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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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Alaska Joins Multi-State Assessment Consortium

JUNEAU – Following a recent adoption of new student standards, Alaska has chosen to join the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), a state-led consortium developing assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Because Alaska's new standards in English/language arts and mathematics have been vetted as college-ready and career-ready, and are sufficiently similar to the Common Core, the SBAC assessments will provide valid and reliable results for Alaska.

"The Smarter Balanced assessment will allow us to compare our students more closely with those around the country and confirm the rigor of Alaska's standards compared to the Common Core," said Alaska Education Commissioner Mike Hanley.

SBAC will produce assessments for implementation by the 2014-2015 school year for grades 3 through 8 and 11. These grades meet the current testing requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. SBAC also will provide formative assessments that may be used during the year to better prepare students and guide teachers in their instruction.

SBAC also will determine the assessment scores that indicate levels of achievement such as advanced, proficient, below proficient, and far below proficient. For the 11th grade assessment, SBAC will work with higher education to define benchmark scores that indicate whether a student is on track to be college-ready, meaning that students should not need remedial courses in English and math in postsecondary institutions.

Students in SBAC states will take year-end assessments on computers in the spring. The assessments will be adaptive, meaning they are individualized to each student by basing questions on the student's response to previous questions. This method produces a more accurate understanding of each student's achievement.

As with Alaska's current standards and assessments, the use of SBAC assessments does not dictate curriculum or teaching methods. Standards and assessments present a goal. School districts retain their authority to decide how to reach this goal.

EDUCATION
& EARLY DEVELOPMENT

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