

Roger Sampson

Commissioner

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STATE OF ALASKA

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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 18, 2007

State Board names Barbara Thompson interim commissioner

JUNEAU – The State Board of Education & Early Development, meeting by audioconference July 17, 2007, has named Barbara Thompson as Interim Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development.

The Commissioner is a member of the governor's Cabinet, ex-officio secretary to the State Board, and chief executive officer of the Department of Education & Early Development.

Thompson's appointment, which is subject to the approval of Governor Sarah Palin, will begin August 18, 2007, and will last for up to a year.

The resignation of current Commissioner Roger Sampson takes effect August 17, 2007. Sampson has been named President of the Education Commission of the States.

Thompson is currently Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Education & Early Development.

During Thompson's tenure as Interim Commissioner, the State Board will search for a permanent Commissioner.

"We are very grateful we have the opportunity to extend our search for a commissioner," said State Board Chairwoman Esther Cox. "We feel the department will be in excellent hands."

Seven candidates had applied this month for the Commissioner position following its advertisement in Alaska and nationally. Chairwoman Cox thanked the applicants and said their applications will remain open.

"I am honored that the State Board has asked me to serve as Interim Commissioner," Thompson said. "The department will continue to implement the State Board's mission to ensure quality standards-based instruction to improve academic achievement for all students."

Thompson holds a master of arts degree in teaching adult and community education from Alaska Pacific University and a bachelor of arts degree in sociology from San Diego State University. She holds state certification as a teacher of secondary education in social science.

Thompson also has served as Director and Deputy Director of the department's Division of Teaching and Learning Support, and as Acting Administrator and Adult Basic Education Supervisor for the department's former Office of Adult and Vocational Education. She serves on the Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

The department, based in Juneau, oversees 53 school districts in the K-12 education system and operates a boarding high school.

The department also operates the state archives, the state library, two state museums, a statewide arts council, the postsecondary education commission, and the professional teaching practices commission.

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