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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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State Board approves waivers for 27 districts

JUNEAU -- The State Board of Education & Early Development, meeting by teleconference October 26, approved waivers for 27 school districts from the state requirement that at least 70 percent of their operating expenditures be spent on instruction. The waivers apply to the district budgets submitted for fiscal year 2010.

Since 2001, when the 70 percent requirement fully took effect, from 24 to 32 districts each year have requested waivers, and they have been granted. Without the waivers, the districts would have lost part of their state funding.

Historically, and again this year, the districts that requested waivers have operating and maintenance costs that exceed 20 percent of their budget or they have revenues of under \$3 million, or both conditions. In other words, the affected districts have high fixed costs such as for heating fuel, and they have small budgets, giving them little flexibility. Affected districts often have declining enrollments, as well, resulting in less state funding.

Districts receiving waivers were: Alaska Gateway, Aleutian Region, Aleutians East, Bering Strait, Bristol Bay, Chatham, Copper River, Denali, Hoonah, Hydaburg, Iditarod, Kake, Kuspuk, Lake and Peninsula, Lower Yukon, Nome, North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Pelican, Pribilof, Saint Mary's, Skagway, Southeast Island, Southwest Region, Tanana, Wrangell, and Yukon Flats.

The State Board also adopted as a permanent regulation an emergency regulation, promulgated in September, regarding school closures for emergencies. The regulation allows districts, with the education commissioner's approval, to designate emergency closure days as days in session if the schools provide instruction to students during the closure.

The State Board also approved resolutions supporting capital funding to construct a new facility in Juneau for the State Libraries, Archives and Museums, and for major maintenance at Mt. Edgecumbe High School, the state-operated boarding school in Sitka.

EDUCATION
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The State Board approved the appointment of Phyllis Carlson of Juneau as the Director of Rural Education.

The meeting packet, with background information, is available at http://www.eed.state.ak.us/State_Board/pdf/09Oct_Packet.pdf.

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