



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Education
& Early Development

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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April 18, 2025

Dear Superintendents,

Thank you for your questions and engagement surrounding the U. S. Department of Education's requests regarding Title VI.

On April 4, 2025, I forwarded to you an April 3, 2025, letter from the United States Department of Education (US ED), titled *Reminder of Legal Obligations Undertaken in Exchange for Receiving Federal Financial Assistance and Request for Certification under Title VI and SFFA v. Harvard*. This letter seeks certification from state departments of education and school districts that they will comply with legal obligations outlined in the April 3 letter, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1965. US ED has advised that failure to comply with federal law may result in enforcement actions, including the loss of federal funding.

On April 11, 2025, I reached out with an update on this matter—that per US ED's directive, I was forwarding the agreement between the National Educational Association (NEA) and the United States Department of Education (US ED), which came about after NEA filed a motion for a temporary restraining order in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire. This agreement addressed the US ED's letter of April 3, 2025.

I am writing now to provide an additional update regarding the April 3 letter and the request for certification. First, I want to confirm that I will be signing the certification on behalf of DEED and submitting it to the U.S. Department of Education by April 24. This action, consistent with our past practice, affirms Alaska's compliance with federal anti-discrimination laws.

We are requesting that the superintendent or chief school administrator of each district sign the FY2026 Consolidated Federal Programs Assurances & Certifications Packet. First, please **email the signed certification form to deborah.riddle@alaska.gov by 5:00 p.m. on April 24, 2025**. Then, as part of the standard process, you will upload this signed packet to your Consolidated Application as you normally do.

If you need more time to return the signed certification, please reach out to me with the reason for the extension request and your anticipated submission date. I understand that some of you may need extra time. Thank you to the superintendents who have already submitted the certification form. As a reminder, like most state and school district records, the requested certification is subject to public inspection under the Public Records Act.

DEED will be maintaining these certification forms on file, just as it has maintained previous annual assurances from school districts submitted as part of the Consolidated Federal Programs Assurances and Certifications packet. As noted in my April 4th email, LEAs are already required to sign assurances as part of this packet that include the assurance that recipients will comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.¹

As you review the attached certification form, you may also wish to consult prior communication and resources from US ED related to the obligations of recipients of federal funding, including the attached February 14, 2025, *Dear Colleague Letter* and *Frequently Asked Questions About Racial Preferences and Stereotypes Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act*.

Finally, I want to reaffirm our collective commitment to ensuring that every student in Alaska receives an education free from discrimination. As superintendents, we have a responsibility to uphold fairness and equal opportunity for all students. This is a long-standing principle. As the Governor noted recently on Elizabeth Peratrovich Day, Alaska enacted the first anti-discrimination law of its kind in the United States.

I thank you in advance for your commitment to the students of Alaska and your commitment to providing an education free of discrimination. I look forward to our biweekly superintendent meeting on Monday, April 21 and would be happy to discuss this issue then as you may have additional questions.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Deena M. Bishop', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Deena M. Bishop, Ed.D.

¹ See Consolidated Federal Programs Assurances and Certifications packet, attached to my April 4, 2025 email to all superintendents. Page 5, Items 12 and 13, state:

12. That equal access to educational programs and services is provided to all students. The eligible recipient will not discriminate against any student and will comply with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, and regulations implementing these statutes.

13. That provisions will be made to provide program and facility access and opportunities for students who desire to participate in these services, programs, and activities regardless of race, national origin, disability, language proficiency, pregnancy, parenting, or marital status.