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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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Students in three grades are assessed in state science standards

JUNEAU – This year, for the first time, Alaska students in grades 4, 8 and 10 are taking state science assessments, as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Schools are administering the tests, which typically take up to 90 minutes, between March 31 and April 14. The 4th-grade test contains 48 questions. The 8th-grade and 10th-grade tests contain 56 questions each. Sample tests are available online at: http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/SBA_ItemSamplers.html.

Parents will receive their students' assessment results in August. Schoolwide, districtwide and statewide results will be made public on the web site of the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, at www.eed.state.ak.us.

Under No Child Left Behind, Alaska students in grades 3 through 10 also take state assessments in reading, writing and math. Each year, the assessment results for those subjects help determine whether schools and districts are making adequate yearly progress toward the law's goal that all assessed students be proficient by the 2013-2014 school year.

Unlike those assessments, the results of the science assessment will not be used to determine whether a school or district has made adequate yearly progress. However, the assessments will help students, parents and educators understand the degree to which each assessed student is proficient in the state science standards. Students' scores will be placed in the achievement categories of advanced, proficient, below proficient, and far below proficient.

"These assessments will provide schools across the state a measure of the effectiveness of the science curriculum and instruction taking place in schools," said Les Morse, Director of Assessment, Accountability and Information Management at the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development. "This is an opportunity for each school to begin to measure their science program and how well it is aligned to the state science standards."

The logo for the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development is located at the bottom right. It features a large, faint watermark of the state seal in the background. Below the watermark, the words "EDUCATION" and "& EARLY DEVELOPMENT" are stacked in a bold, sans-serif font, with a horizontal line underneath the text.

EDUCATION
& EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Alaska's science standards are available online at:
<http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/GLEHome.html>. The standards were created by Alaska teachers.

The science assessments were developed by Data Recognition Corporation of Maple Grove, Minn., which holds the state's contract for its standards-based assessments. Each test question was reviewed by Alaska teachers. Committees of Alaska teachers will meet in May to set the score levels for the achievement categories of advanced, proficient, below proficient, and far below proficient.

For more information: Les Morse, 907-465-8691; Eric Fry, 907-465-2851.

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