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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 22, 2014

Grant Addresses Mental Health of Students

JUNEAU -- The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development has been awarded a \$9.1 million grant to improve school safety by addressing mental health issues in school-aged youth through Alaska's Project AWARE.

The five-year federal award, funded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration, will provide \$1.8 million annually for districtwide Youth Mental Health First Aid training in Anchorage, Mat-Su, and Kenai, and targeted mental health resources to the following alternative schools in those districts: Burchell High School, Valley Pathways, Mat-Su Central School, Avail School, Crossroads School, Benson Secondary/S.E.A.R.C.H., S.A.V.E. High School, Kenai Alternative High School, and Homer Flex School.

Through local and state partnerships, the grant will build schools' capacity to address mental health in a more coordinated and integrated fashion; provide training for early detection and response to mental health issues; connect youth and families with mental health services; and implement effective ways to promote behavioral health and prevent mental illness.

"Alaska's Project AWARE, by combining enhanced mental health services in alternative schools with training across three of Alaska's largest school districts, will raise mental health awareness and mental health referrals in those communities and provide more mental health services to at-risk youth," said Todd Brocious, education specialist at the Department of Education & Early Development .

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