

**To: Members of the State Board of
Education & Early Development**

December 5, 2024

From: Dr. Deena Bishop, Commissioner

Agenda Item: 4A

◆ ISSUE

The board is being asked to adopt the proposed revisions to 4 AAC 04.140. Content Standards. The revisions reflect updates to the regulation to incorporate the revised Social Studies Standards, including the addition of Civics and Inquiry standards and updates to the Geography, History, and Economics standards.

◆ BACKGROUND

- The Alaska Social Studies Standards were drafted in 1999 and last revised in 2006. In 2021, the Fordham Institute released the State of State Standards for Civics and U.S. History in 2021 report. This report evaluated each state's Civics and U.S. History standards against current best practices. Each state received an A-F grade in each area. Alaska received an F grade in both content areas with an overall rating of Inadequate. As DEED was already aware of the need to update our standards, this rating only confirmed the urgency required to address these gaps.
- In 2022, DEED started the process to update standards by researching state and national social studies standards frameworks and revisions processes and developing an approach to the development process that would engage multiple community partner voices, provide clear outcome measures for the standards writing committee, and provide multiple opportunities for iterative review and revision.
- Having identified a revision process, DEED solicited a vendor in early 2023 to facilitate and support the project. DEED wanted a partner in the development process that had a clear understanding on the national landscape for Social Studies, the capacity to implement the development plan and timeline designed by DEED, and the subject matter expertise to support the work. In March 2023, DEED signed a contract with American Institutes for Research (AIR) to serve as the project coordinator and facilitator. AIR has been a national leader in social studies standards updates and implementation for over 15 years.
- Since May of 2023, DEED has engaged several working groups in the drafting and revision process of the Social Studies Standards. Over 50 community partners from around the state participated in drafting and or revising the Guiding Principles and then the updated Social Studies Standards. The process was iterative throughout, with groups drafting components, sending to work groups for review, incorporating feedback, and then sending for additional review. The attached draft standards include an introduction that details the steps and process that the standards have been through to date.
- Public comment follows this cover memo.
- A copy of the proposed regulations follows this cover memo.
- A copy of the Draft Standards follow this cover memo.

◆ OPTIONS

This is a work session item. Action will take place under Agenda Item 5A.