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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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District AYP Results Released

JUNEAU – Twenty-three of Alaska's 54 school districts made adequate yearly progress for the 2008-2009 school year under the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

That represents a decline from 26 districts making adequate yearly progress (AYP) in 2007-2008. Thirty districts made AYP in 2006-2007 under lower proficiency targets than in the past two years; 25 districts made AYP in 2005-2006; and 22 in 2004-2005.

The goal of No Child Left Behind is that all students be proficient in reading and math by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. The AYP process provides an annual check of school and district progress toward this goal. Schools and districts must meet targets for proficiency each year.

Districts are held accountable for AYP in the same way individual schools are. Alaska students in grades 3 to 10 take state standards-based assessments in reading, writing and math. The reading and writing scores are combined into one language arts score.

Districts are held accountable for meeting proficiency targets in those assessments for the student body as a whole and in nine subgroups of students; African American, Alaska Native/American Indian, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic, multi-ethnic, economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency.

Districts are not held accountable separately for subgroups that are so small they would not yield reliable statistics. A subgroup must have at least 26 students. Districts also are held accountable for the student participation rate in taking the state assessments and for meeting targets in attendance rates and graduation rates.

This year's targets are 77.18 percent of students proficient in language arts, 66.09 percent proficient in math, 95 percent student participation rate in assessments, an attendance rate of 85 percent, and a graduation rate of 55.58 percent.

In a provision known as "safe harbor," districts also can make AYP, in a subgroup or the school as a whole, by reducing the percentage of nonproficient students by 10 percent.

The logo for the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development is located in the bottom right corner. It features a large, stylized hand reaching upwards, with the words "ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & EARLY DEVELOPMENT" written in a circular path around it. Below the logo, the words "EDUCATION & EARLY DEVELOPMENT" are written in a large, bold, sans-serif font.

EDUCATION
& EARLY DEVELOPMENT

However, the district AYP process includes an element that is not used for school AYP. Districts that have not made AYP in general but have made AYP in at least one grade span (grades 3-5, 6-8 or 9-12) do not advance to a higher level of improvement status.

Improvement status refers to districts that are in need of improvement. There are four levels of improvement status, with increasing consequences. The consequences are set out in state regulations under 4 AAC 06.840.

Districts in Level 1 must consult with the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (EED) regarding the reasons they did not make AYP.

Districts in Level 2 and above must develop and implement a district improvement plan, submit the plan to EED, request technical assistance from EED, and provide notice to parents.

Districts in Level 4 must continue with their improvement plan. They also are subject to corrective actions from the state, such as deferral of funds, changes in curriculum, professional development, replacement of personnel, or removal of schools from the district's jurisdiction.

Currently, eight districts are at Level 1, one at Level 2, three at Level 3, and 19 at Level 4. Of those 19 districts, 14 are in multiple years of being at Level 4.

Districts must make AYP for two consecutive years to be removed from improvement status. Two districts came off the improvement list this year.

Before implementing corrective action, EED considers whether a district has shown improvement from the previous year in its AYP performance. The department also looks closely at student scores on the state assessments to see whether students are improving, even if they have not yet scored proficient.

Only if a district has not shown improvement in student achievement does EED consider performing an on-site audit of the district's instructional practices. The department's audits review the six components of effective schools: curriculum, assessment, instruction, leadership, supportive learning environment, and professional development. The audit leads to a district improvement plan, which EED monitors on a regular basis.

For complete district results, see:

<http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/ayp/2009/2009DistrictAYPWorksheets.pdf>

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