

## Media Fact Sheet about Priority Schools



*Toward preparing students to be college, career, and culturally ready graduates*

In priority schools, the state, school district and school will work together to improve student achievement over the following three years.

The goals are to:

- Provide strong leadership in the school with an effective principal.
- Make sure that teachers are effective in helping students learn.
- Set aside more time for student learning and for teachers to work together. Schedule at least 90 minutes a day for reading and 60 minutes a day for math for each student.
- Improve the instructional program, to be sure it is rigorous and aligned with the state's standards in English and math, which prepare students for careers and education after high school.
- Look at how each student does on tests, so teachers can decide how to best teach each student. The school will give students three in-class assessments a year to help determine which students need extra help.
- Improve school safety and discipline.
- Engage families and the community, so that the school reflects cultural awareness and understanding of the community's values, and parents can support their students' learning. The school's teachers will be guided by the Alaska Cultural Standards for Educators, created by Native educators.

Priority schools will assess their needs and develop a plan to address them, with help from the state. The plan will specify actions to be taken, key dates for reporting progress, and ways to check if the work is being done.

The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development will provide priority schools with a staff contact, a computerized way to keep track of their improvement plan, training, and school improvement funds as they become available. The department may provide a coach to assist priority schools in planning their improvement goals and implementing their plan. After three years, a school will no longer be a priority school if it shows enough improvement.

