



Photographs by Taryn Bryan

**ALASKA
PROFESSIONAL TEACHING
PRACTICES COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT
2018**

INTRODUCTION

The Alaska State Professional Teaching Practices Commission (PTPC) submits its report for Fiscal Year 2018. This report cites the activities and services of the PTPC as authorized by Alaska Statutes, Title 14, Chapter 20, Article 5, entitled “The Professional Teaching Practices Act.” Since FY 2016 the PTPC has been funded solely by certification fees. This was per legislative intent and is in accordance with AS 14.20.500.

The Commission governs matters of ethical and professional standards of educators and their compliance with state law and contractual obligations.

This report contains a synopsis of activities of the Commission from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018. It is prepared on behalf of the Commission by the outgoing Executive Director, James A. Seitz, and the incoming Executive Director, Melody Mann.

WHAT IS THE PROFESSIONAL TEACHING PRACTICES COMMISSION?

In 1966, the education profession in the State of Alaska was granted the right and responsibility to define and to enforce ethical standards of its members. The Alaska Legislature established and empowered a nine-member Commission to impose sanctions against the certificates of educators who engaged in illegal, immoral, or unethical conduct. The *Professional Teaching Practices Commission* is composed of five teachers, one superintendent, one principal, one representative of the Department of Education & Early Development, and one representative of higher learning. Constituent groups nominate candidates and the governor appoints the Commissioners who are then subject to approval of the Legislature.

Commission staff investigates allegations of misconduct and partners with Department of Law to present cases to the Commission. As a quasi-judicial body, the Commission has the power to impose sanctions against the certificates of those found, by a preponderance of the evidence, to be in violation of the Alaska Code of Ethics of the Education Profession.

The Commission has jurisdiction over all certificated members of the education profession, including administrators, student teachers, and instructors in institutions of higher learning. The Commission's order is final in disciplinary matters regarding a teacher. Before the certificate of an administrator is sanctioned, the Commissioner of the Department of Education & Early Development must concur. A final order of the Commission may be appealed to the Superior Court.

Educators are assigned the responsibility of caring for children and are placed in a position of public trust. Education is a profession, that by its very nature, stresses the value, worth, and dignity of all individuals. Educators are tasked with developing each student's potential, and as such, act as role models for students. It is essential, therefore, that educators sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.

In their commitment to quality education, the members of the Professional Teaching Practices Commission hold their colleagues to the higher ethical standard that is demanded of a profession entrusted with the care and teaching of children.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Pursuant to Alaska Statutes 14.20.470, the PTPC has the power to:

1. **Warn.** A warning stipulates that the considered conduct is unethical, and if not corrected, a more serious sanction could be imposed. A warning is private communication with the educator; however, it is a matter of public record.
2. **Reprimand.** In the event of a reprimand, members of the education community are informed of the action, and record of the sanction is placed in the certification file. A reprimand is reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse for national distribution.
3. **Suspend.** In the event of a suspension, members of the education community are informed of the action. A suspension may include conditions which must be met before the certificate will be reinstated. A suspension means loss of a certificate for a specific period of time. A suspension is reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse for national distribution.
4. **Revoke.** In the event of a revocation, members of the education community are informed of the disciplinary action. Unless a certificate is revoked for life, an educator may reapply for a reinstatement in accordance with Alaska Statutes, at which time the Commission would review the case for another determination. A revocation is sent to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse for national distribution.

AS 14.20.030. Causes for Suspension or Revocation:

- (a) The Commissioner or the Professional Teaching Practices Commission may revoke or suspend a certificate for the following reasons:
 - (1) *Incompetency*, which is defined as the inability or the unintentional or intentional failure to perform the teacher's customary teaching duties in a satisfactory manner;
 - (2) *Immorality*, which is defined as the commission of an act which, under the laws of the state constitutes a crime involving moral turpitude;
 - (3) *Substantial noncompliance* with the laws of the state or the regulations of the department; or
 - (4) upon the determination by the Professional Teaching Practices Commission that there has been a *violation of ethical or professional standards or contractual obligations.*

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Complaints may be filed with the Commission by anyone. If the alleged action is a violation of the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession, the laws of the State of Alaska, or the Regulations of the Department of Education & Early Development, Commission staff conducts an investigation.

If there is sufficient evidence to indicate that a violation has occurred, an accusation is written and a hearing is held before the Commission. During the hearing, an administrative law judge from the Office of Administrative Hearings, presides. The hearing is held in accordance with the Alaska Administrative Procedure Act. All hearings are open to the public.

INQUIRIES (APPLICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATION)

PTPC staff reviewed one hundred forty-four (144) applications for certification in which there were state or federal fingerprint checks indicating convictions, or in which one of the character questions (background information) was checked “yes.” This was a decrease of 54 from last year and also slightly below the average of 155 over the last seven years. This includes initial, renewal/reinstatement, and student teaching applications. Eighty-five (85) applicants divulged convictions (or other actions) on their applications and subsequently most of those applications were immediately approved. A handful required a brief follow-up with the applicant before being approved.

Fifty-nine (59) applicants for certification failed to divulge past convictions for criminal violations or action taken against their certificate in another state. All of these individuals were contacted. The applicants were informed that all convictions must be divulged and an explanation must be provided on any application, now or in the future, that requests that information. This applies even if convictions have been set-aside, resulted in a suspended imposition of sentence, or were from many years ago. Failure to do so in the future could be considered willful misrepresentation and be a cause for revocation. All fifty-nine applicants were eventually approved.

INQUIRIES FROM OTHER STATES AND CANADA

PTPC staff responded to five (5) requests from other states for information regarding candidates for certification who reported that they have held, or do hold, an Alaska education certificate or who were listed on the NASDTEC Clearinghouse as having been sanctioned in Alaska.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS

Administrative Reviews are held to evaluate PTPC staff’s decisions to dismiss a case. There were 6 Administrative Reviews held this year. In all 6 cases the Commission voted unanimously to uphold PTPC staff’s decision to dismiss the cases. An Administrative Review can only be requested by the Complainant.

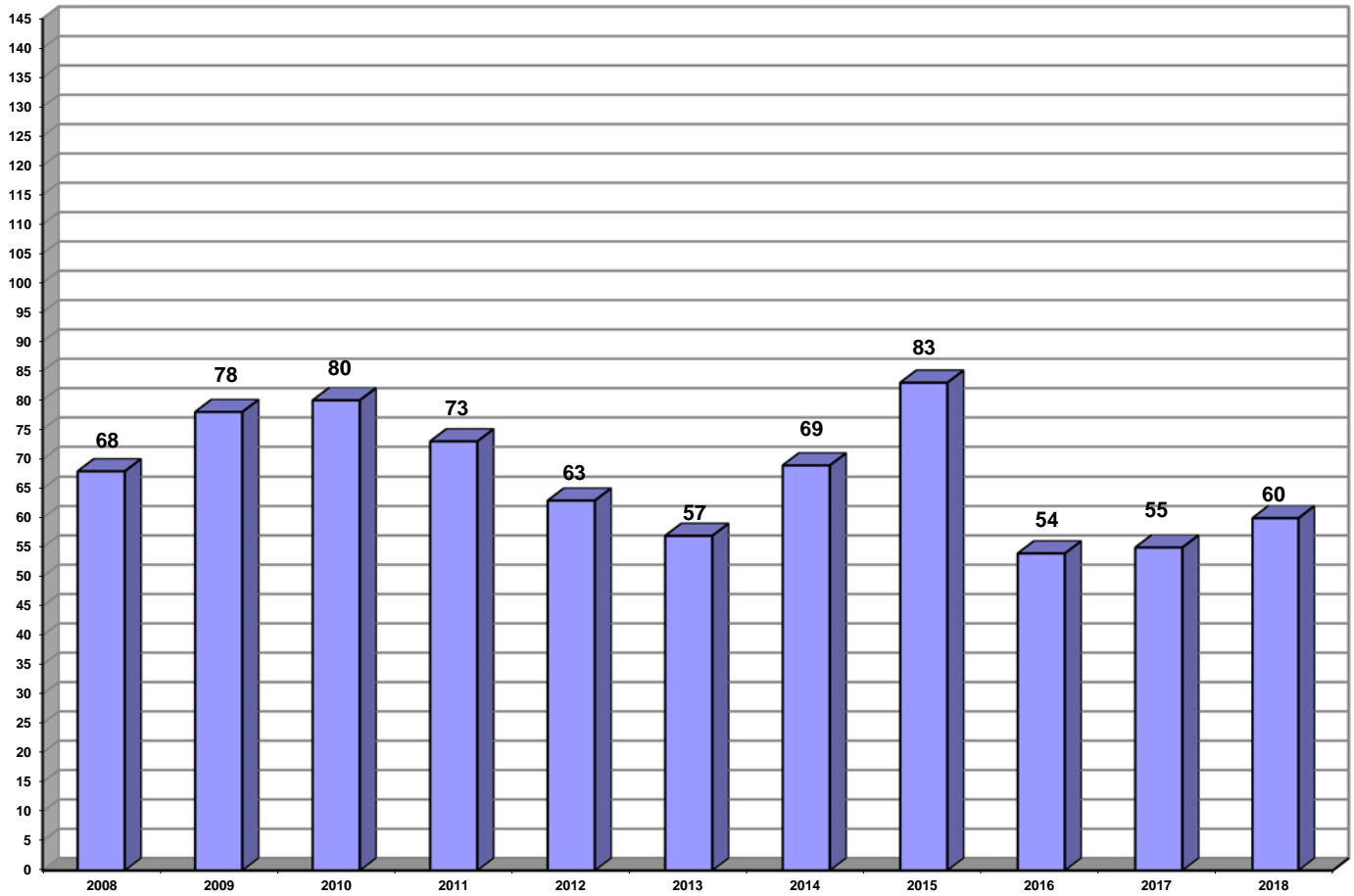
NEWSLETTER

The annual newsletter was published in May 2018 and distributed electronically to all school districts (through the superintendent) and to other education stakeholders in Alaska. The annual newsletter was also distributed as part of the Department of Education and Early Development’s weekly *Information Exchange Newsletter*. It is also posted to the [PTPC homepage](http://education.alaska.gov/ptpc/) (<http://education.alaska.gov/ptpc/>). Paper copies of the newsletter are available upon request.

PRESENTATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Presentations on professionalism, professional ethics, and the role of the Commission were given to both elementary and secondary pre-service teacher candidates at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), and the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS), as well as early childhood interns at UAA. Presentations were also made to students in the UAA principal endorsement program, the UAS superintendent endorsement program, the NEA-AK Uni-Serve Directors, and the mentors in the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project. Executive Director’s activities included attending the Alaska Teacher Placement Job Fair and attending the annual NASDTEC Professional Practices Institute.

PTPC Cases by Year



PTPC CASES BY YEAR

FY 2018 IN REVIEW
(July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018)

The Commission met in general session three times. Eighteen (18) educators were sanctioned in FY 2018. This is above the yearly average of 13.3 educators sanctioned over the last thirteen years.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS:

- 17-07 During its meeting on October 3-4, 2017, the Commission issued an order of **reprimand** to **John M. Hammonds** who holds an Alaska Initial Teacher Certificate.
- 17-13 During its meeting on October 3-4, 2017, the Commission issued an order **warning** an educator who holds an Alaska Professional Teacher Certificate.
- 17-32 During its meeting on October 3-4, 2017, the Commission issued an order **warning** an educator who holds an Alaska Professional Teacher Certificate.
- 17-39 During its meeting on October 3-4, 2017, the Commission issued an order **warning** an educator who holds an Alaska Professional Teacher Certificate.
- 18-04 During its meeting on October 3-4, 2017, the Commission issued an order **denying** certification of **Sonny L. Shields** for **one year** effective **August 7, 2017**.
- 18-05 During its meeting on October 3-4, 2017, the Commission issued an order of **reprimand** to **Deborah A. Hagedorn** who holds both an Alaska Professional Teacher Certificate and an Alaska Administrative Certificate.
- 18-10 During its meeting on October 3-4, 2017, the Commission issued an order of a **one year suspension** of the Alaska Provisional Special Services Certificate of **Laura Weston** effective **August 7, 2017**.
- 17-22 During its meeting on February 26-28, 2018, the Commission issued an order of a **one year suspension** of the Alaska Initial Teaching Certificate of **Janelle Orsolits** effective **January 1, 2018**.
- 17-23 During its meeting on February 26-28, 2018, the Commission issued an order of a **one year suspension** of the Alaska Initial Teaching Certificate of **Joshua Emery** effective **January 1, 2018**.
- 18-04 During its meeting on February 26-28, 2018, the Commission issued an order **changing** the end date of the **denial** of certification of **Sonny L. Shields** to **May 1, 2018**.
- 18-08 During its meeting on February 26-28, 2018, the Commission order of a **one-year suspension** of the Alaska Initial Teaching Certificate of **Brittany Coppola** effective **July 17, 2017**.
- 18-40 During its meeting on February 26-28, 2018, the Commission issued an order **reinstating** the right of **Richard Rau** to apply for certification.

- 17-51, 17-52 During its meeting on April 26-27, 2018, the Commission issued an order of **reprimand** to **Jeffry C. Baker** who holds an Alaska Professional Teaching Certificate.
- 18-18 During its meeting on April 26-27, 2018, the Commission issued an order of a **one-year suspension** of the Alaska Professional Teaching Certificate of **Joni M. Earp** effective **October 29, 2017**.
- 18-19, 18-25 During its meeting on April 26-27, 2018, the Commission issued an order accepting the **Voluntary Surrender** of the Alaska Initial Teaching Certificate of **Amy M. Arnold**.
- 18-22, 18-28 During its meeting on April 26-27, 2018, the Commission issued an order of a **three-year suspension** of the Alaska Initial Teaching Certificate of **Patricia Sullivan** effective **December 1, 2017**.
- 18-24 During its meeting on April 26-27, 2018, the Commission issued an order of **reprimand** to **Hessy L. Bateman**, who holds an Alaska Initial Teacher Certificate.
- 18-26 During its meeting on April 26-27, 2018, the Commission issued an order accepting the **Voluntary Surrender** of the Alaska Professional Teaching Certificate of **Briana J. Coulon**.
- 18-32 During its meeting on April 26-27, 2018, the Commission issued an order of **reprimand** to **Colby D. Root**, who holds an Alaska Professional Teaching Certificate.
- 18-42 During its meeting on April 26-27, 2018, the Commission issued an order of **reprimand** to **Kevin S. Hamrick**, who holds an Alaska Professional Teaching Certificate.

Final Orders
(Frequency of Sanctions Invoked)

FISCAL YEAR	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Sexual Harassment of Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Sexual Misconduct with Students	2	1	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	0	4	0	2
Drug, Alcohol Offenses	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Criminal Conduct, Non-Drug	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0
Fraudulent Certificates/Applications	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Contract Violations (Breach of Contract)	1	3	3	6	3	7	7	7	3	4	7	6	7
Professional Misconduct	2	1	4	1	7	2	9	3	5	10	8	3	6
Total	8	7	10	12	13	12	19	14	12	15	20	13	18

TEACHING PROFESSION (AS 14.20.370)

Teachers required by state law to be certificated, instructors in institutions of higher learning, school administrators, school program administrators, and school counselors are within the teaching profession.

EFFECT OF THE CODE OF ETHICS (AS 14.20.480)

Members of the teaching profession are obligated to abide by the professional teaching standards adopted by the Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

CODE OF ETHICS (20 AAC 10.020)

The Commission staff provides copies of the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession upon requests from any Alaskan.

MANDATORY REPORTING (20 ACC 10.020 (b)(4))

The Code of Ethics requires that knowledge of physical abuse of a student or sexual conduct with a student by an educator must be reported to the Commission.

NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE

The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) maintain a clearinghouse where disciplinary action higher than a warning against an educator in any state (also province in Canada, or U.S. territory) is recorded. This database is not accessible by the general public. This database has recently been made available to school districts for a nominal fee.

PTPC HANDBOOK

The PTPC Handbook for Alaska Educators includes the Alaska statute that created the Commission, the Code of Ethics, and Complaint Screening Guidelines, the investigative procedures of the Commission, Alaska Statutes and Regulations, the Complaint Form. Find the Handbook at the [PTPC Homepage](http://education.alaska.gov/ptpc) (<http://education.alaska.gov/ptpc>). PTPC newsletters and annual reports are also available on the Web site.

DISTRIBUTION OF HANDBOOK (20 AAC 10.310)

Copies of the Alaska State Professional Teaching Practices Commission's Handbook for Alaska Educators shall be conspicuously displayed and available, at every education institution in the state whose employees are members of the teaching profession under AS 14.20.370.

COMPLAINTS

Complaints may be submitted to the Commission by members of the education profession or by the public. Notification by a state agency to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission that an educator has committed a crime may also result in action by the PTPC. Pursuant to 20 AAC 10.210(b): *Unless the alleged act would be grounds for discipline under AS 14.20.030, the staff may not investigate school district personnel actions, including hiring, evaluation, transfer, reassignment, or dismissal of staff; or curriculum actions.*

FY 2018 FINANCIAL REPORT

July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018

	Authorization	Actual Disbursements	Encumbrances	Authorization Balance
Personal Services	\$157,400.00	\$175,908.59	\$0.00	\$-18,508.59
Travel	\$16,700.00	\$11,699.60	\$460.03	\$4,540.36
Contractual Services	\$126,300.00	\$69,719.12	\$16,341.27	\$40,239.61
Commodities	\$2,600.00	\$233.66	\$0.00	\$2,366.34
Totals	\$303,000.00	\$257,560.98	\$16,801.30	\$28,637.72

Personal Services: Salaries (including benefits)

Travel: Executive Director, Commissioners
Conferences
Commission Meetings
Presentations
Investigations

Contractual: Interagency Services
Department of Administration
Department of Education and Early Development
Department of Law
Postage
Print/Copy/Graphics
Telecommunications

Commodities:
Business Supplies
Equipment and Furniture
Information Technology Equipment

PROFESSIONAL TEACHING PRACTICES COMMISSION**FY '18**

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>DATE APPOINTED</u>	<u>REAPPOINTED</u>	<u>TERM EXPIRES</u>
David DeVaughn Teacher Representative North Pole (Fairbanks North Star Borough School District)	3/1/2013	3/1/2016	3/1/2019
Tony Graham Principal Representative Soldotna (Kenai Peninsula Borough School District)	3/1/2018		3/1/2021
Diane Kardash Higher Education Representative North Pole (University of Alaska Fairbanks)	5/26/2017	3/1/2018	3/1/2021
Melody Mann, Chair Teacher Representative Wasilla (Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District)	3/1/2013	3/1/2016	3/1/2019
David Piazza Superintendent Representative Dillingham (Southwest Region School District)	1/10/2014	3/1/2017	3/1/2020
Paul Prussing Department Representative Douglas (Department of Education and Early Development)	3/1/2016		3/1/2019
Frances Roberts, Secretary Teacher Representative Homer (Kenai Peninsula Borough School District; retired)	3/1/2013	3/1/2016	3/1/2019
Kent Runion Teacher Representative Nome (Nome Public Schools)	11/18/2016	3/1/2018	3/1/2021
Maureen van Wagner, Vice Chair Teacher Representative Anchorage (Anchorage School District)	3/1/2014	3/1/2017	3/1/2020
James A. Seitz Executive Director 550 West 7 th Ave., Suite 1240 Anchorage, AK 99501 jim.seitz@alaska.gov 907-269-6579	6/1/2013		6/30/2018