



September 22, 2023

Superintendents of Alaska School Districts

Dear Superintendents,

I hope you are having a great fall and that your schools--staff and students alike, have settled into a great year. Our goal at the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) is to provide you with the information you need to be successful in your role in educating young Alaskans.

To this end, you may have heard that the federal government may “shut down” on October 1, 2023, because federal funding has not yet been appropriated. DEED continues to monitor the federal government activities and support school districts as DEED analyzes the potential impacts related to the possibility of the federal government “shut down” should there be a significant delay to passing an appropriation through the congressional body.

What does a federal “shut down” mean for school districts?

COVID-19 Funds

Since these funds have been appropriated, school districts can be reassured that all COVID-19 related activities would continue without pause.

Child Nutrition Programs

Our Child Nutrition Programs are an essential part of keeping kids healthy and learning. Federal funding for September 2023 claims for reimbursement would be due to DEED by the end of October 2023. Since the source of funds for September was already appropriated, these funds would be available for reimbursement. All Child Nutrition Programs that receive funding after October 1 through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, except for the [Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program](#)¹, are 12-month funds so they are at risk of not being funded as of October 1, 2023, unless the Federal Government makes a provision for this.

We will continue to monitor this closely and will provide any updates as we receive them. Once the federal government passes appropriations, the reimbursements will come, but there may be a delay. This includes:

- National School Lunch Program ([NSLP](#)²),

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program*. www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/farm-school-grant-program

² U.S. Department of Agriculture. *National School Lunch Program*. www.fns.usda.gov/nslp

- School Breakfast Program ([SBP](#)³),
- Summer Food Service Program ([SFSP](#)⁴),
- Child and Adult Care Food Programs ([CACFP](#)⁵),
- Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program ([FFVP](#)⁶),
- [USDA Foods Program](#)⁷, (formerly Commodity Food Distribution), and
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program ([TEFAP](#)⁸).

U.S. Department of Education Federal Programs

Some Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Federal Programs, Carl Perkins, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Special Education, and existing federal grants are mostly forward funded so there will be little to no impact on these programs. State and local educational agencies (SEAs and LEAs) will be able to continue using those funds, as well as carry-over funds from previous years, if the federal government is shut down.

Head Start

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services [Office of Head Start](#)⁹ may be impacted. Head Start funds are not provided through DEED, however, there may be a significant impact on Head Start programs if there is a federal shutdown.

More Information

The [U.S. Department of Education Contingency Plan for Lapse in Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2022](#)¹⁰ Appropriations as well as the White House Office of Management and Budget [Frequently Asked Questions during a Lapse in Appropriations](#)¹¹ dated December 2, 2021 may be used as a point of reference for what potential impacts might be expected for Federal Fiscal Year 2024.

Alaska System of Academic Readiness (AKSTAR)

The DEED Assessment team is working diligently to provide results for the 2022-2023 academic school year. I will be sharing some insights and providing you talking points that you can share in your districts about the timeline and release of results. The work of the Department has been focused on ensuring quality psychometric data through two processes: the Standard Validation and the Policy Review panels.

³ U.S. Department of Agriculture. *School Breakfast Program*. www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/school-breakfast-program

⁴ U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Summer Food Service Program*. www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program

⁵ U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Child and Adult Care Food Program*. www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp

⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program*. www.fns.usda.gov/ffvp/fresh-fruit-and-vegetable-program

⁷ U.S. Department of Agriculture. *USDA Foods Program*. www.fns.usda.gov/usda-foods

⁸ U.S. Department of Agriculture. *The Emergency Food Assistance Program*. www.fns.usda.gov/tefap/emergency-food-assistance-program

⁹ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. *Office of Head Start*. www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs

¹⁰ United States of America. Department of Education. *U.S. Department of Education Contingency Plan for Lapse in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022*. Memorandum dated September 27, 2021. www2.ed.gov/about/shutdown/contingency-plan-2021.pdf

¹¹ United States of America. Office of Management and Budget. *Frequently Asked Questions During a Lapse in Appropriations*. www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Agency-Lapse-FAQs-12-2-21.pdf

Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) Requirement Reminder

As a reminder, the standardized test score ([ACT](#)¹², [SAT](#)¹³, [WorkKeys](#)¹⁴) requirement for Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) eligibility is in effect for the **Class of 2022 and beyond**. To qualify for the APS, students must meet the eligibility requirements pertaining to:

- Complete specific, rigorous high school curriculum
- Earn Minimum GPA
- Meet qualifying score on college/career entrance exam ([ACT](#), [SAT](#), [WorkKeys](#))

For more information about the APS, visit the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education ([ACPE](#)¹⁵) website.

Additionally, many of you have asked questions about the most recent regulation change regarding competitive sports at the high school level. The [State Board of Education and Early Development Decision Document](#)¹⁶ can assist you in understanding the change. Please reach out to our team at the DEED if you have any questions on the material provided – we are here as a resource for you. Thank you for all you do for our students and the future of Alaska. DEED is committed to supporting you to provide an excellent education for every student every day.

Cheers,



Deena Bishop, Ed. D.
Commissioner

¹² American College Testing (ACT). www.act.org

¹³ College Board. Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT). *Dates and Deadlines*. www.satsuite.collegeboard.org/sat/registration/dates-deadlines

¹⁴ State of Alaska. Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Employment Training Services. *Job Centers*. www.jobs.alaska.gov/offices/index.html

¹⁵ State of Alaska. Department of Education and Early Development. Alaska Commission on Post-Secondary Education. Alaska Performance Scholarship. www.acpe.alaska.gov/financial-aid/ak-performance-scholarship

¹⁶ State of Alaska. State Board of Education and Early Development. *State Board of Education and Early Development Statement of Decision*. https://education.alaska.gov/State_Board/pdf/9.20.23%20Decisional%20Document%20-%204%20AAC%2006.pdf