

# STATE OF ALASKA

## Department of Education & Early Development

### Office of the Commissioner

**SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR**

Goldbelt Place  
801 West Tenth Street, Suite 200  
P.O. Box 110500  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0500  
(907) 465-2800  
(907) 465-4156 Fax

May 1, 2007

Raymond Simon, Deputy Secretary  
U. S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Deputy Secretary Simon:

I am pleased to present Alaska's Adequate Yearly Progress Growth Model proposal, and request to incorporate growth into the Alaska Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook. Under the Alaska proposal, which changed significantly as a result of the most recent peer review, students on track to be proficient would be incorporated into the proficient population of our schools and districts for evaluating progress toward the annual measurable objective. This proposal is a model that incorporates individual student growth of those not proficient, but on track, with the status model for the remaining students. Additionally, the model determines individual student decline in performance for all proficient students, and holds districts accountable to have measures in place to ensure such students remain proficient. This Adequate Yearly Progress Growth Model proposal is a revision to previous proposals submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

Specifically, this proposal is a change from the previous submission in the following ways:

1. This proposal establishes a hard deadline for when all students will reach proficiency, or be evaluated based on their current status. That hard deadline will be tenth grade.
2. This proposal reduces the trajectory for most students. Students in grade seven, who are new to the LEA, will have a three-year trajectory, grade eight students a two-year trajectory, grade nine students a one-year trajectory and grade 10 students will be evaluated based on their status.
3. This proposal makes it explicitly clear that if a student does not have a test record from the previous year, or does not have a test record in the current year from a higher grade level than the previous year, growth will not be calculated and the student will be evaluated based on status alone. This proposal also outlines that students on the alternate assessment are included based on status within the model. This proposal clearly does not include other alternative tests because Alaska requires all students to either take the regular Standards Based Assessment or the alternate, and no other alternative assessments are available.
4. This proposal clarifies that a requirement of school improvement plans will be to address what measures will be taken to ensure students who are proficient, but decline in performance, remain proficient in future years.
5. This proposal makes clear the intent to complete validity studies regarding this proposal. At the May 2007 meeting of the Alaska National Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

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the state has included on the agenda validity study recommendations, and specifically is seeking input from the TAC regarding the predictive nature of this proposal.

6. This proposal clarifies that most students are evaluated in this model based on status, and outlines the role of the confidence interval within this mixed growth and status measure.
7. This proposal provides more information regarding matched and unmatched students. Additionally, this proposal makes clear that if a student is not matched, the state includes the student based on his or her status score and no growth calculation is made; therefore, all students are included regardless of the match rates.

Enclosed with this letter you will find sufficient documentation to approve the Alaska growth model proposal for inclusion into the Alaska Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook. The documentation includes an executive summary of the Alaska growth model proposal; Alaska's Peer Review Guidance response; and documents of evidence. The evidence presented, along with Alaska having a fully approved standards and assessment system, provides the necessary information to approve the Alaska Adequate Yearly Progress Growth Model.

We look forward to discussions with U.S. Department of Education regarding the documents submitted with this letter.

Sincerely,



Roger Sampson  
Commissioner

Enclosures

cc: Catherine Freeman  
Abigail Potts  
Jeff Johnson