

School Support and Improvement: Alaska's Current Reality and ESSA Provisions

Developed for Alaska ESSA Advisory Committee meeting
March 9, 2016

COMPREHENSIVE Support and Improvement Schools

Designation

ESSA Provisions

The State shall identify Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools:

- at least the lowest performing 5% of Title I schools, and
- all high schools failing to graduate 1/3 or more of their students, and
- include any Targeted School (see below) not improving subgroup performance.

Designation should be based on indicators of the accountability system.

Current Reality in Alaska

- Priority Schools identified for three years - 5% of Title I schools (16 schools)
- Focus Schools identified for two years – 10% of Title I schools (28 schools)
- 1-Star and 2-Star Schools participate in school improvement planning process – Alaska STEPP with some state oversight and feedback (79 schools)
- 3-Star Schools participate in school improvement planning with district oversight and support (149 schools)

COMPREHENSIVE Support and Improvement Schools

Support and Improvement Process

ESSA Provisions

The district shall “locally develop and implement a **comprehensive support and improvement plan**”:

- “...in partnership with stakeholders (including principals and other school leaders, teachers, and parents),”
- is informed by all accountability indicators,
- “includes evidence-based interventions,”
- “is based on a school level needs assessment”.
- is approved by the school, district, and state
- “is monitored and periodically reviewed” by the state
- “identifies resource inequities which may include [district] and school-level budgeting.”

Discretion allowed...

- for alternative schools by allowing “differentiated improvement activities that utilize evidence based interventions.”
- for a High School that has a total enrollment of less than 100 students, district could “forego implementation of [required] improvement activities.”

Current Reality in Alaska

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All Priority, Focus, 1-Star, 2-Star, and 3-Star Schools participate in school improvement planning process:

- based in Alaska STEPP – an online planning and task management tool
- using indicators and domains of effective schools: Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, Supportive Learning Environment, Professional Development, and Leadership .
- considering the seven school Turnaround Principles: Strong and Effective Leadership, Effective Teachers, Maximizing Learning Time, Strong Instructional Program, Use of Data to Inform Instruction, Healthy School Environment, and Family and Community Engagement.
- EED based staff providing basic process feedback to all 1-Star and 2-Star School plans.
- districts providing oversight and support for 3-Star School plans

Waiver process allows for alternative planning process not based in Alaska STEPP. Two districts currently use alternative process.

TARGETED Support and Improvement Schools

Designation

ESSA Provisions

The State shall designate Targeted Support and Improvement Schools:

- any school in which “any subgroup of students is consistently underperforming, as determined by the State, based on all indicators” of the accountability system

Subgroups considered:

- Race/ethnicity,
- Economically disadvantaged
- English Language Learners
- Students with disabilities

Current Reality in Alaska

- Subgroup performance is measured and reported through the Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOs). AMOs set targets for the percent of students proficient on statewide Standards Based Assessments (SBAs).
- Based upon 2013-14 data, 167 of Alaska's 273 3-Star and 4-Star Schools were required to engage in focused planning because at least one subgroup at the school -
 - did not reach its AMO percent proficient target for two consecutive years, or
 - saw a decrease in graduation rate (both four-year and five-year rates) from the previous year, or
 - did not test at least 90% of students on the statewide SBAs.

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TARGETED Support and Improvement Schools

Support and Improvement Process

ESSA Provisions

Each school “shall develop and implement a school level **targeted support and improvement plan**...for each subgroup of students”:

- “...in partnership with stakeholders (including principals and other school leaders, teachers, and parents),”
- is informed by all accountability indicators,
- “includes evidence-based interventions,”
- “is based on a school level needs assessment”.
- is approved by the school, district, and state
- is approved and monitored by the district
- “identifies resource inequities which may include [district] and school-level budgeting.”

Current Reality in Alaska

- Any school containing a subgroup not meeting the AMO percent proficiency and attendance targets should engage in focused improvement planning, addressing the specific subgroups – not necessarily the Alaska STEPP process.
- This applies to all schools regardless of star rating.
- Districts provide oversight and support of these subgroup focused plans.

EXIT CRITERIA

BOTH COMPREHENSIVE and TARGETED Support and Improvement Schools

ESSA Provisions

State “shall establish a statewide exit criteria” to be applied:

- to all Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools
 - in a state determined number of years after designation (not to exceed four years)
 - if not met, then “more rigorous State-determined action, such as the implementation of interventions (which may include addressing school-level operations)”
- to all Targeted Support and Improvement Schools
 - if not met, then Targeted school becomes a Comprehensive School

Current Reality in Alaska

- ASPI star designations are newly assigned each year based upon ASPI indicators
- Priority Schools are designated for at least three years before evaluation for exit
- Focus Schools are designated for at least two years before consideration for exit

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EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS

BOTH COMPREHENSIVE and TARGETED Support and Improvement Schools

ESSA Provisions

ESSA Definition:

An Evidence-Based activity, strategy, or intervention is one that -

- (i) demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on –
 - I. strong evidence from at least 1 well-designed and well implemented experimental study; or
 - II. moderate evidence from at least 1 well-designed quasi-experimental study; or
 - III. promising evidence from at least 1 well-designed and well-implemented correlation study with statistical controls for selection bias; or
- (ii)
 - I. demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes, and
 - II. includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention.

Current Reality in Alaska

Alaska's frameworks for effective activities, strategies, and interventions:

- Seven Turnaround Principals - see resource titled: *Expectations for Priority Schools*
- 6 Domains and 30+ Indicators of Alaska STEPP - see resource titled: *Alaska Effective Schools Framework*