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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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State announces accountability results of No Child Left Behind

In school year 2007-2008, nearly six out of 10 Alaska public schools made adequate yearly progress under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, according to data released today by Alaska Education Commissioner Larry LeDoux.

Of 501 schools, 294, or 58.7 percent, made adequate yearly progress in 2007-2008.

That represents a decline from nearly 62 percent of Alaska public schools in 2005-2006 and nearly 66 percent in 2006-2007. But the data should be interpreted in light of higher targets for student proficiency that began in the 2007-2008 school year, education officials said. More students must score proficient on state assessments for a school to make adequate yearly progress.

"It is important to note that many schools that did not make adequate yearly progress this year due to the higher targets did show improvement over the previous year," said Commissioner LeDoux. "This progress is a credit to efforts by educators to achieve higher levels of success for all students. Moreover, many good things are happening in our schools that are not reflected in test scores. At the same time, we recognize the important challenge and responsibility to fulfill the State Board of Education & Early Development's core belief that all students can meet the Alaska standards."

Under Alaska's accountability system for NCLB, nearly all students in grades 3 through 10 take the state's standards-based assessments in reading, writing and math. For NCLB, the reading and writing scores are combined into a language arts score.

Schools are held accountable for meeting targets each year for the percentage of students who score proficient in language arts and math. Those targets, called "annual measurable objectives" in NCLB, increase over the years to gradually reach 100 percent student proficiency by 2013-2014.

From 2004-2005 through 2006-2007, the targets were 71.48 percent of students proficient in language arts and 57.61 percent proficient in math. In 2007-2008, and continuing

A large, faint watermark logo of the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development is visible in the background of the lower half of the page. It features a circular emblem with a hand reaching up, surrounded by the words "ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT". Below the emblem, the text "EDUCATION & EARLY DEVELOPMENT" is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font.

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through 2009-2010, the targets are notably higher: 77.18 percent proficient in language arts and 66.09 percent proficient in math.

“We expect that each time the targets are increased, there will be a temporary decrease in the number of schools making adequate yearly progress,” said Les Morse, Director of Assessment, Accountability & Information Management at the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development. “But we’ve seen that over time, more schools meet the higher targets.”

Schools are held accountable for their student body as a whole and in up to nine subgroups of students for language arts and math, participation rate in taking assessments, and either a graduation rate or an attendance rate. Thus, schools are held accountable for up to 31 targets. A school that does not meet all of the targets has not made adequate yearly progress. Nearly half of schools that fall short do so in only one or two targets.

Schools that do not make adequate yearly progress are said to be “in need of improvement.” NCLB requires school districts to impose consequences on such schools, the details of which depend on whether the schools receive federal Title I anti-poverty funds.

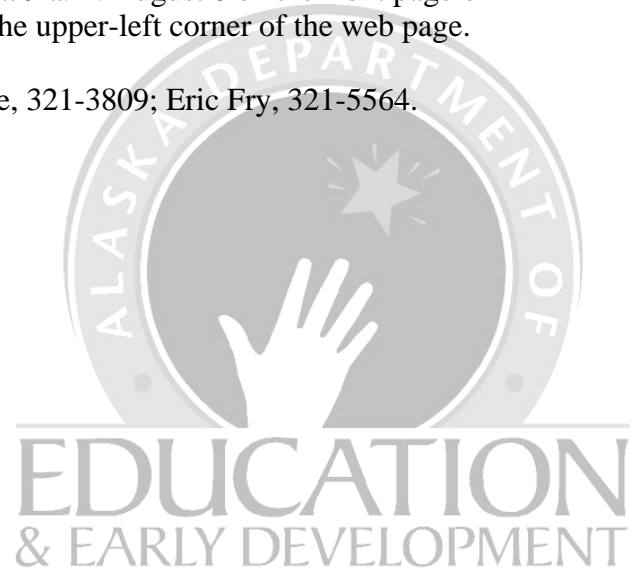
Consequences for Title I schools range from offering parents a choice of schools and funding tutoring for low-income students, to implementing a new curriculum or restructuring a school’s governance. For non-Title I schools, districts must implement improvement plans.

In 2007-2008, 20 schools that had been in need of improvement made adequate yearly progress for the second consecutive year and were removed from the list of schools needing improvement. Another 34 schools needing improvement did make adequate yearly progress in 2007-2008. If they make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years, they will come off the list of schools in need of improvement.

A media packet of information about adequate yearly progress results for 2008, including data about individual schools, will be available at 9 a.m. August 8 on the front page of www.eed.state.ak.us. Look under Headlines in the upper-left corner of the web page.

For more information on August 8: Les Morse, 321-3809; Eric Fry, 321-5564.

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