



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

JUN 25 2009

Honorable Larry LeDoux
Commissioner of Education
Alaska Department of Education and Early Development
801 West 10th Street, Suite 200
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1894

Dear Commissioner LeDoux:

Thank you for submitting additional assessment materials for peer review under the standards and assessment requirements of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended. We appreciate the efforts that were required to prepare for the latest peer review that occurred in March 2009.

In a letter to you on January 13, 2009, we enumerated the evidence required for Alaska's standards and assessment system to be fully approved. Outside peer reviewers and Department staff have evaluated Alaska's additional submission, which was provided in response to this letter. I have determined that, although the evidence reviewed to date suggests that Alaska administered science assessments in grades 4, 8, and 10 in 2008–09 that are fully compliant with the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, one element of these standards and assessments is not yet completely documented. Accordingly, Alaska's standards and assessment system continues to be designated *Approval Expected*. To obtain full approval of its standards and assessments, Alaska must submit documentation related to technical quality. The complete list of evidence needed for Alaska's standards and assessment system to be granted full approval is enclosed with this letter. In addition, I have also enclosed detailed comments from the peer review team that evaluated Alaska's submission which I hope will help you in gathering the additional required evidence.

Because certain significant elements of Alaska's standards and assessment system are not yet complete, the condition on Alaska's Title I, Part A grant award will continue until Alaska submits the outstanding evidence and receives full approval of its standards and assessment system. Please note that, if it becomes evident that Alaska did not implement a fully compliant standards and assessment system in the 2008–09 school year, the Department will change the status of Alaska's standards and assessment system to Approval Pending and may take other appropriate legal action.

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

I appreciate the steps Alaska has taken toward meeting the requirements of the ESEA, and I know you are anxious to receive full approval of your standards and assessment system. We are committed to helping you accomplish that goal and remain available to provide technical assistance. We will schedule a peer review, either in the fall of 2009 or earlier, if you have evidence available to evaluate the remaining elements of your system. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sharon Hall of my staff at sharon.hall@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph C. Conaty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Joseph C. Conaty
Delegated Authority to Perform the Functions and
Duties of the Assistant Secretary for Elementary
and Secondary Education

Enclosures

cc: Governor Sarah Palin

Les Morse

SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE THAT ALASKA MUST SUBMIT TO MEET ESEA REQUIREMENTS FOR ALASKA'S STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

4.0 TECHNICAL QUALITY

1. For the Standards-Based Assessments (SBA):
 - a. A plan to address intended and unintended consequences of the SBA. (4.1.g)
 - b. Evidence that the use of accommodations yields meaningful scores. (4.3.d)
 - c. Evidence that the state monitors the availability and implementation of accommodations for use during science assessments. (4.6.a)
2. For the Alternate Assessment Based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS):
 - a. Evidence of inter-rater consistency in scoring. (4.2.c)