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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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State Board approves three regulation packages, proposes others

JUNEAU -- The State Board of Education & Early Development, meeting March 26, 27 and 28, 2008, in Juneau, has approved three regulation packages and sent out further proposed regulation packages for public comment.

The approved regulations:

Changed some of the criteria used in developmental profiles, in order to align the profiles with the state's early learning guidelines. Schools use developmental profiles to create a baseline of understanding of their kindergartners and those first-graders who are new to school.

Allowed small schools to average their graduation rates over several years, for purposes of demonstrating adequate yearly progress under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Using several years of data provides for more statistical validity.

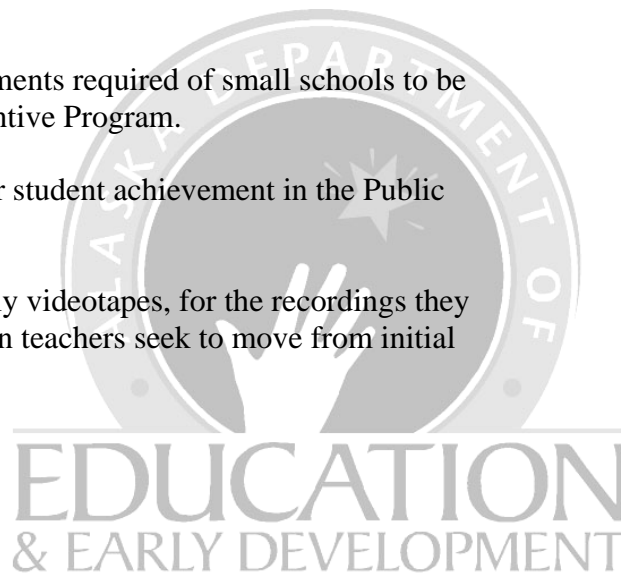
Allowed schools to receive credit, in calculating adequate yearly progress, for students with disabilities who have improved and have exited the special education program.

Allowed schools to be recognized for excellence under No Child Left Behind if they score well in the state's Public School Performance Incentive Program and make adequate yearly progress.

Clarified the student participation rate in assessments required of small schools to be eligible for the Public School Performance Incentive Program.

Changed the table that assigns schools points for student achievement in the Public School Performance Incentive Program.

Allowed teachers to submit DVDs, and not solely videotapes, for the recordings they submit to the state as performance reviews, when teachers seek to move from initial certification to professional certification.



The State Board sent out for public comment the following proposed regulation packages:

Eliminate the Alaska alternate performance standards because the federal government does not allow such standards. Instead, students with severe cognitive disabilities will take alternate assessments, but those assessments will be geared to the same academic standards that apply to other students.

Add content and performance standards for teachers who are new to the profession. These standards guide school districts in evaluating their teachers. The proposal reflects the concept that what teachers know and are able to do will vary at different times in their career.

Allow people who hold Type C certificates in the special service areas of speech pathology and school counseling to be eligible for Type B administrative certificates and become endorsed as special education administrators. The proposal broadens the pool of people who could become special education administrators.

Allow any holder of a Type C special service certificate to be eligible for a Type B administrative certificate, thus broadening the pool of people who could become school principals.

Require teachers who hold a subject-matter-expert limited teacher certificate to remain enrolled in a teacher preparation program, or have completed the program, throughout their certificate period. In Alaska, certified teachers must be enrolled in, or have completed, a teacher preparation program.

Ask for public comment on two options for determining when foster parents may represent foster children in special education matters such as voting in Individualized Education Program meetings. Option One would maintain the status quo, which allows foster parents to actively opt in as surrogate parents and receive training for that role. Option Two would automatically give foster parents the parental role unless they choose to opt out. They would not need specialized training for the role.

Expand the state's academic audits of school districts to include audits of individual schools, and implement improvement programs as needed. The state would consult with affected districts, through which the improvement plans would be implemented. Improvements might include weekly collaborative meetings of the school's teachers, focused on student progress; regular use of classroom student assessments, to adjust instruction for the students' needs; professional development and technical assistance for staff, to focus on state academic standards.

Apply the state's regulations for statewide correspondence schools to those correspondence schools that are operated only within one district. Correspondence schools are state-funded, district-operated home school programs in which districts approve curriculums and provide teachers of record. The proposal also would increase

the amount of state money that families could spend on art, music and physical education. Typically, correspondence programs give families an allotment of state funds for instructional materials. The proposed regulation also clarifies that correspondence programs cannot exclude children with disabilities.

In addition to regulatory matters, the State Board took the following actions:

Approved five school districts' requests for waivers from a state requirement that they spend at least 70 percent of their operating funds on instruction. The districts are: Bering Strait, Denali, Hydaburg, Lower Yukon, and Yukon Koyukuk.

Approved the proposed decision of an administrative law judge as the final agency decision in a dispute with the Delta Greely School District over an application for a capital improvement project grant. The judge agreed with the Department of Education & Early Development's decision to categorize a project as school construction rather than major maintenance.

Approved the renewal of Winterberry Charter School in Anchorage for 10 years and the Juneau Community Charter School for eight years.

Appointed Cynthia Jones, Patricia Partnow and Marnie Leist to the Alaska State Museum Collections Advisory Committee.

Appointed Doreen Deaton to the Mt. Edgecumbe High School Advisory Board.

The State Board is meeting in executive session March 28 to interview finalists for the position of Commissioner of Education & Early Development. By statute, the appointment must be approved by the Governor. The Governor's Office will issue a news release when a Commissioner has been named.

For the State Board's meeting packet, see: http://www.eed.state.ak.us/State_Board/.

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