

Mike Hanley
Commissioner

P.O. Box 110500
Juneau, AK 99811-0500
education.alaska.gov



Eric Fry
Information Officer
907.465.2851
cell: 907.321.5564
eric.fry@alaska.gov

Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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Alaska's NCLB Waiver Renewed for Three Years

JUNEAU – The U.S. Department of Education has extended for three school years Alaska's waiver from major provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, commonly known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Alaska's renewed waiver, which takes effect this school year, gives the state and school districts additional flexibility to implement school and educator accountability.

"No Child Left Behind's accountability model, which measures only students' ability to exceed a pre-set proficiency bar on a standardized test, is an erroneous measure for our schools," Alaska Education Commissioner Mike Hanley said. "I am excited the U.S. Department of Education continues to recognize the value of Alaska's accountability model and has provided three additional years of flexibility."

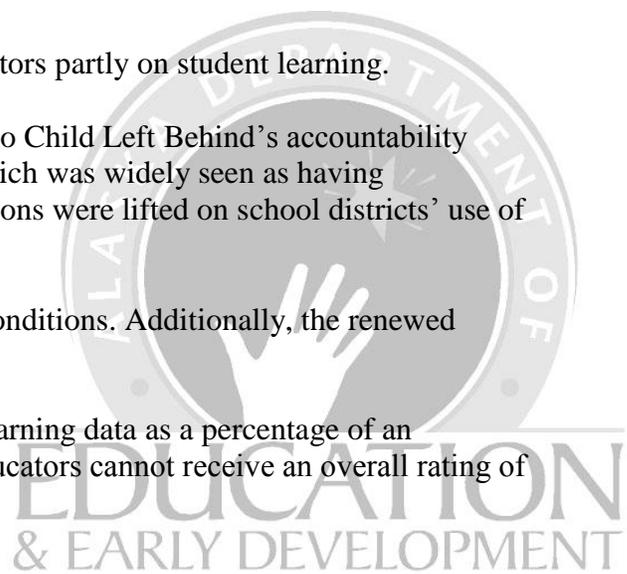
Alaska first received a waiver in May 2013. States with waivers agreed to:

- implement English and math standards that prepare students for jobs, education, and training after high school;
- have their own system for holding schools accountable for students' academic success; and
- require school districts to evaluate educators partly on student learning.

In exchange, states were allowed to opt out of No Child Left Behind's accountability system known as Adequate Yearly Progress, which was widely seen as having unattainable goals. Additionally, certain restrictions were lifted on school districts' use of anti-poverty funds.

Alaska's renewed waiver continues the above conditions. Additionally, the renewed waiver:

Eliminates the requirement to include student learning data as a percentage of an educator's overall evaluation rating. Instead, educators cannot receive an overall rating of



exemplary or proficient if they rated unsatisfactory on any standard, including student learning.

Use of student learning data in educators' evaluations has been postponed to the 2016-2017 school year, allowing districts more time to decide how to address the standard accurately and fairly.

The Alaska School Performance Index (ASPI) star ratings and accountability provisions for schools are "paused" for the upcoming school year. The provision will allow Alaska to have two years of student assessment results before the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) assessments are used for school accountability. Two consecutive years of AMP results are necessary to measure student growth, an important part of ASPI.

On Aug. 24, the State Board of Education & Early Development will consider proposed regulations to implement the renewed waiver.

For more on Alaska's waiver, see <https://education.alaska.gov/akaccountability/#c3gtabs-esea>

The U.S. Department of Education's webpage for waivers is at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/index.html>

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