

# Alaska's Definition of Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools

## For School Improvement Grant (SIG) Eligibility for 2011-2012

January 24, 2011

### Overview of Criteria for Tiers

#### Tier I

*Any Title I School at Level 2 or above (in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring) for 2010-2011 with more than 25 FAY students tested on the SBAs in 2009-2010 and 2008-2009 that:*

- ✓ Is among the lowest-achieving 5%, or 5, whichever number is greater (6 schools in Alaska) of those schools; or,
- ✓ Is a school that includes grade 12 that has had a graduation rate of less than 60 percent for 3 years

#### Tier II

*Any secondary school with more than 25 FAY students tested on the SBAs in 2009-2010 and 2008-2009 that is either eligible for but did not receive Title I, Part A funds in 2010-2011 or any Title I secondary school (did receive Title I, Part A funds in 2010-2011) not on the Tier I list, that is in the bottom 20% of all schools in the state based on proficiency rates or has not made AYP for two consecutive years that:*

- ✓ Is among the lowest-achieving five percent, or 5, whichever number is greater (5 schools in Alaska) of those schools; or
- ✓ Is a school that includes grade 12 that has had a graduation rate of less than 60 percent for 3 years

#### Tier III

*Any Title I school at Level 2 or above that is not a Tier I or Tier II school and any schools excluded from the Tier I or Tier II pool who had 25 or fewer FAY students.*

### Definitions of Relevant Terms

- **Secondary school** – schools with grades 7 through 12, or any appropriate combination of grades within this range (AS 14.03.070). Secondary schools include K-12 schools, middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools. K-8 schools are designated as elementary schools.
- **Number of years for determining academic proficiency** – the state will determine academic proficiency over two years, based on test scores from 2008-2009 and 2009-2010.
- **Number of years for determining graduation rate** – the state will determine graduation rates based on three years, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, and 2009-2010. A secondary school that includes grade 12 will be considered to be persistently low achieving when it has a graduation rate of less than 60% for all three years.
- **Full Academic Year (FAY)** – the state will include students in the academic proficiency calculations who have been enrolled in the school for the full academic year (FAY) as defined in the state's Accountability Workbook.
- **Standards Based Assessments (SBAs)** – the state Standards Based Assessments in reading, writing, and math on which the academic proficiency and adequate yearly progress (AYP) for reading/language arts and math is based.
- **School Index Point Value** – the score given to each school in the state that reflects progress made on the SBAs by individual students in the school across a period of two test administrations. See "Lack of Progress" description for more information.

### **Method used to determine academic proficiency**

The state is using the adding ranks method to determine academic proficiency on the state's assessments (SBAs) in reading/language arts and mathematics, combined. All schools that have more than 25 FAY students in each assessment year will be ranked from highest to lowest for each year in each content area with the highest performing school in the given content area and test administration receiving a rank of 1. Those 4 ranks (2 years for each of 2 content areas) will be added to determine a combined rank. Using the combined rank, the schools will be re-ranked so the highest performing school has a rank of 1. This same method is used to rank all schools in the state to determine those in the lowest quintile (20%) of performance according to proficiency on the SBAs.

### **Lack of Progress**

The state will use the school index point value to determine lack of progress. Schools that have a school index point value of less than 90 will be considered to be lacking in progress. The school index point value is a score that is given to each school that reflects the progress made by individual students in the school. The school index point value was originally created as a measurement of a schools' growth in order to award financial bonuses through the Performance Incentive Program to reward staff in schools that achieved significant growth. Each student who takes the SBAs is given a point value that compares that student's proficiency level to the proficiency level on the prior year's test and measures the student's growth or decline in achievement. All of the individual FAY student point values are totaled and then divided by the total number of FAY students who attempted the test during both administrations to get the school growth index score. The value table created to implement this legislation provides a range of school growth index scores from 0 to 200. Schools that receive a score of 85 or less are considered to be declining in achievement. State regulation 4 AAC 06.872 uses the school index point value of less than or equal to 85 as one measure to identify schools that are lowest performing and must receive additional analysis by the state to determine the reasons for lack of progress in the school. The school index point value is described completely in regulation 4 AAC 33.540.

### **Weighting**

The state did not apply any weighting criteria in determining the list of persistently lowest achieving schools.

### **Lowest 5%**

The number of Tier I schools in the lowest 5% is 6. Alaska has 122 Title I Schools in improvement, corrective action or restructuring (at AYP Level 2 or above) for 2010-2011 based on the 2009-2010 SBA results.

The number of Tier II schools in the lowest achieving 5% is 5. The number of schools in the pool for Tier II, using the waiver to allow inclusion of Title I participating secondary schools, is 100, so the minimum number of lowest achieving schools is 5. (The Tier II pool uses the waiver flexibility to include Title I secondary schools not already identified in Tier I that either have not made AYP for at least two consecutive years; or are in the state's lowest quintile of performance based on proficiency on the state's assessments in reading/language arts and math, combined).

### **Waivers and Excluded Schools**

Alaska is using the flexibility provided by two waivers.

#### *Exclude Schools below a "Minimum n"*

Pursuant to the flexibility granted by this waiver, schools were excluded from the pool of potential Tier I and Tier II schools that had 25 or fewer FAY students in the "all students group" in one or both assessment years. This exclusion includes schools that did not have any test data for 2008-2009 and/or 2009-2010, very small schools that might reveal personally identifiable information if included on the list,

and “feeder” schools for other schools that carry the AYP designation of the schools they feed. Any schools that were excluded from the pool of schools from which it identified the persistently lowest achieving schools in Tier I or Tier II are included on the list of Tier III schools. The “minimum  $n$ ” size of 25 FAY students was chosen as it is consistent with the state’s Accountability Workbook. According to the state’s Accountability Workbook, a subgroup must have more than 25 students in order to be considered for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP). The “minimum  $n$ ” size for the subgroup is applied in order to ensure that the data on which a school’s progress is measured is valid and reliable.

*Include Title I Secondary Schools in Tier II*

Pursuant to the flexibility granted by this waiver, Alaska will include the following schools in the pool of schools under consideration for Tier II: A secondary school that is either eligible for but did not receive Title I, Part A funds in 2010-2011 **or** any Title I secondary school (did receive Title I, Part A funds in 2010-2011) not identified for Tier I that is in the bottom 20% of all schools in the state based on proficiency rates on the state’s SBAs in reading/language arts and mathematics combined or has not made AYP for two consecutive years. This waiver expands the pool of schools under consideration for Tier II from 55 to 100.

## Newly Eligible

Alaska is not identifying any schools in any Tier through the Newly Eligible criteria authorized by Congress.

### Steps to determine the list of schools in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III

For Tier I:

1. Start with the list of Title I schools at Level 2 or above for 2010-2011.
2. Determine the total number of schools in the pool and the number that represents the lowest 5%, or 5, whichever is higher. There are 122 schools in the pool, so there will be 6 schools in the lowest 5%.
3. Exclude schools from the ranking process that have 25 or fewer FAY students in each test year (2008-2009 and 2009-2010).
4. Rank order the remaining schools on the percent proficient or above of the full academic year (FAY) students in the all students group for each of the following: (rank of 1 = highest percent proficient)
  - ✓ Language arts for 2010
  - ✓ Language arts for 2009
  - ✓ Math for 2010
  - ✓ Math for 2009
5. Add the 4 ranking numbers for each school to create a combined rank.
6. Re-rank based on the combined ranking (rank of 1 = highest rank in reading/language arts and math combined).
7. Determine schools that showed some progress in language arts and in math from 2009 to 2010 (those that had a school index point value of greater than or equal to 90).
8. Remove all schools from consideration for the lowest 5% of achieving schools according to proficiency for Tier I that showed progress according to Step 7.
9. Identify the 6 schools that are the lowest 5% from the schools that remain (count up from the bottom starting with the highest number by rank). Mark these as “Low 5” schools in Tier I. (Note for 2010-2011: If any of the six lowest schools were awarded SIG grants for 2010-2011, exclude those schools from the Low 5 and continue counting up from the bottom until six schools have been identified in the Low 5%.)
10. To complete the list of schools in Tier I add any high school from the ranked group of schools from the original list of 122 (including K-12 schools) that had a graduation rate of *less than* sixty percent for 2008, 2009 *and* 2010. Mark these as “GRAD” schools in Tier I.

For Tier II:

1. Start with the list of Title I eligible, but not participating secondary schools for 2010-2011.
2. Add any Title I participating secondary schools in 2010-2011 not identified as Tier I that are in the bottom 20% of all schools in the state based on proficiency rates on the state’s SBAs in reading/language arts and mathematics combined or who have not made AYP for two consecutive years.
3. Determine the total number of schools in the pool for potential consideration as Tier II and the number that represents the lowest 5%, or 5, whichever is higher. There are 100 schools in the Tier II pool, so there will be 5 schools in the lowest 5%.
4. Complete steps 3-8 as shown in Tier I.
5. Identify the 5 schools that are the lowest 5% from the schools that remain (count up from the bottom starting with the highest number by rank). Mark these as “Low 5” schools Tier II. (Note for 2010-2011: If any of the six lowest schools were awarded SIG grants for 2010-2011, exclude those schools from the Low 5 and continue counting up from the bottom until six schools have been identified in the Low 5%.)

6. To complete the list of schools in Tier II, add any high school from the ranked group of schools from the original Tier II pool (including K-12 schools) that had a graduation rate of less than sixty percent for 2008, 2009, *and* 2010. Mark these as “GRAD” schools in Tier II.

For Tier III

Include in Tier III all schools from the original pools of schools under consideration for Tier I that were not identified as Tier I or Tier II. Also include all schools from the original pool of schools under consideration for Tier I or Tier II that were excluded due to 25 or fewer FAY students . Mark those that were removed from consideration due to 25 or fewer FAY students as “FAY.” Mark others as “Not Tier I” or “Not Tier II” as applicable.