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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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State Board selects finalists for position of Commissioner of Education

JUNEAU – The State Board of Education & Early Development met in executive session March 20, 2008, in Anchorage and selected three finalists for the position of Commissioner of Education & Early Development.

The finalists, in alphabetical order, are: Steve Atwater, John Holst, and Larry LeDoux. They will be invited to be interviewed by the board in an executive session on March 28, 2008, in Juneau. By state statute, the board's final selection must be approved by the Governor.

The finalists were selected from a field of 14 applicants. In a statement, State Board Chair Esther Cox thanked the applicants for the time and care they put into the process. Applicants provided written statements about their core educational values and the policies and strategies that will be needed to meet the State Board's mission of ensuring quality standards-based instruction to improve academic achievement for all students.

"On behalf of the State Board, I want to thank all of the applicants for their thoughtful responses. It has been a long day of very serious deliberation by the board. We wish the finalists well," Chair Cox said.

Atwater, of King Salmon, is Superintendent of the Lake & Peninsula School District, where he also has held the positions of curriculum coordinator and teacher. He holds a master of education degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, where he is currently a doctoral candidate.

Holst, of Sitka, is a consultant specializing in school improvement and school district improvement. He has served as Superintendent of the Sitka School District, Principal of Ketchikan High School, administrator in other schools, and as a teacher. He holds a master of science degree in educational administration from the University of Wisconsin at River Falls.

A large, faint watermark logo of the Department of Education & Early Development is visible in the background of the lower half of the page. It features a circular seal with a sunburst and a landscape, similar to the one at the top of the page. Below the seal, the words "EDUCATION & EARLY DEVELOPMENT" are written in a large, bold, sans-serif font.

**EDUCATION
& EARLY DEVELOPMENT**

LeDoux, of Kodiak, is Superintendent of the Kodiak Island Borough School District, where he also has held numerous administrative posts. He has served as Principal of North Star Elementary School and of Kodiak High School, and he taught at the latter school. LeDoux holds a master of arts in teaching degree in science and biology from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Former Deputy Commissioner Barbara Thompson has been serving as Interim Commissioner since August 18, 2007. She replaced Commissioner Roger Sampson, who resigned to take the post of President of the Education Commission of the States.

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

By statute, Education Commissioners must have at least a master's degree with at least five years of experience in education since receiving the degree, with at least three of the five years in an exclusively administrative position. Commissioners are approved by the Governor. They are appointed without regard to political affiliation. They serve at the pleasure of the State Board for no fixed term.

The Department of Education & Early Development oversees K-12 public schools, and operates Mt. Edgecumbe High School in Sitka; the Division of Libraries, Museums and Archives; the Alaska Postsecondary Education Commission; the Professional Teaching Practices Commission; and the Alaska State Council on the Arts.

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