

August 7, 2007

Ms. Carol Comeau
Superintendent
Anchorage School District
P.O. Box 196614
Anchorage, AK 99519

Dear Superintendent Comeau:

I am writing to notify Anchorage School District (ASD) that it may continue its participation in the supplemental educational services (SES) pilot for the 2007-08 school year. As you know, ASD began its participation in this pilot in 2006-07, allowing it to provide SES to eligible students although it was a district identified for improvement. ASD reported to the Department twice during the past school year, as required, and met the conditions for participation. ASD reported that it increased its SES participation rate from 5 percent in 2005-06 to 14 percent in 2006-07; notified parents about SES options early and through multiple venues; offered additional SES enrollment windows; and allowed private providers access to school facilities.

Additionally, as part of this offer of flexibility, I am allowing ASD to count toward meeting the 20 percent expenditure requirement for SES and choice-related transportation, up to 1 percent of that amount (0.2 percent of ASD's total Title I allocation) on parent outreach activities for SES. The purpose of this flexibility is to support high-quality outreach efforts for SES.

By extending ASD's flexibility agreement, I am using my authority under section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended, to grant ASD eligibility to be a provider of SES to eligible students in Title I schools even though your district has been identified for improvement and thus is precluded from providing SES under 34 C.F.R. §200.47(b)(1)(iv)(B). My approval of this flexibility agreement for 2007-08 is conditioned on ASD's fulfilling the conditions detailed in the enclosure to this letter, which include submitting an interim and a final report to this Department on January 1, 2008, and on June 30, 2008, respectively.

In addition, as part of the terms of this flexibility agreement, ASD must submit a report under section 9401(e)(1) of the ESEA to the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development at the end of the 2007-08 school year that describes the district's provision of SES to eligible students in Title I schools; describes how those schools continued to provide Title I services to eligible students; and evaluates the progress of the district and schools in improving the quality of instruction and the academic achievement of students. The Alaska Department of Education

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and Early Development must then submit a report to the U.S. Department of Education based on ASD's report.

As part of your participation in the SES pilot, we also ask for your continued assistance with the third-party evaluation that we are conducting of ASD and the other districts participating in the pilot. We will need ASD to supply our evaluator with student achievement data files and other information necessary to conduct an evaluation of the effects of SES on student achievement.

This flexibility agreement continues to serve several important goals: increasing the numbers of students receiving SES; ensuring early notice about SES through multiple venues and extended enrollment windows; allowing external organizations reasonable access to school facilities; and providing information on the academic achievement of students receiving SES.

We hope that ASD will be a model of high-quality implementation of SES. We ask ASD to share with the Department examples of those practices and strategies that are effective and information on why, so that we can disseminate that information to other districts around the country.

This extension of your flexibility agreement applies to the provision of SES in Title I schools in Anchorage during the 2007-08 school year and is subject to a review at the end of that school year to determine if the flexibility will be continued.

SES is an important component of NCLB, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that students are accessing services and succeeding in the classroom.

Sincerely,

Margaret Spellings

Enclosure

cc: Roger Sampson
Commissioner of Education
and Early Development