

SCOMM

125:42

LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES
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MEMORANDUM

February 8, 2002

SUBJECT: Sectional analysis - HB 352

TO: Representative Con Bunde
Attn: Karen

FROM: Michael F. Ford 
Legislative Counsel

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents. If you would like an interpretation of the bill as it may apply to a particular set of circumstances, please advise.

Section 1. Changes the date for including a public school performance designation under AS 14.03.123, in a report on performance of public schools under AS 14.03.120, from 2003, to 2005. Also makes a technical change to a reference in AS 14.03.123, and substitutes "most recent" performance designation in place of a performance designation received "during the prior school year".

Section 2. Changes the beginning date for assigning performance designations to public schools from "August 2002", to "September 2004". Adds language to specify that a performance designation is based on multiple student measures, including student achievement "of essential skills".

Section 3. Changes the date that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is required to begin monitoring progress of each school improvement plan prepared under AS 14.23.123(e), from "August 1, 2002", to "January 1, 2005".

Section 4. Effective date.

MFF:med
02-125.med

SECTIONAL ANALYSIS

Bill Analysis

HB 352

Bill Title: "School Performance Reports"

Sponsor: House Rules at the Request of the Governor

The Bill Would:

- 1) Change the due date for school designations from August, 2002 to September, 2004; change the date school designations are reported in the Report Card to the Public; change the date that DEED would monitor progress of each school improvement plan from August, 2002 to September, 2005. Also makes technical changes.
- 2) Adds language to specify that designations are based on essential skills measured by state tests.
- 3) The Department wants these changes to allow time to align state programs with the new federal requirements contained in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), collect the state test data to show status and growth, and build the capacity to collect, analyze and use local data. Some data will be available by August 2002, but growth measures will not be available for all grades until 2003.
- 4) The **Bill Backup contains:** the current statute on school designations, present and former designator committee membership lists, resolutions supporting the delay, chart of 2000 graduation rates for each school district, Summary of Issues and Questions & Answers from DEED, a sample School Report Card, a resolution from the Anchorage School District supporting the delay and asking that caution be used in designating districts based on test scores alone.

Possible Questions:

- 1) Why is the growth score based on school averages instead of individual students' achievement? Wouldn't individual student achievement provide better information about special populations and avoid problems with transient student scores?
- 2) When will the Student Identification Number system be up and running?
- 3) Is the acceptable measure of growth one school year or to bring students up to grade level? Will this be required to show Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for special education students also?
- 4) Some have questioned whether schools can be held accountable for students who have just transferred in and have not had the opportunity to learn Alaska's standards or benefit from the school's programs. Kind of an "opportunity to teach" issue. How would you respond to this?

Available to Testify:

- 1) Ed McLain, Deputy Commissioner of DEED
- 2) Mark Leal, Assessment Director, DEED
- 3) Bruce Johnson, Association of Alaska School Boards
- 4) Vernon Marshall, NEA ???

*How many schools now?
How many for two years?*

The Anchorage School District, the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, and the Northeast Community Council have all submitted resolutions supporting the delay.

Teleconference Sites:

Wrangell, Kotzebue, Kodiak and Anchorage. It is unknown if there will be anyone at any of those sites interested in testifying on this bill.

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DP: Guess Doyle
Stevens
Wilson
NR: Porter Green
Bonde

Mark Leal - School reform has focused ed on results rather than process, so test results should be core of designations.

Sample Report Card is not complete - more things can be added to show context.

Bunde - How many schools would be deficient or in crisis right now?

McLarn - Haff. That's one reason why they want to delay: because they have no growth scores.

Bunde - Will a 2 yr delay help schools focus on growth, provide other, better testing mechanisms?

McLarn - ESEA also has designation requirements. Status scores are already available. When they disaggregated the data, lots of concern. LOGs are meant for remediation this year. Results will begin to show.

Bunde - What can really be done w/ in crisis schools? Public embarrassment may not be agent of real change.

McLarn - ESEA provides for some remedies, they would be problematic for AK. AK legislation requires school improvement plan. Legis would have to fund AK Center for Ed Excellence, funds for school intervention & supporting good programs.

Guess - Student transiency: student id numbers & class averages?

Leal - Experts say little difference between matched student growth model vs. class growth model. Students moving in are often same characteristics of those moving out. Plans to do statistical analysis of student model. Important that schools know that transient students matter. High transient rates would require student match for growth.

Guess - are you going to report on poverty?

Leal - possibly. Info they have is self reported: lunch counts. They would have to be some other measure. No matter what the report criteria, the bottom line is student achievement. Plus, most movement is within one district.

Bunde - no correlation between socioeconomic status & capability.

AASB - supports delay.

Nick Staupack - Fbx NSB S.D. Supports delay.

School Designators- Summary of Issues

Background- Current Alaska statutes (Sec. 14.03.123 *School Accountability* and Sec. 14.03.120 *Education Planning*) require the Department of Education and Early Development to develop a system to assign each school in Alaska a designation of Distinguished, Successful, Deficient, or in Crisis by August 2002. The Department is also charged annually to publish a "Report Card to the Public" that includes those school designations beginning January 2003.

To develop a system for designating school performance the Department convened a School Designators Committee to advise in the design and implementation of the school designator system. The Department hired consultants from the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Inc. (Center for Assessment) to work with the Committee and Department towards establishing principles and guidelines within which the school designator system would be developed.

Goals- We assume that the primary intent of assigning school designation labels is to spur strengthened educational services to all students and to inform the public. The desired long-term outcome of the School Designator System therefore should be better schools, better-educated students, and more informed public and policymakers. The school designator system has been designed to contribute to strengthened education, be appropriate for the wide range of circumstances of Alaska public schools, and be technically sound, legally defensible, and politically acceptable to a wide range of stakeholders.

Indicators Used To Determine School Designations- The School Designator System (SDS) will base assignment of school designations upon, student performance on state benchmark and HSGQE assessments, commercial norm-referenced tests, and dropout rate (for high schools). Student performance measures will include Status (most recent performance of students in the school) and Growth (improvement over time of students in successive grades/years). Results from these indicators will be combined to inform a decision about assigning a designation. Additional indicators will be reported, as part of the School Report Card to the Public, but will not be used for determining school designations.

Calculating a Score for Status- The Status score will represent the average performance of all students in the school on the various assessments (i.e., benchmark and NRTs). The Status score will be calculated through an index assigning points for each student score in a designated performance level. Scores will be averaged across subjects and grade levels.

Performance on Benchmark Test	Accountability Points
Above Standard	150
Meets Standard	100
Nearly Meets Standard	50
Does Not Meet Standard	0

Calculating a Score for Growth- The Committee determined that growth will account for 2/3 of the total designator score. Growth will be measures based on the improvement made by a class of students from one year to the next year. This measure of improvement, is sensitive to "where students started" and uses classes of students; rather than tracking exactly the same students. Scores will be averaged across subjects and grade levels.

Persistence/Dropout Index- The Committee recommended that dropout or persistence rates should be included as an indicator for high schools. We recommend that persistence rate be used instead of dropout rate, where persistence is the inverse of dropouts: the percentage of students who continue in school.

Report Degree of Certainty-A degree of certainty (reliability) will be reported with each school designation. The degree of certainty should be taken into consideration when interpreting the school designation. The degree of certainty of the school designation would reflect the reliability or decision consistency of the assignment of the designation.

Implementation Date-The Department and Board are proceeding to implement as much of the proposed plan as possible by August 2002. This will include status measures on the benchmark exams and TerraNova CAT/6 in grades three through nine, but few if any growth measures. Due to standard setting for the refocused High School Graduation Qualifying Exam results from the grade 10 students will not be available until late September 2002.

Growth measures on state tests, which require at least two years' data, will first be available for all grades in 2003. It is expected that additional enhancements and refinements will be available in 2004 and after. A possible implementation schedule is indicated on the sample report.

The committee and the Department have expressed concern regarding the designation of schools on the basis of status scores only. The Department is recommending implementation of the designator system in 2004 to allow for the inclusion of growth data, and to more fully develop the capacity of the state and districts to collect, manage and analyze the data gathered by schools and districts.

The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in December of 2001 also contains a significant number of school and district accountability requirements. The Department of Education and Early Development and the School Designator Committee believe that is critically important to incorporate the new Federal requirements into the Designator System that will be implemented in the state. Implementing the designator system in 2004 will allow the Department to ensure that our state accountability system is consistent with these new federal requirements.

Description of School Designator System And Questions and Answers

Alaska Department of Education and Early Development

What is the purpose of the School Designator System (SDS)?

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development is charged statutorily (Sec. 14.03.123) to develop a system for assigning designations and providing assistance to schools. The purpose of the school designation system is to communicate school quality and performance to the public, educators, and others. It is expected that this program will recognize good performance and help lower performing schools get better through increased attention and targeted assistance.

What is the status of the SDS?

The Department will present a proposal to the state Board of Education in March 2002. The Board is responsible for issuing regulations that will direct the specific implementation of the SDS by August 2002. The specifications for the SDS will be set when the Board approves its final regulations. Therefore, the information presented here is a proposal from the Department, subject to change.

Who is developing the SDS?

The SDS is benefiting from input from many sources. The Department has convened a School Designator System Committee. The SDS Committee consists of over two dozen members who represent much of the diversity of Alaska. Members include very experienced educators, school principals, superintendents, school board members, parents, and businesspersons. A nationally experienced firm, the Center for Assessment, is helping with the design of the SDS. The Technical Review Committee established by the Department, consisting of Alaskans with measurement expertise, will also review the SDS design.

As part of the process, the Department is soliciting comments from many educator and policy-making groups. The state Board's regulations will also be subject to a period for public comment.

What will be reported?

The law requires that each school be assigned one of four labels: Distinguished, Successful, Deficient, or In Crisis. These labels will be based on school performance on a number of indicators which will also be reported, including students' performance in relation to the state standards on reading, mathematics, and writing; performance on norm-referenced tests; learning growth of students over the past year in reading, mathematics, and writing; dropout rates; and graduation rates. In addition, the SDS Committee recommended adding results from other performance indicators as they become available, including an early primary

assessment, post-graduation success, and local performance assessment. The degree of confidence in the designation will also be reported.

It may be desirable to combine elements from the existing school report with the information for the school designator system. This could provide information about the school context and quality, such as percent of students living in low-income families, special education, racial/ethnic diversity, and remoteness of the school. Attendance, expulsions, truancy, physical plant, course offerings, and teacher qualifications could also be reported. Although the SDS Committee did not recommend including these other indicators in the school designation rating, most of these elements are collected and reported, and could be combined into a single school report. A sample possible report is attached.

Why does the SDS emphasize student test scores?

In compliance with the state legislature's requirement that the SDS be built on "student measures, including student achievement," a very large part of the school's designation will reflect the performance of its students on the state benchmark and high school graduation qualifying exams. These exams provide a valid and reliable assessment of student performance on the content standards determined to be of most importance for Alaska. Standardized test scores provide a common "measuring stick" across all schools.

The Department and SDS Committee recognize that standardized tests are not the only indicator of school quality and student performance. However, very few other measures were available that met minimum criteria for rigor and fairness. As mentioned above, a number of other indicators have been identified that may be developed and included in the future.

How are status and growth included in the SDS?

One agreed upon indicator of school performance was how its students performed in relation to state standards—for example, how many of its students were passing the high school qualifying exam or performing in relation to the similar proficiency standard for the benchmark exams in grades 3, 6, and 8.

However, it was also agreed that it is more important how much students are learning, or how much their scores are improving from year to year. Thus, the SDS will include how much student test scores have increased from year to year.

Growth will count twice as much as status in assigning school designations. Provisions will be made for schools that are performing so high that it is not reasonable to expect much growth.

How will the system be fair to all schools?

Fairness is a primary concern for the Department and all those who have worked on the design of the School Designator System. There are several ways the system has been designed to be fair to all schools.

The SDS will apply objective, common measures to all schools.

Schools whose students have less advantaged backgrounds will "get credit" for helping those students progress. The growth component gives as much credit to helping a student who started low and learned "one year's standard growth" as it does helping a student who started high. Schools are not competing with each other; they are recognized for helping their students grow, no matter where they started.

Much thought has been taken to make the system as reliable as possible for small schools. This includes including as many grades and students as possible.

The reporting of the degree of confidence in the designator is also an important safeguard against basing decisions on uncertain or unstable evidence.

For schools with substantial student transience, while the individual student tracking system is being developed, the Department will allow schools that can track individual students to present evidence for consideration if the results are substantially different than those based on the state's unmatched data.

It is anticipated that on-going studies will alert the Department if there are changes in school circumstances, population shifts, or unforeseen situations.

Can you give an example of how the system is fair to a school serving less advantaged students?

It is recognized that students from lower socio-economic positions, or who have less proficiency in English, usually score lower on achievement tests. Often these are racial or ethnic minority students, although most studies indicate a stronger relationship with socio-economic status. It is not true, however, that these less advantaged students cannot learn. In fact, one of the underlying tenets of the standards movement is that all children can learn, most to higher levels than are currently being achieved. This view that all children can learn is supported by extensive research on the effectiveness of teachers, the power of expectations, and the effect of schools with powerful instructional programs.

If schools were only evaluated on how high their students scored—such as how many were Proficient on a benchmark exam or what percentage passed the HSGQE—then schools serving less advantaged students might be expected to rank low. However, the proposed SDS gives credit to schools for helping their students learn, no matter where they started. So, for example, a school whose grade 4 students were all reading one grade level below would receive credit for helping those students progress one grade's worth on the exam by the end

of grade 5, as would a school whose students were all reading on level from grade 4 to grade 5. That is, schools get credit for helping students learn, no matter how low or high they start.

Some schools serve high percentages of students who are mobile. How does the system treat them?

Statistically speaking, in large enough sample sizes, if the students moving into a school are like the students moving out, then transience should not affect the school's results. Schools should monitor and document changes in population from year to year.

The proposed SDS system includes all students who are enrolled and tested in the school each year, with certain exceptions. One reason for this is to recognize that "all students count" and not to provide any incentive to push students out of the accountability and educational system. A study done by the Department on the limited Alaska data available indicates that using a matched student system would not result in very different school results than the proposed system that compares groups of students. However, the Department is very interested in studying a true student longitudinal growth system that will track growth from year to year for each individual student.

There is a difference between students who are transient within the state, within a district, or who move in or out of the state or in and out of the public school system. The Department is working on establishing a system that will allow student scores to be matched no matter where a student moves within the public school systems within the state, and is planning to study how much such a system should be used in the SDS and what differences it might make.

When will the school designator system be implemented?

The Department and Board are proceeding to implement as much of the proposed plan as possible by August 2002, which is required by law. This will include status measures on the benchmark exams and TerraNova CAT/6 in grades three through nine, but few if any growth measures. Due to standard setting for the refocused High School Graduation Qualifying Exam results from the grade 10 students will not be available until late September 2002.

Growth measures on state tests, which require at least two years' data, will first be available for all grades in 2003. It is expected that additional enhancements and refinements will be available in 2004 and after. A possible implementation schedule is indicated on the sample report.

The committee and the Department have expressed concern regarding the designation of schools on the basis of status scores only. The Department is recommending implementation of the designator system in 2004 to allow for the inclusion of growth data, and to more fully develop the capacity of the state and districts to collect, manage and analyze the data gathered by schools and districts.

The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in December of 2001 also contains a significant number of school and district accountability requirements. The Department of Education and Early Development and the School Designator Committee believes that is critically important to incorporate the new Federal requirements into the Designator System that will be implemented in the state. Implementing the designator system in 2004 will allow the Department to ensure that our state accountability system is consistent with these new federal requirements.

SAMPLE Alaska School Report Card

School Designation of Student Performance

Designation: TBD	
Confidence: TBD	
Status Score	2002
Growth Score	2003
Total Score	2003

Indicator	Status		Growth	
	N	Score	N	Score
Kindergarten Profile				
Grade 3 Benchmark		'02	--	--
Grade 4 NRT		'02		'02/'03
Grade 5 NRT		'02		'03
Grade 6 Benchmark		'02		'03
Grade 7 NRT		'02		'03
Grade 8 Benchmark		'02		'03
Grade 9 NRT		'02		'03
Grade 10 HSGQE		9/'02		'03
Persistence/Dropout		'02		'02
Percent Graduating		'02		'02
Post-graduation Success		'03		'04
Local Assessment		'03		'04

School Context

Percent AFDC	
Percent Transient	
Percent Special Ed	
Remoteness	
Racial/Ethnic Makeup	
Limited English Proficiency	

School Quality

(Examples of indicators that would be reported)

Attendance	Accreditation Status
Chronic Truancy	School Plan in Place
Safety (Expulsions)	Parent Involvement
Physical Plant	Community Involvement
Course Offerings	Average Volunteer Hours
Percent Tenured	Parent Satisfaction Survey
Avg. Years Teaching	Student Satisfaction Survey
Percent Teaching in Area of Certification	Community Satisfaction Survey

Other Notes



Anchorage School District

4600 DeFanti Road
P.O. Box 196614
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(907) 742 4000

SCHOOL BOARD

Peggy Robinson
President

Mita Hallhouse
Vice President

Harnet A. Drummond
Clerk

Tim Steele
Treasurer

Jake Metcalfe

Debbie Osslander

Dave Werdal

SUPERINTENDENT

Carol Corrigan

February 12, 2002

Dear Members of the House Special Committee on Education:

Attached please find a copy of the Anchorage School Board resolution in support of delaying the school designations until 2004.

The Anchorage School Board urges caution in labeling schools on the basis of test scores alone and supports legislation that delays the effective date of the school designator process from August 2002 to August 2004.

Senate Bill 36, which became AS 14.07.020(b). 5., requires the State Board to develop an annual system of rating schools, and designate each school by August 2002 in one of four categories: distinguished, successful, deficient, and in crisis. The categories are to be based on a school's student test scores and other indicators of student performance.

The Anchorage School Board supports assessment of student progress and the accountability implicit in this legislation. However, designating a school as deficient or in crisis on the basis of test scores alone ignores certain factors such as the high level of mobility that occurs in our schools. This means that the students being measured on the benchmark exams in the spring may not be the students who started at the school in the fall. In addition, such labeling has the high potential to be misleading and adversely affect families and neighborhoods. Schools in low socioeconomic areas, schools in highly transient communities, and schools designed to serve high needs populations are more likely to be labeled deficient as a result of factors other than the quality of education being delivered.

A committee of educators and community representatives are currently developing criteria to measure the annual yearly growth essential to fair designations. The lack of historical data does not allow for this to be measured at this time. The delay will allow annual yearly growth to be determined so as to be fair to all schools.

The Anchorage School Board also supports delaying the effective date until 2004 to align it with the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam.

I look forward to discussing this with you and other legislators when I am in Juneau at the end of the month for the AASB Fly-in.

Sincerely,



Carol Comeau
Superintendent

Cc: Anchorage Caucus
Governor Knowles
Commissioner Holloway
Anchorage School Board

**ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ASDR 2001 - 2002 - 7**

**A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF DELAYING THE SCHOOL DESIGNATIONS
UNTIL 2004**

WHEREAS, in 1998, the legislature passed the school accountability law requiring school designators to be established in each Alaskan school in August 2002; and

WHEREAS, effective in the spring of 2002, the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development will replace the California Achievement Test (CAT) - Fifth Edition (part of the statewide assessment for the past seven years) with the TerraNova/CAT/6 - 2nd Edition; and

WHEREAS, the School Designator Committee has recommended the school designators be based on both achievement status and achievement growth; and

WHEREAS, achievement growth requires a minimum of two years of achievement data on the same students using the same tests and growth data that will not be available in August, 2002; and,

WHEREAS, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in December of 2001 contains a significant number of school and district accountability requirements that will need to be incorporated into the School Designator System; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, the legislature passed a law to revise the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) to make sure it measures "essential" skills and knowledge and to extend its effective date to 2004; and

WHEREAS, designating a school as deficient or in crisis on the basis of test scores alone ignores certain factors such as the high level of mobility that occurs in our schools; and

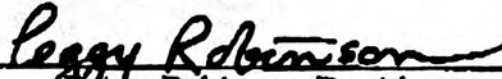
WHEREAS, schools in low socioeconomic areas, schools in highly transient communities and schools designed to serve high needs populations are more likely to be labeled deficient as a result of factors other than the quality of education being delivered;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage School Board supports delaying the effective date until 2004 to align it with the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Anchorage School Board urges caution in labeling schools on the basis of test scores alone.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage School Board this 11th day of February 2002.

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD



Peggy Robinson, President

**Harriet Drummond
Rita Holthouse
Jake Metcalfe**

**Tim Steele
Debbie Ossiander
Dave Werdal**

Carol Comeau, Superintendent



Anchorage School District

4600 Delian Road
P.O. Box 196614
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6614
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SCHOOL BOARD

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Hilda Hultkrantz
Vice President
Harriet A. Drummond
Clerk
Tim Stulu
Treasurer
Jake Melcillo
Debbie Ostlander
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SUPERINTENDENT

Carol Connors

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Comeau".

Carol Comeau
Superintendent

Cc: Anchorage Caucus
Governor Knowles
Commissioner Holloway
Anchorage School Board

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Carol Comeau, Superintendent

*unknown if
he's a const. ✓*

Subject: Northeast Community Council Position

Date: Wed, 16 Jan 2002 21:34:18 -0900

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**Northeast Community Council
School Designator Resolution**

Whereas the real estate values and the quality of life in our area are dependent upon the perceived value of our schools,

And whereas some school student populations in our area are highly mobile, have a high percentage of students that have had limited home experiences in the English language, come from families who have parents who work two and three jobs with limited opportunity to support school efforts, and as a group do not currently and historically compare well to some other school populations (there are few programs developed to remediate this difference in a short time),

And whereas the quality of the school staff is the single most important factor in the success of the student and a negative school designation will make it even more difficult for schools in our area to attract and retain quality teachers,

And whereas school morale significantly effects student test scores,

And whereas this is a community in transition that can not afford any undue negative publicity,

Therefore be it resolved that the Alaska State School Designator Committee develop an evaluation system that takes full account of the unique needs of each school, its student population and the community from which they come as they develop a means to compare and judge our schools,

And further be it resolved that the State of Alaska postpone its

implementation of the school designator program until schools have the full opportunity to implement programs that break the historic pattern of certain types of school populations that remain more difficult than others to effectively teach.

And further be it resolved that any eventual school designator process provide a realistic opportunity for each school to be successful.

Date _____

 <u>Resolution School Designator</u>	Name: Resolution School Designator Type: WINWORD File (application/rtf) Encoding: base64 Description: Unknown Document
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Education Commission
of the States

StateNotes

Accountability

Education Commission of the States 700 Broadway, Suite 1200 Denver, CO 80203-3460 303.299.3600 Fax: 303.296.8332 www.ecs.org

State Performance Indicators

January 2002

States measure student achievement as well as school performance through a variety of indicators. The following indicators were gathered from statute, regulation and state department of education documents. They are either measures of gains in student achievement or elements perceived to influence those gains. The indicators have two primary functions. The first is to provide the type of underlying data to better inform the public about its schools. We are labeling this "information only" level as secondary indicators – represented by "S." The more important function of indicators, however, is to determine whether a district or school qualifies for a reward or if the state needs to intervene in some way to help improve performance. We refer to these criteria as "primary indicators" – represented by "P."

The four main categories of indicators used for the charts below relate to (1) students, including assessment scores, demographics (ethnicity, socioeconomic status), dropout rate and truancy; (2) professional staff, including staff attendance, experience, and salary levels; (3) program information such as curriculum, climate and parent involvement; and (4) expenditures and the use of resources. Although indicators in the last three categories are not immediate indicators of gains in student achievement, they are perceived by educators, legislators and researchers as having a relationship to student achievement.

Achievement as a Primary Indicator

- Thirty-two states use achievement as a primary indicator.
- Twenty-one states use improvement in student achievement as a primary indicator.
- Twelve states use nothing except achievement and improvement in achievement as primary indicators (Alabama, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Virginia).
- All but two states report on achievement to the public.

Use of Primary Indicators

Normally, only a limited number of indicators act as triggers to rewards or interventions within schools. Following is a summary of those areas:

- Student achievement/assessment scores – 32 states
- Improvement in achievement/assessment scores – 21 states
- Attendance – 17 states
- Dropout rate – 13
- Graduation rate – 8 states
- Student behavior (includes discipline/safety, expulsion, suspension) – 6 states

- Transition (education or employment after high school graduation) – 4 states (one is in an “other” category)
- Expenditures and use of resources – 3 states

Caution: Although we made every effort to accurately reflect state policies, synthesizing policy language into common categories is difficult and interpretations can vary. Please let us know if information for your state is stated incorrectly.

Table 1: Alabama – Kentucky

P = evaluative indicators that trigger rewards and/or sanctions

S = informative indicators for reporting or additional indicators for gauging performance

Indicators:	AL	AK ¹	AZ	AR	CA	CO	CT	DE	FL	GA	HI	ID	IL	IN	IA	KS	KY
Student:																	
Assessment scores/achievement	P	S	P	S	P	P	S	P	P	P	S	S	P	P	S	P	P
ACT and/or SAT scores				S		P	S	S		P		S	S	P			
Adv Placement (AP) courses: access																	
AP courses: scores														P		P	
Attendance rate/truancy	S	S	S	S	P	S		S	S	S	S	S	P	P		P	P
Class size					S			S					S	P			
Demographics/Socioeconomic data	S			S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	P ²		S	
Discipline/safety	S		S	S	S	S			S		S	S		P		P	S
Dropout rate	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S			P	P
English language learners/special needs					S		S		S	S	S		S	S		S	
Enrollment	S	S	S	S		S	S	S			S	S		S		S	S
Expulsion rate				S	S				S					P			S
Graduation rate/completion rate	S	S	S	S	P	S		S	S	S	S		P	P	S	P	
Mobility		S	S		S		S				S		S	P			
Promotion/retention rate (Advancement)		S	S						S	S							P
Student/administrator ratio								S						S			
Student/teacher ratio								S	S	S	S	S	S	S			S
Suspension rate					S				S		S			P			
Transition to postsecondary education	S						S		S					P	S		P
Student/School Improvement in Academic Performance	P	S	P		P	P	S	P	P	P				P	S	P	P
Other*:																	
			S	S	S	S			S	S		S	S	P	S	P	P
Professional Staff:																	
Attendance					P	S								S			
Diversity									S				S				
Evaluation					S							S ³					
Experience			S			S	S			S	S		S				S
Leadership					S												
Preparation/Certification	S		S	S			S			S				P			S
Salary levels				S		S	S		S			S	S	S			
Professional/staff development					S	S								P			S
Working in area of certification					S	S											S
Program:																	
Curriculum			S														
Learning climate					S												
Mission and/or goals statement			S					S			S	S					

Indicators:	AL	AK ¹	AZ	AR	CA	CO	CT	DE	FL	GA	HI	ID	IL	IN	IA	KS	KY
Parental and/or community involvement		S	S										S	P			S
Parental satisfaction/opinion		S	P								S						
Expenditures & Use of Resources	P		S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	P			S

1. Alaska will set its primary indicators by summer 2002.
2. Indiana: Breakout of programs, i.e., vocational education, special education, gifted and talented, remedial education.
3. Idaho: Explanation of teacher evaluations must be reported.

Table 2: Louisiana – North Dakota

P = evaluative indicators that trigger rewards and/or sanctions

S = informative indicators for reporting or additional indicators for gauging performance

Indicators:	LA	ME	MD ¹	MA	MI	MN	MS	MO	MT	NE ²	NV	NH	NJ	NM	NY	NC	ND
Student:																	
Assessment scores/achievement	P	S	P	P	P	S	P	P		P	P	S	P	P	P	P	S
ACT and/or SAT scores	S						S	P		P			S				S
AP courses: access	S						S						S				
AP courses: scores																	
Attendance rate/truancy	P		P	S			P	P			P	S	S	S			S
Class size	S												S				
Demographics/socio-economic data	S	S		S	S	S	S	S				S	S	S	S	S	S
Discipline/safety	S										S	S	P	S			
Dropout rate	P		P	S	S		S	P		P	S	S	S	S	P	S	
English language learners, special needs		S	S	S		S	S	S					S	S	S	S	S
Enrollment		S	S	S	S			S					S	S	S	S	S
Expulsion rate	S			S							S						
Graduation/completion rate	S	S			S		S	S					S		S		S
Mobility			S								S			S			
Promotion/retention rate											S					S	
Student/administrator ratio								P									
Student/teacher ratio					S		S	P			S		S				S
Suspension rate	S										S						
Transition to post-secondary education		S		S				P				S	S		S	S	S
Student/School Improvement in Academic Performance	P		S	P	P	S				P						P	
Other*:												S	S	S	S	S	S
Professional Staff:																	
Attendance											S		S				
Diversity																S	
Evaluation					S										S		
Experience	S					S		S									S
Leadership																	
Preparation/certification	P	S				S	S	S		P					S		S
Salary levels		S		S	S	S		S									S
Professional/staff development										P	S				S		S

Indicators:	LA	ME	MD	MA	MI	MN	MS	MO	MT	NE	NV	NH	NJ	NM	NY	NC	ND
Working in area of certification											S						
Program:																	
Curriculum					S						S						S
Learning climate												S					
Mission and/or goals statement																	
Parental and/or community involvement					S						S		S	S			
Parental satisfaction/opinion																	
Expenditures & Use of Resources	S	S		S	S	S	S	P			S		S		S	S	S

1. Maryland: In law, national standardized testing may not be the only measure for evaluating of education accountability.
2. Nebraska: Indicators for second increment of awards; after seven years of receiving awards use extra certification endorsement, advanced degrees; mentors, dropout rates, access to high-level and gifted/talented courses; meeting special poverty factors with good performance.

Table 3: Ohio – Wyoming

P = evaluative indicators that trigger rewards and/or sanctions

S = informative indicators for reporting or additional indicators for gauging performance

Indicators:	OH	OK	OR	PA	RI	SC	SD	TN	TX	UT	VT	VA	WA	WV	WI	WY
Student:																
Assessment scores/achievement	P	P	P	P	S	P		P	P	S	S	P	S	P	S	S
ACT and/or SAT scores		P		S	S			P	S	S	S					
AP courses: access		P										S			S	
AP courses: scores									S	S	S			S	S	
Attendance rate/truancy	P	P	P	P	S	P		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Class size										S	S		S	S		
Demographics/socioeconomic data	S		S		S			S		S	S		S		S	S
Discipline/safety	S									S		S				
Dropout rate	S	P	P			P		P	P	S	S	S	S	P	S	S
English language learners, special needs			S		S	S		S	S	S					S	
Enrollment	S	S						S		S	S		S	S		
Expulsion rate	S							S					S		S	
Graduation/completion rate	P	P	S	P		P			S				S	S	S	S
Mobility										S						
Promotion/retention rate	S							P			S		S		S	
Student/administrator ratio														S		
Student/teacher ratio	S	S				P*			S	S	S			S		
Suspension rate	S	P			S			S					S		S	
Transition to postsecondary education									S		S			S	S	
Student/School Improvement in Academic Performance		P				P		P	P		S	P		P		S
Other*:		P	P	P					P							S
Professional Staff:																
Attendance		P			S	S										
Diversity																
Evaluation																
Experience				S						S				S		S
Leadership																

Indicators:	OH	OK	OR	PA	RI	SC ¹	SD	TN	TX	UT	VT	VA	WA	WV	WI	WY
Preparation/certification										S		S		S		
Salary levels								S			S					
Professional/staff development						S					S					
Working in area of certification			P					S	S			S				
Program:																
Curriculum																
Learning climate																
Mission and/or goals statement					S							S	S			
Parental and/or community involvement					S	P*				S				S	S	
Parental satisfaction/opinion														S		
Expenditures & Use of Resources	S	S	S	S				S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S

1. SC: proposed indicators – state board is to finalize; for P*, necessary for accreditation of grades two and below.

***Other -- Secondary indicators (S) unless marked otherwise**

Access to technology – Indiana, Nevada, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Vermont
 ACT/SAT – percent taking exams – Nebraska (requires 60%)
 Alternative classes or programs for expelled students – Nebraska (P), Georgia
 Attainment of state achievement goals – Iowa
 Availability of substitutes – California
 Average time between intervention and achieving grade level – Georgia (P)

Career/technical certified to industry standards within five years – Alabama
 Challenge index for specified populations – Nebraska
 Choice/open enrollment/charters – Delaware, Arizona, Massachusetts, Michigan, Oregon (P)
 Classroom aides – Minnesota
 College readiness – Florida
 Core coursework (high school) – Texas (P)
 Council duties – Arizona

Extracurricular activities offered – Missouri, Wisconsin
 Facilities – Missouri, California
 Gifted-talented available – Nebraska
 Graduation requirements – Wisconsin
 Health barriers to learning (physical, mental) – Kentucky (P)
 Level of diplomas received – Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Nevada
 Locally developed indicators and assessment measures – New Hampshire

Mastery of algebraic concepts – Kentucky (P)
 Mentors for teachers – Nebraska
 Number of special education students by disability – Wyoming
 Percent English language learners – New Jersey, New Mexico
 Percent enrolled in International Baccalaureate programs – Virginia
 Percent meeting course requirements/high school – Georgia (P)
 Percent of participation/opportunity of students in lowest quartile -- Mississippi
 Percent taking or exempt from assessments – California (P), Louisiana, Michigan, New York, Nevada (P), Oregon (P), Rhode Island, Texas (LEP exemptions), Virginia
 Parent level of education – California
 Percent taking alternative assessments – Georgia (P), New York, Virginia
 Percent enrolled in alternative programs not leading to diploma – Virginia
 Percent of school-aged children attending public schools – Massachusetts
 Percent passing Presidential Fitness Test – West Virginia

Quality of assessments – Nebraska (P)
 Quality and currency of texts and materials – California, Idaho
 Reduction of class size/teaching load – California

Remedial courses in high school and college – Arkansas, Nebraska (P), Nevada (P)
Report on selection and completion of education pathways – Indiana, Mississippi, Nevada, North Carolina, Vermont and Virginia
Social services – Arizona
School calendar -- Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Missouri
Special awards – Idaho
Split-grade classrooms – West Virginia
Standards adopted – Nebraska (P)

Student employment (percent juniors/seniors working more than 16 hours per week) – Connecticut
Student grades – Mississippi
Student support services and counseling – California, Colorado, Idaho
Students per total staff – Colorado
Substitute teacher qualifications – Idaho
Survey return rates – Alaska

Teachers with license variances
Teacher, other staff turnover – Colorado, New York
Teachers with tenure and without tenure – Colorado
Time spent on curriculum – Illinois
Transition to employment or military – Connecticut, Iowa, California, Kentucky (P), Massachusetts, North Carolina, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and Vermont
Transportation – Arizona
Upper- and lower-level course enrollment/completion – Florida, Kansas, Indiana (P), Virginia

This *StateNote* was compiled by Kathy Christie, vice president for knowledge management and ECS Clearinghouse, and Judith Mathers, a former policy analyst with the Education Commission of the States.

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**NOTES OF THE SCHOOL DESIGNATORS COMMITTEE
MEETING, FEBRUARY 25-25, 2000**

Place: Williwaw Room, Talking Library, Anchorage, AK

Participants: Andy Baker, Jenanne Bradner, Ron Erickson, Kitty Farnham, Elaine Griffin, Mari Anne Gross, Dee Hubbard, Viletta Knight, Andre Layral, Richard Mauer, Teri Regan, Sophie Shield, Patricia Weaver.

Consultants: Robert Dalton, Indiana; Pat McCabe, California.

EED Staff: Bruce Johnson, Richard Smiley, Nick Stayrook

The meeting was opened by Deputy Commissioner Bruce Johnson who gave background information on the purpose and direction of the committee. The purpose of the committee is to implement Sec. 14.03.123 *School accountability*. The committee will look at different models for implementing school ratings and make recommendations to the State Board of Education and Early Development. At some point in the process the department will contract for assistance in developing the mathematical model behind the formula. As the committee proceeds with its deliberations, the Department will keep the State Board of Education apprised of progress. It is important that the committee learn from other states before proceeding with its work.

By way of introducing the guest speakers, Bruce Johnson, Deputy Commissioner, reviewed the two state laws that most affect the task of assigning designators to schools. These laws are:

1. Sec. 14.03.123. School accountability, a law that requires the Department to implement a rating system by August 2002 that assigns each school in Alaska a designation of distinguished, successful, deficient or in crisis;
2. Sec. 14.03.120. Education planning, a law that:
 - a. requires the Department to establish definitions of attendance, retention, dropout and graduation rates as well as the annual percent of enrollment change;
 - b. requires the Department to publish a document titled Alaska's Public Schools: A Report card to the Public. On January 15, 2003, the report must include the school designators established under Sec. 14.03.123.

With this background information, Dr. Johnson introduced the two consultants.

Indiana

Consultant Robert Dalton from Indiana gave the committee an overview of school reform in Indiana.

Indiana has a long history of school reform that began in 1987 with the passage of legislation creating the A+ program. Although the A+ program was extensive it does not involve a school rating component. Another aspect of the Indiana school reform initiative is an incentive awards program called the Performance-Based Accreditation (PBA) system.

At the student level, Indiana has implemented the ISTEP+ assessment which is a standards-based high stakes qualifying examination. Indiana also administers a norm-referenced test as part of ISTEP+. Also a recent law requires the Indiana Department of Education to begin developing grade-by-grade standards in core subject areas.

Some of the challenges faced by the Indiana school reform model are the following:

1. Dealing with the variability that exists;
2. Keeping the focus on learning and not testing;
3. Establishing a program that can be maintained over time;
4. One critical point learned about school reform in Indiana is the importance of getting the word out to schools, the community, and especially students, that school reform is underway, and;
5. It is important to focus on positive results. It must be kept in mind that one hundred percent of the students who take a high-stakes qualifying exam will not pass.
6. Pitfalls of Indiana school reform include the following:
 - a. The lack of buy-in by stake holders;
 - b. Lack of understanding by stake-holders;
 - c. Policy makers changing the game plan.

Things Indiana has learned:

1. Leadership is very important for acceptance of any school change effort
2. It is critical to communicate, communicate, and communicate all of the changes being planned;
3. Put the most effort on the front end of any school reform effort;
4. Ensure that the school rating model implemented is accepted by the policy makers who passed the authorizing legislation.

California

Consultant Pat McCabe of the California Department of Education presented an overview of the school reform efforts in California.

Between the years 1994 and 1998 California had no assessment system. A previous examination system called CLAS was terminated because it did not receive the support of lawmakers. The current school rating program is based on the Stanford 9 achievement test (scheduled to change to a standards-based assessment in the future), the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) and the SABE/2 for Spanish speaking students. The exams are given in grades 2-11. In the California school rating model scores on the Stanford 9 received the following weights;

mathematics	40%
reading	30%
language arts	15%
spelling	15%

From this each school is given an Academic Performance Index score (API) based on student achievement and growth toward a Statewide Performance target. The API scale ranges from 0 to 1000 and adequate growth is defined as score increases equal to at least 5% growth toward the Statewide Performance target (defined as 800 by the CA State Board of Education). In addition to the API, each school is also given a statewide score, which is its absolute standing in the state, a similar schools score which is a comparison of the school with comparable schools in the state and a growth score computed from past and current achievement data. The California rating systems is under development and includes several other measures that will be phased in over a 5-year period.

 California also has the California School Recognition Program (CSRP) that is part of the accountability program. CSRP rewards 5-10% of the public schools in CA that are successfully implementing state priorities. Schools selected for recognition are honored as Distinguished Schools at a statewide awards ceremony and much of the funding comes from some of California's largest corporations. For a school to get an award, 50% or more of all students must be at or above grade level standards using a standards-based assessment and accountability system. A second option allows a school to get an award if 40% or more of all students score at or above grade level standards using a standards-based assessment and the percent of students at or above grade level compared to the previous year is 5 percentage points or more higher.

Recommendations to the School Designator committee:

1. Appointment a State Board of Education member to the committee;
2. Appointment a technical review committee;

3. Insure that any school designator system have a built-in program evaluation component; 
4. Be aware of the unintended consequences of implementing some indicators. Sometimes unanticipated consequences can ruin a school designator system;
5. Do not use measures over which schools have no control;
6. "If you want to mandate change don't change the mandate;"
7. Integrate Title I CSRD activities with your school designation efforts (an excellent background paper for states inaugurating school rating systems is *Creating Responsible and Responsive Accountability Systems* published by the US Dept. of Education, Office of Ed. Research and Improvement) 

Day Two - February 25, 2000

The morning discussions involved the Alaska data elements and what is available to rate schools. Also discussed were the state tests and the legal requirements for them. Transient versus non-transient students and the difficulties associated with them were discussed. The issue of whether standards are used in all schools was mentioned. A challenge in the Alaska model is the lack of rewards and incentives for schools that achieve high ratings.

Another concern is the effect of this school rating system in small rural communities. It was pointed out that some may feel that Alaska natives themselves have failed if predominately Native schools low ratings. The connection between labeling schools as in-crisis could turn into labeling the local people as failures. A recommendation was made for more village representatives on the committee. 

Another issue that was discussed at length was the issue of comparable schools. The basic components of a model discussed by the committee was one that assessed schools on:

- 
1. An absolute scale;
 2. a similar school comparison, and;
 3. a growth component.

Concluding recommendations and comments made by consultants Dalton and McCabe:

1. Expand the committee to include both legislators, state Board of Education members, and representatives of the governor's office.
2. The number of small schools in Alaska will create problems for any school designator model. It was recommended that the committee seek outside help for the statistical aspects of the model, especially for computing ratings for these small schools.

3. Communicating with parents will be a very important aspect of the committee's work (public relations).
4. The committee should continue its work beyond implementation of the initial school designation system.
5. The committee have a long time line for committee work. It was also recommended that the committee seek state Board of Education approval during the model development.
6. Establish a system of rewards for high performing schools.
7. Create the growth index to determine who gets awards.
8. Plan meetings for one year ahead of time and not meeting-to-meeting.
9. Student and school variability will be a challenge.
10. Build a base of support for the project.
11. Ensure that the school rating system is data driven.
12. A model was offered that consisted of three concentric circles. The innermost circle is student achievement. The second circle is the school rating system. The outermost circle represented school report card.
13. Consider an alternative or different system for rating small schools.

Why?
During a discussion that followed these recommendations, there was a general agreement to focus on student achievement as the core for school designation with fewer, rather than more, additional factors although growth was definitely a large factor.

Prior to adjournment, the committee discussed other potential members. Dr. Johnson agreed to seek additional membership while maintaining the committee at a size that facilitates efficient work.

The next meetings were scheduled for:

April 13-14, 2000

May 18-19, 2000 (tentative)

ADJOURN

**NOTES OF THE SCHOOL DESIGNATORS COMMITTEE
MEETING, APRIL 13-14, 2000**

Place: Williwaw Room, Talking Library, Anchorage, AK

Participants: Andy Baker, Jenanne Bradner, Ron Erickson, Kitty Farnham, Elaine Griffin, Mari Anne Gross, Dee Hubbard, Lucy Hope, Viletta Knight, Andre Layral, Richard Mauer, Teri Regan, Patricia Weaver, John Weise.

Consultants: Brian Gong, National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment

EED Staff: Bruce Johnson, Richard Smiley, Nick Stayrook

Day 1 Morning

The meeting was opened and introductions made by Bruce Johnson, Deputy Commissioner of Education and Early Development. Before the guest speaker, Dr. Brian Gong, was introduced, the intent of Sec. 14.03.123 *School accountability* was reviewed. The following points were made:

I. Purpose of school Designator System:

1. Improve schools
2. Provide information that will be used constructively
3. Allow comparisons in order to show that public schools are of good quality.

II. Standards upon which school reform is based:

1. State content standards
2. State Performance standards
3. School Designators
4. Other standards
5. Opportunity to Learn Standards are missing

III. INDICATORS

Dr. Brian Gong, from the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (NCIEA) in Dover, NH was introduced. Dr. Gong began his presentation by noting that the NCIEA has helped develop and/or analyze school rating systems for state departments of education, including those in Vermont, Louisiana, Oregon, Massachusetts, and California. A two-step process is typically used to develop a school rating system. First, values and principles for school ratings are developed with a state-level committee that represents the various constituencies. Second, a NCIEA consultant works with department of education staff to develop a rating system that is then taken back to the

committee for review. As a prelude to Dr. Gong's two-day presentation, the following recommendations were made to the committee:

1. Watch for unanticipated consequences and changes of school rating systems. For example, in Louisiana a state school rating system was designed based on successive cohorts, but then had to interact with a student accountability system that involved deciding which students would be advanced to the next grade or granted a high school diploma. The interactions of the two rating systems created many very complex situations that were not anticipated when each system was designed.
2. The school rating system must be designed to withstand assaults and criticisms. Ultimately, some rating systems may be challenged in court. Thought should go into this at the time of the design of the system.
3. Committee members should bring issues of contention up at committee meetings so they can be considered. The system will be stronger if issues are addressed early and openly.
4. Problems are inherent in any school rating system and one person is not able to solve them alone. Many heads are better than one.
5. The credibility of a school rating system is important. Committee members are encouraged to let EED know what problems are apparent. The Committee work should be of such quality that it adds to the credibility of the process, and so that Committee members are comfortable endorsing the process (even if they may not agree with every specific outcome).

Two issues were raised by committee members during the course of the above discussion:

1. If no resources are available to reward successful schools, why assign school ratings?
2. It is not desirable for a situation to develop where teachers are narrowly "teaching to the test."

At this point, Dr. Gong initiated several discussions with the committee about core beliefs and main elements of a school designator system for Alaska. Dr. Gong began each discussion with a question to which the committee responded:

1. What is the purpose of school designator (what was intent of legislators)?
 - a. Improve student achievement - (what is the mechanism?);
 - b. Answer question, "is my child's school a good school?" in order to reassure public that schools are good;
 - c. Reply to people who don't think they are getting their money's worth;

*Was the
promise to
prove all
schools are
good?*

- d. Business community wants to compare school against school in a marketplace fashion. People are now looking forward to this. End product will support such comparisons. Some people will choose schools on this basis and some teachers will use it to choose schools in which to teach.
2. What are some of the fears?
 - a. Once schools are rated, bad schools will get worse but better schools will improve;
 - b. Real estate values will change;
 - c. Lack of fairness.
 3. To what extent do people already have an informal rating system?
 - a. Will a new rating system exacerbate the negative aspects of the informal system;
 - b. Many people will have no basis for school comparisons if there are few schools, as in rural areas. This is not such a problem in large urban districts;
 - c. Are people willing to use school rating system to improve things rather than just use it to gripe and cast aspersions?

Dr. Gong offered three examples to show how other states have reacted constructively to low school ratings:

1. In Kentucky, parents were offered the option to move their child from a low to a high performing school. Even though 17 schools in the first year and about 50 schools in the second year were rated "In Crisis," no parents applied to have their students transferred. Parents and other community members pulled together around their schools and supported their improvement rather than moving out;
2. In Vermont low performing schools were identified for technical assistance. However, in VT, school budgets are under local control. Of the 39 schools identified as in need of technical assistance this year, 36 had their budgets approved by their communities' voters. Of the 3 that did not, all had reasons other than being identified as a low-performing school. The lesson is that it is possible to rally community support for schools identified as needing help;
3. In Kentucky, a notion underlying their school rating system was that education was the only way to improve the economic viability of the state. The state has lots of poverty, mines have been closed and logging has been reduced. Their accountability system was designed to be fair to pockets of poverty and improvement was the element on which the system was focused. The discovery was that school improvement was not related to poverty (as was low performance). When school improvement occurred, it was predominately a result of leadership and community/parent support, which could occur even in schools serving concentrations of poor, minority, and/or rural children.

Two cautions urged by Dr. Gong:

1. School designator system is not the whole education system, and should not even be viewed as the only assessment system;
2. Avoid a system that encourages good teachers and administrators to leave low performing schools.

In a discussion of other purposes of school ratings the following points were made by Committee members:

1. Not all advocates of school ratings want them for reasons supportive of public education. Some (e.g. voucher advocates) are looking for reasons to criticize public schools. Also, some critics are looking for excuses to consolidate schools or create more Charter schools. Dyson?
2. There is public perception that schools are inconsistent. There is a need for a single scale that provides CONSISTENT information.
3. Question from Committee Member: Can we really find a system that allows comparisons between very rural and urban schools (fairness issue)?
4. An efficient school rating system must identify schools that need additional support.
5. One complicating issue is external vs. internal ratings systems or local versus state evaluations. Alaska's law mandates an external system.

Two options for rating system

- a. one standard for success that would be applied to all schools
- b. or a comparable schools system (e.g., grouping schools according to similar free reduced lunch, size, mobility, etc.)

Note that it is possible to use either for accountability designations, but *report* both.

In a discussion of an outline for the Alaska school designators system the following points were raised:

1. The Alaska system should include consideration of growth or improvement over time;
2. Student achievement should be the primary measure;
3. The Alaska system should use some but not all available student indicators in assigning school designations;
4. Consideration should be given to parent and community input into the school rating.
5. Local assessments could be part of the mix of indices used for school ratings.

6. A list of possible indicators was generated by the committee. Each indicator was noted either as a possible designator or an indicator that would simply be reported in the state report card:

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| a. Benchmark exams | (designator) |
| b. norm-reference test | (designator) |
| c. participation rates for examinations | (designator) |
| d. parent involvement | (report) |
| e. extra curricular activities | (??) |
| f. parent satisfaction | (report) |
| g. immersion schools | (report) |
| h. teacher quality (opportunity standards) | (???) |
| i. preservation of culture | (???) |
| j. dropout rates | (indicator) |
| k. graduation | (report) |
| l. preventative measures | (???) |
| m. developmental profile | (???) |
| n. baseline - growth | (designator) |
| o. other student rates | (???) |
| p. attendance | (???) |
| q. key courses, (e.g., algebra) | (???) |
| r. retention | (???) |

thick / thin?

There was an extended discussion of rating systems on two continua; thin versus rich designator systems and thin versus rich reporting and comparison systems. The consensus of the committee was that Alaska needed a thin designator and rich reporting system.

The committee had a discussion of state and local standards. Some accountability systems include local standards. There was some support expressed for this idea.

Dr. Gong mentioned three approaches other states have taken to the thin versus rich designator systems issue:

1. Some states have a focused or thin set of designators and use state and comparable schools plus a growth factor (such as California);
2. Oregon has a thin set of indicators but MANY reporting variables (but reporting indicators do not change score);
3. Vermont has a richer reporting system that includes a menu
 - a. menu A all must do;
 - b. menu B - locals may have their own variables.

Day 1: Afternoon

The afternoon discussion focused on reliability issues as they pertain to school rating systems. Dr. Gong noted that some schools will likely always be near the top and others always near the bottom in a relative ranking on absolute performance. This leads to the notion of the usefulness of a growth model. Some of the issues are:

1. What is the best way to show or measure growth;
2. Growth has turned out to be not highly related to socioeconomic status (SES) in Kentucky (which is one of the few states that has several years of school accountability data);
3. There are two reasons to focus on growth;
 - a. does the system show you what you already know?
 - b. is it fair?
4. In Alaska transience can be a problem;
5. An emphasis on growth will make a school designator system easier to sell in Alaska;
6. What about developmental profiles? Should they play a role in the school rating system?
7. One possibility for Alaska would be the use of two scores, one an absolute score and another a growth score both of which are combined into one school rating. Combining increases the reliability of the measure.
8. Should Alaska use a system based on incremental goals? Louisiana and California use this approach to determine if sufficient improvement has occurred.
 - a. Need target and timeline in order to establish growth index. State must set long-term goal (10 or 20 year) in order to decide if adequate growth has occurred.
9. Participation rates for all students and for significant subgroups, including special education and LEP students, should be published.
 - a. Consequences for low participation rates can be either to flag the school or build it into the school rating formula.
10. How should mobility be handled in the accountability system? Should kids not enrolled in the school or district for at least one year be included in school ratings?
11. Compulsory attendance laws (e.g. age) affects when kids drop out of school.

12. After a long discussion of the length of time that goals should be set (long term versus short term versus just plain growth) the committee preferred the long-term growth model.
13. In a discussion of assessments the issue of having only one test at the high school level arose (e.g. the HSGQE). Dr. Gong recommended adding a 9th grade NRT to the existing 4th and 7th grade NRTs to improve reliability of high school ratings by including more measures and students (assuming the NRT is a valued measure, e.g., aligns with state standards).
14. Will there be a different system K-8 and 9-12?
15. Will special education be reported in report card?
16. Is retention rate a valid student measure (is a high rate good?)?
17. Are other states using attendance rates? Dr. Gong "Yes, some do use them in ratings, others merely report them."
18. Could percentage of students who go to college be used as an indicator?
19. Could transience be used as an indicator, or should it be used as a factor in determining comparable schools?

Day 2 Morning

 Dr. Gong began by noting that his objective for Day 2 was to establish a broad outline of a school designation system. He began with several ancillary points and then discussed four major issues in accountability systems; validity; consistency of metric; consistency of included population and; reliability.

/ SES correlates with performance but not so much with improvement.

The problem of rank-ordering schools was discussed. The media will do it anyway but it has problems if it is done. Are the differences significant? If you rank-order all "successful" schools, for example, those on the bottom will look bad.

Discussion of consequences of publicizing low achieving schools - it may cause parents to move to another school. It may cause teachers to move to another school. But it is also the only way to hold schools accountable and drive improvement. A communication plan should start early to build a positive image of the school rating system. There will be a problem for HS because they won't have the same data as Middle and Elementary schools.

Socio-economic status

Question from Committee: Did any states establish rating systems based only on improvement? Dr. Gong, "Yes, both KY and LA use improvement as their primary basis for determining school designations."

The Committee had a discussion involving EED's communication plan for the school designator system, what consequences would obtain for schools that consistently rank low and what intervention procedures for low performing schools were planned. EED staff reviewed the consequences as called for in the authorizing legislation and the establishment of the Talent Bank of Quality School Consultants put together by EED. The Committee was informed that the EED communication plan for the school designator system would be reviewed at the next meeting.

A Committee member stated that norm-referenced tests (e.g. California Achievement Test, 5th edition) are not a good way to measure school success in small rural schools. The tests are not authentic, don't indicate how improvement is to be achieved and exacerbate the differences between rural and urban and low and high SES schools.

At this point Dr. Gong gave a prepared lecture on the 4 common problems with accountability systems. (Note: A Microsoft PowerPoint presentation of this lecture is published on the EED website). A summary of the 4 issues follows:

1. Validity (the degree to which an assessment truly measures what it purports to measure).

Validity issues concern both the tests used to measure school performance and the accountability system itself. To insure validity, an accountability system should have a wide range of measures and care should be taken to insure that if the system will be used to gauge school improvement, the measures are both practical and realistic.

2. Consistency of Metric

A system to measure school performance must be consistent in terms of the content measured, the way the system is administered, the standards which form the basis of the assessment system, and the scoring method that determines school ratings.

3. Consistency of Included Population

A school designation system assumes that there will be a certain amount of consistency from year-to-year in the population of students tested. Policy and administration procedures should be established to maximize this consistency.

4. Reliability (the degree to which an assessment consistently measures an attribute)

A school rating system must be designed so as to control those factors that reduce reliability. These factors include:

- using the actual population for modeling instead of conditional probabilities;
- focusing on sampling instead of measurement error;
- avoiding conjunctive decision rules when possible;
- using fine as opposed to coarse reporting statistics.

At the conclusion of Dr. Gong's lecture on common problems with accountability systems, he addressed several issues specific to a school rating system for Alaska.

1. How will we increase reliability of measures of Alaska's small schools?

- a. add more measures
- b. add more grades (more students)
- c. include more years of data

2. What about special schools, such as alternative schools/programs?

- a. send scores back to feeder schools
- b. rate school but take into account the reality.

3. Other special circumstances?

There may have to be a third rating system (in addition to k-8 and 9-12) for special schools (correctional, special education, k-2, etc.)

4. Dr. Gong's final comment was that the issue of unanticipated consequences of school rating systems was not adequately discussed and needed to be added to the agenda of a future meeting.

A discussion of the appropriate time for the next meeting was inconclusive. One issue addressed was the inadvisability of releasing a model designator system in early fall since it would overlap the first release of High School Graduation Qualifying Examination scores and conflict with the Fall Education Summit planned for late September 2000. Some committee members thought waiting until after the Fall Education Summit was too long. Others suggested a summer audio-conference at which time the committee could be provided an update on the development of the school designator system.

ADJOURN

**NOTES OF THE SCHOOL DESIGNATORS COMMITTEE
MEETING, October 25-26, 2000**

Place: Williwaw Room, Talking Library, Anchorage, AK

Participants: Ron Erickson, Kitty Farnham, Elaine Griffin, Karla Griswold, Mari Anne Gross, Lucy Hope, Dee Hubbard, Dave Holmquist, Richard Mauer, Teri Regan, Patricia Weaver, John Weise.

Consultants: Brian Gong and Rich Hill, National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment

EED Staff: Bruce Johnson, Richard Smiley, Nick Stayrook, Erik McCormick

Day 1

After introductions, Deputy Commissioner Bruce Johnson addressed the issue of a proposed delay in the effective date of the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination. Mention was made of the large numbers of students who were significantly below the passing scores. These students do not appear to have much chance of passing the exam even with several additional years of instruction and repeated test taking attempts. While there appears to be some resistance to a delay, the position of the Department is that this is an issue that needs to be raised. Legislation is being prepared for submission to the Alaska State Legislature where the final decision will be made.

It was clarified that while the Governor and Commissioner of Education and Early Development have advocated for a delay of the high stakes consequences for individual students, i.e. High School Graduation Qualifying Examination, this was not true of the school designators. There is a need to slow down the process and implement the requirements with care and consideration. Also noted was that limited English Proficient (LEP), socioeconomic status (SES) and gender will be the only student demographic variables on which state data will be disaggregated.

Several issues that were raised in response to the Deputy Commissioner's remarks concerned cross-grade comparisons (student growth), the problems created by schools with high percentages of special populations, and the time lag between test completion and return of reports to schools (60 days in the CTB contract).

This led to a brief discussion of the purpose served by the school designator system. In summary, while there is a common core of shared beliefs among committee members, differences with regard to some of the specifics do exist. Rich Hill concluded the discussion by noting that the committee purpose should be to identify valid indicators of low performing or ineffectual schools or schools that are improving the most.

Presentation by Rich Hill:

Rich Hill gave a slide presentation highlighting several different generic school designation models and elucidated several features of a proposed system. The following is a summary of major points in the slide show that may be viewed by clicking here (slide show):

There are three models to consider:

- the Value Added model
- the Rising Tide model
- a Mixed model combining elements of both the Value Added and Rising Tide models.

In the Value Added model, average student test score changes are followed from year-to-year. For example, test scores of year-one third grade students are compared to the test scores of the same students in year two (when they are in 4th grade) and subsequently in year 3 (when they are 5th graders).

In the Rising Tide model, the students of focus are always at the same grade level but the intent is to raise the average test scores of subsequent students. For example, if the average test scores of students in the 3rd grade are 250 in year one, a goal could be to raise these average scores for 3rd grade students to 275 in year two.

 It is the mixed model that is being recommended for Alaska.

The model being proposed would

1. combine multiple results into a single number or index;
2. use established rules to assign designations based on the results.

Elementary Schools

The basic process for elementary schools would:

1. assign each student one of 4 designations based on Benchmark exam scores with corresponding Accountability points (from highest to lowest) of 150, 100, 50 and 0, respectively.
 2. Calculate the average number of Accountability points (total Accountability points divided by total number of students) for each school in reading, writing and mathematics would be summed and divided by three to yield a Benchmark Test Index.
- Decide on desired improvement and convert all variables to indices based on 100 equals good and 80 equals ok (see above #1 and #2).
 - The focus will be on three achievement variables
 1. grade three status
 2. Grade three improvement

3. Grade 4 and 5 growth (this is the Value Added model)

- Weights will be applied to K-5 achievement variables
 1. grade three status = 1
 2. Grade three improvement = range 4 to 0
 3. grade 3-to-4 and 4-to-5 = 2
- Proposal for 6-8 Schools
 1. one achievement variable
 2. grade 6, 7 and 8 improvement
 3. The Rising Tide responsibility rests with the elementary school
- Proposal for K-8 Schools
 1. Three achievement variables
 - a. grade 3 status
 - b. grade three improvement
 - c. grade 4 through 8 growth
 2. Weights
 - a. grade 3 status = 1
 - b. grade 3 improvement = range from 0 to 4
 - c. grade 4 through 8 growth = 4

High Schools

Issues

1. The High School Graduation Qualifying Examination results are only available at the end of 12th grade.
2. There is a need to track dropouts. A dropout should count as a failing score on the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination
3. There is a time lag between 8-12 tracking
 - a. mobility
 - b. delay
 - c. accountability.

Committee Reaction/Discussion:

One idea discussed is to require all 10th graders to take the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination on the first occasion they are eligible. This would provide comparable data and serve as an early warning for students in need of remedial help. However, it would force unprepared students to take the exam. This idea would be good accountability but bad educational practice. The committee rejected this idea.

Later mandated

At this point Brian Gong gave an extended review of discussions from the previous meeting regarding committee attitudes about selected indicators. He made the point that what we are looking for are schools that are effective, not just schools that score high. He reviewed previously agreed-to values and reviewed data that are important to report, but not important to include in deriving a score. This includes attendance and dropout rates as well as the developmental profile. This led to a discussion of what variables should be included in the calculation of scores. The committee agreed at the previous meeting that process variables should be kept to a minimum. The school designator law requires that the ratings consist of "student measures" including student achievement. One member mentioned that it was important that the committee focus on fewer rather than many indicators. This would promote a school designator system that is easier to understand and enhance the probability of public acceptance.

There was a short discussion of local assessments in addition to the state assessments. While districts would be free to administer local assessments, they would not be used in the rating system. It was noted that there is a narrative section of information that is reported to the state with the report card information and that this could potentially be one place where local assessment information could be reported.



At the previous school designators committee meeting, it was agreed that the indicators would be limited to the Benchmark exams, the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination, and norm-referenced tests at the existing grades of 4 and 7 plus additional exams at grades 5 and 9. Dropout rates would also be included as an indicator.

The committee reviewed other possible indicators such as high school credit, local assessments, attendance rates, discipline such as suspension and expulsion rates, percent of credits accumulated, employability, ability to present ideas to others and participation rates for special education students and perhaps students who are limited English proficient. A discussion ensued regarding what educational or community values are shared by each community. Something may be highly valued in one community and not necessarily valued in other communities. In such cases, it would be expected that some schools would score low on some variables but high on others simply because of differences in values.

At this point there was a reiteration of the ways of including school rating information in educational accountability systems. The first is to include information in the actual formula for obtaining the score; the second is to make the information public by reporting it. It was noted that when information about a school is made public, the information tends to become more accurate over time.

HSGQE-Related Issues:

One issue discussed was assigning differential weights to the various sub tests of the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination. For example if the committee felt that reading was more important than writing or mathematics, reading could be given a higher weight than the other two.

Another issue with the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination is that the test is optional as when a student takes it for the first time. Although the expectation is that the percentages of students who would take the HSGQE would be very high initially, there is the possibility that these participation

rates would decline over time, and therefore become a source of decreased reliability. Also, it creates a time lag if a student does not have to take the HSGQE until grade 12. This would imply that the first complete set of high school test data might not be available for several years. Growth data would take even longer to accumulate.

Norm-referenced Test Issues:

Another discussion concerned the value of adding norm-referenced tests at grades 5 and 9. This would permit measures of growth that are so critical to the success of the model envisioned by the committee. There is some question about the ability to equate scores from criterion-referenced to norm-reference examinations but it is believed that these technical issues can be resolved. One possible resolution would be to include a requirement in request for proposals that the department will issue to solicit bids for a new norm-reference test this year. A related issue is the use of a survey version of the new norm-referenced test or the full battery version. Interest was expressed in having the state adopt a full battery version of a new norm-referenced test. Comment was made on the limitations of abbreviated or short-form tests like the California Achievement Test, fifth edition.

Other Potential Indicators:

The issue of employability as a designator was raised and two points were made:

- 
1. Tests are valuable indicators of the ability of a school to prepare its students to live successful lives of adults but employability has not been seriously considered as part of the indicators system.
 2. In fact it is success in life and not necessarily a high score on an exam that is the purpose to which schools should address themselves.

Another issue raised but not resolved was how to handle attendance issues in cyber schools.

Brian Gong concluded his discussion by pointing out that the key elements of the indicators discussed thus far pertain to:

- practicality
- potential for corruption
- duplication
- need for a lean system.

Day 2

On the second day of the meeting Rich Hill began with an overview of the two models presented the previous day. These were the Rising Tide and the Value Added models.
(see Day 1 for overviews of the school designator models)

Developmental Profile:

There was a discussion of the developmental profile. The following points were made:

- The department has plans for reviewing and revising the developmental profile. The result may be the selection of a standardized developmental assessment that will give more accurate information than now obtained.
- There are several reasons for not starting an accountability system at the kindergarten level:
 1. Statistical - There is a long gap between kindergarten and third grade and many students would be missing or not accounted for in the Alaska system.
 2. There would be a waiting period of four years until the kindergarteners get to the 4th grade and assessed.
 3. One possible alternative is to use kindergarten performance as a covariate for the 3rd grade assessment.
 4. What is the responsibility of a school for the condition of kids when the kids show up at the schoolhouse door?

Developing a Formula for School Designators:

Following the previous discussion, Rich Hill handed out survey forms designed to solicit from committee members their feelings on the weights that should apply to variables in the school designator formulas. Results of the survey will be available at a future meeting.

Following the survey, an extended discussion began that included the following points and questions:

- What is the role of the school designator system in driving responsibility for school reform? Will a complicated system cause people to lose faith in the school designator system? One possible problem is that some people will resist by taking the attitude that "The state is doing this to me."
- How will schools be dealt with according to size or amount of improvement? (Smaller size and smaller improvement makes detecting significant gains more difficult.) One suggestion by Rich Hill is that it might be necessary to label the degree of confidence in each designator. This could be the principal method of dealing with the uncertainty and unreliability that will necessarily obtain in ratings given to very small schools. Some of the considerations are:
 1. What is the school score;
 2. how does the score translate into a label;
 3. what are the consequences of the designation?
- One suggestion was that the department could use a three-year rolling average for a small school. The problem with rolling averages is that they would conceal any significant curricular change that occurred in the middle of the span. This fact reveals the advantage of using a year-by-year school designator; under such a system changes brought about by curriculum modifications would be more likely to be revealed.

Two alternative methods of showing growth were explained by Rich Hill (see slide show for graphics):

- Under alternative #1 schools that start out much lower in their ratings must eventually achieve the same goal as other schools that start out with higher ratings.
- Under alternative #2 schools that start out with low initial scores would be responsible for meeting the same goal but would be given additional time compared to those schools who start with much higher ratings.

At this point the issue of ethnic and special population subgroups was discussed. Rich Hill pointed out that reporting scores of these groups and making them part of any kind of designation system creates problems from the point of view of reliability. He noted that the Center for Assessment does recommend that subgroup scores be reported but not used in the computation of the score. He noted that in spite of the importance of reporting some group differences, the best way to raise scores is to work with those students whose designation are likely to be low.

Another issue raised was the use of a target date. When target dates are set further in the future the growth expectation for schools is least. A question was raised about the necessity for Alaska to have goals for schools. Rich Hill point out that goals were necessary in order to specify changes in scores schools must obtain to be consistent with the school designator system espoused by the committee thus far.

Another concern raised at this point was a school that obtains a *successful* label and chooses not to strive for a *distinguished* designation. It was noted that in many cases schools that are designated as *successful* may choose to emphasize or focus their efforts on the other things felt valuable by the local community, but perhaps not reflected in state priorities. The concern is that the school designation system taking shape might not allow for that, because continual growth would be required of any school attempting to retain a *successful* designation.

The committee was asked what local information is important and the following were mentioned:

1. attendance,
2. scholarships,
3. special populations,
4. socioeconomic status,
5. limited English proficient,
6. staff development,
7. retention, and,
8. class size information.

In a discussion of school report cards, it was noted that:

- they should contain more than test scores and should inform for school improvement,
- parents still want comparisons of schools made
- other important information might be patterns of course taking, and the number of disabled students or students on IEPs taking the exam.

At the conclusion of the meeting, it was agreed that the department would mail samples of school report cards to all committee members. The next meeting was scheduled for January 16, & 17 in Anchorage.

Adjourn

NOTES OF THE SCHOOL DESIGNATORS COMMITTEE MEETING

January 16 & 17, 2001

Place: Williwaw Room, Talking Library, Anchorage, AK

Participants: Ron Erickson, Kitty Farnham, Elaine Griffin, Karla Griswold, Mari Anne Gross, Lucy Hope, Dave Holmquist, Viletta Knight, Richard Mauer, Teri Regan, Sophie Shield, Chris Simeon, John Weise.

Consultants: Brian Gong and Rich Hill, National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment

EED Staff: Bruce Johnson, Richard Smiley, Nick Stayrook

Deputy Commissioner Bruce Johnson began with an update of the December 2000 meeting of the State Board of Education and Early Development. He noted that the State Board held a one-day work session that was devoted exclusively to assessment. The reasons for this work session stemmed from a concern about the direction of the assessment program and some specific questions about both the design of the assessments and the test results. Dr. Johnson outlined a proposal for a Continuous Renewal Cycle which is the plan that the department has devised to respond to the concerns of the State Board. The heart of the Continuous Renewal Cycle is a series of three questions that will be addressed through a committee process, beginning with the HSGQE this spring and the Benchmark exams at a later date. In this process, three Content Review Committees (reading, writing and mathematics) composed of educators and members of the business community will address the three questions raised by the State Board:

1. Are the Alaska Performance Standards in reading, writing and mathematics appropriate?
2. Does the HSGQE appropriately measure the Alaska Performance Standards?
3. Are the passing scores on the HSGQE appropriate?

These questions will be addressed sequentially. If the Content Review Committees decide that the Performance Standards are appropriate they will move on to the second question. If the Content Review Committees determine that the HSGQE appropriately measures the Performance Standards, they will then address the last question "Are the passing scores appropriate? A no answer to any of the questions will trigger a response that will address and correct the problem.

Dr. Johnson also reviewed assessment results for the Spring and Fall 2000 administration of the HSGQE as presented to the State Board. The results identify a problem in that there are a large number of students whose failing scores are so low that it is reasonable to predict that they will not pass the examination by January of 2000. It is for this reason that the State Board passed a formal resolution requesting that the Alaska State Legislature delay the implementation of the high-stakes consequences the HSGQE until the year 2006.

Following Deputy Commissioner Johnson's opening remarks, a two-day meeting commenced during which a broad outline of the school designator system was discussed. To facilitate understanding of the school designator system, an outline of the discussions that occurred during the two-day meeting are not presented. Instead, the following description of the school designator as it has evolved to this point in time is presented. It should be noted that these specifications are proposed and not final and will be presented to the State Board of Education & Early Development on March 29th.

THE SCHOOL DESIGNATOR SYSTEM

I. Design Recommendations for Schools with K-8 Grades

1. In compliance with statute, every school shall receive one of the following labels: Distinguished, Successful, Deficient, or In Crisis.
2. The SDS shall be based on a combination of:
 - a) Status (most recent performance) and
 - b) Growth (the increased learning of one group of students in successive grades/years, e.g., from Grade 3 in Year 1 to Grade 4 in Year 2).

 The Status performance shall count one-third, and the Growth performance shall count two-thirds of the total score. Various disaggregations shall be reported, e.g., school performance on Status and Growth by content area assessed.

3. The School Designator System (SDS) shall base school designations upon:

- 
- a) student performance on assessments,
 - b) student attendance, and
 - c) dropout (for high schools).

Additional indicators may be reported but not used for determining school designations. Other indicators may be added to the designation system in the future.

4. Status performance shall be represented by an index that reflects the weighted average performance of students in the school on the most recent CRT and NRT assessments administered in grades 3-8, as well as attendance. Students in grades 3, 6, and 8 shall participate in the state's benchmark assessments. Students in grades 4, 5, and 7 shall participate in the state's norm-referenced test (NRT). Attendance shall be for the entire school up to and including grade 8.
5. Individual indices shall be calculated and reported for each content area. Content area indices may also be calculated by grade level, although it is likely small numbers of enrolled students will make this level of reporting somewhat unreliable.
The school index shall be calculated as a weighted average of the performance of the students for whom the school is accountable, across all content areas.

- [a] Each student shall be assigned a number of "index points" based on her/his performance.

Student Performance Level Label	Performance Level Score	Index Points
Advanced	4	180
Proficient	3	120
Below Proficient	2	60
Not Proficient	1 or lower	0

- [b] The same type of assignment of index points shall be made for each student taking the NRT, even though performance level labels are not assigned with the NRT scores.

Student Performance on NRT (NPR)	Index Points
90 and above	180
50-89	120
10-49	60
0-9	0

- [c] A weighted average for the school shall be calculated. This is done by counting the number of students at each point level, multiplying by the number of points, summing the subtotals, and dividing by the total number of students.

Student Performance Index Points	Number of Students	Index Points (subtotal)
180	9	1620
120	22	2640
60	14	840
0	5	0
Total	50	5100
Index Score		102.0

6. The four school designator labels and the point values assigned to them shall be:

Status	
Benchmark Tests	
Designator	Point Range
Distinguished	150 or above
Successful	100-149
Deficient	60-99
In Crisis	below 60

7. Growth performance shall be represented by an index based on the ratio of the growth achieved by the school in relation to the statewide average.

If the ratio of the school's growth to the statewide average growth is 1.20, then the index would be 150 points; a ratio of .80 would be 60 points.

The general formula is:

$$\text{Growth Ratio} = (4/9 * \text{Points}) + 53.3$$

$$\text{Points} = (\text{Growth Ratio} - 53.3) * 9/4$$

Growth School Label	Growth Ratio (School to State Avg.)
Distinguished	120.0 or above
Successful	97.7 - 119.9
Deficient	80.0 - 97.6
In Crisis	below 80.0

8. An overall index score will be calculated using the Status and Growth indices. The Status score will count one-third and the Growth score will count two-thirds of the overall index score. An overall school designator will be assigned based on the overall index score.
9. A confidence score designation will be calculated for each school. It will report the probability, based on the standard error of the overall index score for that size school, that the school, upon re-measurement, would be *In Crisis*, *Deficient*, *Satisfactory*, or *Distinguished*. Reporting the probability of misclassification complies with professional standards, and helps guide appropriate use of the data.

A number of analyses must be done to inform discussions and decisions about this proposed design. In addition, many special cases must be addressed.

II. Design Issues for 9-12 Schools

1. The high school designator system will incorporate student performance on the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) and dropout rate.
2. The SDS Committee, Department, and Center staff have identified several issues related to the design of the 9-12 school designator system. These have not been resolved yet to the point that recommendations can be made. Significant issues include the trade-offs between a mandatory testing grade and open testing sometime before graduation; the interpretation of scale scores; the reliability of "percentage above cut" measures; and the lack of repeated measures to implement a Growth model at high school.

While the outline above provides enough information to allow an observer to get a general sense of the design of the School Designator System, there is still significant work to be done. More details have to be provided for the high school system and procedures will have to be developed to handle the following exceptional circumstances:

1. schools with low student enrollments;
2. schools with at which no students are tested;
3. schools that span high school or other grades;
4. alternative schools and programs;
5. student exceptions;
6. students who did not participate in assessment;
7. students without a valid score on the NRT;
8. students tested out-of-level;
9. students who have taken the alternate assessment;
10. student mobility;
11. student missing pre-or post-test for growth;
12. school boundary change or grade consolidation;
13. new school;
14. appeal process for unusual circumstances;
15. Inappropriate testing practice (e.g., cheating;
16. student skips a grade;
17. student is retained in grade;
18. student graduates early;
19. NRT changes forms, is re-normed, or changes publisher;
20. language immersion students;
21. school serving intensive needs special education population;
22. How to keep SDS from providing more incentives for good, dedicated teachers to move from challenging situations;
23. How to attribute for accountability students in correspondence, cyber schools, or district-level programs.

NOTES OF THE SCHOOL DESIGNATORS COMMITTEE MEETING

March 28-29, 2001

Place: Hammond Room, Centennial Hall, Juneau, AK

Participants: Andy Baker, Ron Erickson, Kitty Farnham, Elaine Griffin, Karla Griswold, Mari Anne Gross, Lucy Hope, David Holmquist, Dee Hubbard, Richard Mauer, Teri Regan, Sophie Shield, Christopher Simeon, John Weise.

Consultants: Brian Gong, Center for Assessment

EED Staff: Bruce Johnson, Richard Smiley, Erik McCormick, Nick Stayrook

Deputy Commissioner Bruce Johnson presented an update of recently introduced legislation. Much of the focus in the Alaska Legislature is on the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination (HSGQE). Bills have been introduced in both the House and Senate that would allow the State Board of Education & Early Development to establish a procedure for granting waivers to the HSGQE for certain special populations, allow more flexibility in dealing with special education students and delay the effective date of the HSGQE.

An overview was given of the progress of the Department's Continuous Renewal Cycle. At the first meeting of the Content Review committee, the decision was made that the Alaska Performance Standards are appropriate and do not need revision. However, the committee decided that levels of performance expected on the HSGQE were deemed inappropriate in some cases, particularly on the mathematics test. At the second meeting to be held on April 19 and 20 in Anchorage the committee will review all of the test questions in the Alaska HSGQE item bank and decide which items measure basic competencies and which items measure higher level skills. Future versions of the HSGQE will be constructed using only those items that measure basic competencies.

The remainder of the meeting was spent reviewing the design of the School Designator System and seeking to resolve the issues that remained open from earlier meetings. The following is a summary of the discussions and decisions:

 **Inclusion of Students** – It is essential that the system includes as many students as possible and appropriate. This will provide a basis for comparable scores over time. It will also provide an incentive to help all students benefit from enhanced educational services reflected in the school designations. The Alaska assessment system provides that almost all students will be assessed. These guidelines make it fairly straightforward to include virtually every student in the school designator system

- The School Designator System will include all students except:

-  ○ LEP students who have not been enrolled in an English-language program for at least two years are not included in assessment nor accountability.

- Special education students who participate in the assessment with modifications, as specified on their IEPs. Note that these modifications should not be specified only for use in tests; they should be the same enhancements provided for students in their regular daily instructional settings.
- These students will be included in the SDS:
 - Special education students who participate in the regular assessment (with or without accommodations),
 - Special education students who participate in the alternate assessment.
 - Students who do not complete a test (i.e., are absent) will get zero (0) points in the SDS status score.
 - Students who do complete a scorable test but who are at the "Not Proficient" level will receive 20 points. This is to provide an incentive for schools to get students to participate in the assessment and accountability system.
 - Students who are enrolled in the school on the day of testing should participate in the assessment.

Use of Attendance – The SDS Committee recommended not including attendance for use in calculating the SDS designations, although attendance rate may be reported. The primary reasons for not including attendance in the ratings were

- a) In general, schools in Alaska report high average attendance rates (about 92%);
- b) Few schools were low enough in attendance to benefit substantially from improvement in attendance (fewer than 10% were less than 85%);
- c) Attendance was seen by some SDS Committee members as an "input" that should be left to the discretion of the local school/district; and
- d) The SDS Committee members recognized there were substantial differences between schools in circumstances, policies, and practices regarding how to count attendance (e.g., traveling for sports or other events, whether homework and instruction were required).

Growth Expectations – The SDS Committee discussed several ways growth might be measured and reported, and how growth expectations might be set. The Committee recommended that growth be calculated and reported in relation to "one year's normal growth" at each grade level. A figure of 1.0 would represent one year's normal growth; a number higher than 1.0 would recommend more than one year's normal growth, and a number less than 1.0 would mean the student or class of students had made less than one year's normal growth, e.g., was falling further behind "grade level." (Note that a growth figure of 1.0 does *not* mean that all students are "on grade level" or at the desired performance level of proficiency. It does mean that over one year's time the students made sufficient progress to score at the equivalent level on the next year's (harder) test.

The Department anticipated awarding a new contract to an assessment contractor in early April. One important task for the assessment contractor will be to create a definition of "normal growth" across grades. Nick Stayrook, representing EED, will work with the contractor and the Technical Review Committee on this task.

Assignment of School Designations – The SDS Committee discussed two ways to create rules for assigning school designations. The Committee favored a matrix, where specific combinations of status and growth would result in a particular school designation. The Committee did not favor a purely mathematical formula that would combine status and growth indices because it appeared that such a formula would likely be more complicated and less sensitive to desired outcomes (e.g., a requirement that less growth be required of schools with high status). The Committee also felt a “top bar” and “bottom bar” were not necessary if the matrix approach were used.

Variant Grade Ranges – The proposed SDS growth model requires test scores from at least two consecutive grades (e.g., grades 3 and 4). Some schools will not meet this requirement. The SDS Committee discussed the possible extent of this problem and how to address it within the school designator system. The SDS Committee recommended that schools without at least two consecutive grades be “paired” and share the same designation. That is, a school without sufficient test grades would be “paired” with the school to which its students feed. Preliminary data indicated that a small proportion of schools would be affected by this rule. The Department will analyze how many and which schools would be affected in the year 2001.



Small Schools – The SDS Committee discussed the fact that designations based on smaller numbers of students would be less reliable than designations based on larger numbers of students. To address this issue, the Committee recommended that:

1. An indication of possible error, (e.g., confidence intervals) be published with each school designation, regardless of school size;
2. Rolling averages be created of three years' data for schools with a total number of students accountable lower than a designated threshold. If, at the start of the system, a school were below this threshold, it would be in the averaging group; if it were above the threshold, it would be in the single year group. A school would need to have its number of students above/below the threshold for three consecutive years to change groups.

It may be possible for a school to have both the “Variant Grade Span” and “Small Schools” provisions apply to it.

High School Rating System – The SDS Committee recommended that:

1. An NRT be required in grade 9;
2. All students enrolled in grade 10 be required to take the HSGPE.
3. Districts be contacted regarding the possibility of tracking data from grade 8 to grade 9. Since over half the high schools in the state are K-12 institutions, and the three largest districts can track students within their districts, this may be possible.

With the above provisions, the SDS Committee envisioned a high school system that could incorporate both status and growth, similar to the K-8 SDS. The Committee identified these possible indicators to be included in high school designations:

1. Status on grade 9 NRT
2. Status on grade 10 HSGPE (percent passing)
3. Status on HSGPE at end of grade 12 (percent passing)
4. Growth from grade 8 to 9;
5. Growth from grade 9 to 10 (using the HSGPE scale score)
6. Dropout in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12

Time Schedule – The SDS Committee discussed the timelines required to send recommendations to the Department in the fall, so that the Department could send draft regulations to the Board in December 2001. The Board needs to have final regulations in place in spring 2002 so the Department can issue school designations in fall 2002 and report to the legislature in January 2003.

Summary – A summary of the recommendations by the SDS Committee is included in the attached PowerPoint presentation. (This presentation was made to the Alaska state Board of Education on March 29, 2001 by EED staff and Brian Gong from the Center for Assessment. EED staff, Gong, and members of the SDS Committee responded to questions from the Board.

Next Meeting – The members of the SDS Committee agreed that to meet again, most likely in an audio conference in early summer, and in early fall. The audio conference would be held after more was settled regarding the growth model in the meeting of the Technical Review Committee and when staff from the Center for Assessment have gathered more districts' data to analyze. The fall meeting would focus on settling on cutpoints and final recommendations; this should be informed by more data analyses using 2001 data, which should be available to EED and the Center for Assessment in late summer.

- Brn Packets
- sch des cmte membership
 - DEED outline on when we are & where we're going & obstacles.

Senate HES School Designators Delay Bill

Nick
Staprock

Fairbanks S.B Resolution supports delay.
Multiple measures should be included

↓
on designator
committee

- post graduation success rates
- parent satisfaction

What you hold schools accountable for is what they're going to concentrate on.

- student success in areas other than 3R's

Special schools (alterative, etc) will be rated poorly because that's where we put at-risk kids.

Extremely small schools (1-2 kids tested/year)

Amendment to bill could read

"other student and parent measures

Jim Holt
Supt Pbx

Shares chair's concern that just date change won't help the bigger problems.

- some schools should be exempt

Bruce
Johnson
AASB

Supports delay

Growth part will address Holt's concerns.

Districts are responsible for students' growth.

Byron
Rice
Glenallen
S.D.?

Lots of factors need to be taken into account

- historical test score results
- # of assessments
- sped kids' inclusion in school scores
- how will cut scores be determined?
- supports delay

Ed McLain

intends to evaluate status and growth
sped students - ESEA requires inclusion
of all students in assessments.
Some accomm/modif may invalidate
tests. Number of issues to address.

Bill Held 1½ wks.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2002 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
Bill Version: HB 352
(H) Publish Date: 1/23/02

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction):

Title School Designators

Dept. Affected: EED

BRU Teaching and Learning Support

Component Quality Schools

Sponsor Rules

Requester Governor

Component No. 2147

Expenditures/Revenues

(Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
-------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE

(Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2002) cost: 0.0

Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2003 budget proposal: ☐

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill proposes to change the implementation date for the school designator system. It would have no fiscal impact on the Department of Education & Early Development.

Prepared by: Barbara Thompson

Division Teaching and Learning Support

Approved by: Ed McLain, Deputy Commissioner of Education

Agency Education & Early Development

Phone 465-8727

Date/Time 1/16/02 1:06 PM

Date 1/16/02

Sec. 14.03.123. School accountability.

(a) Beginning in August 2002, and during each of the following 12-month periods, the department shall assign each public school in each district the performance designation of distinguished, successful, deficient, or in crisis based on multiple student measures, including student achievement. The state board of education shall establish this process by regulation.

(b) A public school assigned a performance designation of deficient or in crisis shall develop a school improvement plan under (e) of this section. The department shall inform the governing body of each district of the performance designation assigned to each public school in the district.

(c) The state board shall adopt regulations to allow a district to appeal the performance designation assigned to a public school in that district.

(d) The department may establish a program of special recognition for those public schools that achieve a distinguished performance designation.

(e) A public school that receives a designation of deficient or in crisis shall prepare a school improvement plan to improve student performance based on a process established by the state board of education. The public school shall undertake an improvement process under that plan to lead to a designation of successful or distinguished. The school improvement plan must be prepared with the maximum feasible public participation of the community, including, if appropriate, interested individuals, teachers, parents, parent organizations, students, tribal organizations, local government representatives, and other community groups. The district shall consult with and assist the public school in the preparation of the school improvement plan. The school improvement plan must be approved by the local school board. The commissioner may provide technical assistance to a public school or the district at any time during the preparation and implementation of the school improvement plan on the request of an interested person and the approval of the district.

(f) Beginning August 1, 2002, and periodically during each of the following 12-month periods, the department shall monitor the progress of the implementation of each school improvement plan prepared under (e) of this section.

(g) The department may use existing staff or contract with one or more qualified persons to assist a public school that is deficient or in crisis under this section to improve student performance. Qualified persons to provide assistance under this section include educators, business leaders, members of the governing body of that district, and community leaders. The provisions of AS 36.30 do not apply to a contract awarded under this subsection.

(h) Notwithstanding any other provisions in this title, if the performance designation of a public school has continued to be deficient or in crisis for two consecutive school years, the chief school administrator, if the district employs a chief school administrator, the president of the governing body, and the principal of the public school shall, at a public meeting of the state board of education, present a written report on the performance of that public school.

(i) The state board of education shall develop, by regulation, measures that may be progressively implemented by the commissioner to assist a public school to improve student performance in accordance with this section.

(j) In this section, "district" has the meaning given in AS 14.17.990 .



School Designator Committee Membership 2001/2002

School Board

Richard Mauer	Delta-Greely
Paul Thiboudeau	Craig
Mariann Gross	Kenai
Ida Olemaun	North Slope
Sally Rue	Juneau
Paula Pawlowski	Anchorage D-11

PTA

Viletta Knight	Fairbanks
Pat Weaver	Wasilla
Dee Hubbard	Anchorage D-8

NEA Alaska

Lucy Hope	Mat-Su
Elaine Griffin	Chiniak
Karla Griswold	Anchorage D-12

EED

Ed McLain
PJ Ford
Mark Leal
Ardy Miller

School Administrators

Ron Erickson	Haines
Dave Holmquist	Wasilla
Teri Regan	Anchorage D-15
Les Morse	Juneau
Rick Matiya	Kenai
Les Daenzer	Lower Kuskokwim
Sharon Swope	Dillingham

Business Community

Andy Baker	Kotzebue
Kitty Farman	Anchorage

Members-at-Large

Sophie Shields	Lower Kuskokwim
John Weise	REPP
Christopher Simon	Huslia

Technical Review Committee

Nick Stayrook	Fairbanks
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**School Designator Committee Membership
March 2000**

School Board

Richard Mauer	Delta-Greely
Paul Thibodeau	Craig
Mariann Gross	Kenai

School Administrators

Ron Erickson	Haines
Dave Holmquist	Wasilla
Teri Regan	Anchorage

PTA

Viletta Knight	Fairbanks
Pat Weaver	Wasilla
Dee Hubbard	Anchorage

Business Community

Andy Baker	Kotzebue
Kitty Farman	Anchorage

NEA Alaska

Lucy Hope	Mat-Su
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Karla Griswold	Anchorage

Members-at-Large

Sophie Shields	Lower Kuskokwim
John Weise	REPP
Christopher Simon	Huslia

EED

Bruce Johnson
Richard Smiley
Nick Stayrook

JAN-16-2002 WED 10:24 AM SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

FAX NO. 4510541

P. 01/01

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH BOARD OF EDUCATION

Resolution 2002-01

A Resolution Regarding the Implementation of AS 14.03.123 - School Accountability

WHEREAS, in 1998, the legislature passed the school accountability law requiring school designers to be established for each Alaskan school in August 2002; and

WHEREAS, the school designers will be based on multiple student measures including student achievement; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, the legislature passed a law to revise the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) to make sure it measures "essential" skills and knowledge and to extend its effective date to 2004; and

WHEREAS, effective in the spring of 2002, the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development will replace the California Achievement Test (CAT) - Fifth Edition (part of statewide assessment for the past seven years) with the TerraNova/CAT - 2nd Edition; and

WHEREAS, the School Designer Committee has recommended the school designers be based on both achievement status and achievement growth which requires a minimum of two years of achievement data on the same students using the same tests and growth data will not be available in August, 2002; and

WHEREAS, the school accountability law requires the writing of school improvement plans for schools designated as "deficient" or "in crisis" and the development of these plans will require significant work which may be unnecessary because of a designer that is based on incomplete test data; and

WHEREAS, many school districts establish "specialized schools" for serving the needs of at risk, incarcerated, or special needs students and these schools will be designated as in crisis if the rating is solely based on test scores; and

WHEREAS, the public reporting of test scores and school designations in small schools may breach the confidentiality of student records; and

WHEREAS, a one-year pilot test of the school accountability system would provide information to assure the practicality and validity of the system; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fairbanks North Star Borough Board of Education recommends a delay for the implementation of school designers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board recommends the school accountability system include at least two years of consistent student achievement data for computing growth; that the HSGQE scores for seniors be used as one of the high school indicators; that a minimum one-year pilot study be conducted prior to implementing school improvement plans; that steps are taken to assure confidentiality of student test information; and that specialized schools are treated fairly in assigning a school designer; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board recommends a broader involvement of individuals across the state to develop and review the school accountability system.

PASSED AND APPROVED January 15, 2002.



Bert Larson, President
Board of Education

ATTEST:


Susan Besette
Secretary to the Board



Northeast Community Council School Designator Resolution

Whereas the real estate values and the quality of life in our area are dependent upon the perceived value of our schools,

And whereas some school student populations in our area are highly mobile, have a high percentage of students that have had limited home experiences in the English language, come from families who have parents who work two and three jobs with limited opportunity to support school efforts, and as a group do not currently and historically compare well to some other school populations (there are few programs developed to remediate this difference in a short time),

And whereas the quality of the school staff is the single most important factor in the success of the student and a negative school designation will make it even more difficult for schools in our area to attract and retain quality teachers,

And whereas school morale significantly effects student test scores,

And whereas this is a community in transition that can not afford any undue negative publicity,

Therefore be it resolved that the Alaska State School Designator Committee develop an evaluation system that takes full account of the unique needs of each school, its student population and the community from which they come as they develop a means to compare and judge our schools,

And further be it resolved that the State of Alaska postpone its implementation of the school designator program until schools have the full opportunity to implement programs that break the historic pattern of certain types of school populations that remain more difficult than others to effectively teach.

And further be it resolved that any eventual school designator process provide a realistic opportunity for each school to be successful.

_____ Date _____

Provided by Mr. Rod McCoy

Percent of Seniors Who Graduated in 2000 by District

State of Alaska			
Department of Education & Early Development			
	10/1/1999		
	Grade 12	2000	%
District Name	Enrollment	Graduates	Graduating
Alaska Gateway Schools	38	32	84%
Aleutian Region Schools	3	2	66%
Aleutians East Borough	15	13	86%
Alyeska Central School	165	34	20%
Anchorage School District	3,238	2,334	72%
Annette Island Schools	31	27	87%
Bering Strait Schools	82	73	89%
Bristol Bay Borough	17	18	94%
Chatham Schools	14	14	100%
Chugach Schools	14	3	21%
Copper River Schools	49	42	85%
Cordova City Schools	33	30	90%
Craig City Schools	33	28	84%
Delta/Greely Schools	94	56	59%
Denali Borough Schools	24	24	100%
Dillingham City Schools	28	22	78%
Fairbanks North Star	850	808	95%
Galena City School District	145	109	75%
Haines Borough Schools	28	28	100%
Hoonah City Schools	22	16	72%
Hydaburg City Schools	6	5	83%
Iditarod Area Schools	28	27	96%
Juneau Borough Schools	369	344	93%
Kake City Schools	7	7	100%
Kashunamiut Schools	15	10	66%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	819	691	84%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	144	129	89%
Klawock City Schools	19	20	105%
Kodiak Island Borough	151	133	85%
Kuspuk Schools	28	25	89%
Lake & Peninsula Schools	23	18	78%
Lower Kuskokwim Schools	150	122	81%
Lower Yukon Schools	73	56	76%
Mat-Su Borough Schools	840	708	84%
Mt. Edgecumbe High School	67	48	71%
Nenana City Schools	33	4	12%
Nome City Schools	31	32	103%
North Slope Borough	108	104	96%
Northwest Arctic Borough	95	77	81%
Pelican City Schools	2	2	100%
Petersburg City Schools	42	43	102%
Pribilof School District	4	5	125%
St. Mary's Schools	8	6	75%
Sitka School District	150	112	74%
Skagway City School	4	4	100%
Southeast Island Schools	17	16	94%
Southwest Region Schools	26	22	84%
Tanana City Schools	6	6	100%
Unalaska City School District	21	17	80%
Valdez City Schools	51	50	98%
Wrangell Public Schools	44	38	86%
Yakutat School District	8	8	100%
Yukon Flats Schools	21	15	71%
Yukon/Koyukuk Schools	24	38	158%
Yupit School District	24	13	54%
*Statewide Totals	8,381	6,668	80%
*Statewide Totals include All Districts, Mt. Edgecumbe, and Alyeska Central School.			

School Designators- Summary of Issues

Background- Current Alaska statutes (Sec. 14.03.123 *School Accountability* and Sec. 14.03.120 *Education Planning*) require the Department of Education and Early Development to develop a system to assign each school in Alaska a designation of Distinguished, Successful, Deficient, or In Crisis by August 2002. The Department is also charged annually to publish a "Report Card to the Public" that includes those school designations beginning January 2003.

To develop a system for designating school performance the Department convened a School Designators Committee to advise in the design and implementation of the school designator system. The Department hired consultants from the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Inc. (Center for Assessment) to work with the Committee and Department towards establishing principles and guidelines within which the school designator system would be developed.

(Brian Gong)

Goals- We assume that the primary intent of assigning school designation labels is to spur strengthened educational services to all students and to inform the public. The desired long-term outcome of the School Designator System therefore should be better schools, better-educated students, and more informed public and policymakers. The school designator system has been designed to contribute to strengthened education, be appropriate for the wide range of circumstances of Alaska public schools, and be technically sound, legally defensible, and politically acceptable to a wide range of stakeholders.

Indicators Used To Determine School Designations- The School Designator System (SDS) will base assignment of school designations upon, student performance on state benchmark and HSGQE assessments, commercial norm-referenced tests, and dropout rate (for high schools). Student performance measures will include Status (most recent performance of students in the school) and Growth (improvement over time of students in successive grades/years). Results from these indicators will be combined to inform a decision about assigning a designation. Additional indicators will be reported, as part of the School Report Card to the Public, but will not be used for determining school designations.

See Sample Report (attached)

Calculating a Score or Status- The Status score will represent the average performance of all students in the school on the various assessments (i.e., benchmark and NRTs). The Status score will be calculated through an index assigning points for each student score in a designated performance level. Scores will be averaged across subjects and grade levels.

Performance on Benchmark Test	Accountability Points
Above Standard	150
Meets Standard	100
Nearly Meets Standard	50
Does Not Meet Standard	0

Calculating a Score for Growth- The Committee determined that growth will account for 2/3 of the total designator score. Growth will be measures based on the improvement made by a class of students from one year to the next year. This measure of improvement, is sensitive to "where students started" and uses classes of students; rather than tracking exactly the same students. Scores will be averaged across subjects and grade levels.

*Why?
what about
the effect of
transient
students?*

Persistence/Dropout Index- The Committee recommended that dropout or persistence rates should be included as an indicator for high schools. We recommend that persistence rate be used instead of dropout rate, where persistence is the inverse of dropouts: the percentage of students who continue in school.

Report Degree of Certainty-A degree of certainty (reliability) will be reported with each school designation. The degree of certainty should be taken into consideration when interpreting the school designation. The degree of certainty of the school designation would reflect the reliability or decision consistency of the assignment of the designation.

Implementation Date-The Department and Board are proceeding to implement as much of the proposed plan as possible by August 2002. This will include status measures on the benchmark exams and TerraNova CAT/6 in grades three through nine, but few if any growth measures. Due to standard setting for the refocused High School Graduation Qualifying Exam results from the grade 10 students will not be available until late September 2002.

Growth measures on state tests, which require at least two years' data, will first be available for all grades in 2003. It is expected that additional enhancements and refinements will be available in 2004 and after. A possible implementation schedule is indicated on the sample report.

The committee and the Department have expressed concern regarding the designation of schools on the basis of status scores only. The Department is recommending implementation of the designator system in 2004 to allow for the inclusion of growth data, and to more fully develop the capacity of the state and districts to collect, manage and analyze the data gathered by schools and districts.

The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in December of 2001 also contains a significant number of school and district accountability requirements. The Department of Education and Early Development and the School Designator Committee believe that is critically important to incorporate the new Federal requirements into the Designator System that will be implemented in the state. Implementing the designator system in 2004 will allow the Department to ensure that our state accountability system is consistent with these new federal requirements.

Description of School Designator System And Questions and Answers

Alaska Department of Education and Early Development

What is the purpose of the School Designator System (SDS)?

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development is charged statutorily (Sec. 14.03.123) to develop a system for assigning designations and providing assistance to schools. The purpose of the school designation system is to communicate school quality and performance to the public, educators, and others. It is expected that this program will recognize good performance and help lower performing schools get better through increased attention and targeted assistance.

What is the status of the SDS?

The Department will present a proposal to the state Board of Education in March 2002. The Board is responsible for issuing regulations that will direct the specific implementation of the SDS by August 2002. The specifications for the SDS will be set when the Board approves its final regulations. Therefore, the information presented here is a proposal from the Department, subject to change.

Who is developing the SDS?

The SDS is benefiting from input from many sources. The Department has convened a School Designator System Committee. The SDS Committee consists of over two dozen members who represent much of the diversity of Alaska. Members include very experienced educators, school principals, superintendents, school board members, parents, and businesspersons. A nationally experienced firm, the Center for Assessment, is helping with the design of the SDS. The Technical Review Committee established by the Department, consisting of Alaskans with measurement expertise, will also review the SDS design.

As part of the process, the Department is soliciting comments from many educator and policy-making groups. The state Board's regulations will also be subject to a period for public comment.

What will be reported?

The law requires that each school be assigned one of four labels: Distinguished, Successful, Deficient, or In Crisis. These labels will be based on school performance on a number of indicators which will also be reported, including students' performance in relation to the state standards on reading, mathematics, and writing; performance on norm-referenced tests; learning growth of students over the past year in reading, mathematics, and writing; dropout rates; and graduation rates. In addition, the SDS Committee recommended adding results from other performance indicators as they become available, including an early primary

assessment, post-graduation success, and local performance assessment. The degree of confidence in the designation will also be reported.

It may be desirable to combine elements from the existing school report with the information for the school designator system. This could provide information about the school context and quality, such as percent of students living in low-income families, special education, racial/ethnic diversity, and remoteness of the school. Attendance, expulsions, truancy, physical plant, course offerings, and teacher qualifications could also be reported. Although the SDS Committee did not recommend including these other indicators in the school designation rating, most of these elements are collected and reported, and could be combined into a single school report. A sample possible report is attached.

Why does the SDS emphasize student test scores?

In compliance with the state legislature's requirement that the SDS be built on "student measures, including student achievement," a very large part of the school's designation will reflect the performance of its students on the state benchmark and high school graduation qualifying exams. These exams provide a valid and reliable assessment of student performance on the content standards determined to be of most importance for Alaska. Standardized test scores provide a common "measuring stick" across all schools.

The Department and SDS Committee recognize that standardized tests are not the only indicator of school quality and student performance. However, very few other measures were available that met minimum criteria for rigor and fairness. As mentioned above, a number of other indicators have been identified that may be developed and included in the future.

How are status and growth included in the SDS?

One agreed upon indicator of school performance was how its students performed in relation to state standards—for example, how many of its students were passing the high school qualifying exam or performing in relation to the similar proficiency standard for the benchmark exams in grades 3, 6, and 8.

However, it was also agreed that it is more important how much students are learning, or how much their scores are improving from year to year. Thus, the SDS will include how much student test scores have increased from year to year.

Growth will count twice as much as status in assigning school designations. Provisions will be made for schools that are performing so high that it is not reasonable to expect much growth.

How will the system be fair to all schools?

Fairness is a primary concern for the Department and all those who have worked on the design of the School Designator System. There are several ways the system has been designed to be fair to all schools.

The SDS will apply objective, common measures to all schools.

Schools whose students have less advantaged backgrounds will "get credit" for helping those students progress. The growth component gives as much credit to helping a student who started low and learned "one year's standard growth" as it does helping a student who started high. Schools are not competing with each other; they are recognized for helping their students grow, no matter where they started.

Much thought has been taken to make the system as reliable as possible for small schools. This includes including as many grades and students as possible.

The reporting of the degree of confidence in the designator is also an important safeguard against basing decisions on uncertain or unstable evidence.

For schools with substantial student transience, while the individual student tracking system is being developed, the Department will allow schools that can track individual students to present evidence for consideration if the results are substantially different than those based on the state's unmatched data.

It is anticipated that on-going studies will alert the Department if there are changes in school circumstances, population shifts, or unforeseen situations.

Can you give an example of how the system is fair to a school serving less advantaged students?

It is recognized that students from lower socio-economic positions, or who have less proficiency in English, usually score lower on achievement tests. Often these are racial or ethnic minority students, although most studies indicate a stronger relationship with socio-economic status. It is not true, however, that these less advantaged students cannot learn. In fact, one of the underlying tenets of the standards movement is that all children can learn, most to higher levels than are currently being achieved. This view that all children can learn is supported by extensive research on the effectiveness of teachers, the power of expectations, and the effect of schools with powerful instructional programs.

If schools were only evaluated on how high their students scored—such as how many were Proficient on a benchmark exam or what percentage passed the HSGQE—then schools serving less advantaged students might be expected to rank low. However, the proposed SDS gives credit to schools for helping their students learn, no matter where they started. So, for example, a school whose grade 4 students were all reading one grade level below would receive credit for helping those students progress one grade's worth on the exam by the end

of grade 5, as would a school whose students were all reading on level from grade 4 to grade 5. That is, schools get credit for helping students learn, no matter how low or high they start.

Some schools serve high percentages of students who are mobile. How does the system treat them?

Statistically speaking, in large enough sample sizes, if the students moving into a school are like the students moving out, then transience should not affect the school's results. Schools should monitor and document changes in population from year to year.

The proposed SDS system includes all students who are enrolled and tested in the school each year, with certain exceptions. One reason for this is to recognize that "all students count" and not to provide any incentive to push students out of the accountability and educational system. A study done by the Department on the limited Alaska data available indicates that using a matched student system would not result in very different school results than the proposed system that compares groups of students. However, the Department is very interested in studying a true student longitudinal growth system that will track growth from year to year for each individual student.

There is a difference between students who are transient within the state, within a district, or who move in or out of the state or in and out of the public school system. The Department is working on establishing a system that will allow student scores to be matched no matter where a student moves within the public school systems within the state, and is planning to study how much such a system should be used in the SDS and what differences it might make.

When will the school designator system be implemented?

The Department and Board are proceeding to implement as much of the proposed plan as possible by August 2002, which is required by law. This will include status measures on the benchmark exams and TerraNova CAT/6 in grades three through nine, but few if any growth measures. Due to standard setting for the refocused High School Graduation Qualifying Exam results from the grade 10 students will not be available until late September 2002.

Growth measures on state tests, which require at least two years' data, will first be available for all grades in 2003. It is expected that additional enhancements and refinements will be available in 2004 and after. A possible implementation schedule is indicated on the sample report.

The committee and the Department have expressed concern regarding the designation of schools on the basis of status scores only. The Department is recommending implementation of the designator system in 2004 to allow for the inclusion of growth data, and to more fully develop the capacity of the state and districts to collect, manage and analyze the data gathered by schools and districts.

Student
ID Numbers

What
DEED can
do by 2002

The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in December of 2001 also contains a significant number of school and district accountability requirements. The Department of Education and Early Development and the School Designator Committee believes that is critically important to incorporate the new Federal requirements into the Designator System that will be implemented in the state. Implementing the designator system in 2004 will allow the Department to ensure that our state accountability system is consistent with these new federal requirements.

SAMPLE Alaska School Report Card

School Designation of Student Performance

Designation: TBD	
Confidence: TBD	
Status Score	2002
Growth Score	2003
Total Score	2003

Indicator	Status		Growth	
	N	Score	N	Score
Kindergarten Profile				
Grade 3 Benchmark		'02	--	--
Grade 4 NRT		'02		'02/'03
Grade 5 NRT		'02		'03
Grade 6 Benchmark		'02		'03
Grade 7 NRT		'02		'03
Grade 8 Benchmark		'02		'03
Grade 9 NRT		'02		'03
Grade 10 HSGQE		9/'02		'03
Persistence/Dropout		'02		'02
Percent Graduating		'02		'02
Post-graduation Success		'03		'04
Local Assessment		'03		'04

School Context

Percent AFDC	
Percent Transient	
Percent Special Ed	
Remoteness	
Racial/Ethnic Makeup	
Limited English Proficiency	

School Quality

(Examples of indicators that would be reported)

Attendance	Accreditation Status
Chronic Truancy	School Plan in Place
Safety (Expulsions)	Parent Involvement
Physical Plant	Community Involvement
Course Offerings	Average Volunteer Hours
Percent Tenured	Parent Satisfaction Survey
Avg. Years Teaching	Student Satisfaction Survey
Percent Teaching in Area of Certification	Community Satisfaction Survey

Other Notes



Anchorage School District

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SCHOOL BOARD

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Treasurer

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Debbie Osslander

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SUPERINTENDENT

Carol Corrigan

February 12, 2002

Dear Members of the House Special Committee on Education:

Attached please find a copy of the Anchorage School Board resolution in support of delaying the school designations until 2004.

The Anchorage School Board urges caution in labeling schools on the basis of test scores alone and supports legislation that delays the effective date of the school designator process from August 2002 to August 2004.

Senate Bill 36, which became AS 14.07.020(b). 5., requires the State Board to develop an annual system of rating schools, and designate each school by August 2002 in one of four categories: distinguished, successful, deficient, and in crisis. The categories are to be based on a school's student test scores and other indicators of student performance.

The Anchorage School Board supports assessment of student progress and the accountability implicit in this legislation. However, designating a school as deficient or in crisis on the basis of test scores alone ignores certain factors such as the high level of mobility that occurs in our schools. This means that the students being measured on the benchmark exams in the spring may not be the students who started at the school in the fall. In addition, such labeling has the high potential to be misleading and adversely affect families and neighborhoods. Schools in low socioeconomic areas, schools in highly transient communities, and schools designed to serve high needs populations are more likely to be labeled deficient as a result of factors other than the quality of education being delivered.

A committee of educators and community representatives are currently developing criteria to measure the annual yearly growth essential to fair designations. The lack of historical data does not allow for this to be measured at this time. The delay will allow annual yearly growth to be determined so as to be fair to all schools.

The Anchorage School Board also supports delaying the effective date until 2004 to align it with the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam.

I look forward to discussing this with you and other legislators when I am in Juneau at the end of the month for the AASB Fly-in.

Sincerely,



Carol Comeau
Superintendent

Cc: Anchorage Caucus
Governor Knowles
Commissioner Holloway
Anchorage School Board

**ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ASDR 2001 - 2002 - 7**

**A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF DELAYING THE SCHOOL DESIGNATIONS
UNTIL 2004**

WHEREAS, in 1998, the legislature passed the school accountability law requiring school designators to be established in each Alaskan school in August 2002; and

WHEREAS, effective in the spring of 2002, the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development will replace the California Achievement Test (CAT) - Fifth Edition (part of the statewide assessment for the past seven years) with the TerraNova/CAT/6 - 2nd Edition; and

WHEREAS, the School Designator Committee has recommended the school designators be based on both achievement status and achievement growth; and

WHEREAS, achievement growth requires a minimum of two years of achievement data on the same students using the same tests and growth data that will not be available in August, 2002; and,

WHEREAS, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in December of 2001 contains a significant number of school and district accountability requirements that will need to be incorporated into the School Designator System; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, the legislature passed a law to revise the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) to make sure it measures "essential" skills and knowledge and to extend its effective date to 2004; and

WHEREAS, designating a school as deficient or in crisis on the basis of test scores alone ignores certain factors such as the high level of mobility that occurs in our schools; and

WHEREAS, schools in low socioeconomic areas, schools in highly transient communities and schools designed to serve high needs populations are more likely to be labeled deficient as a result of factors other than the quality of education being delivered;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage School Board supports delaying the effective date until 2004 to align it with the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Anchorage School Board urges caution in labeling schools on the basis of test scores alone.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage School Board this 11th day of February 2002.

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD


Peggy Robinson, President

**Harriet Drummond
Rita Holthouse
Jake Metcalfe**

**Tim Steele
Debbie Ossiander
Dave Werdal**

Carol Comeau, Superintendent