Alaska State System of Support (SSOS) Operations Manual

Building Local Capacity

2010-2011 Academic Year

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Our Purpose and Mission

Our mission is to support districts as they build their capacity to implement sustainable school improvement strategies with fidelity. Authority for developing and implementing a system of support for districts and schools comes from both State and Federal law (see Appendix B). This document provides an overview of our program and resources that are available to districts and schools in Alaska.

The State System of Support (SSOS) was established to help all students (AS 14.03.015):

- Succeed in education and work,
- Shape a personally worthwhile and satisfying life,
- Exemplify the best values of society, and
- Be effective in improving the character and quality of the world.

Our program goal is for all districts and schools to:

- Demonstrate yearly increases in student achievement in all subgroups,
- Show improvement in the school value table index growth score, and
- Exhibit gains in the growth of individual student achievement with the eventual goal of two consecutive years of meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

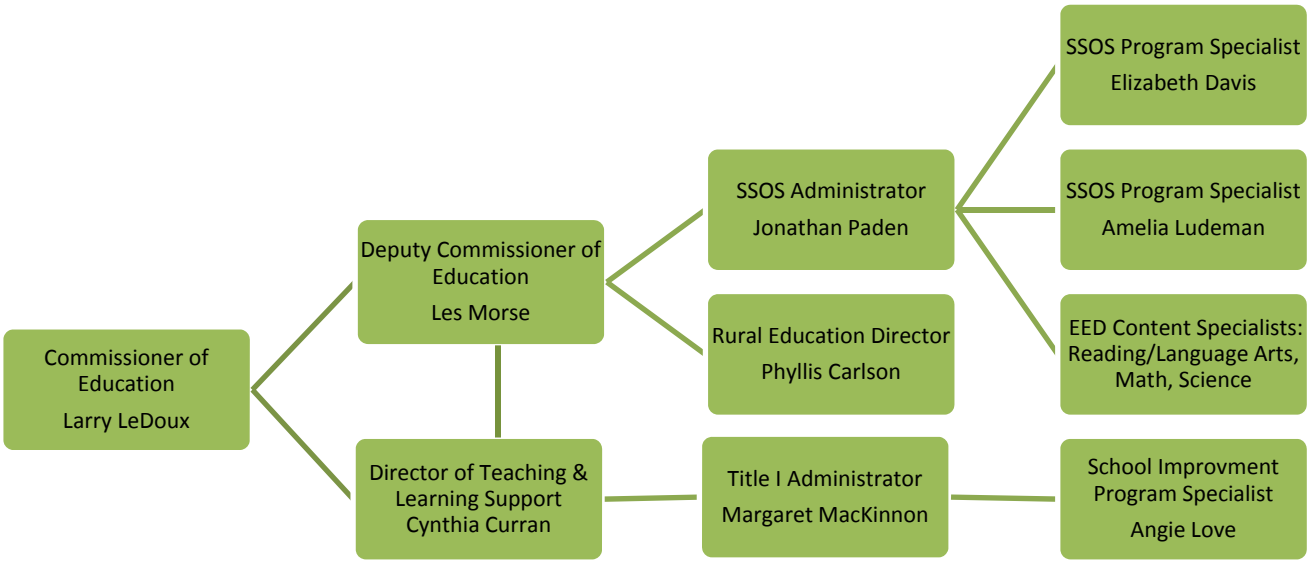
The SSOS specializes in helping Alaskan districts, schools, and school boards:

- Develop, sustain, and monitor improvement efforts,
- Build local capacity and increase staff retention rates,
- Align curriculum with Alaska Grade Level Expectations (GLEs),
- Gain meaningful exposure to all content areas,
- Use formative and summative assessment to make decisions and to inform instruction,
- Develop a multi-tiered approach to curriculum delivery that incorporates quality instruction and effective interventions for all students,
- Implement effective instructional strategies that are aligned to curriculum as well as addressing the needs of diverse learners,
- Implement effective High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) Remediation Plans,
- Foster a positive school climate and learning environment that is attentive to local culture,
- Foster staff collaboration through weekly staff meetings that discuss individual student progress,
- Align professional development policies and practices with resources and academic goals,
- Utilize instructional leaders to model and reinforce behavioral expectations, and
- Understand their role in improving student achievement.

Our Organizational System

The State's primary mission is to help districts build their capacity to sustain student growth. State and Federal government statutes require growth in student achievement and provide funds to ensure that the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (EED) supports and holds districts accountable for the same.

EED's departmental SSOS organizational system is as follows:

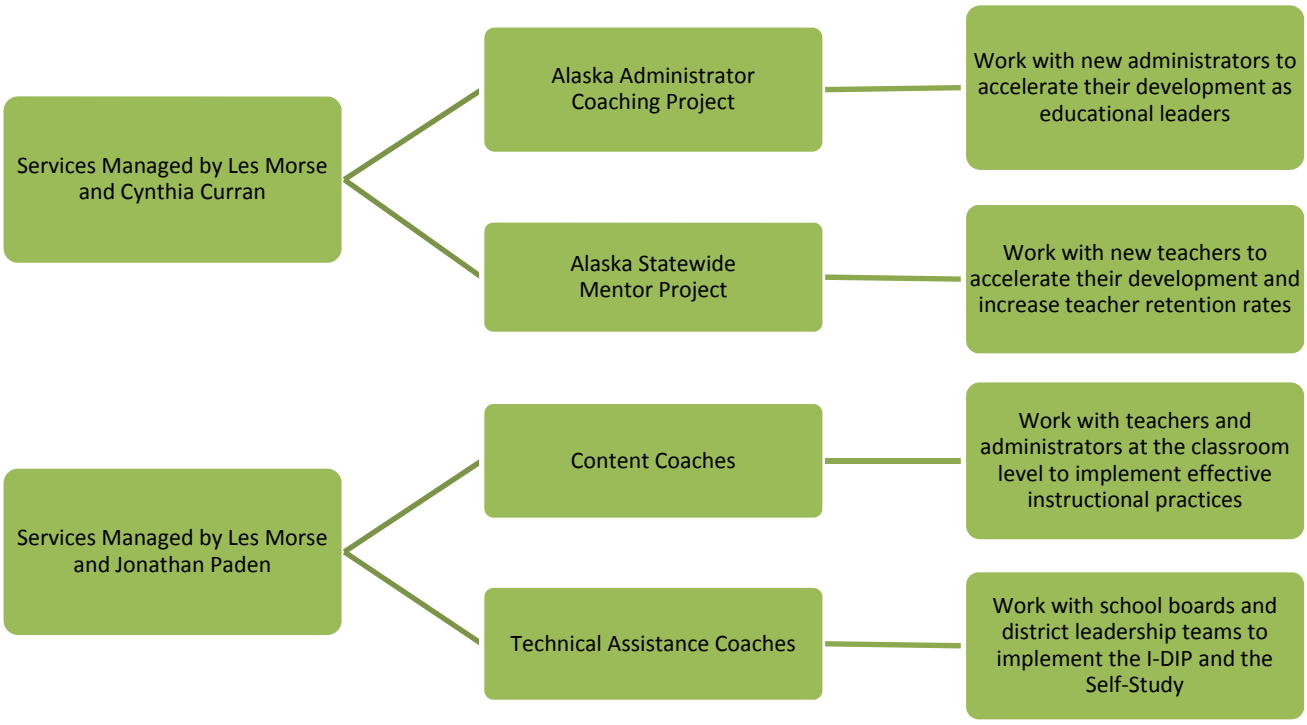


The SSOS collaborates with all divisions and sections of EED and works in partnership with the following agencies:

- Alaska Administrator Coaching Project (AACP),
- Alaska Comprehensive Center (ACC),
- Alaska Parent Information Resource Center (AKPIRC),
- Alaska Staff Development Network (ASDN),
- Alaska Statewide Mentor Project (ASMP),
- Assessment & Accountability Comprehensive Center (AACC),
- Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB),
- Center on Innovation and Improvement (CII),
- Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE),
- Education Northwest,
- Mid-Continent Research for Education & Learning (McRel),
- Measured Progress,
- RMC Research,
- Rural Alaska Principal Preparation & Support (RAPPS),
- Special Education Service Agency (SESA), and
- WestEd.

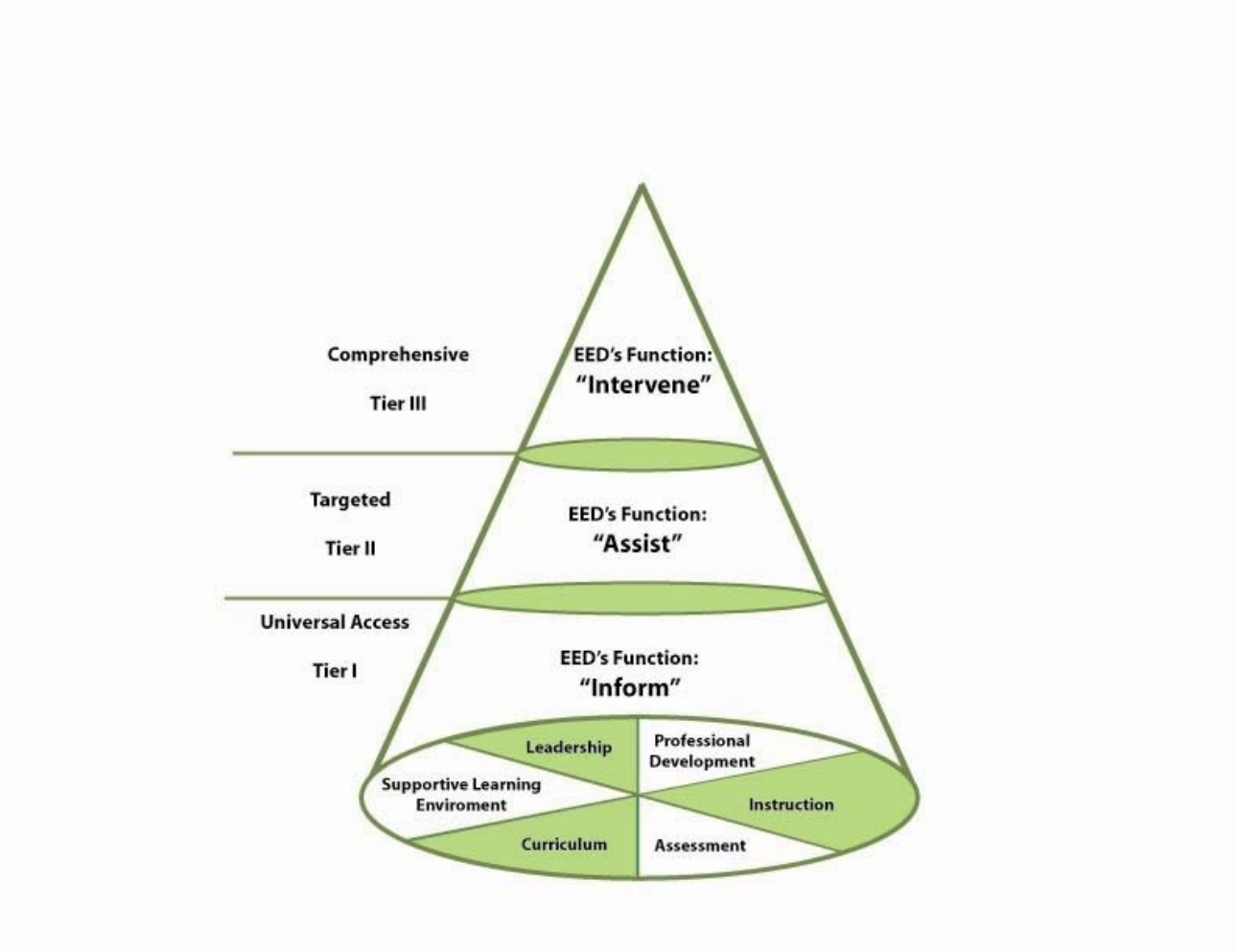
In addition, the SSOS is comprised of service providers who work in the field:

Alaska Administrative Coaches who work with new administrators to accelerate their development as educational leaders, Alaska Statewide Mentors who work with new teachers to accelerate their development and increase teacher retention rates, Content Coaches (CCs) who work at the classroom level with teachers and administrators to implement effective instructional practices, and Technical Assistance Coaches (TACs) who work with school boards and district leadership teams to implement Intervention District Improvement Plans (I-DIPs) created by Alaska STEPP (see Appendix H) or the Self-Study Tool (see Appendix G).



Tri-Tiered Model of Support

The SSOS uses a tri-tiered model to represent our efforts to help districts build their capacity to implement sustainable school improvement strategies. EED provides aligned resources, information, professional development, content coaches, and technical assistance within six domain areas that represent aspects of best practices that substantially influence school and student performance. The six domains are: curriculum, assessment, instruction, supportive learning environment, professional development, and leadership (see Appendix D). Depending on which tier a district is in, EED provides the district with varying degrees of support within each domain.



SSOS Services Available to Districts by Tier

While all districts have access to the SSOS, the schools and districts designated at higher levels of accountability through more years of not making AYP, or as audit-identified "872" schools, will have targeted support or may be required to participate in comprehensive support activities.

At the Universal Access level of support, all districts and schools have access to information that supports the six domain areas. Examples of support provided at the Universal Access level are information provided through the ACC and EED websites (visit http://dev.alaskacc.org/ssos or http://www.eed.state.ak.us/), through audio or web conferences, and through regional or State conferences offered to participants from all districts. At the Targeted level of support, EED provides increased resources and support available to schools and districts identified in greater need. Examples of this support are on-site visits or workshops provided by CCs. At the Comprehensive level of support, EED provides focused support and requirements through the I-DIP for those districts and schools at the highest level of need. Examples of this support include CCs, TACs, and on-site professional development or training.

Tier I: Universal Access

- **Description:** Designed to provide **all** districts with access to information about the best practices in the six domains of effective schools (curriculum, assessment, instruction, supportive learning environment, professional development, and leadership).
- **Example:** Districts and schools meeting AYP.
- **EED Expectations:** Tier I sites are expected to do their best to improve student achievement and to ask for help when they need it.
- **Support Provided by EED:** SSOS is available to help identify and leverage resources for school and district improvement. In addition, EED offers access to our website, audio and web conferences, and regional or State conferences.

Tier II: Targeted

- **Description:** Designed to provide districts and schools in **greater need** with additional assistance.
- **Example:** Districts and schools not meeting AYP, "872" schools, and most Level 4 Districts in Corrective Action.
- **EED Expectations:** Tier II schools and districts are required to submit District Improvement Plans (DIPs) and Tier II "872" schools and Title I schools at Level 2 or above are required to submit School Improvement Plans (SIPs).
- **Support Provided by EED:** SSOS staff ensures that leadership teams identify the evidence of implementation as well as its impact on students. In addition to providing Tier II with a centralized pool of resources, EED offers expertise provided by Content Coaches (CCs) who work directly with teachers and administrators, in districts with limited capacity, on implementing effective instructional practices.

Tier III: Comprehensive

- **Description:** Designed to provide districts in the **highest level of need** with more rigorous and explicit interventions.
- **Example:** High needs "872" schools; Level 4 Districts in Intervention.
- **EED Expectations:** Tier III schools and districts are required to focus on key areas that will have an immediate impact on student achievement and to collaborate regularly to discuss assessment data and student work. They're required to practice instructional leadership and implement: a core curriculum that's aligned to Alaska GLEs; a framework for Response to Instruction (RTI); a Curriculum Based Measure (CBM) system that monitors student growth; and to participate in a facilitated Self-Study process.
- **Support Provided by EED:** In addition to providing Tier III schools and districts with a centralized pool of resources and Content Coaches (CCs), SSOS provides them with on-site trainings and Technical Assistance Coaches (TACs) who work directly with school boards and district leadership teams to facilitate the Self-Study and to implement their intervention district improvement plan (I-DIP). Support teams composed of CCs and TACs visit assigned sites on a regularly scheduled basis.

Responsibilities of the Content Coaches and Technical Assistance Coaches

Content Coaches	Technical Assistance Coaches
Share expertise in improving instructional practices at the building leadership and teacher level. Focus efforts on curriculum, instruction, and assessment related to content area, as well as content focused professional development. Content Coaches utilize the alignment model, they model exemplary teaching, and they support GLE walkthroughs. Content Coaches **are not** operational substitutes for school staffs.	Share expertise in improving instructional practices at the district or building leadership level. Technical Assistance Coaches advance components of the improvement plan, and monitor the improvement of instructional practices district-wide. Technical Assistance Coaches **are not** operational substitutes for district staff.

Tier Identification Process

All schools and districts are in one of three tiers; the following diagram outlines the tier identification process.

School Level Desk Audit

School Level Desk Audit based on SBA Results

- Each August, EED performs a desk audit on all schools. **4 AAC 06.840 (j)(1).** The purpose of performing a desk audit is to identify "872" schools that belong in Tier II: schools who did not make AYP; and have fewer than 50% of their full-academic-year students proficient in reading, writing, or math; and have a school index point value of 85 or lower. **4 AAC 06.872.** NOTE: while some of these schools may be served as Title I schools, they're **not** required to be a Title I school to become an "872" school.

Conversation with Superintendent about "872" Schools

- In September and October EED has a conversation with superintendents about "872" schools. If superintendents have planned to do what EED would have recommended, **and** they commit to implementing these plans, EED offers them support to achieve their objectives. If it's apparent that districts could use additional support with their school improvement efforts, EED may intervene and require: weekly collaborative meetings of teaching staff to discuss individual student progress; regular use of assessements that provide feedback for adjustment of ongoing teaching and learning; and school-level instructional management that provides professional development and technical assistance to staff. **4 AAC 06.872 (c)(1)(2)(3).**

District Level Audit

District Level Desk Audit

- After a district has been designated as Level 2 or higher under 4 AAC 06.835(b), the department may conduct a desk audit or an instructional audit of the district or one or more schools within the district; these district level desk audits take place in August and September. **4 AAC 06.840 (j)(1).**

District Level Instructional Audit

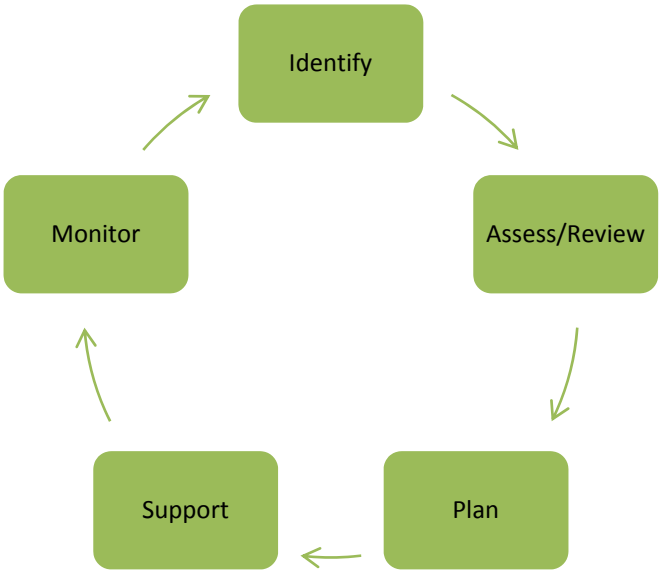
- When the prior year's Standards Based Assessment (SBA) results are released in August, EED compares the SBA results to the desk audit results to determine whether or not growth is occuring. If the comparison reveals that students are flatlining or declining in growth, EED may or may not conduct an instructional audit. In February and March EED may contract with independent consultants to perform instructional audits in identified districts. **4 AAC 06.840 (j)(2).** The team is trained in the components of the Instructional Audit Tool (see Appendix F) and they complete an on-site examination of selected schools within the district. The team gathers information about the district's curriculum, including whether the curriculum is aligned with the State's standards and grade level expectations; assessment policy and practice; instruction; supportive learning environment; professional development policy and practices; and leadership. The team examines documents, observes classroom instruction, and interviews teachers, administrators , and students. The team leader submits a Report of Findings (ROF) to the Commissioner of Education; EED reviews the ROF and shares it with the district.

Instructional Audit Findings Compared to SBA Results

- When the current year's SBA results are released in May, EED compares the SBA results to the ROF results to determine whether or not intervention is necessary. If intervention **is** necessary, districts move into Tier III status; if it **is not** necessary, districts remain in Tier II and EED works in concert with them to identify additional measures they might take to improve student achievement. For example, Title I districts in Level 4 Corrective Action are in Tier II, but if the State intervenes, they move to Tier III status.

The Cycle of Support

In an effort to support sustainable school improvement in Alaskan schools, EED's Cycle of Support is outlined below:



Identify

- Review SBA and desk audit results
- Identify Tier II and Tier III schools and districts
- Notify schools and districts of status

Assess/Review

- EED Commissioner or designee has a conversation with "872" schools to find out the components of their program to improve instruction practices, their needs, what their action plans are, and how EED can best support their efforts to implement their plans
- EED reviews I-DIPs, and Title I DIPs and SIPs
- SSOS Support Teams are assigned to Tier III schools and districts

Plan

- Lead TAC begins site visits to help modify I-DIP as needed
- Lead TAC works with district to schedule regular site visits for SSOS Support Team
- EED approves I-DIP or provides district with additional support to refine I-DIP

Support

- Direct services provided as required in I-DIP
- State approved vendor services provided as required by I-DIP

Monitor

- CCs report to TAC and EED on district's progress towards implementing effective classroom practices
- Lead TAC reports to district and EED on district's progress towards meeting I-DIP requirements
- EED provides district and SSOS Support Team with continual feedback on efforts to meet I-DIP objectives

*** NOTE: districts participating in Alaska STEPP will have a more unique implementation timeline and process.**

Considerations made by the SSOS

EED asks service providers to report back regularly on their districts' progress towards meeting the following targets/objectives:

1. Districts and schools will demonstrate yearly increases in student achievement in all subgroups, will show improvement in the school index score, and will exhibit gains in the growth of student achievement, with the eventual goal of two consecutive years of meeting AYP.
2. Districts and schools will provide evidence of curriculum aligned to Alaska GLEs and Content and Performance Standards, use of progress monitoring assessments and using data to make instructional decisions, use of effective instructional strategies, promotion of supportive learning environments, executing professional development based on district needs, and supporting effective instructional leadership.

In an effort to create sustainable school improvement in Alaskan schools, service providers have considered the following concepts to help districts meet the above-stated targets/objectives:

Communication	- Find ways to address Federal mandates while removing burdens from the district. - Reinforce the value of the services available in order to identify and remove barriers. - Establish a single point of contact for the district and team. - Establish transparent communication between all stakeholders (District, EED, TACs, and CCs). - Promote inter-district collaboration on improvement efforts. - Emphasize results-driven consultation. - Emphasize sites' progress on I-DIP goals while celebrating growth. - Develop a time-bound framework for reassessing and reprioritizing work as needed.
Deployment	- Make time in the spring to map out how the stakeholders will work together throughout the year. Identify details related to dates, sites, goals/purpose for visits, types of service, and how these services are connected to the goals stated in the I-DIP/SIP. - Ensure that all parties can articulate the vision stated in the I-DIP and that the I-DIP is a continuous improvement process which is evaluated and revised, not rewritten every year. - Schedule site visits and professional development opportunities in advance. - Make informed decisions based on district needs and capacity. - Facilitate prioritization of needs within the school/district. - Provide districts with coordinated and explicit efforts versus offering "random acts of service".
Assessment	- Get the necessary AIMSweb* passwords for the appropriate staff (EED, TACs, and CCs). - Schedule AIMSweb* professional development sessions for TACs, CCs, and district personnel. - Schedule quarterly data driven debriefing sessions to examine and share performance data with EED. *** NOTE: or other curriculum based measurement system utilized by the district**
Leadership	- Reinforce the idea of being open to the need for change. - Emphasize results-driven leadership and instill systems-wide change. - Reinforce the need for GLE walkthroughs and providing teachers with feedback related to their work. - Assist districts in their efforts to improve staff retention rates. - Collaborate with school boards and community members. - Plan and support the implementation of the I-DIP and other needs as defined.

It is helpful for our team when district personnel:

- Reinforce district buy-in.
- Establish an open communication system about the intervention plan, players, process, and progress.
- Differentiate coaching assignments based on site needs and identifying goals to be addressed before receipt of services.
- Identify a contact person who can provide information about local accommodations, local customs, and logistical travel information.
- Provide all Content Coaches and Technical Assistance Coaches with access to the appropriate staff, materials, and data information management systems.
- Ensure that services provided to the district become embedded in the district's ways of practice.

Appendix A: School Improvement Planning Calendar

*** NOTE: the Spring AIMSweb testing window provides districts with teacher-centered results; should districts choose not to conduct spring universal AIMSweb screening, they are strongly encouraged to work with EED to analyze the prior year's AIMSweb data in comparison to final SBA results.**

Appendix B: Federal Law and Alaska Statutes Related to the SSOS

NCLB. Section 1116. Academic assessment and local educational agency and school improvement.

NCLB. Section 1117. School support and recognition.

AS 14.03.015. State education policy.

It is the policy of this state that the purpose of education is to help ensure that all students will succeed in their education and work, shape worthwhile and satisfying lives for themselves, exemplify the best values of society, and be effective in improving the character and quality of the world about them.

AS 14.03.123. School and district accountability.

(a) By September 1 of each year, the department shall assign a performance designation to each public school and school district and to the state public school system in accordance with (f) of this section.

(f) In the accountability system for schools and districts required by this section, the department shall
  (1) implement 20 U.S.C. 6301 – 7941 (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1935), as amended;
  (2) implement state criteria and priorities for accountability including the use of
    (A) measures of student performance on standards-based assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics, and including competency tests required under AS 14.03.075;
    (B) measures of student improvement; and
    (C) other measures identified that are indicators of student success and achievement; and
  (3) to the extent practicable, minimize the administrative burden on districts.

AS 14.07.020. Duties of the department.

(a) The department shall
  (1) exercise general supervision over the public schools of the state except the University of Alaska;
  (16) establish by regulation criteria, based on low student performance, under which the department may intervene in a school district to improve instructional practices, as described in AS 14.07.030 (14) or (15); the regulations must include
    (A) a notice provision that alerts the district to the deficiencies and the instructional practice changes proposed by the department;
    (B) an end date for departmental intervention, as described in AS 14.07.030(14)(A) and (B) and (15), after the district demonstrates three consecutive years of improvement consisting of not less than two percent increases in student proficiency on standards-based assessments in math, reading, and writing as provided in As 14.03.123(f)(2)(A); and
    (C) a process for districts to petition the department for continuing or discontinuing the department's intervention;

(17) notify the legislative committees having jurisdiction over education before intervening in a school district under AS 14.07.030(14) or redirecting public school funding under AS 14.07.030(15).

(b) In implementing its duties under (a)(2) of this section, the department shall develop

(1) performance standards in reading, writing, and mathematics to be met at designated age levels by each student in public schools in the state; and

(2) a comprehensive system of student assessments, composed of multiple indicators of proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics…

AS 14.07.060. Regulations.

The board shall adopt regulations that are necessary to carry out the provisions of this title. All regulations shall be adopted under AS 44.62 (Administrative Procedure Act).

AS 14.50.080. Consent to reasonable conditions.

The governor or the board as the federal law may require may accept all reasonable conditions which may be required by the federal government as a condition to receiving federal money for education purposes.

Appendix C: Alaska Administrative Codes Related to the SSOS

4 AAC 06.800-899. School and district accountability.

4 AAC 06.759. High school graduation qualifying examination: remediation.

(a) A district shall provide remediation to a student who has not passed one or more subtests of the state high school graduation qualifying examination (HSGQE) after the fall administration of the HSGQE in the student's 11th grade year. Remediation must begin no later than the start of the student's 11th grade year and continue as necessary for the student to pass all subtests of the HSGQE. Nothing in this subsection prevents a district from offering remediation at an earlier time.

4 AAC 06.800. Purpose.

The purpose of the school and district accountability system is to ensure that by school year 2013-14, all students will reach proficiency or better in language arts and mathematics.

4 AAC 06.840. Consequences of not demonstrating adequate yearly progress.

(j) At any time after a district has been designated as Level 2 or higher under 4 AAC 06.835(b), the department may conduct a desk audit or an instructional audit of the district or one or more schools within the district. The department may require a district to provide information, including a self-assessment, as part of either audit process. To the extent permitted under federal law, the department will use federal programmatic funds allocated to the district to pay the cost of an instructional audit.
    (1) "desk audit" means a review of data to determine the reasons a district has not demonstrated adequate yearly progress;
    (2) "instructional audit" means an on-site review of the instructional policies, practices, and methodologies of the district or one or more schools within the district; an instructional audit may include a review of the district's or school's
        (A) curriculum, including whether the curriculum is aligned with the state's standards and grade level expectations adopted in 4 AAC 01.140 and 4 AAC 04.150;
        (B) assessment policy and practice;
        (C) instruction;
        (D) school learning environment;
        (E) professional development policy and practices; and
        (F) leadership.

(k) If a district is designated under 4 AAC 06.835(b) as Level 3, the department will prepare to take corrective action in the district consistent with this subsection. If the district is designated as Level 4, by the end of the school year in which the district receives the designation, the department will implement one or more of the following corrective actions in the district:
    (3) defer programmatic funds or reduce administrative money provided to the district from federal sources;

(4) institute and implement a new curriculum based on state content standards adopted in 4 AAC 04.140 and performance standards adopted in 4 AAC 04.150, including the provision, for all relevant staff, of appropriate professional development that
   (A) is grounded in scientifically-based research; and
   (B) offers substantial promise of improving educational achievement for low-achieving students;
(5) replace the district personnel who are relevant to the district's receipt of the designation;
(6) remove schools from the jurisdiction of the district and provide alternative arrangements for public governance and supervision of these schools;
(7) in conjunction with at least one other action in this subsection
   (A) authorize students to transfer from a school operated by the district to a higher-performing public school operated by another district; and
   (B) provide to these students transportation, or the costs of transportation, to the other school;
(8) appoint a receiver or a trustee to administer the affairs of the district in place of the chief school administrator, and school board.

(l) Following the audit process described in (j) of this section, or, if no audit has been conducted, before implementing corrective action in a district under (k) of this section, the department will give notice to the district regarding the possible corrective actions, if any, under consideration for the district. A district has 15 days after receipt of notice to submit comments and evidence to the department before corrective action is implemented. When determining the appropriate corrective action under (k) of this section, the department will consider
   (1) the results of any audit conducted under (j) of this section;
   (2) the actions taken by the district to address the district's failure to demonstrate adequate yearly progress;
   (3) the growth that the district has shown in the proficiency level of its students;
   (4) the public interest; and
   (5) comments and evidence submitted by the district.

4 AAC 06.852. Technical assistance.

(a) If a school is designated as Level 2 or higher under 4 AAC 06.835(a), the district within which the school is located shall ensure that the school receives appropriate technical assistance as the school develops and implements its improvement plan under 4 AAC 06.845 and throughout the plan's duration.

(b) A district may arrange for the technical assistance to be provided by one or more of the following:
   (1) the district;
   (2) the department;
   (3) an institution of higher education;
   (4) a private or not-for-profit organization, a private for-profit organization, an educational service agency, or another entity with experience in helping schools improve academic achievement.

(c) Technical assistance must be based on scientifically based research and include assistance in
    (1) analyzing data from the state assessments, and other examples of student work, to identify and develop solutions to problems in
        (A) instruction;
        (B) implementing the requirements for parental involvement and professional development; and
        (C) implementing the school improvement plan, including district-level and school-level responsibilities under the plan.
    (2) identifying and implementing professional development and instructional strategies and methods that have proved effective, through scientifically based research, in addressing the specific instructional issues that caused the district to designate the school; and
    (3) analyzing and revising the school's budget so that the school allocates its resources more effectively to the activities most likely to
        (A) increase student academic achievement; and
        (B) remove the school from its designation.

4 AAC 06.872. School-level desk audits.

(a) Each year, at the same time the department is conducting district desk audits under 4 AAC 06.840(j), the department will conduct a school-level desk audit of all schools in the state. The department will identify a school as needing additional analysis if the school
    (1) did not make adequate yearly progress under 4 AAC 06.805;
    (2) has fewer than 50 percent of its full-academic-year students score proficient or higher on the mathematics, reading, or writing standards-based assessment under 4 AAC 06.737; and
    (3) has a school index point value under 4 AAC 33.540 of 85 or lower.

(b) The department will determine whether the schools identified in (a) of this section would benefit from being placed on a program for improvement of instructional practices as described in (c) of this section. In making this determination, the department will consult with the superintendent of the district in which the school is located and will consider
    (1) the reasons the school has been identified, including whether the school serves a special population;
    (2) whether the state has imposed a district improvement plan under 4 AAC 06.850(c) as a result of an instructional audit under 4 AAC 06.840(j);
    (3) whether the district has implemented a comparable program in the school;
    (4) whether the school has shown substantial growth in student achievement; and
    (5) for a school with fewer than 20 tested students, multiple years of data.

(c) After the department has determined under (b) of this section that a school would benefit from a program for improvement of instructional practices, the department will send notice of this determination to the district in which the school is located. In the notice, the department will inform the district of the deficiencies that need to be remedied and a timetable for implementation of the program and for amendment of the school improvement plan developed under 4 AAC 06.845 for the school. Within 30 days after receiving the notice, the district shall take action under the timetable as required by the department, and shall verify in writing to the department that it has taken that action. A program for improvement of instructional practices must include
    (1) weekly collaborative meetings of teaching staff to discuss individual student progress; logs of the meeting shall be recorded and sent to the superintendent;

(2) regular use of assessments that provide feedback for adjustment of ongoing teaching and learning in order to improve achievement of intended instructional outcomes; and
(3) school-level instructional management that provides professional development and technical assistance to staff and addresses grade-level expectations in the instruction.

(d) The department will provide technical assistance to the district regarding the implementation of the program in (c) of this section, unless the commissioner determines that technical assistance is not required. Technical assistance may be provided by department personnel or by a contractor, and may include a site visit. The department may redirect money from the district's funding under AS 14.17 to pay for services by a contractor that the commissioner determines are necessary under this section.

(e) The commissioner may require the district to implement or amend at a school under a program for improvement of instructional practices
(1) corrective action described in 4 AAC 06.840 or 4 AAC 06.865; or
(2) a remediation plan under 4 AAC 06.759 for students at the school who have not passed the state high school graduation qualifying examination (HSGQE).

(f) If a district fails to take the action required under this section, the commissioner may, after notice to the district and an opportunity for the district to respond, cause the district's funding under AS 14.17 to be redirected to pay for the action or to a holding account for the district until the action is completed. Before requiring action under this subsection, the commissioner will consider the
(1) comments from the superintendent of the district;
(2) action taken by the district to improve the school;
(3) number of years the school has been identified under this section; and
(4) factors listed in (b) of this section.

(g) The department will not redirect a district's funding under (d) or (f) of this section, and will not impose corrective action that involves personnel under (e) of this section, if in each of the three previous years the district demonstrated increases of at least two percentage points in the standards-based assessment in mathematics, reading, and writing under 4 AAC 06.737.

(h) A district may petition the department at any time to cease or continue an intervention taken by the department under this section. In considering whether to grant a petition under this subsection, the department will consider the
(1) factors described in (b) and (f) of this section; and
(2) public interest.

(i) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the department will not take action under this section unless it has reached a conclusion, after consideration of the evidence, that its action will likely improve student achievement.

(j) Compliance with this section does not necessarily constitute compliance with a district's other responsibilities for school or district improvement under 4 AAC 06.800 - 4 AAC 06.899.

Appendix D: Six Domains of Effective Schools & Districts

Curriculum

A school or district curriculum is an educational plan that defines the content to be taught, the resources and instructional methods to be used, and the assessment processes to be employed to document student progress and achievement. It is aligned with Alaska Performance Standards and GLEs and allows for the collection of data to inform instruction. Ideally, the curriculum is coordinated across grade levels so that the goals and objectives can be met.

Assessment

Assessment is the process of collecting, recording, scoring, monitoring, and interpreting information about a student's progress, a teacher's instruction, and a school's overall effectiveness. Some assessments are used for a record of accountability, but a primary purpose of assessment at the classroom level is to inform instructional decisions and ultimately to improve student achievement. In addition to summative data collected through State assessments, each school must be engaged in formative assessments and assessments to monitor progress that provide ongoing information to teachers. Formative measures provide the basis for decisions about what each student is learning. Teachers must be supported in their efforts to collect progress monitoring data for students at regular increments throughout the school year.

Instruction

Instruction concerns the methods that are used to teach curriculum and to help students achieve performance targets. Effective instruction recognizes that every student has individual needs, interests, and learning styles. Therefore, it incorporates a variety of instructional strategies and progress monitoring techniques to further learning for all students, as well as targeted remediation for some students in areas of need as determined by data from progress monitoring and formative assessments.

Supportive Learning Environment

Factors that contribute to creating a supportive learning environment include safety and order, an emphasis on academic achievement, parent/community involvement strategies, attention to local culture, and attention to assessment and monitoring. Schools that foster a positive school climate create a culture of cohesiveness and a high level of morale among students as well as staff.

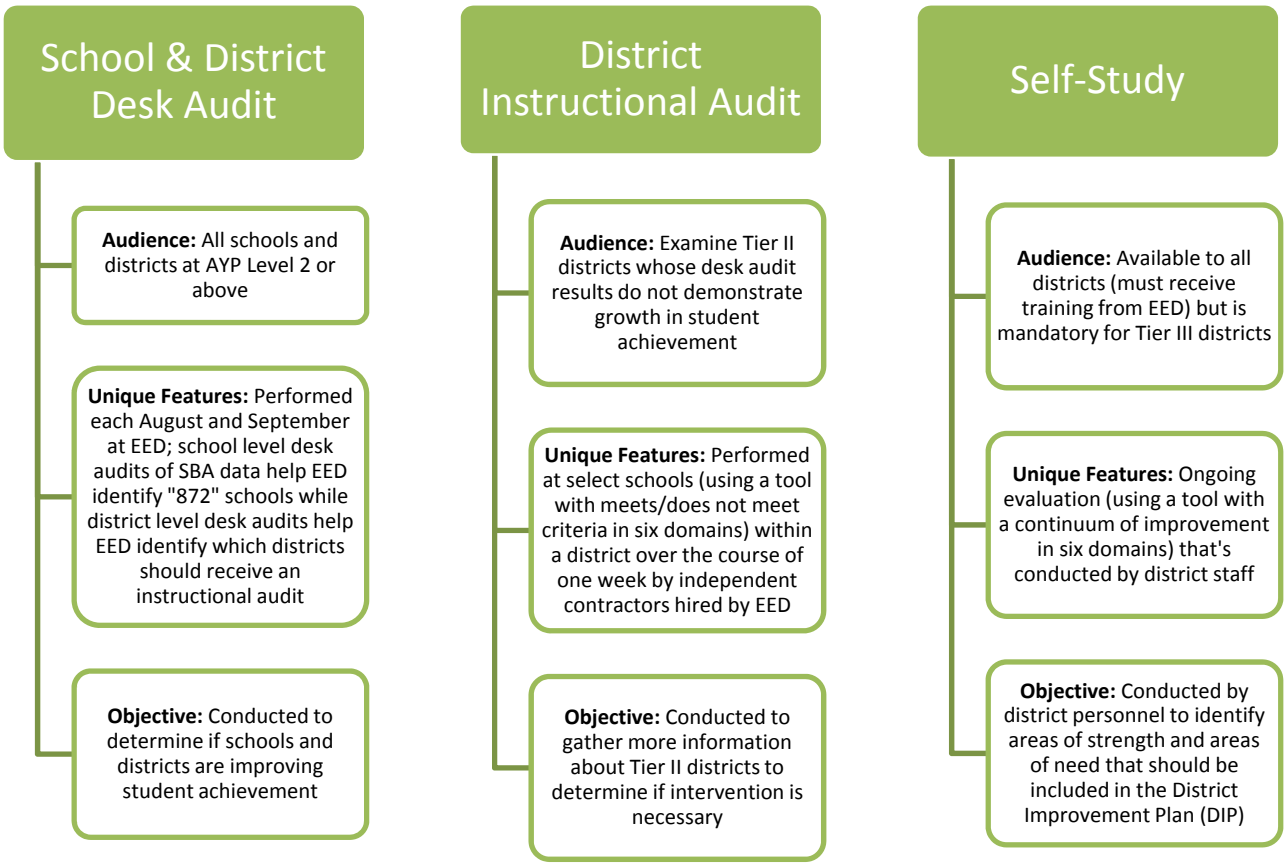
Professional Development

Well-planned, ongoing professional development involves school personnel in their own learning and ultimately leads to improved student achievement. It is practical, job-embedded, and results-oriented. Professional learning communities support effective staff development and allow for coaching, mentoring, collaborating, and a collective responsibility for student learning.

Leadership

School leadership is a process of influence leading to effective teaching and learning. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools based on their personal and professional values. They choose to articulate this vision at every opportunity and they encourage their staff and community to share that vision. Management of the school's structures and activities is focused toward the achievement of this shared vision.

Appendix E: Desk Audit vs. Instructional Audit vs. Self-Study



Appendix F: Elements of the Instructional Audit Tool

1.0 Curriculum.

1.1 Alaska state standards and GLEs are aligned with school/district curriculum.
1.2 A system is used regularly to measure implementation of Alaska state standards and GLEs.
1.3 There is a schedule for the review and/or development of the curriculum based on the Alaska content standards for each curriculum area and the schedule is consistently followed.
1.4 Statewide assessment data are used each year to identify gaps/areas of curriculum that are not being taught.
1.5 A review process is used to make the curriculum more responsive to the needs of the school's student population.

2.0 Assessment.

2.1 Assessments are aligned with Alaska's Performance Standards, GLEs, and district curriculum.
2.2 The school uses established systems for collecting, managing, analyzing, and reporting data.
2.3 Data from classroom assessments are used by school staff members as a source of information about student learning and to guide instructional decisions.
2.4 Assessments are administered in an ongoing fashion, multiple times a year, in order to determine student progress.
2.5 Formative assessments are used on a regular basis to inform instruction and to address the instructional needs of students.
2.6 School administrative leaders and instructional staff members review SBA data to evaluate school programs and student performance.

3.0 Instruction.

3.1 There is a system in place to ensure that classroom instructional activities are aligned to Alaska's content and performance standards and GLEs.
3.2 There are coordinated, school wide efforts to help low-performing students become proficient.
3.3 There is a system in place to provide timely/early instructional intervention to help low-performing students.
3.4 The use of research-based instructional practices dominates instructional planning and teaching.
3.5 Classroom instruction addresses diverse student learning needs.
3.6 High academic expectations for student learning are routinely conveyed to students so that they know what is needed for them to achieve at proficient levels.
3.7 Teachers use formative assessments to measure the effectiveness of instruction and to monitor student progress.
3.8 Teacher daily lesson plans demonstrate an alignment of instruction with Alaska content standards and GLEs.

4.0 Supportive Learning Environment.

4.1 Effective classroom management strategies that maximize instructional time are evident throughout the school.
4.2 School wide operational procedures are in place to minimize disruptions to instructional time.
4.3 School wide behavior standards are consistently communicated by staff and understood by the students.
4.4 The school has an established attendance policy that is used consistently.
4.5 Extended learning opportunities are made available and are utilized by students in need of additional support.
4.6 School and classroom environment reflects awareness and an understanding of local cultural values.

4.7 School staff communicates with parents about learning expectations, and ways to reinforce learning at home.
4.8 School staff members communicate with parents and community members to inform them about school priorities and to engage their support.
4.9 Physical facilities are safe and orderly.

5.0 Professional Development.

5.1 Student achievement data are a primary factor in determining professional development opportunities.
5.2 Written policies and procedures are consistently used in the evaluation of all personnel.
5.3 The teacher evaluation process is aligned to the Alaska Professional Teaching Standards.
5.4 Professional development is embedded into the daily routines and practices of school staff.
5.5 All teachers receive ongoing and systematic feedback and support for instructional improvement.
5.6 There is a mentoring program in place that supports new teachers in the development of instructional and classroom management skills.
5.7 Sufficient time and resources are allocated to support professional development and growth geared toward the goals outlined in the school improvement plan.

6.0 Leadership.

6.1 School administrative leaders facilitate the development and implementation of the school's goals.
6.2 School administrative leadership regularly analyzes assessment and other data, and uses the results in planning for improved achievement for all students.
6.3 School administrative leadership actively assists staff members in understanding formative and summative student achievement data and in how to use these data to make changes in instruction.
6.4 School improvement goals are Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound (SMART) and are based on student achievement data.
6.5 School administrative leaders systematically monitor the implementation of the school improvement plan.
6.6 School administrative leaders ensures that staff members, including new staff members, have access to and are trained to implement Alaska Content and Performance Standards and GLEs.
6.7 School administrative leaders conduct formal and informal observations and provide timely feedback to staff members on their instructional practices.
6.8 School administrative leaders build a positive relationship with parents and community members regarding school improvement efforts.
6.9 There is a process for the principal to receive support and guidance as part of the administrator evaluation procedures.
6.10 School administrative leaders oversee the progress of students who do not meet adequate yearly progress.

Appendix G: Elements of the Self-Study Tool

Overview

The Self-Study Tool (SST) was developed to help schools conduct an internal review as part of their school improvement effort. The SST materials are based on the Instructional Audit Tool that has been used throughout Alaska to conduct on-site school audits by external teams of educators. The SST process provides teams from a school community an opportunity to engage in discussion and evidence-based inquiry. It is not intended to be the basis for evaluation or for making comparisons across schools. The end product is not a score, but the identification of current strengths and limitations, which can assist school staff members in their school improvement efforts.

The tool is organized around six domains that represent important areas of successful school functioning: curriculum, assessment, instruction, supportive learning environment, professional development, and leadership.

Each domain consists of a series of key elements that are grounded in school improvement literature. It is not necessary for a school team to conduct the self-study across all six domains at once. For instance, a team might choose to begin by examining only one or two domains, such as instruction and/or supportive learning environment.

To complete this self-study, the entire school faculty, or a smaller leadership team, works in small groups to locate evidence, make ratings, and summarize findings. Parents, community members, and students may also be involved. When a team engages in the self-study process, it is important for each team member to begin with an open mind, setting aside assumptions and relying on evidence to make ratings on each of the elements. Some of the options for use of the SST include:

- Teams may start by examining a single domain area, using the initial discussion questions and then dividing up the elements they wish to tackle. In a subsequent meeting they can share their evidence, and then the whole group can come to a consensus on the rating of each element. Ultimately, the entire group needs to agree.
- Teams may focus on one or more, but not all, domains. Different teams might each work on the same domain and then compare their ratings, or the teams might "jigsaw" the effort so that each group looks at a different domain.
- Larger school districts with the capacity to do so, may wish to employ one team or several smaller teams in the use of the SST to review their status in all domains. Because this option requires collecting evidence to make ratings, it is the most thorough, yet time consuming of all the options.

The findings from any of these options can be useful for determining school direction and goal setting for school improvement planning. The three essential aspects of the process, which should remain consistent, are that 1) all ratings are based on evidence; 2) teams reach a consensus on the ratings; and 3) the process is transparent- findings are presented back to the entire school faculty and to the school community.

Step-by-Step Process

Note: Prior to formally beginning the process, any group should take time to establish norms to follow. The consensus model is often employed as part of these norms as it ensures that every voice is heard and promotes effective buy-in to the process.

1. **Review the rubric.** There is a separate rubric for each of the six domains, and each rubric breaks down its domain into several key elements. Four ratings are possible for each of the key elements. The rubric gives an example of the level of implementation and/or development necessary for each rating. For the self-study to be most effective, it is important for the team to review the entire packet of materials and to understand the process prior to engaging in the work.

2. **Discuss the guiding questions for each domain.** Each domain begins with a set of guiding questions. It is important to respond to these questions prior to attempting to rate the school across the domain. Time spent reflecting upon, discussing, and answering these questions will lead participants to a deeper understanding of the domain and the related key elements they are about to examine. This also gives the team an opportunity to discuss potential sources of evidence. If working with a larger faculty group, have small groups discuss the questions and share out with the entire group.

3. **Locate the evidence necessary to make ratings for each domain.** To determine the level of functioning for each element, it is necessary to find written evidence that substantiates the rating. For example, a team might look at the alignment maps to determine if the curriculum is aligned. There is space under each rating choice to record the evidence the team used to help make its decision. For each indicator, brainstorm and locate the sources of evidence that would allow you to make a rating.

4. **Make the ratings directly on the rubric.** Ratings of the school's performance level should be made once the team reaches consensus, based on the evidence. Note that each rating must be backed up with evidence from multiple sources. Opinions do not constitute evidence; therefore, even if someone at the school thinks that lesson plans demonstrate alignment to the GLEs, if none of the lesson plans actually show any reference to the GLEs, the rating should be a "1" ("limited or no evidence"). Additionally, while some team members may be tempted to inflate their school's ratings, the final team ratings must be based on evidence and on group consensus. For each of the elements, teams must list the evidence that was used to determine the rating directly on the rubric. The following are conditions for making ratings at each of the performance levels:

   4 = Exemplary level of development and implementation of this element. This rating is given if there are multiple sources of evidence that this element is a key component of everyday school functioning.

   3 = Fully functioning and operational level of development and implementation of this element. Schools may receive this rating if there are multiple sources of evidence for the presence of this

element. It is possible that the evidence depends on source document that is reviewed for the rating, such as current curriculum maps for all subjects.

2 = Limited development or partial implementation of this element. This rating is appropriate if there has been some effort related to the indicator but it has not been fully implemented and/or there is only one source of evidence. For example, alignment activities may be very active and ongoing in the content area of reading, but not in mathematics.

1 = Little or no development and implementation of this element. This rating is appropriate where there is very limited or no evidence for the presence of this element.

5. **Determine strengths and areas for improvement.** Once the ratings are made, transfer them to the chart on the domain Ratings Summary that follows each rubric and make copies for each participant involved in the self-assessment process. As a team answer the final summarizing questions: what are the school's top 2-3 strengths within this domain; what are the school's top 2-3 limitations/areas needing improvement within this domain; and how will we further develop this domain?

6. **Present findings to all faculty members and/or the greater school community.** Sharing the results is an important step in building awareness of and support for the Self-Study findings and the school improvement steps taken as a result. The SST can be used to help all members of the school community understand the current strengths and the areas needing improvement. It can also provide an opportunity for discussion and transparency.

Domain 1.0 Curriculum.

Discussion questions prior to making ratings:

1. What was the process for aligning the curriculum with standards and GLEs in your school/district?
2. How are new curricula and materials aligned to standards and GLES on an ongoing basis?
3. How do we make sure new staff members understand what the Alaska standards and GLEs are and how the curriculum is aligned?

Domain 1.0 There is evidence that he curriculum is aligned, implemented, and used in conjunction with the local and Alaska state standards and GLEs.

1.1 Alaska state standards and GLEs are aligned with school/district curriculum.
1.2 A system is used to monitor implementation of Alaska state standards and GLEs.
1.3 There is a schedule for the review and/or development of the curriculum based on the Alaska Content Standards for each curriculum area and the schedule is consistently followed.
1.4 Statewide assessment data are used each year to identify gaps in the curriculum.
1.5 A review process is used to determine if the curriculum is responsive to the learning needs of all students.

Domain 2.0 Assessment.

Discussion questions prior to making ratings:

1. What assessments are given at each of the grade levels/subject areas?
2. How does the school go about reviewing and using summative assessment results?
3. In what ways do the formative assessments we use inform our instructional practices in the classroom and at the individual student level?

Domain 2.0 There is evidence that assessment of student learning is frequent, rigorous, and aligned with Alaska's GLEs and performance standards.

2.1 Assessments are aligned with Alaska's Performance Standards, GLEs, and district curriculum.
2.2 The school staff uses established systems for collecting, managing, analyzing, and reporting data.
2.3 Data from classroom assessments are used by school staff members as a source of information about student learning and to guide instructional decisions.
2.4 Assessments are administered multiple times a year, in order to determine student progress.
2.5 Formative assessments are used on a regular basis to inform instruction and to address the instructional needs of students.
2.6 The school's leadership and instructional staff review SBA data to evaluate school programs and student performance.

Domain 3.0 Instruction.

Discussion questions prior to making ratings:

1. What are the expectations of the school and district for how we provide instruction (e.g., lesson plans, providing for diverse student needs, etc.)?
2. How do teachers identify struggling students for additional and/or more appropriate instruction?
3. How do teachers select instructional strategies and learning activities that meet the individual learning needs of all students?
4. How do teachers collaborate with one another around teaching and student learning?

Domain 3.0 There is evidence that effective and varied instructional strategies are used in all classrooms to meet the needs of each student.

3.1 There is a system in place to ensure that classroom instructional activities are aligned to Alaska's Content and Performance Standards and GLEs.
3.2 There are coordinated school wide efforts to help low-performing students become proficient.
3.3 There is a system in place to provide timely/early instructional intervention to help low-performing students.
3.4 The use of research-based instructional practices guides instructional planning and teaching.
3.5 Classroom instruction addresses diverse student learning needs.
3.6 High academic expectations for student learning are conveyed to students, so that they know what is needed for them to achieve at proficient levels.
3.7 Teachers use formative assessments, on a regular basis, to measure the effectiveness of instruction and to monitor student progress.

3.8 Teachers' daily lesson plans demonstrate an alignment of instruction with Alaska Content Standards and GLEs.

Domain 4.0 Supportive Learning Environment.

Discussion questions prior to making ratings:

1. Does our school consistently provide a safe, orderly, and supportive learning environment for our students?
2. What are the building-wide behavior standards for students? Is there a building-wide discipline plan? Is the plan used consistently across the building?
3. How does the school schedule maximize learning time?
4. How are parents and community members involved in the school's supportive learning environment?

Domain 4.0 There is evidence that school culture and climate provide a safe, orderly environment conducive to learning.

4.1 Effective classroom management strategies that maximize instructional time are evident throughout the school.
4.2 School wide operational procedures are in place to minimize disruptions to instructional time.
4.3 School wide behavior standards are communicated by staff and understood by students.
4.4 The school has an established attendance policy that is implemented.
4.5 Extended learning opportunities are made available and utilized by students in need of additional support.
4.6 School and classroom environments reflect cultural awareness and an understanding of local cultural values.
4.7 School staff members communicate with parents about learning expectations, student progress, and ways to reinforce learning at home.
4.8 School staff members communicate with parents and community members to inform them about school priorities and to engage their support.
4.9 Physical facilities are safe and orderly.

Domain 5.0 Professional Development.

Discussion questions prior to making ratings:

1. What professional development has taken place during the last year and how has it influenced our instructional practices?
2. How are professional development topic priorities determined at our school?
3. In what ways are new teachers supported in our school and district?

Domain 5.0 There is evidence that professional development is based on data and reflects the needs of students, schools, and the district.

5.1 Student achievement data are a primary factor in determining professional development priorities.
5.2 Written policies and procedures are used in the evaluation of all personnel.
5.3 The teacher evaluation process is aligned to the Alaska Professional Teaching Standards.
5.4 Professional development is embedded into the daily routines and practices of the school staff.
5.5 All teachers receive ongoing and systematic feedback and support for instructional improvement.
5.6 There is a mentoring program in place that supports new teachers in the development of instructional and classroom management skills.
5.7 Sufficient time and resources are allocated to support professional development and growth geared toward the goals outlined in the school improvement plan.

Domain 6.0 Leadership.

Discussion questions prior to making ratings:

1. How has the school developed its improvement goals in the past?
2. How is progress on the school improvement plan monitored in this building?
3. How does the district and building-level leadership assist teachers in overseeing the progress of students, including student subgroups?

Domain 6.0 There is evidence that school administrative leaders focus on improving student achievement.

6.1 School administrative leaders facilitate the development and implementation of the school and district goals.
6.2 School administrative leaders regularly analyze assessment and other data, and use the results in planning for the improved achievement of all students.
6.3 School administrative leaders actively assist staff members in understanding formative and summative student achievement data and in how to use this information to make changes to instruction.
6.4 School improvement goals are specific, measureable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) and are based on student achievement data.
6.5 School administrative leaders systematically monitor the implementation of the school improvement plan.
6.6 School administrative leaders ensure that staff members have access to and are trained to implement Alaska's Content and Performance Standards and GLEs.
6.7 School administrative leaders conduct formal and informal observations and provide timely feedback to staff members on their instructional practices.
6.8 School administrative leaders build a positive relationship with parents and community members regarding school improvement efforts.
6.9 There is a process for the school administrative leader to receive support and guidance as part of administrator evaluation procedures.
6.10 The school administrative leader oversees the progress of students who are not meeting AYP.

Appendix H: Alaska STEPP

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development plans to introduce Alaska STEPP (Steps Toward Educational Progress and Partnership) as an entirely web-based school improvement system used by district and school improvement teams to inform, coach, sustain, track, and report improvement activities.

Implemented in stages, Alaska STEPP will eventually replace paper-based templates such as the Self-Study Tool, the District Improvement Plan, the School Improvement Plan, the Intervention District Improvement Plan, as well as certain Title I planning and report requirements. It will guide improvement teams through a continuous cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, and progress tracking using the domains and key indicators from the Self-Study Tool.

The Alaska STEPP pilot project will begin in the spring of 2010 and EED will have a complete complement of services (available to all districts) by the end of the 2012-2013 academic year. Training for Alaska STEPP provided by EED will prepare participant districts to: (a) use the online version of the Self-Study Tool for Alaska Schools; (b) examine their role as instructional leaders and change agents and; (c) set up supporting structures for the continuous nature of improvement made possible through Alaska STEPP. Participants will further examine and practice the use of the online tool, discuss processing the six domains of school improvement, and problem-solve potential barriers. A portion of the time will also be devoted to planning future onsite training and webinar opportunities for school and district teams.

Appendix I: Elements of the Alaska Peer Review Guidance Document

Introduction

An Alaska school or district curriculum is an educational plan that defines the content to be taught, the resources (e.g., textbooks, kits, atlases, resource guides, etc) and instructional methods to be used, and the assessment processes to be employed for documenting student progress and achievement. Further, a district curriculum must include a plan for staff development. Overall, the curriculum is expected to be aligned with Alaska Performance Standards and Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and allow for the collection and use of data to inform instruction. The Department of Education & Early Development also supports the inclusion of Alaska Cultural Content Standards adopted by the Alaska State Board of Education in school and district curricula.

Alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment with the Alaska GLEs is an essential element of focus for districts. Ideally, curricula are vertically aligned across grade levels and content areas. If standards-aligned curriculum is implemented with fidelity in each classroom, student achievement is fostered and instructional goals and objectives are met.

Purpose of Guidance

The Department of Education & Early Development (EED) issues this Guidance to provide districts with information to prepare for the department's peer review, as designated by state regulation 4 AAC 05.080 and enforced through regulation 4 AAC 06.840.

This Guidance represents the department's current thinking on this topic. Based on feedback from Alaska Peer Reviewers or other invited experts, new critical elements or important sources of evidence may be added to the Guidance. It does not create or confer any rights for or on any person. This Guidance does not impose any requirements beyond those required under applicable law and regulations. This document is intended to guide districts through a peer review process focused on examining evidence about curriculum-to-standards alignment but not to teach or instruct districts about the methods for performing curriculum-to-standards or curriculum-to-assessment alignment studies.

District Curricular System

A district may include in its curricular system multiple approaches to its design.

- A district's curricular system may employ either a uniform set of materials district-wide or a combination across schools. Districts using a combination of materials and resources must address issues of comparability and equivalency. For example, a student attending one elementary school must be able to continue to progress toward proficiency in the standards even if moved into another elementary school within the district that uses different materials.
- A district's curricular system may be supplemented through the use of correspondence course materials. These correspondence materials are approved by the Commissioner when evidence of alignment to standards and comparability and equivalency to other district course materials has been collected.
- A district's curricular system may include local standards which incorporate the local culture.

A district may support curriculum-to-standards alignment and fidelity of implementation of standards-based instruction by

- Identifying key resources and materials to be used for each grade and content area and verifying their alignment to state standards;
- Identifying or developing appropriate measures for gauging student progress toward achievement targets for each grade and content area and verifying their alignment to state standards;
- Indicating the processes for ensuring alignment to the state's academic content standards in each content area and grade and the timeframe for review;
- Providing information regarding the progress of teachers relative to staff development goals for effective curriculum implementation ;
- Establishing criteria to ensure that curricular materials, resources, and assessments are coherent, comprehensive, and synchronized with the levels of cognitive complexity (depth) and content breadth embodied by the state's academic standards;
- Demonstrating that all materials can be sufficiently differentiated to address the instructional needs of all students, including those who are currently performing at far below proficient, below proficient, proficient, and advanced levels;
- Receiving school board approval per regulation 4 AAC 05.080; and
- Receiving the department's final approval per state regulation 4 AAC 06.840.

The Peer Review Process

To determine whether districts have met curriculum-to-standards alignment requirements, EED will be using the Alaska Peer Review process. This process relies on involvement of local, state, and national experts and colleagues in the fields of standards and curriculum. The Alaska Peer Reviewers will evaluate districts' curricular systems only against state regulations and requirements. In other words, peer reviewers examine characteristics of a district's curricular system that will be used to hold the district accountable under regulation 4 AAC 06.840 *Consequences of not demonstrating adequate yearly progress.*

The Alaska Peer Review process does not directly examine a district's local standards or formative assessment instruments. Rather, it examines *evidence* compiled and submitted by each district that is intended to show that all facets of its curricular system (resources, materials, instruction, and assessment) meet state requirements. Such evidence may include, but is not limited to, final aligned curriculum documents, results from alignment studies, adopted policies, and curriculum committee meeting minutes. Peer reviewers will advise the department on whether a district's curricular system meets a particular level of sufficiency based on the totality of evidence submitted. Peer reviewers also provide constructive feedback to help districts strengthen their systems.

Role of Peer Reviewers

With this Guidance document as a framework, peer reviewers will use expert professional judgment to evaluate the evidence supplied by the district and determine the degree to which the district's final curricular system complies with the state requirements. Their evaluation of the final curricular system serves two purposes. First, the peer reviewers' comments are sent to the district as a technical assistance tool to support improvements in the system. Second, the peer reviewers' comments are used to inform the EED during final decision-making about each district's compliance status.

Review Process

- The Alaska Peer Review teams are trained in advance of the review process. They are facilitated through a mock review process by curriculum and instruction specialists and calibrated to ensure common understanding and interpretation of each critical element in the Guidance prior to reviewing any district's evidence.
- Districts will submit evidence of compliance consistent with the peer review schedule announced by the department. The evidence is then distributed by the department to each member of the Peer Review team in advance of a review meeting to allow for a thorough independent review based on the Guidance. At the review meeting, a team of at least three peer reviewers discusses the evidence provided by the district and records their opinions. Sufficient evidence must be provided to convince these experienced professionals that the curricular system is being implemented in a manner that meets state requirements.
- During this process, this Guidance is used as a framework to support a series of analytic judgments by peer reviewers. The review team addresses each of the critical elements in the Guidance document, evaluating the status of each component of the district's curriculum based on the evidence provided.
- To ensure common understanding of the value or usefulness of different pieces of evidence, decision rules will be recorded by peer reviewers. Decision rules are guidelines related to the application of Guidance criteria that explain how or why reviewers assigned a particular rating or reached a particular decision about a piece or type of evidence. That same rationale then is applied in all situations in which that type of evidence is presented, thereby promoting consistency in decisions over time and across reviewers.
- For each district evaluated, the peer reviewer team will provide a brief statement of the degree to which the curricular system meets state requirements and a summary of the changes needed, if any, to meet those requirements. The peer reviewers are responsible for providing feedback to each district that is informative and is consistent with professional standards and best practice. Generally, if changes in a district's curricular system are required in order to meet state requirements, peer reviewers present options rather than prescriptive instructions.
- The Alaska Peer Review team then prepares a report based on its examination of the evidence for all districts in that round of review.
- To ensure reliability of decisions over time (i.e., across rounds of review) and across peer reviewers, decisions will be monitored by the department. Peer reviewers also will be monitored to ensure ongoing calibration.

Review Teams

On each team, one person is designated team leader; this person is responsible for seeing that peer notes are clear, complete, and delivered to EED staff at the end of the review meeting. An EED staff person, assigned as a resource to each Peer Review Team, is responsible for (1) assisting the review team in obtaining adequate and appropriate information from the district prior to the review meeting; (2) contacting the district during the review meeting to obtain clarification or additional information needed by the reviewers; (3) securing resources needed to support the team during the meeting; and (4) accurately reporting the review team's deliberations as EED determines the district's compliance status. Department staff may question or even challenge the peer reviewers in order to promote clarity and consistency with the Guidance; they will not, however, impose their views or require substantive changes to the peer reviewers' judgments.

Role of the School District

Districts should familiarize themselves with instructions for completing the review document. To facilitate the peer review process, a district should organize its evidence with a brief narrative response to each of the critical elements in the Guidance (e.g., 1.1, 1.2, etc.). In the Guidance, the department has provided a suggested submission model to help districts develop their narratives and identify documents that constitute appropriate evidence of meeting the requirements for each critical element.

Districts are urged when possible to provide all acceptable evidence listed in the Guidance. In some occurrences the same evidence may be referenced in multiple sections. Further, districts can submit evidence that is not listed in the Guidance. Some sections identify specific evidence the department is requiring with the submission. These are marked with an asterisk.

Districts then submit final review documents and all evidence to the department in electronic and hard copy (one) formats.

Each district will be asked to designate a representative who can be contacted by telephone during the review process to provide clarification or additional information, if requested.

Once peer reviewers complete their review, feedback will be forwarded to the department and then to districts. If any critical elements are missing information that could not be secured through a telephone conversation with the designated representative, districts will be given a timeline for resubmitting evidence to meet the peer review requirements.

Section 1.0 School/district curriculum are aligned with Alaska Standards and Grade Level Expectations (GLEs).

Overview and Definitions

To establish common expectations for the academic achievement of all students, the State expects all public school districts to adhere to a set of challenging academic content standards and grade level expectations. These standards should guide the selection of appropriate district resources and materials for classroom instruction. Those materials and resources selected for use must be aligned to state standards and adaptable to allow for differentiated instruction and ensure inclusion of those students with disabilities and students who are not yet proficient in English.

Standards

Content standards are the overarching goals that describe, in the broadest terms, what all students in Alaska should know and be able to do. Performance standards state what students should know and be able to do at grades 5-7, 8-10, 11-14, and 15-18. Grade-level expectations are specific statements of the knowledge and/or skills that students are expected to demonstrate at each grade level. They serve as checkpoints that monitor progress toward the performance standards and ultimately the content standards. The grade-level expectations do not replace the performance standards; rather, they serve to explicate and clarify the standards. They also serve to define and communicate eligible content, or the range of knowledge and skills from which priorities for instruction and state assessment are drawn.

Stakeholders

Participants in the alignment process should be drawn from district personnel. These staff should be using the curriculum and know the GLEs and the content addressed. They may be experienced teachers, administrators, and other specialists working directly with students. In some cases, they may be drawn from a broader group of community stakeholders. Districts should consider cultural diversity and other demographic considerations when identifying alignment participants.

Proficiency Descriptors

Proficiency level descriptors are statements that describe the knowledge and skills expected at different proficiency levels with respect to the content standards, performance standards, and grade-level expectations. Alaska has four

proficiency levels: far below proficient, below proficient, proficient, and advanced. The proficiency level descriptors describe the expected level of performance at each of these four levels.

Evidence-Based Research

All materials/resources require a decision making process supported by the appropriate balance of sound theory and relevant empirical evidence. Most publications reference evidence of research. Overall, a district's decision needs to be thoughtful showing evidence of diligence in selecting materials.

Cognitive Complexity/Depth of Knowledge/Level of Rigor

Cognitive complexity, also known as depth of knowledge, refers to the level of rigor or cognitive demand required for a student to demonstrate mastery of a particular standard or GLE. Typically, standards for any grade or content area will include a range of levels of cognitive complexity (i.e., some more complex and some less complex). District curriculum should encourage the teaching of advanced skills as well as foundational skills and show a balanced progression toward higher levels of cognitive complexity as GLEs carry into the next grade.

Response to Instruction/Intervention

Response to Instruction/Intervention (RTI) is a framework for instruction that has a purpose: to improve the academic achievement and educational outcomes of *every student*. The RTI model supports the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to students' individual needs, monitoring progress frequently to guide decision making about changes in instruction or educational goals, and using data to monitor each child's response to instructional strategies or interventions. The RTI concepts supported by EED make use of a multi-tiered approach that incorporates quality instruction and effective interventions for all students. The use of 'tiered' models is common in both education and mental health. The RTI model can be applied in all academic content areas, such as math, written language and reading. It can also be applied to social behavior and school environment.

Differentiation

To differentiate instruction is to recognize students varying background knowledge, readiness, language, preferences in learning, interests; and to react responsively. Differentiated instruction is a process to approach teaching and learning for students of differing abilities in the same class. The intent of differentiating instruction is to maximize each student's growth and individual success by meeting each student where he or she is, and assisting in the learning process.

1.0 School/district curriculum are aligned with Alaska Standards and Grade Level Expectations (GLEs).

1.1 A process was used to identify appropriate resources and materials available for each GLE.

a) Who were the stakeholders involved and how often did they meet? Of the stakeholders, which have experience and knowledge in the content and GLEs?
b) How did proficiency descriptors guide resource selection?
c) What was the process to identify and select aligned, evidence-based researched materials? How were gaps in the resources and materials determined? How were materials selected to address gaps?
d) How are the resources/materials used in your district? Are the ways in which they are being used consistent with the developers' (or vendors') stated purpose?
e) What evidence supports claims that the materials are aligned to state standards? At what level were they found to align (e.g., was the unit of analysis the standard or GLE level)?

1.2 All learners were considered in the selection of resources and materials.

a) What considerations were made for students with disabilities, English language learners, and advanced learners?

1.3 A process was used to ensure that the full range of content (breadth) represented in the GLEs is represented in the collection of resources/materials.
   a) Who were the stakeholders and how often did they meet?
   b) How did the stakeholder group determine a full range of content for the collection of materials?

1.4 A process was used to ensure the full range of depth of knowledge (DOK) or cognitive complexity represented in the GLEs is represented in the collection of resources/materials.
   a) Who were the stakeholders involved and how often did they meet?
   b) How did stakeholders assign/identify the cognitive complexity (i.e., Blooms taxonomy descriptors or Webb's depth of knowledge levels) for each GLE?
   c) How did the stakeholder group determine an appropriate range of cognitive levels for the collection of materials?
   d) How does the curriculum framework show progression in student understanding?
   e) How do the materials support differentiated instruction so that the needs of struggling learners and gifted students can be addressed?

Section 2.0 School/district curriculum has aligned formative/summative assessment components.

Overview and Definitions

To ensure that districts are able to evaluate whether all students are progressing toward proficient and advanced levels, aligned formative and summative assessments are required to support classroom instruction and monitor student progress. All public school students must participate in the district assessment system, including those with disabilities and those who are not yet proficient in English.

Districts may choose to implement a variety of formative/summative assessments. The evaluative system might include common assessments, interim formative assessments, curriculum-based measures, and end-of-course assessments. If a district only uses assessments referenced against national norms at a particular grade (i.e., norm-referenced curriculum based measures), those assessments must be augmented with additional items to ensure the tool accurately measures the full depth and breadth of the state academic content standards.

Formative Assessments

Formative assessment is part of the instructional process. When embedded in classroom practice, formative assessment provides the information needed to adjust teaching strategies during the time of instruction to support optimal learning outcomes. In this sense, feedback from formative assessment informs both teachers and students about student understanding at a point where instruction can be adjusted and interventions implemented as needed.

Summative Standards-Based Assessments

Summative assessments are given periodically to determine at a particular point in time what students know and do not know in relation to state standards. Summative assessment at the district/classroom level is an accountability measure that is generally used at the end of a unit or course of instruction as part of the grading process.

Although the information that is gleaned from this type of assessment is important, it can only help in evaluating certain aspects of the learning process. Because they are administered (1) at the end of instruction, not during, and (2) at less frequent intervals, e.g., every few weeks, months, or once a year, results from summative assessments can be used to help evaluate the effectiveness of programs, school improvement goals, alignment of curriculum, or student placement in specific programs. Summative assessments happen too far down the learning path to provide the finely-grained information to guide instruction at the classroom level or to make adjustments and interventions to teaching strategies *during* the learning process.

2.0 School/district curriculum has aligned formative/summative assessment components.

2.1 Ongoing use of aligned classroom assessments document student progress and achievement.

a) a) What types of formative assessment practices are used in your district?
b) How are results from formative assessments used in your district? Are they providing instructional feedback to students and teachers?
c) What evidence supporting claims of instructional sensitivity of formative assessments has been collected? Or means to support the implementation of instructional-sensitive formative assessments?

2.2 A structure is in place to support continued use of aligned formative/summative assessments.

a) What is the process for collaboratively examining student work for alignment to proficiency descriptors and GLEs?
b) How are tools and strategies for formative/summative assessments shared?
c) How are formative/summative assessments connected to other school improvement initiatives?

Section 3.0 School/district curriculum is implemented with fidelity.

Overview and Definitions

The governing body of a district shall adopt, in the manner required by AS 14.14.100(a) a curriculum that describes what will be taught students in grades kindergarten through grade 12. The district curriculum can incorporate local standards along with required state standards.

Comparability and Equivalency

Students who move between schools must receive comparable instruction through materials that are equally aligned to the grade level expectations. Assurances are necessary that schools are pacing through materials at rates that are equivalent over time so students are able to maintain comparable progress toward the standards regardless of school attended.

Stakeholders

District level participants must include experienced teachers, administrators, and other specialists working directly with students at each grade level. Districts involving stakeholders in this process ensure cultural identities and other demographic considerations when designing or adopting a curriculum.

Fidelity

Fidelity (or integrity) of implementation is the delivery of instruction in the way in which it was designed to be delivered, i.e., in keeping with the intent of the standards, district and school policies for effective instruction, and community expectations.

3.0 School/district curriculum is implemented with fidelity.

3.1 The curriculum is fully adopted by the school board.

a) The curriculum contains a statement that the document is used to guide for planning instructional strategies. Does the audience for the statement point to the teachers? Does the statement express the purpose of the curriculum?
b) The curriculum contains a statement of goals that the curriculum is expected to accomplish. Will the listed goals be measured? Where do the goals reflect district philosophy?

c) The curriculum must set out content that can reasonably be expected to accomplish the goals. How does the curriculum support instruction in preparation of the summative spring assessments?
d) There is a review process to determine if the curriculum is responsive to the learning needs of all students. How will data be used to determine the curriculum is meeting the needs of all earners? Who are the stakeholders involved in reviewing the curriculum? What assurances exist that all subgroups are represented in the curriculum?
e) A schedule or plan to address each content area undergoing review at least once every six years. How does the timeline address grades K-12 in each specific content area?

3.2 A system is in place that guarantees teachers are prepared to use district curriculum.
a) How are teachers prepared to use curriculum materials with fidelity? How does this preparation provide multiple entry points for novice as well as experienced teachers?
b) How are new teachers to the district prepared to implement the curriculum with fidelity?
c) How does district leadership programs support and monitor for implementation of curriculum?

Appendix J: Consequences of Not Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

For Schools Receiving Title I, Part A Funds

Level 1	**Alert:** Prepare and implement a school plan, consult with district and EED to receive technical assistance to meet AYP in next year.
Level 2	**School Improvement Status Year 1:** Develop a school improvement plan. After district review and approval, implement plan. District sends plan to EED. Provide school choice, if choice is available, or supplemental educational services (SES) and inform parents of designation and choice (or SES) options as appropriate.
Level 3	**School Improvement Status Year 2:** Continue to implement school improvement plan (revised as necessary), continue to provide choice, offer supplemental services if not already provided due to limited choice, and inform parents.
Level 4	**Corrective Actions:** Continue school improvement plan, choice, SES, and inform parents. *In addition, district must take one of the following actions:* replacement of staff; implementation of a new curriculum; decrease management authority at school level; appoint an outside expert; extend the school day or year; or restructure the internal organization of the school. [4 AAC 06.865 & NCLB 1116(b)(7)]
Level 5	**Restructuring: Year 1 -** Continue school improvement plan, choice and SES, and inform parents. *District required to prepare a restructuring plan for alternative governance using one of the following actions:* reopen as a charter school, replace all or most of the staff, enter into a contract with a management company, turn over operation of the school to the state, or any other major restructuring of a school's governance arrangement consistent with section 1116 of NCLB. **Restructuring: Year 2 -** Implement restructuring plan for alternative governance. Continue to implement school improvement plan, continue to provide school choice and supplemental services, inform parents. [4 AAC 06.870 & NCLB 1116(b)(8)]

For Schools Not Receiving Title I, Part A Funds

Level 1	**Alert:** Prepare and implement a school plan, consult with district and Department to receive technical assistance to meet AYP in next year.
Level 2 & Above	**School Improvement:** School shall develop & implement school plan, and notify parents.

For Districts

Level 1	**Alert:** Consult with the Department regarding reasons for not meeting AYP.
Level 3	**District Improvement:** District shall develop & implement a district improvement plan, submit the plan to EED, request technical assistance from EED, and provide notice to parents. [4 AAC 06.840(h), 06.850, & NCLB 1116(c)]
Level 4	**District Corrective Action:** Continue district improvement plan. *EED must take at least one corrective action:* defer programmatic funds or reduce administrative money from federal sources; institute new curriculum; replace district personnel; remove schools from jurisdiction of district; authorize students to transfer to another district; or appoint trustee to administer districts in place of school board. [4 AAC 06.840(k) & NCLB 1116(c)(10)(C)]

Financial Consequences

District	Set-aside 20% (or amount equal to) of district's Title IA allocation to provide choice/SES if **any** Title I school is in Level 2 or above
District	Spend 10% of district's Title IA allocation to provide professional development if **district** is identified at Level 2 or above and receives IA funds (may include 10% school-level allocation for professional development).
School	Spend 10% of school's Title IA allocation for professional development if school is in Level 2 or above.

Appendix K: Menu of Available Services

Curriculum

Resource	Tier I	Tier II	Tier III
Curriculum Alignment Institute	X	X	X
Content Coaches (CCs)		X	X
Technical Assistance Coaches (TACs)			X

Assessment

Resource	Tier I	Tier II	Tier III
Alaska Computerized Formative Assessments (ACFA)	X	X	X
Curriculum Based Measures: AIMSweb Training			X
Data Interaction for Alaska Student Assessments (DIASA)	X	X	X
Content Coaches (CCs)		X	X
Technical Assistance Coaches (TACs)			X

Instruction

Resource	Tier I	Tier II	Tier III
Response to Instruction/Intervention Guidance Document	X	X	X
Response to Instruction/Intervention PowerPoint	X	X	X
Content Coaches (CCs)		X	X
Alaska Statewide Mentor Project (ASMP)	X	X	X
Technical Assistance Coaches (TACs)			X

Supportive Learning Environment

Resource	Tier I	Tier II	Tier III
SESA's PBS Resource Center/Clearinghouse	X	X	X
SESA's PBS Implementation Support			X
Content Coaches (CCs)		X	X
Technical Assistance Coaches (TACs)			X

Professional Development

Resource	Tier I	Tier II	Tier III
Alaska Reading Course	X	X	X
Content Coaches (CCs)		X	X
Technical Assistance Coaches (TACs)			X

Leadership

Resource	Tier I	Tier II	Tier III
Alaska Administrator Coaching Project (AACP)	X	X	X
Rural Alaska Principal Preparation Project (RAPPS)	X	X	X
Alaska School Leadership Institute (ASLI)		X	X
Collaborative Meeting Training	X	X	X
GLE Walkthrough DVD	X	X	X
Observation Protocols	X	X	X
Content Coaches (CCs)		X	X
Technical Assistance Coaches (TACs)			X
Governance Technical Assistance Coach			X

Glossary

"872" School – School that meets specific criteria, per 4 AAC 06.872, indicating need for EED and district consultation.

AACP- Alaska Administrator Coaching Project. Is part of the ASMP; it is a state initiative in which principals and superintendents receive support through leadership institutes, workshops, and coaches. The goals are to develop instructional leaders, increase student achievement, and reduce administrator turnover. Under the AACP, inexperienced administrators or those new to Alaska are paired with a coach for one or two years. The administrators receive guidance in organization and facilitation, teacher observation and evaluation, the use of data to improve instruction, and the use of effective school-level and classroom practices.

ACC – Alaska Comprehensive Center. Supports EED with high quality, research-based resources. The ACC is one of sixteen centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education to support states in increasing student achievement. The website presented by the ACC is for all educators serving Alaska's K-12 schools. It brings together in one place current information about improvement planning and strategies that districts can use to meet the provisions of NCLB and increasing student performance. For more information visit http://dev.alaskacc.org/ssos.

ACFA- Alaska Computerized Formative Assessments. ACRA are computer-based formative assessments using the CAL online computer test delivery and reporting system. Items are linked to specific Alaska performance standards and grade level expectations (GLEs). The system is intended to provide feedback that can be used to adapt teaching and learning to meet student needs.

AIMSweb- A 3-tier progress monitoring system based on direct, frequent and continuous student assessment which is reported to teachers and administrators via a web-based management and reporting system for the purpose of determining response to instruction.

AIMSweb Diagnosing- Looking for reading vulnerabilities within each student.

AIMSweb Early Literacy Assessment Schedule -

Kindergarten			First Grade		
Fall	**Winter**	**Spring**	**Fall**	**Winter**	**Spring**
Beginning Sound Fluency (optional)	Beginning Sound Fluency				
Letter Naming Fluency	Letter Naming Fluency	Letter Naming Fluency	Letter Naming Fluency		
	Letter Sound Fluency	Letter Sound Fluency	Letter Sound Fluency		
	Phonemic Segmentation Fluency	Phonemic Segmentation Fluency	Phonemic Segmentation Fluency	Phonemic Segmentation Fluency	
	Nonsense Words Fluency (optional)	Nonsense Words Fluency	Nonsense Words Fluency	Nonsense Words Fluency	Nonsense Words Fluency
				R-CBM Fluency	R-CBM Fluency

AIMSweb Progress Monitoring- Assessing intervention efforts and its impact on student achievement. Conducted every 2-3 weeks to identify how individual students are responding to instruction. Is the intervention having a positive impact?

AIMSweb Universal Screening- Commonly referred to as benchmarking. Testing all students, usually three times a year, measures performance compared to students of their own age.

Alaska Reading Course- EED developed a scientifically based Alaska Reading Course focusing on the five critical elements of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. It includes word study and comprehension through writing of text. The course gives any teacher necessary skills to deliver reading instruction.

Alaska STEPP- an entirely web-based school improvement system used by district and school improvement teams to inform, coach, sustain, track, and report improvement activities.

AMO – Annual Measurable Objective. AMO is the percentage of students that must score at a proficient level or higher on state assessments. By year 2013-14 the AMOs for language arts and math are 100%.

ASMP- Alaska Statewide Mentor Project. EED created the ASMP in partnership with the University of Alaska in support of their shared mission to improve academic achievement for students in Alaska. The ASMP includes two components: teacher mentoring for beginning teachers; and principal coaching for new school principals. The goals of the program are to increase teacher retention, increase student achievement, and equip principals with the skills to be instructional leaders and effective managers.

AYP - Adequate Yearly Progress. When a school or district meets the state's goals for reading/language arts and mathematics, it makes AYP.

CBM – Curriculum Based Measurement. Assessment of student progress aligned to the GLEs.

Desk Audit – A review of assessment data to determine the reasons a district or school has not demonstrated adequate yearly progress.

DIASA- Data Interaction for Alaska Student Assessments. An online database, allows for dynamic access to SBA student performance results. It is password protected with hierarchical access to varying levels of depth into the data, in order to protect individual students. The data interaction system permits approved users to create their own reports, graphs or data files; conduct ad hoc data queries and analysis; disaggregate on user-selected subgroup variables; drill down from summaries to individual students; and print reports in PDF format or export to other software programs.

Domain – Broad area of policy or practice related to effective and successful school functioning.

EED – Alaska Department of Education & Early Development.

Formative Assessment - An assessment conducted at the classroom level intended to be used by teachers to monitor and adjust instruction based on student need.

GLE - Grade Level Expectations. GLEs are based on Alaska's Content and Performance Standards, provide teachers with grade level teaching roadmaps, and for what may be assessed in the Standards Based Assessments (SBA).

GLE Walkthroughs- A process developed for principals to monitor the coverage of the grade level expectations in math, reading, writing, and science during classroom instruction. GLE recording sheets are distributed to principals and also available electronically upon request. GLE walkthrough training has been offered on-site by visiting classrooms, as well as through observing teaching episodes on DVD. Teachers are encouraged to use the GLE recording sheets when planning lessons.

Instructional Audit – An on-site review of the instructional policies, practices, and methodologies in the six domains of effective practice.

LEA – Local Education Agency. In Alaska, school districts are LEAs.

NCLB - No Child Left Behind Act. NCLB is the latest version of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, signed into law January 8, 2002.

PBS – Positive Behavior Support. School-wide behavioral supports for positive environments.

RTI - Response to Instruction/Intervention. In Alaska, RTI provides a framework to support all students using a tri-tiered triangle model that addresses both academic instruction and behavioral support.

SESA- Special Education Service Agency. A non-profit, political subdivision of the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development. Specializes in offering Positive Behavior Support (PBS) services at the school-wide level.

SESA's PBS System- A three-tiered positive behavior support (PBS) system of intervention with a primary focus on prevention. Tier 1 emphasizes the use of universal supports for all students to increase pro-social behavior, while decreasing problem behaviors. School-wide PBS offers targeted interventions for at-risk students at Tier 2, and provides individualized, intensive interventions for students at Tier 3. The PBS Center staff will provide the necessary professional development and coaching support to schools and districts with following general outcome goals for students: decreases in problem behavior, increases in pro-social skills, increases in positive school climate, and increases in academic performance.

SSOS - State System of Support. State and federal law requires EED to provide a system of intensive and sustained support to districts and schools that are in need of improvement, in corrective action, or in restructuring.

SEA – State Education Agency. In Alaska, the SEA is the Department of Education & Early Development.

Title I – The key program of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law that provides federal funding aid focused toward schools with high-poverty.