



Commissioner Roger Sampson
Department of Education
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NEWS RELEASE

State Board schedules special meeting for March 27

The State Board of Education & Early Development will meet in special session Monday, March 27, starting at 11 a.m.

The meeting will be held over teleconference and will originate from the Commissioner's Conference Room at the Goldbelt Building at 801 W. 10th Street in Juneau. The board will not take public testimony at this meeting.

The board will consider opening a period of public comment on a proposed amendment to the regulation regarding the state's accountability workbook under the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

The amendment would set a uniform minimum number of students for the groups that schools are held accountable for in making adequate yearly progress toward proficiency targets.

The U.S. Department of Education is requiring the change for states, such as Alaska, that have applied to pilot a growth model for determining schools' and districts' adequate yearly progress. The federal agency also has said that it soon will require all states to use a uniform minimum number for students in subgroups.

Under the No Child Left Behind Act, states must set standards in language arts and mathematics; provide annual testing in those subjects for all students in grades 3-8 and once in high school; and set annual progress targets ensuring that all students reach proficiency in those subjects by the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

The progress of schools is measured not only by the student body as a whole but in groups of students. The nine groups for Alaska are: African-American, Alaska Native/American Indian, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic, Multi-Ethnic, Economically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, and Limited English Proficient Students.

A key point in the law is that schools cannot be declared proficient while ignoring minorities. However, if a school has too few students in a subcategory to generate statistical significance,

then the school will not be held accountable for that group separately. The students in the group still will be assessed and their scores reported as part of the school as a whole.

Alaska currently has a minimum group size of 41 for students with disabilities and limited proficiency in English, and 21 for all other groups. The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development will recommend that the State Board adopt a uniform minimum number of 31 students for all groups.

The March 27 meeting will be broadcast to the following Legislative Information Offices: Anchorage, Barrow, Bethel, Cordova, Delta Junction, Dillingham, Fairbanks, Glennallen, Homer, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Kotzebue, Mat-Su, Nome, Petersburg, Seward, Sitka, Tok, Valdez, and Wrangell.

Persons with disabilities who need accommodations to participate should contact Dottie Knuth at 465-2802 or dottie_knuth@eed.state.ak.us no later than five days before the accommodation is needed.

For a copy of the board packet, see: http://www.eed.state.ak.us/State_Board/.

The Department of Education & Early Development's news release about the growth model is available at: <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/news/releases>.

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