate can be earned with a bachelor's degree, fingerprint clearance, appropriate coursework or completion of an approved educator preparation program, and passage of subject and content knowledge exams. Alaska also provides a pathway for career changers to complete a teacher preparation program leading to full state certification while teaching full time. Additionally, Alaska statutes allow teachers who are fully certified out of state and in good standing in their state to qualify for an Initial Teaching Certificate valid for up to three years. These reciprocity rules help districts recruit qualified educators from other states. Within two years of initial certification, all teachers, administrators, and special service providers must complete six semester hours of coursework (Alaska Studies and Multicultural) to increase their understanding of Alaska's unique cultures and history. DEED is continuing to reduce barriers in certification as one of our equity strategies. This past year, it has migrated more services online, including acceptance of electronic transcripts and online payments. DEED is investigating the transition to a complete online application system. With at least 75 percent of teachers being prepared outside of Alaska, special attention has been given to simplifying information for out-of-state applicants. Due to our shortage of teachers, a proof of program enrollment option is available in certain circumstances. Alaska may revisit establishing an alternate route to certification using the lessons learned from the Alaska Transition to Teaching (AKT2) program.

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4. Improving Skills of Educators *(ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(J))*: Describe how the SEA will improve the skills of teachers, principals, or other school leaders in order to enable them to identify students with specific learning needs, particularly children with disabilities, English learners, students who are gifted and talented, and students with low literacy levels, and provide instruction based on the needs of such students.

DEED will work to improve the skills of educators to meet the needs of students with specific learning needs by providing technical assistance, services, and support as aligned to local school and district system needs. As part of the Title II, part A of the ESEA Consolidated Application, districts are specifically asked how they are helping their educators to improve their skills. Districts' practices that use culturally relevant instructional practices and resources, especially in meeting the needs of minority students who are also English learners, will be shared. For example: As a successful retention activity, many districts provide culturally enhanced professional development at the beginning of the school year to better prepare new educators to Alaska.

DEED is able to provide technical assistance, services, and supports through a combination of face-to-face (conferences, workshops, meetings) and virtual opportunities (webinars, online courses, phone conferences). Support at any level may also be provided in conjunction with other Alaska educational organizations and partners (e.g. the 2017 Alaska RTI/MTSS Conference - Elevating Effective Instruction).

Here are some available offerings that help teachers serve diverse groups of students:

- DEED has multiple courses in its distance-delivered eLearning Program to boost educators' skills in working with students with specific learning needs. Example courses include Identifying Learning Theory, Strategies for Accommodating Individual Needs, and Supporting Student Learning Styles.
- DEED also has two reading foundational webinars to help teachers improve their skills in working with students with low literacy levels.
- The WIDA CLIMBS and WIDA CLIMBS Training of Trainers professional development opportunities are available to teachers and districts to provide training on instructional strategies that specifically address the needs of English learners and intentionally support the WIDA English Language Development Standards.
- DEED assists districts in meeting the needs of their gifted and talented students, which are identified in districts' plans of service for gifted students.

DEED will create a collaborative team consisting of Special Education, Migrant Education, English Learner Education, State Systems of Support, and McKinney-Vento staff to design guidance on the use of district funds to support the improvement of the skills teachers, principals, and other school leaders need to meet specific student learning needs. This collaboration will also create guidance on how to leverage federal and State funds to fully support all students' learning needs through the braiding and blending of funds.

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5. Data and Consultation *(ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(K))*: Describe how the State will use data and ongoing consultation as described in ESEA section 2101(d)(3) to continually update and improve the activities supported under Title II, Part A.

DEED will continue to use existing advisory committees to meaningfully consult on the activities supported under Title II, Part A. The advisory committees described below are the Commissioner's Teacher Advisory Committee and Educational Leadership Council, Educator Quality Advisory Committee, and Educator Evaluation and Support Advisory Committee. In addition, DEED collaborates with other organizations and partners with relevant and demonstrated expertise in cohesive professional development and learning (such as the Alaska Staff Development Network, Southeast Regional Resource Center, and Professional and Continuing Education at UAA).

Commissioner's Teacher Advisory Committee
The Commissioner's Teacher Advisory Committee is a stakeholder group that provides a teacher perspective on DEED's initiatives and programs. The committee consists of the past and present Alaska Teachers of the Year; Alaskan Milken Educators; the National Education Association Alaska (NEA-AK) President, and teacher representatives from all regions of the state.

Commissioner's Education Leadership Council
The Commissioner's Education Leadership Council is a stakeholder group that provides an outside perspective on DEED's initiatives and policies. The committee consists of the current president and executive director of the Alaska Association of School Boards (AASB), Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA), Alaska Superintendent's Association (ASA), Alaska Association of Elementary Principals (AAEP), Alaska Association of Secondary Principals (AASP), the Alaska Association of School Business Officials (ALASBO), and Alaska's Parent and Teacher Association (PTA).

Educator Quality Advisory Committee
The Educator Quality Advisory Committee is a stakeholder group that focuses on improving educator quality in Alaska. It primarily advises DEED on changes to teacher certification and preparation, and also considers teacher development, evaluation, and other teacher quality related issues. This committee consists of the deans and professors from all four of the state's institutes of higher education, the director of K-12 Outreach for the University of Alaska, National Education Association Alaska (NEA-AK) representatives, other teacher representatives, State Board of Education members, and representatives from districts, including human resources and instruction personnel.

Educator Evaluation and Support Advisory Committee
The Educator Evaluation Advisory Committee has been a key stakeholder group formed to assist DEED in providing guidance and resources for districts in the redesign and implementation of their Educator Evaluation and Support systems. Representatives include human resources, curriculum and instruction, and educational association leaders from across the state.

DEED shares data relevant to the purpose of the advisory committee or other organizations and partners. Examples of data would include educator evaluation and support data, educator qualification data, passing rates and scores on basic and content area exams for educators, and student academic achievement data. The various advisory committees meet on a monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis depending on the need.

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6.	**Teacher Preparation** *(ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(M))*: Describe the actions the State may take to improve preparation programs and strengthen support for teachers, principals, or other school leaders based on the needs of the State, as identified by the SEA.

Collaboration with Alaska universities and colleges is another strategy to improve programs, strengthen support, and promote equity. The three University of Alaska teacher preparation programs are merging into one program, which is adding another dimension to the CAEP accreditation process (see below). As an example of DEED-university collaboration, DEED is serving in an advisory capacity in the merger of the programs.

DEED's program review and approval process requires educator preparation programs to adhere to both the Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP) standards (4 AAC 12.308. Approval of in-state educator preparation programs) and the Alaska's Beginning Teacher Standards (4 AAC 04.200 Professional content and performance standards). These include the requirement that new educators are adequately prepared to meet the needs of low income and minority students. Alaska has Guidelines for Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers for Alaska's Schools, published by the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, to help prepare new educators to meet the specific needs of Alaska Natives. Both initial program approval and the CAEP accreditation process require educator preparation programs to show evidence that pre-service educators have ample opportunities for structured practice in a range of settings with diverse learners.

Alaska will continue to examine the internship component in Alaska's teacher preparation programs. Recently, our regulations were updated to require a minimum of 600 hours over a 15 week period. Alaska's universities have both traditional and post-baccalaureate routes. Many of these programs exceed the requirement with a year-long internship fully based in the school. Alaska is specifically interested in the expansion of internships in remote, rural schools which our rural districts indicate help them and candidates make more informed decisions when offering or accepting a job, which increases retention.

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E. Title III, Part A, Subpart 1, English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement

1. Entrance and Exit Procedures *(ESEA section 3113(b)(2)):* Describe how the SEA will establish and implement, with timely and meaningful consultation with LEAs representing the geographic diversity of the State, standardized, statewide entrance and exit procedures, including an assurance that all students who may be English learners are assessed for such status within 30 days of enrollment in a school in the State.

Entrance Procedures

- Determine which students might be identified as an English learner (EL) as defined in Alaska Regulation 4 AAC 34.090 (2) and ESEA as amended by ESSA section 8101(20).
- Before a student is screened for English language proficiency (ELP), the district must determine if the student is included in one of the categories of students eligible to be identified as an English learner as defined:
    - Student who is not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English – DEED recommends a pre-screen with, at a minimum, the Parent Language Questionnaire (PLQ).
    - American Indian, Alaska Native, or resident of the outlying areas where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency.
- Parents of students complete a Home Language Survey to determine if a language other than English has a significant impact on the student's level of English language proficiency.
- Teacher observations should be taken into consideration in the identification process. The Language Observation Checklist may be used if the parent language survey indicates that English is spoken at home.
- Before a student is screened for English language proficiency, the district must determine if the student is included in one of the categories of students eligible to be identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) as defined:
    - Should a student fall into one of the above categories, the district must administer one of the State-approved ELP screening assessments (either the W-APT, WIDA Screener or the WIDA MODEL) to determine if the second part of the definition of an English learner student is met.
        - Students who fall below the minimum score – identified as an English learner, are eligible for EL services, and must take the annual ELP assessment (ACCESS for ELLs 2.0) during the current school year.
            - Students entering school March 1 or later that have not been identified may be screened, but are not required to take the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 until the following spring.
        - Students who score **at or above** the minimum score for English language proficiency--not identified as EL and are not required to be assessed further.
- Incoming kindergartners and older students new to the district from another state or country who are potentially English learners must be screened and identified as soon as possible after enrolling in school, and within 30 days after the beginning of the school year if enrolled at the beginning of the school year.

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- Annual test for English Language Proficiency – in addition to an initial assessment for identification and program placement, all identified EL students must be assessed annually for English language proficiency in four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- Each district with a school that is attended by at least eight English learners is required to file a plan of Service. The Plan of Service requirements are based on Alaska Regulation 4 AAC 34.055.

Exit Procedures

- A student may be exited from EL status as a result of testing on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 if a student has:
  - Minimum composite and individual domain scores (reading, writing, speaking and listening) determined by data collected by the spring administration of the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, taking into consideration the score changes brought on by the standard-setting process.
    - Possible exit criteria (will be reviewed based on 2017 ACCESS 2.0 scores)
    - Composite score of 4.5
    - Domain Scores
      - Reading 4.0
      - Writing 3.8
      - Speaking 4.0
      - Listening 4.0
- After meeting exit criteria, a former EL student will be in monitoring status for four years using the State content-based assessments in English language arts and math (for students grades 3-10).
- Re-identifying a former EL student – the district will administer the MODEL or W-APT after one semester of exit from LEP status should the student struggle academically.

2. SEA Support for English Learner Progress *(ESEA section 3113(b)(6))*: Describe how the SEA will assist eligible entities in meeting:

i. The State-designed long-term goals established under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii), including measurements of interim progress towards meeting such goals, based on the State's English language proficiency assessments under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(G); and

ii. The challenging State academic standards.

To help districts and schools meet State-designed long-term goals, DEED belongs to the WIDA Consortium. As part of the consortia, districts have access to WIDA English Language Development Standards and materials to provide a research-based framework for English language instruction. These standards are aligned to key principles that Alaska feels meet the instructional needs of ELs. This framework also aligns to Alaska's challenging academic standards by integrating language development with the appropriate academic content matter.

WIDA CLIMBS and WIDA CLIMBS Training of Trainers professional development opportunities are available to teachers and districts to provide training on instructional strategies that specifically address the needs of ELs and intentionally support the WIDA English Language Development Standards.

DEED will examine the reliability of the Alaska Developmental Profile (Alaska's Kindergarten Readiness tool) results for English Learners and identify additional actions that should be taken to increase the reliability of the assessment for EL students.

DEED will develop strategies to provide guidance to LEAs on how to target and provide inclusive family involvement to meet the needs of DLL and EL students. Strategies could include building family engagement in screening and assessment tools, and development of activities that are geared towards meeting the needs of families.

3. Monitoring and Technical Assistance *(ESEA section 3113(b)(8))*: Describe:

i. How the SEA will monitor the progress of each eligible entity receiving a Title III, Part A subgrant in helping English learners achieve English proficiency; and

ii. The steps the SEA will take to further assist eligible entities if the strategies funded under Title III, Part A are not effective, such as providing technical assistance and modifying such strategies.

The DEED Title III-A program is responsible for the oversight of the language instruction of English learners and immigrant students. This program engages in the following strategies to ensure successful language instruction:

- Administers grant programs that help students develop proficiency in English and achieve high content standards.
- Monitors federal-funded programs and provides technical assistance that address outcomes and accountability.
    - DEED formally monitors districts on a five-year cycle. Desk audits are performed as needed and are determined by a risk assessment process.
- Recommends policies that promote best practices for meeting the needs of English learners.
    - Districts with more than eight English learners are required to submit a Plan of Service outlining the identification and exit procedures for ELs as well as details regarding how the district determines the needs of their EL population and services provided. This is a five-year plan that is updated when the needs of the students or services change. A current copy of the Plan of Service is also included in the district Consolidated Application.
    - A DEED team that includes the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 program manager, Title III-A program manager, and data management staff meet on a regular basis to discuss EL related topics that include assessment scores and district programs. This team strives to gain insight into the overall progress of English learners.
- The Title III-A program manager provides support to Title III-A schools, as well as districts with more than eight English learners. Support includes:
    - Updates and information regarding English learners in a weekly newsletter
    - Support and technical assistance in creating Plans of Service
    - Connecting districts with similar programs and/or challenges
    - Focused technical assistance during monitoring visits or desk audits
    - Updates on any policy or procedural requirements
    - Creating guidance to support districts and schools
    - Scheduled informational webinars
    - Providing information regarding WIDA materials and trainings
    - Acting as a liaison between other Title programs and the assessment team

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Technical Assistance for Supporting Early Learners

- Alaska will coordinate technical assistance and other related activities with the Head Start Collaboration Office.

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F. Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

1. Use of Funds *(ESEA section 4103(c)(2)(A)):* Describe how the SEA will use funds received under Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1 for State-level activities.

Initially, DEED will utilize its Title IV Part A State funding for state-level activities to support school health and safety. Alaska is disproportionately affected by behavioral health and social challenges that negatively impact student health, behavior in the classroom, and learning. Examples of these Alaska challenges include: the highest known incidence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders in the nation, one of the highest rates of child abuse and neglect, the highest rates of domestic violence and sexual assault, high rates of substance abuse, and the highest rate of suicide in the nation. The impact these issues/adverse childhood experiences have on Alaska's students is significant, and DEED will initially use the State's portion of Title IV Part A funding (approximately $80,000) to expand the training and cohesive professional development it provides to districts on critical health and safety topics. DEED will deliver both face-to-face training and state-of-the-art asynchronous distance delivered eLearning training to district personnel.

(A) Utilizing existing partnerships, DEED will expand its delivery of face-to-face health and safety training to school and community members statewide. Mental health issues, which are often either created or exacerbated by adverse childhood experiences, present a formidable barrier to student learning/safety, and addressing the classroom behaviors that arise from unaddressed mental health concerns is daunting for teachers. DEED will offer statewide evidence-based training that increases knowledge of mental illnesses, increases first aid delivered to youth, and reduces stigmas associated with mental illness with Title IV Part A State funds. The training will provide the tools community members and school personnel need to intervene when youth may be experiencing suicidal thoughts/behaviors, self-injury, panic attacks, reactions to trauma, psychosis, substance abuse, and aggressive behaviors. Additionally, the training will assist schools in becoming trauma sensitive and build statewide capacity to address a broad spectrum of emergent health and safety priorities affecting school-aged youth—such as, the state's current opioid epidemic.

(B) DEED will expand its distance-delivered eLearning Program. This program currently offers 50 online courses to more than 16,000 users and employs state-of-the-art technology to deliver timely and cost effective asynchronous educational training to teachers, other district personnel, school service providers, and parents. This system offers educators and other education stakeholders training on many health, safety, and educational topics that play a vital role in improving academic achievement. District feedback on this system has been positive—indicating it provides high quality training, limits the loss of teacher instructional time often incurred by training, and saves them significant funding they would otherwise spend on acquiring/delivering the training.

The eLearning Program delivers many courses on student health related topics like suicide prevention, alcohol and drug related disabilities, child abuse and neglect prevention, domestic violence and sexual assault prevention, and dating violence prevention that all contribute to achieving trauma sensitive schools. DEED will expand its offerings to include new courses on critical topics like adverse childhood experiences, trauma informed schools, and opioid prevention/intervention. DEED will also update existing courses to keep them

current on best practices and emerging educational research. For example, DEED will partner with its regional equity support center, the Western Educational Equity Assistance Center within the Metropolitan State University of Denver, to update its eLearning training materials on bullying, harassment, and intimidation prevention.

In addition to growing its health and safety course offerings, DEED envisions expanding its utilization of the eLearning system to support districts both in understanding and implementing ESSA.

(C) Finally, DEED will pass through 95 percent of Title IV Part A funding to districts. DEED will utilize a portion of its Title IV Part A State-level activities funding to provide monitoring of, and training, technical assistance, and capacity building, to the districts that receive the preponderance of the Title IV Part A funds.

2. Awarding Subgrants *(ESEA section 4103(c)(2)(B))*: Describe how the SEA will ensure that awards made to LEAs under Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1 are in amounts that are consistent with ESEA section 4105(a)(2).

DEED's Division of Finance and Support Services, Administrative Finance Unit will be responsible for calculating district Title IV Part A allocations. These calculations will be determined in accordance with this ESEA section's minimum local education agency allocation requirement that no district receive less than $10,000.

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G. Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers

1. Use of Funds *(ESEA section 4203(a)(2))*: Describe how the SEA will use funds received under the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, including funds reserved for State-level activities.

In any given year, DEED will utilize up to the full seven percent of funds allowable for State usage to complete some or all of the following activities:

- Write a Request for Application (RFA) that solicits grant proposals that will create or expand community learning centers that support students' academic and non-academic needs and satisfy all 21st CCLC statutory requirements.
- Conduct the competitive application process that adheres to all 21st CCLC statutory requirements.
- Provide a list of potential external organizations sub-grantees might partner with.
- Collect and submit all federally required 21st CCLC data and reporting.
- Provide technical assistance and capacity building through online and in-person directors meetings, a 21st CCLC dedicated website, email messages, and individual calls and web-conferencing.
- Collaborate to provide cohesive professional development on best practices through a state conference on afterschool programs.
- Collaborate with and support a network of afterschool providers.
- Provide a state mentor as well as peer-level site visits.
- Monitor for compliance with state and federal statutes and regulations in accordance with the Uniform Grant Guidance requirement to distinguish between low-risk and high-risk grantees.
- Work with an external evaluator to conduct evaluation processes and reports that lead to continuous improvement cycles.

The focus of professional development and technical assistance will be guided by current needs of the grantees, but has recently included STEM, inclusive programming, working with partners, structured physical activity, hands-on math, project based learning, culturally-relevant programming, positive youth development, and behavior management. In the future, DEED will be providing cohesive professional development for grantees in the areas of trauma-informed instruction and the use of technology to support individualized student learning.

2. Awarding Subgrants *(ESEA section 4203(a)(4)):* Describe the procedures and criteria the SEA will use for reviewing applications and awarding 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds to eligible entities on a competitive basis, which shall include procedures and criteria that take into consideration the likelihood that a proposed community learning center will help participating students meet the challenging State academic standards and any local academic standards.

DEED issues competitive grant awards as outlined in the Request for Applications (RFA). Each cycle, the 21st CCLC State Director meets with their Division Director's office and aligns any relevant state and national priorities for serving the target populations within the grant application. The RFA includes priorities mandated in federal 21st CCLC statute. Additionally, determinations are made regarding whether to offer additional priority points to boost applications to serve areas or populations that are underserved among the existing 21st CCLC grantees (e.g. high school programs, rural programs) or to encourage applications that will support relevant State initiatives.

Overall, the RFA is designed to promote the academic achievement of the students served through the intentionality of the services outlined. In order to be funded, programs have to primarily target academic improvement and be based upon a current needs assessment. Measures, such as improvement of grades or standardized test scores and improved classroom academic and/or social-emotional behaviors, are typically required performance measures for funded proposals.

Although the process may be adjusted or revised for a given year as DEED determines necessary, in general, the RFA review cycle proceeds in the following manner to ensure the quality of funded projects:

- The release of the RFA is announced through several different methods (e.g. email, website, newspaper). Applicants typically have six to ten weeks to submit applications. During that time the 21st CCLC Program Manager offers technical assistance, primarily via webinar.

- With approval of DEED's Commissioner of Education, the Program Manager assembles a balanced review team that will ideally have strong knowledge of best practices in education and afterschool, positive youth development, and grant management, as well as awareness of the unique challenges faced in rural Alaska. All reviewers must be free from conflict of interest.

- Reviewers are gathered initially to go through the RFA and receive training on topics such as the scoring rubric and eligible point values, applicants and potential conflicts of interest, all written comments becoming public property, and guidance about DEED priority points for that RFA.

- The 21st CCLC Program Manager verifies the applications meet the eligibility criteria expressed in the competitive RFA, such as the page limitations, deadline date for submission, and priority points. Reviewers are given all eligible grant applications and are generally given two to four weeks to review and initially score/rank all proposals. (While we prefer all reviewers to review and score all applications, if we receive an overwhelming number of applications, we will revise the process to use a two-tier scoring process.) Prior to the date of the final review, all reviewers provide their initial scores on each application to the Program Manager. These scores are loaded into a spreadsheet so that the sum totals can be viewed during the review.

- Reviewers gather and the Program Manager facilitates the conversation around each application, providing an opportunity to have reviewers provide feedback for improvement or questions regarding each section. These comments may be provided to the applicants along with their scores. Where there are significant scoring differences, the program manager facilitates a conversation around the scores, and reviewers are given an opportunity to change their scores based on the discovery of information or lack thereof. Once the scores are adjusted based on the conversation, the spreadsheet is revised for the new values, displaying the applicants based on the total number of scoring points high to low. The reviewers then look at the eligible applicants and their request for funding, deducting each fiscal request until there are no more funds available. Reviewers may eliminate budgetary items they feel are excessive in order to reach down to fund another applicant if desired.

- Once they have made a determination, the Program Manager re-checks all point values and sets up a meeting with their Division's Director's office. During this meeting, the Program Manager

must explain the process used to select the grantees, show the Director the spreadsheet of scores, and review any potential concerns with the selection process. The Director looks for any oddities in scoring or potential challenges that cannot be defended. Once it is clear there are none, the recommendations are forwarded through the Director's Office to the Commissioner of Education for final approval of release.

- All applicants are notified of the funding decisions and scores are provided. Successful applicants are sent a Notice of Intent to award. If applicable, the Program Manager may request a revised budget that addresses items such as unallowable or excessive costs that may have been identified during the review process. Within the RFA, all applicants are made aware of Alaska's funding appeals process that is set by Alaska Administrative Code. No final awards are issued until after 30 days have passed without any applicant filing an official appeal.

Through the process described above, Alaska is able to select entities that are best able to operate community learning centers that help participating students meet the challenging State academic standards, as well as local academic standards.

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H. Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program

1. Outcomes and Objectives *(ESSA Section 5223(b)(1)):* Provide information on program objectives and outcomes for activities under Title V, Part B, Subpart 2, including how the SEA will use funds to help all students meet the challenging State standards.

Alaska is not applying to receive and administer Rural and Low-Income School Program (RLIS) funds to eligible districts, and therefore, will not set State-level program objectives and outcomes for RLIS-funded activities. Instead, as provided in ESSA section 5221, (a)(3)(A) and (C), Alaska will allow US ED to distribute these funds directly to Alaska's eligible districts beginning in the 2017-18 school year. This will enable each eligible district the opportunity to set relevant and individual district-specific objectives and outcomes when describing how the RLIS funds will help their students meet the challenging State standards. DEED believes this will also help districts to better use this small amount of funding by making it easier to blend and coordinate it with other district-specific funding and initiatives.

There are several factors that support this as the best course of action for Alaska's districts:

- Due to changes brought about by ESSA, approximately 25 of 54 Alaska districts will have the option and necessity to *choose* between receiving the US ED-administered Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) grant or the RLIS grant. Because of eligibility for RLIS being *dependent* upon whether a district applied to US ED for SRSA funding, it seems more logical for Alaska districts to simply apply to US ED for RLIS funds, too, instead of to DEED.

- Under ESSA, DEED anticipates the maximum amount of RLIS funding reserved for Alaska would be $300,000 total. If these funds were distributed to eligible districts based on student population, half the districts would receive awards of less than $5,000 per year, with some awards being less than $1,000. At this time, DEED does not have the staffing capacity to provide technical assistance on implementing RLIS activities and to report to US ED on whether a sub-grantee receiving $1,000 has met State-determined program objectives and outcomes.

- In a typical year, DEED strives to approve district ESEA funding in June and July. However, US ED has indicated it will not be able to inform us which districts are eligible to apply for RLIS funds prior to late July. How much RLIS funding Alaska is eligible for may be communicated even later in the summer, and the actual award to DEED is not scheduled to happen until September. This places the RLIS application on a different timeline than our other DEED district application processes and thus reduces potential efficiency.

2. Technical Assistance *(ESEA section 5223(b)(3)):* Describe how the SEA will provide technical assistance to eligible LEAs to help such agencies implement the activities described in ESEA section 5222.

Alaska is not applying to receive and administer RLIS funds to eligible districts and instead will allow US ED to distribute the funds directly to Alaska's eligible districts beginning in the 2017-18 school year. DEED will provide information to Alaska districts to help them understand their eligibility.

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I. Education for Homeless Children and Youth program, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Title VII, Subtitle B

1. Student Identification *(722(g)(1)(B) of the McKinney-Vento Act)*: Describe the procedures the SEA will use to identify homeless children and youth in the State and to assess their needs.

DEED will provide technical assistance and guidance to districts and schools on the identification of homeless students.

Identification

In Alaska, the identification of homeless children and youth is the responsibility of the district. A district-appointed Homeless Liaison, who will serve as the key contact for the school district will be responsible for:

- Identification of homeless children and youth
  - Providing the definition of homelessness to all school employees
  - Implementing the appropriate processes and procedures for keeping track of and reporting information regarding homeless students in the district to district and school staff.
- Ensuring that the homeless student is able to enroll immediately and participate fully in school.
- Informing parents and guardians of the rights of the student.
- Ensuring the public posting of educational rights throughout the school district and community.

The liaison is responsible for training **all** school and district personnel on how to identify homeless students using McKinney-Vento Eligibility Guidelines and ensuring that they have adequate transportation to attend the school of origin and that all barriers to registration are eliminated. Other duties of the liaison include:

- Determining the situation of the family and youth regarding the youth's living arrangements.
- Using the definition of homelessness in the McKinney-Vento Act, to determine what services the student is eligible for.
- Gathering additional information about the student from other agencies to assist with the identification of homeless students and the determination of services to provide.

Needs Assessment

The primary responsibility for assessing the needs of homeless students and youth lies with the district and school. The district's needs assessment tool will identify the needs of the students and organize the services that the students will receive.

2. Dispute Resolution *(722(g)(1)(C) of the McKinney-Vento Act)*: Describe procedures for the prompt resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youth.

DEED has established a dispute resolution procedure process outlined in regulation. The regulation requires the individual to first file a complaint with the district. If the complaint is not resolved by the district, the individual may file a complaint with DEED according to the procedures outlined in the regulation.

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3. Support for School Personnel *(722(g)(1)(D) of the McKinney-Vento Act)*: Describe programs for school personnel (including the LEA liaisons for homeless children and youth, principals and other school leaders, attendance officers, teachers, enrollment personnel, and specialized instructional support personnel) to heighten the awareness of such school personnel of the specific needs of homeless children and youth, including runaway and homeless children and youth.

DEED will provide ongoing technical assistance and guidance as needed to all school personnel on the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program. District Homeless Liaisons will be provided with training guidelines and training updates as they become available. Training opportunities include face-to-face training at the Annual Technical Assistance Workshop (Federal Programs), weekly newsletter updates, updated information as it becomes available via email, and webinars.

DEED will also conduct monitoring visits to all districts during scheduled ESEA monitoring visits. During these visits, DEED program managers will provide individualized technical assistance to Homeless Liaisons to ensure all processes and procedures meet the requirements outlined in the McKinney-Vento Education Act.

Additional support includes:

- Weekly newsletter
- Webinar trainings
- Resources for district homeless training sessions

4. Access to Services *(722(g)(1)(F) of the McKinney-Vento Act)*: Describe procedures that ensure that:

i. Homeless children have access to public preschool programs, administered by the SEA or LEA, as provided to other children in the State;

ii. Homeless youth and youth separated from public schools are identified and accorded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services, including by identifying and removing barriers that prevent youth described in this clause from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with State, local, and school policies; and

iii. Homeless children and youth who meet the relevant eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs, if such programs are available at the State and local levels.

DEED ensures preschool-aged children experiencing homelessness have the same access to early childhood and preschool programs as all other students. Solutions to the barriers described below apply to early childhood and preschool students to ensure they are able to attend school immediately.

Information gathered from a Student Residency Questionnaire will help district liaisons connect homeless, unaccompanied youth with service providers who will advocate on behalf of the children and youth to ensure they have the opportunity to return to school and participate in these programs. The State homeless coordinator works with district liaisons and school counselors at the secondary

level to make sure homeless youth are receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework in accordance with State, local, and school policies.

Every effort will be made by the districts and schools to remove barriers to homeless children and youth participating in all academic and extracurricular activities. DEED will work with state athletic associations to ensure access and opportunity is available for all students.

5. **Strategies to Address Other Problems** *(722(g)(1)H) of the McKinney-Vento Act)*: Provide strategies to address other problems with respect to the education of homeless children and youth, including problems resulting from enrollment delays that are caused by:
    i. Requirements of immunization and other required health records;
    ii. Residency requirements;
    iii. Lack of birth certificates, school records, or other documents;
    iv. Guardianship issues; or
    v. Uniform or dress code requirements

Processes and procedures in Alaska allow any homeless student or youth to enroll immediately. Verification of these policies will occur during scheduled ESEA monitoring visits.

<u>Immunization and other required health records:</u>
Homeless students may provisionally enroll in a public school for a period of up to 30 days while proof of immunization records are obtained. Upon enrollment, the Homeless Liaison is contacted to help facilitate obtaining immunization records or immunizations for the students as necessary. The Alaska Division of Public Health works with the district to ensure the proper services are provided so the student can attend school immediately.

<u>Residency requirements:</u>
The district will have a Student Residency Questionnaire (nighttime living status of every student). This form will ask questions about the family, where the family is staying, and siblings. The district liaison can coordinate with various agencies and service providers who work with homeless youth.

<u>Lack of birth certificates, school records, or other documents:</u>
DEED verifies that district policies provide for time-line waivers for producing medical, school, and other records so that homeless students can immediately be enrolled in school.

<u>Guardianship issues:</u>
DEED verifies that districts have developed a caregiver form establishing responsibilities of caregivers that requests their contact information replace traditional proof of guardianship. This form should not create further barriers or delay school enrollment.

<u>Uniform or dress code requirements:</u>
DEED verifies that district policies provide waivers for uniform fees so that homeless students may fully participate in all aspects of school immediately.

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6. Policies to Remove Barriers *(722(g)(1)(I) of McKinney-Vento Act)* Demonstrate that the SEA and LEAs in the State have developed, and shall review and revise, policies to remove barriers to the identification of homeless children and youth in schools in the State, including barriers to enrollment and retention due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences.
DEED verifies that district liaisons and district policies and practices do not act as barriers to enrolling homeless students, including public notices of rights, enrollment assistance, waivers for producing medical records, school records, or other potential obstacles to enrollment.
7. Assistance for Counselors *(722(g)(2)(K)):* A description of how youths described in section 725(2) will receive assistance from counselors to advise such youths, and prepare and improve the readiness of such youths for college.

A multi-program approach is used to support counselors assisting homeless students.
• DEED's School Health and Safety Team provides school counselors with information and support on:
  ○ Trauma-informed schools
  ○ Suicide prevention
  ○ Partnerships with State agencies that provide health and safety related services
• The Federal Programs team provides support and guidance about funding available through Title I-A to support homeless students.
 	
To support homeless students and youth prepare for college and career readiness, DEED will provide support and resources to counselors to assist these students, as well as provide information regarding resources for:
• Credit Recovery
• Tutoring
• ACT/SAT fee assistance
• FAFSA application assistance for special circumstances
• Alaska Performance Scholarship requirements

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Appendix A: Measures of interim progress

Instructions: Each SEA must include the measurements of interim progress toward meeting the long-term goals for academic achievement, graduation rates, and English language proficiency, set forth in the State's response to Title I, Part A question 4.iii, for all students and separately for each subgroup of students, including those listed in response to question 4.i.a. of this document. For academic achievement and graduation rates, the State's measurements of interim progress must take into account the improvement necessary on such measures to make significant progress in closing statewide proficiency and graduation rate gaps.

A. Academic Achievement

		Goal of Reduce by 1/2 percentage not proficient or above by 2027; equal										
	estimated baseline*	Measures of Interim Progress									**Long Term Goal**	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	
ELA	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	annual increment needed
All students	**34.8**	38.1	41.3	44.6	47.8	51.1	54.4	57.6	60.9	64.1	67.4	3.3
SWDs	**7.9**	12.5	17.1	21.7	26.3	30.9	35.5	40.1	44.7	49.3	54.0	4.6
ELs	**4.4**	9.2	14.0	18.7	23.5	28.3	33.1	37.9	42.6	47.4	52.2	4.8
Ec Disadvantaged	**20.3**	24.3	28.3	32.3	36.2	40.2	44.2	48.2	52.2	56.2	60.2	4.0
AK Native/AI	**13.6**	17.9	22.2	26.6	30.9	35.2	39.5	43.8	48.2	52.5	56.8	4.3
Caucasian	**47.5**	50.1	52.8	55.4	58.0	60.6	63.3	65.9	68.5	71.1	73.8	2.6
Asian/Pac Is	**27.7**	31.3	34.9	38.5	42.2	45.8	49.4	53.0	56.6	60.2	63.9	3.6
African Am	**23.6**	27.4	31.2	35.1	38.9	42.7	46.5	50.3	54.2	58.0	61.8	3.8
Hispanic	**31.5**	34.9	38.4	41.8	45.2	48.6	52.1	55.5	58.9	62.3	65.8	3.4
Two/More Races	**37.0**	40.2	43.3	46.5	49.6	52.8	55.9	59.1	62.2	65.4	68.5	3.2

**modeled on 2015 data, will be updated with 2017 assessment data*

		Goal of Reduce by 1/2 percentage not proficient or above by 2027; equal										
	estimated baseline*	Measures of Interim Progress									**Long Term Goal**	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	
Math	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	annual increment needed
All students	**31.2**	34.6	38.1	41.5	45.0	48.4	51.8	55.3	58.7	62.2	65.6	3.4
SWDs	**7.9**	12.5	17.1	21.7	26.3	30.9	35.5	40.1	44.7	49.3	54.0	4.6
ELs	**7.9**	12.5	17.1	21.7	26.3	30.9	35.5	40.1	44.7	49.3	54.0	4.6
Ec Disadvantaged	**18.8**	22.9	26.9	31.0	35.0	39.1	43.2	47.2	51.3	55.3	59.4	4.1
AK Native/AI	**13.9**	18.2	22.5	26.8	31.1	35.4	39.7	44.0	48.3	52.6	57.0	4.3
Caucasian	**41**	44.0	46.9	49.9	52.8	55.8	58.7	61.7	64.6	67.6	70.5	3.0
Asian/Pac Is	**30.1**	33.6	37.1	40.6	44.1	47.6	51.1	54.6	58.1	61.6	65.1	3.5
African Am	**19.6**	23.6	27.6	31.7	35.7	39.7	43.7	47.7	51.8	55.8	59.8	4.0
Hispanic	**25.9**	29.6	33.3	37.0	40.7	44.4	48.1	51.8	55.5	59.2	63.0	3.7
Two/More Races	**33.2**	36.5	39.9	43.2	46.6	49.9	53.2	56.6	59.9	63.3	66.6	3.3

**modeled on 2015 data, will be updated with 2017 assessment data*

Appendix A: Measures of interim progress

B. Graduation Rates

4-Year Adjust Cohort Graduation Rate Goal of 90% by 2026-2027												
	estimated baseline*	Measures of Interim Progress									Long Term Goal	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	
	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	annual increment needed
All students	76.1	77.5	78.9	80.3	81.7	83.1	84.4	85.8	87.2	88.6	90.0	1.4
SWDs	53.9	57.5	61.1	64.7	68.3	72.0	75.6	79.2	82.8	86.4	90.0	3.6
ELLs	54.7	58.2	61.8	65.3	68.8	72.4	75.9	79.4	82.9	86.5	90.0	3.5
Ec Dis	68.4	70.6	72.7	74.9	77.0	79.2	81.4	83.5	85.7	87.8	90.0	2.2
AK Nat/AI	64.1	66.7	69.3	71.9	74.5	77.1	79.6	82.2	84.8	87.4	90.0	2.6
Caucasian	80.8	81.7	82.6	83.6	84.5	85.4	86.3	87.2	88.2	89.1	90.0	0.9
Asian/PI	81.3	82.2	83.0	83.9	84.8	85.7	86.5	87.4	88.3	89.1	90.0	0.9
Af Am	74.4	76.0	77.5	79.1	80.6	82.2	83.8	85.3	86.9	88.4	90.0	1.6
Hispanic	76.0	77.4	78.8	80.2	81.6	83.0	84.4	85.8	87.2	88.6	90.0	1.4
Two/More	75.4	76.9	78.3	79.8	81.2	82.7	84.2	85.6	87.1	88.5	90.0	1.5
**estimate based on 2015-2016 data, will be updated to reflect new baseline with 2016-2017 data*												

5-Year Adjust Cohort Graduation Rate Goal of 93% by 2026-2027												
	estimated baseline*	Measures of Interim Progress									Long Term Goal	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	
	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	annual increment needed
All students	80.8	82.0	83.2	84.5	85.7	86.9	88.1	89.3	90.6	91.8	93.0	1.2
SWDs	65.8	68.5	71.3	74.0	76.7	79.4	82.1	84.8	87.6	90.3	93.0	2.7
ELs	64.6	67.5	70.3	73.1	76.0	78.8	81.6	84.5	87.3	90.2	93.0	2.8
Ec Dis	75.3	77.1	78.9	80.6	82.4	84.2	85.9	87.7	89.5	91.2	93.0	1.8
AK Nat/AI	70.9	73.1	75.3	77.5	79.8	82.0	84.2	86.4	88.6	90.8	93.0	2.2
Caucasian	83.9	84.8	85.7	86.6	87.5	88.5	89.4	90.3	91.2	92.1	93.0	0.9
Asian/PI	87.7	88.2	88.7	89.3	89.8	90.3	90.9	91.4	91.9	92.5	93.0	0.5
Af Am	75.9	77.6	79.3	81.0	82.7	84.5	86.2	87.9	89.6	91.3	93.0	1.7
Hispanic	78.1	79.6	81.1	82.6	84.1	85.6	87.0	88.5	90.0	91.5	93.0	1.5
Two/More	82.1	83.2	84.3	85.4	86.5	87.6	88.6	89.7	90.8	91.9	93.0	1.1
**estimate based on 2015-2016 data, will be updated to reflect new baseline with 2016-2017 data*												

Appendix A: Measures of interim progress

C. Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency

Progress toward Attaining English Proficiency Goal of 80% by 2026-2027												
	estimated baseline*	Measures of Interim Progress									Long Term Goal	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	
	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	annual increment needed
All English learners	47.5	50.8	54.0	57.3	60.5	63.8	67.0	70.3	73.5	76.8	80.0	3.3
**estimate based on 2014-2015 data, will be updated to reflect new baseline with 2016-2017 data*												

Appendix B

OMB Control No. 1894-0005 (Exp. 03/31/2017)

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS

The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about a new provision in the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) that applies to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs. This provision is Section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law (P.L.) 103-382).

To Whom Does This Provision Apply?

Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new grant awards under this program. **ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW AWARDS MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.**

(If this program is a State-formula grant program, a State needs to provide this description only for projects or activities that it carries out with funds reserved for State-level uses. In addition, local school districts or other eligible applicants that apply to the State for funding need to provide this description in their applications to the State for funding. The State would be responsible for ensuring that the school district or other local entity has submitted a sufficient section 427 statement as described below.)

What Does This Provision Require?

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.

Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully participate in the project and to achieve to high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use the Federal funds awarded to it to eliminate barriers it identifies.

What are Examples of How an Applicant Might Satisfy the Requirement of This Provision?

The following examples may help illustrate how an applicant may comply with Section 427.

(1) An applicant that proposes to carry out an adult literacy project serving, among others, adults with limited English proficiency, might describe in its application how it intends to distribute a brochure about the proposed project to such potential participants in their native language.

(2) An applicant that proposes to develop instructional materials for classroom use might describe how it will make the materials available on audio tape or in braille for students who are blind.

(3) An applicant that proposes to carry out a model science program for secondary students and is concerned that girls may be less likely than boys to enroll in the course, might indicate how it intends to conduct "outreach" efforts to girls, to encourage their enrollment.

(4) An applicant that proposes a project to increase school safety might describe the special efforts it will take to address concern of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, and efforts to reach out to and involve the families of LGBT students

We recognize that many applicants may already be implementing effective steps to ensure equity of access and participation in their grant programs, and we appreciate your cooperation in responding to the requirements of this provision.