

# Alaska ESSA PLAN

## Excerpts

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Referenced in DEED Presentation  
Relating to School Accountability and Rating System

Senate Education Committee  
February 14, 2019

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<p>students formerly identified as ELs for three years after exit beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, and for four years after exit beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. Stakeholders have indicated over time 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.</p>
<p>d. If applicable, choose one of the following options for recently arrived English learners in the State:</p>
<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(i); or  <input type="checkbox"/> Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(ii); or  <input type="checkbox"/> 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.         </p> <p>Consistent with current practice in Alaska, exception 1111(b)(3)(A)(i) allows the state to exempt recently arrived English learners from one administration of the English language arts (ELA) content assessment. EL students must take the math assessment and the English language proficiency assessment. Performance on the math content assessment may be excluded from the accountability system during the recently arrived EL's first year. In the following years, the student must take the ELA and math content assessments, and those scores are included in the accountability system.</p>
<p>ii. <b>Minimum N-Size (ESEA section 1111(c)(3)(A)):</b></p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Alaska will use 10 as the minimum number of students (minimum <i>n</i>-size) necessary for an indicator to be included in a school's accountability score and designation. The minimum <i>n</i>-size of 10 applies to the all students group and other subgroups for all purposes of the accountability system. As has been the case in Alaska, the minimum <i>n</i>-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.</p>
<p>b. Describe how the minimum number of students is statistically sound.</p>
<p>In proposing a minimum <i>n</i>-size of 10, 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. DEED analyzed data for minimum <i>n</i>-sizes of five, 10, 15, and 20. The chart below shows the number of schools that would be included in the accountability system for the all students group as well as the other subgroups based on one year of data in 2015. The number of schools included in the accountability system for the all students group ranged from 94.3% with an <i>n</i>-size of five, to 86.7% with an <i>n</i>-size of 10, and 80.6% with an <i>n</i>-size of 15.</p>

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with the U.S. Department of Education'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 and will continue to be 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))**

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.

Students in grades 3-10 took the Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools (PEAKS) assessment for the first time in spring 2017. In spring 2018, the only grade in high school to be assessed will be grade 9. Also, the grade 9 math assessment will transition to an algebra-based assessment. These two changes will affect the 2017 baseline data used to determine long-term goals and measures of interim progress for academic achievement as measured by statewide assessments. In 2017, 39.4 percent of students in grades 3-9 were proficient on the ELA assessment. Also in 2017, 35.4 percent of students in grades 3-8 were proficient on the math assessment. Standard setting will be required following the

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proficiency. In 2017, 41.9 percent of Alaska's English learners met their student-specific progress targets. Although DEED calculated these targets and the percentage of English learners who met them based on adjusted ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 results from the 2016 administration, this figure will be used as the baseline value. Alaska's long-term goal for English learner progress toward English language proficiency is 70 percent in the 2026-2027 school year. This long-term goal is ambitious because of the gap from the baseline performance. In order to meet the long-term goal, the percentage of English learners meeting their progress targets must increase 2.8 percentage points annually.

### Summary of Statewide Long-Term English Language Proficiency Goals

Baseline	Long-Term Goal	Annual Increment Needed
2016-2017	2026-2027	
41.9%	70.0%	2.8%

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 will measure the percentage of students scoring at the proficient or advanced achievement levels on the statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. While the indicator will be measured and reported for all students and all subgroups, for the purpose of inclusion in the index, schools will earn between zero and 100 points for the all students group, with ELA and mathematics being weighted equally. Except for the "80/20 rule" described later in this section, schools will earn points equal to the percentage of students scoring at the proficient or advanced achievement levels on the statewide assessments in ELA and mathematics. Since the long-term Academic Achievement goal is ambitious, a school will receive significantly more points when meeting its long-term goal. This indicator will be calculated for the grade K-6 and grades 7 and above, except for schools with grade 12, portions of the accountability system.

If a school meets the participation requirement, the denominator will be all full academic year (FAY) students with a valid score.<sup>3</sup> If a school does not meet the participation rate requirement, the denominator will be 95 percent of all FAY students in grades 3-9. ESSA does not provide flexibility for a participation n-size when calculating the Academic Achievement indicator.

<sup>3</sup> A valid score is one in which a student receives a scale score and an achievement level.

in Section A.4.iv.b. Schools serving grade 12 will earn 1.) between zero and 100 points equal to the percentage of students scoring at the proficient or advanced achievement levels on the statewide assessments in ELA and mathematics; and 2.) between zero and 100 points equal to the percentage of students meeting their growth targets in ELA and mathematics as described in Section A.4.iv.b. The final Academic Achievement indicator score for each subject for schools serving grade 12 will consist of one-third of calculation #1 and two-thirds of calculation #2 described in the previous sentence.

- 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 assessments in ELA and math as the Other Academic indicator for students in grades 4-9. This indicator will be calculated for the grades K-6 and grades 7 and above portions of the accountability system.

The Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development adopted the rigorous Alaska English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards in 2012. Students first took an assessment aligned to these standards in 2015 – the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP). In 2016, DEED canceled the general and alternate assessments due to numerous technical difficulties associated with the computer-based assessment. The vendor reported no valid scores. In 2017, Alaska transitioned to a new vendor and assessment – Performance Evaluation for Alaska’s Schools (PEAKS). DEED will administer PEAKS again in 2018, and the department looks forward to continued stability in the assessment system.

A value table was used in Alaska for a number of years. Most recently, the value table was included in the Alaska School Performance Index (ASPI) as the school progress indicator. The primary challenge with the value table, though, was the misinterpretation of school-level scores in ASPI. To make this indicator actionable for schools and districts, and meaningful for all stakeholders, DEED will modify the existing value table.

A student taking PEAKS receives a scale score and one of four achievement levels (“four-way status”). The current version of the value table splits the lowest three achievement levels into two categories, leaving Advanced alone. Under this system, a student’s scale score fell into one of seven categories. Alaska will also split Advanced into two categories. Under this system, a student’s scale score will fall into one of eight categories (“eight-way status”).

In addition, Alaska will shift from point values to binary values that indicate whether each student met their growth target. The growth indicator for school accountability will be calculated by dividing the number of eligible students meeting their growth targets by the number of students eligible to be counted. Except for the 80/20 rule described in Section A.4.iv.a., schools will earn between zero and 100 points equal to the percentage of students meeting their growth targets in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. This indicator will be calculated for the K-6 and 7-12 portions of the accountability system.



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Grade	English Language Arts (Computer-Based)						Mathematics (Computer-Based)					
	Below Proficient		Proficient		Advanced		Below Proficient		Proficient		Advanced	
	Scale score cut	Scale score standard error	Scale score cut	Scale score standard error	Scale score cut	Scale score standard error	Scale score cut	Scale score standard error	Scale score cut	Scale score standard error	Scale score cut	Scale score standard error
3	464	10	500	10	542	13	458	11	500	10	554	13
4	468	9	500	9	538	12	460	12	500	10	559	13
5	464	9	500	9	548	14	462	13	500	11	568	14
6	473	10	500	10	551	13	454	11	500	9	554	11
7	471	10	500	10	546	13	451	13	500	10	559	13
8	469	9	500	10	541	12	448	13	500	11	562	14
9	471	9	500	10	535	12	450	14	500	13	570	14

Splitting the achievement levels in this manner results in sub-levels that are between 13 and 57 scale-score points wide, greater than the standard errors at the achievement levels, which are between nine and 14 scale-score points wide.

The above addresses the issue of reliability of the half-performance levels in relation to a conditional standard error of measurement (at the performance level cut points). In terms of validity, the achievement levels are based on the Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs), and the performance levels were set during standard setting to reflect progressive achievement. In other words, the achievement levels reflect substantial growth both within years and across years. (The latter is what Alaska will use.) Because the half-performance levels are about one-half standard deviation, movement from the mean of one half-performance level to the next (up or down) would reflect a substantial effect size (e.g., 0.5). A student close to the cut score who moves just to the other side of the cut score would reflect less growth; however, that is common to any growth measured by categorical changes.

Validity involves an interpretation of scores, not just the score itself. The claim that the student has grown from one half-performance level to the next is a very straightforward interpretation based on the ALD ranges and the student's initial and ending scale scores. A value table growth model based on achievement levels has the advantage of being quite transparent in terms of what the change in performance is, and how that change is incorporated into the accountability system.

- 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

(v)	<p>graduation rate is combined with that rate or rates within the indicator; and</p> <p>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).</p>
	<p>Alaska will measure and report the four- and five-year adjusted cohort graduation rates for the all students group and for all subgroups present in a school. While the indicator will be measured and reported for all students and all subgroups, for the purpose of inclusion in the index, schools will earn between zero and 100 points equal to the four-year rate for the all students group only, and between zero and 100 points equal to the five-year rate for the all students group only. The four-year rate will receive 15 percent of the weight assigned to the 7-12 portion of the accountability score, and the five-year rate will receive five percent of the weight assigned to the 7-12 portion of the accountability score. The indicator is based on the long-term goals. Schools with a four-year rate of at least 90 percent and schools with a five-year rate of at least 93 percent will receive the most points because points are based on the actual rate. Alaska will take advantage of the flexibility under ESSA Section 8101(23) and 8101(25) for very small schools by requiring a minimum number of 10 students in an adjusted cohort, below which the school will be exempt from differentiation and identification for accountability. At this time, Alaska does not propose creating or awarding a State-defined alternate diploma to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.</p>
	<p>d. <u>Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency (ELP) Indicator.</u> Describe the Progress in Achieving ELP indicator, including the State's definition of ELP, as measured by the State ELP assessment.</p>
	<p>Alaska will measure the percentage of eligible English learners (ELs) in each school that meet the definition of making progress in achieving proficiency in English, as measured by the state English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessment, WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0. Schools will earn points based on the percentage of ELs making progress.</p> <p>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). Upon enrollment, districts follow the pre-screening process to identify potential ELs. This is typically accomplished by having parents complete the Home Language Survey and perhaps having teachers complete the optional Language Observation Checklist. Through this process, districts identify students eligible for a state-approved screening assessment, which will indicate a student's English language proficiency. When the student's screener performance falls below a minimum score, the district identifies the student as an EL.</p> <p>Alaska administers the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment as a measure of ELP. ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 measures proficiency in four domains: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. There are six WIDA English language proficiency levels, identified as (1) Entering, (2) Emerging, (3) Developing, (4) Expanding, (5) Bridging, and (6) Reaching.</p>

Using the table as an example, DEED will reset each English learner's growth target annually based on the student's most-recent overall CPL on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0. The maximum number of expected years a student has to meet the exit criteria is based on the overall CPL in the initial year of identification. The last column in the table above shows how the number of years remaining for the hypothetical student to meet the exit criteria decreases annually until the student is expected to meet the exit criteria.

Alaska will continue to consider EL students to have made progress if the student earned at least the expected increase in the overall CPL from the previous year. An EL student who meets the exit criteria for attaining proficiency will also be considered as having made progress.

A student will be included in this calculation by meeting the following criteria:

1. The student received a valid overall CPL in a previous year used to determine the number of years needed to achieve an overall CPL of 4.5; and
2. The student was enrolled for the full academic year in the current year.

Alaska will calculate this indicator by dividing the number of FAY English learners who either achieved their growth target or met the exit criteria by the number of FAY English learners with growth targets. Except for the 80/20 rule described in Section A.4.iv.a., schools will earn between zero and 100 points equal to the percentage of students meeting their growth targets on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0. This indicator will be calculated for the K-6 and 7-12 portions of the accountability system, including all English learners in grades 1-12.

- 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.

When implementing the accountability system following the 2017-2018 school year, Alaska will implement two School Quality or Student Success (SQSS) indicators: chronic absenteeism and Grade 3 English language arts (ELA) proficiency. For each SQSS indicator, performance will be measured and reported for all students and all subgroups. Schools will earn between zero and 100 points for the performance of the all students group.

The proposed indicators are designed to encourage schools to improve the quality of instruction, the quality of the school climate, and student engagement. Alaska will continue to consult with stakeholders including district staff, educators, parents, tribal members, and others to determine additional possibilities for indicators that can measure non-academic qualities of a successful school.



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This will include further discussions about the three additional SQSS indicators Alaska included in its initial state plan submission: participation on district-administered interim assessments, grade 9 students on track for graduation, and eligibility for the Alaska Performance Scholarship.

DEED will work with stakeholders to develop a timeline for implementing any new indicators, including the possibility of piloting indicators by collecting data for a period of time before incorporating new indicators into the accountability system.

Indicators to be used beginning in the 2017-2018 school year are:

### **Chronic absenteeism**

A student is chronically absent when they missed at least 10 percent of the days in which they were enrolled in the school. The denominator for the chronic absenteeism indicator will include all students who were enrolled at the same school for at least half of the school term. The numerator will be the number of students enrolled at the same school for at least half of the school term who were not chronically absent. Schools will earn points equal to this percentage, resulting in a value between zero and 100 points for the all students group.

During the 2016-2017 school year, 24.3 percent of students statewide enrolled at the same school for at least half of the school term were chronically absent. Using data from the 2014-2015 school year, 37.6 percent of students who were not chronically absent met the standards on the AMP ELA content assessment. This compares to 22.8 percent of chronically absent students who met the standards. The figures for the math content assessment reflect a similar gap: 34.1 percent versus 18.8 percent.

Resources and strategies are available to support schools in reducing rates of chronic absenteeism and thus increasing learning. DEED also recognizes that Alaska has unique circumstances that potentially exacerbate the rates of chronic absenteeism that would not typically affect most schools in the other states. For example, access to medical or dental care, participation in student activities, and cultural events may require an absence of several days from school for students residing in rural communities. DEED will advocate for districts to provide instruction for students during times away from school. DEED will also review the data and impact of this indicator in the accountability system for possible revisions or replacement in the future.

This indicator will be calculated for the K-6 and 7-12 portions of the accountability system.

### **Grade 3 English language arts proficiency**

Students who can read on grade level by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are much more likely to be successful and less likely to drop out of school. To provide an incentive to help meet this goal, Alaska will measure the percentage of grade 3 students scoring at the proficient or advanced achievement levels on the statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA).

While the indicator will be measured and reported for all students and all subgroups, for the purpose of inclusion in the index, schools will earn between zero and 100 points for the all students group based on identified performance levels. Except for the 80/20 rule described in Section A.4.iv.a., schools will earn points equal to the percentage of students scoring at the proficient or advanced

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- 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-6 and schools with students in grades 7-12.

## Accountability Indicator Weights: Schools that Do Not Serve Grade 12

Indicator		Grade Span	
		K-6	7 and above
Achievement	English Language Arts	15%	10%
	Mathematics	15%	10%
Growth	English Language Arts	20%	20%
	Mathematics	20%	20%
Graduation Rate	Four-Year	n/a	15%
	Five-Year	n/a	5%
English Learner Progress		15%	10%
Chronic Absenteeism		10%	10%
Grade 3 English Language Arts		5%	n/a
Total		100%	100%

## Accountability Indicator Weights: Schools that Serve Grade 12

Indicator		Grade Span	
		K-6	7-12
Achievement	English Language Arts	15%	30%
	Mathematics	15%	30%
Growth	English Language Arts	20%	n/a
	Mathematics	20%	n/a
Graduation Rate	Four-Year	n/a	15%
	Five-Year	n/a	5%
English Learner Progress		15%	10%
Chronic Absenteeism		10%	10%
Grade 3 English Language Arts		5%	n/a
Total		100%	100%