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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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State's plan for flexibility in school accountability turned down

JUNEAU -- The U.S. Department of Education has turned down Alaska's proposal to pilot a school accountability plan under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Alaska officials are considering whether to submit a revised proposal.

The federal agency said Tuesday it had approved six states' proposals for differentiated accountability and not approved the proposals of 11 states, including Alaska. But federal officials said they will accept a new round of state submissions in the fall.

"Our foremost concern is to implement No Child Left Behind in a way that is most beneficial to our students," said Alaska Commissioner of Education & Early Development Larry LeDoux. "We are reviewing the U.S. Department of Education's feedback and the successful state proposals."

The federal government is allowing up to 10 states to try out plans that differentiate consequences for struggling schools based on how far they fall short of targets for student proficiency and other goals.

Alaska assesses students in language arts and math in grades 3 through 10 to determine whether schools are making adequate yearly progress toward 100 percent proficiency of assessed students under No Child Left Behind.

Schools that receive federal Title I (anti-poverty) funds face consequences for not meeting targets over multiple years. The goal of differentiated accountability systems is to better match consequences and resources to the needs of struggling Title I schools.

Alaska proposed to differentiate consequences for Title I schools that do not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for academic reasons from those that do not make AYP because they fall short in the required student participation rate in assessments or attendance rates or graduation rates.

Under Alaska's proposal, Title I schools that fall short academically are assigned a level based on how many years they have missed AYP targets. Those schools are further



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differentiated by how close they are to making academic targets. The range of interventions is based on the severity of students' needs.

Alaska's plan promotes the use of Response to Instruction/Intervention in struggling schools. In that model, educators determine each student's academic needs, apply instructional methods that are known to be effective, closely monitor all students' progress, and adjust instruction as needed until each student improves.

Alaska's proposal is available at:

<http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/differentiatedaccountability/dapstates.html#ak>.

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