

# STATE OF ALASKA

## Department of Education & Early Development

*Office of the Commissioner*

**FRANK H. MURKOWSKI, GOVERNOR**

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February 15, 2006

Henry L. Johnson, Ph.D., Assistant Secretary  
U. S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Assistant Secretary Johnson:

I am requesting U.S. Department of Education approval of a modification to the Alaska Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook. Our proposal will incorporate students on track to be proficient with the proficient population of our schools and districts for evaluating progress toward the Annual Measurable Objective. In a meeting on May 12, 2005, and in a letter sent to Deputy Secretary Ray Simon dated June 16, 2005, Alaska made a request to incorporate individual student growth into our 2006 adequate yearly progress calculations. On August 25, 2005, you responded that your office would give the proposed amendment further consideration. Given the announcement made by Secretary Margaret Spellings on November 21, 2005, and the guidance provided on January 25, 2006, Alaska requests to incorporate individual student growth into our adequate yearly progress calculations.

Enclosed you will find sufficient documentation to approve the Alaska growth model for inclusion into the Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook. The documentation includes an executive summary of the Alaska growth model proposal, Alaska's response to the January 25, 2006, Peer Review Guidance, and five documents of evidence. Alaska does not anticipate additional amendments this year.

Evaluating school performance based on individual student growth is widely supported in Alaska. Alaska has very diverse schools. We have more than 100 K-12 schools with three or fewer teachers, yet we have very large schools, including the 80<sup>th</sup> largest school district in the nation. Stakeholders from small remote schools and large urban schools know that when we evaluate status and growth together we have a fairer system. We have redesigned our assessment system to support a growth model, and are prepared to implement the model in our assessment and accountability system.

I appreciate your consideration of Alaska's growth model. Please contact Les Morse, Director of Assessment & Accountability (907-465-8691), or me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Roger Sampson  
Commissioner

Enclosures