Part 1 - Intro

Hello. My name is Michael Johnson and I have the privilege of serving you, my fellow Alaskans, as the Commissioner of Education and Early Development.

I want to share with you some important information about a new accountability system that will be implemented for the first time this fall.

Part 2 - ESSA

**The Every Student Succeeds Act, also known as ESSA or E-S-S-A**, is a federal law that imposes requirements for public schools in exchange for funding designed to close America’s gaps in student achievement.

Alaska’s ESSA plan was approved by the U.S. Department of Education on May 16th of this year. Approval of our state plan was required for Alaska to continue receiving approximately $80 million annually in funding from the federal government to support our state’s public schools.

Part 3 – Accountability System

One of the largest and most anticipated pieces of Alaska’s ESSA plan is an accountability system for our schools and districts. Accountability systems are important because they provide **information about how each school is supporting its students**. This information helps us **focus on what matters most**, gives us a better understanding of **what is working well**, and helps determine **where we need to improve** so that we can help ALL students succeed.

Part 4 – School Ratings

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development will be releasing accountability determinations, or ratings, for every public school in the state. Accountability ratings are a method to **convey a broad picture of school performance over time**, incorporating outcomes for all students. They are designed to **highlight each school’s strengths and areas where they can improve.**

Part 5 – Trial Year

As with any new system, adjustments will be needed to make the system as accurate, transparent, and effective as possible. With your help, this new accountability system, combined with the State Board of Education’s strategic plan known as Alaska’s Education Challenge, will provide you with important information about how well your local school is doing, and how well our public school system is working for different groups of students.

We want to find out together what changes we may need to make in this new accountability system to move us toward an **excellent education for every single student in our state**, no matter where they live.

Part 6 – Public Involvement

When school ratings are released on our website this fall, I encourage you to review your school’s data and use that information to engage in conversations with your local school boards, school administrators, and teachers about your school’s performance. If you have questions about the data or the new accountably system, please contact your local school or district office or visit our website at education.alaska.gov.

Thank you for your time. Only with your involvement can we have the important conversations needed about the performance of our schools so that we can work together to **ensure every student is receiving an excellent education every day**.