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Commissioner

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Department of Education
and Early Development

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Board Votes to Open Public Comment on Native Languages, Teacher Certification, and Assessment Participation Regulation changes

UAA Early Childhood Program Provisional Approval Vote Delayed

JUNEAU – Thursday the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development (Board) held a regular quarterly business meeting virtually.

The Board voted to send three sets of regulations out for public comment, approved the Draft Board Report to the Legislature, and approved the minutes of meetings and work sessions in August, September, and October 2021.

The Board did not vote on provisional approval of the initial educator program in Early Childhood Education at the University of Alaska Anchorage's (UAA) School of Education. The Board will continue working with UAA prior to the voting on approval for the program.

Regulations going out for public comment include teacher certification, assessment participation guidelines, and Native languages. A 30-day public comment period will open when the proposed regulation changes are posted in the State of Alaska's Online Public Notices.

The proposed regulations for teacher certification address two of the six essential areas identified by the Governor's Working Group on Teacher Retention and Recruitment including expanding certification pathways, simplifying qualifications, and streamlining the certification process. Also going out for public comment are proposed amendments to regulations on administering statewide assessments to students with disabilities. The third set of regulations going out for public comment are proposed amendments to add the definition of "world languages," expand the opportunity for students to meet any world language requirements, and update the term "foreign language" to "world language." The definition provides that world languages means "non-English languages including Alaska Native, American Indian, and American Sign Language." Alaska Native language courses are by in large not being offered across the state. Including them in the world languages definition and providing addition options to take these courses will create more opportunity for students who are working to meet Alaska Performance Scholarship requirements, graduation requirements, and college entrance requirements with an Alaska Native Language.

The Board also swore in Lt. C. James Fowley of the U.S. Air Force as the military advisor. Madelyn Brokaw, a senior at Eagle River High School, was appointed as the student advisor.

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*The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development provides information, resources, and leadership to support over 130,000 students in 505 public schools across the state of Alaska. The mission of the department is to ensure an “**Excellent Education for Every Student Every Day.**”*

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