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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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State Board Approves Changes to School Accountability System

JUNEAU – The State Board of Education & Early Development, meeting June 5 and 6 in Anchorage, adopted regulations to adjust Alaska's school accountability system to account for the special circumstances of alternative high schools and small schools.

A major element in the state's school accountability system is called the Alaska School Performance Index, which awards points to schools based on student achievement, student improvement, attendance, scores in college- and career-readiness assessments, participation in career-readiness assessments, and graduation rates.

The newly adopted regulations acknowledge that alternative high schools serve students who are at risk of dropping out. The schools provide an important service in keeping those students working toward a diploma. The regulations set a more realistic metric for awarding points for such schools' graduation rates.

Additionally, the newly adopted regulations calculate the graduation rates of schools with very small graduating classes over a three-year span, to provide a more accurate measure of the schools' performance.

The state board also sent out for public comment three proposed regulations:

- A regulation to establish a process to determine eligibility for, and distributions under, a new state law (House Bill 278) that funds the improvement of Internet speed at public schools. It is funded at \$5 million for fiscal year 2015 (July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015). The upgrade will help districts move toward delivery of instruction by interactive videoconferences.
- A regulation to require school districts to allow students in grades 7 to 12 to test out of courses in math, language arts, science, social studies, and world languages by demonstrating mastery of course material. The regulation would fulfill a requirement of House Bill 278, the Alaska Education Opportunity Act, signed into law by Governor Parnell.

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- A regulation to fulfill the student assessment-related requirements of House Bill 278: repeal the high school exit exam and require students to take, at state expense, the SAT, ACT, or WorkKeys assessments. The regulation would no longer require all 11th-graders to take the WorkKeys assessments. Additionally, the regulation would adopt the most recent state-allowed WorkKeys accommodations for students with disabilities and limited English proficiency.

The board did not adopt a proposed regulation to change requirements for superintendent certification. The proposed regulation would have allowed school districts to substitute district management experience for teaching experience. The board asked the department to examine other approaches to the issue, for discussion at its September meeting.

The board named as its officers Esther Cox as chair, Jim Fields as first vice-chair, and Sue Hull as second vice-chair.

The board approved the following schedule of meetings: Sept. 18-19, 2014, in Anchorage; Oct. 29, 2014, video-teleconference; Dec. 4-5, 2014, in Anchorage; Jan. 26, 2015, video-teleconference; March 19-20, 2015, in Juneau; the first week in June, the dates to be determined, in Fairbanks. The board selected 9 a.m. July 30 as the time and date for a teleconference to consider adopting the proposed Internet speed regulation.

The meeting packet is at [http://education.alaska.gov/State Board/pdf/14_june_packet.pdf](http://education.alaska.gov/State_Board/pdf/14_june_packet.pdf)

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