

Dr. Michael Johnson  
Commissioner



Department of Education  
and Early Development

[www.Education.Alaska.Gov](http://www.Education.Alaska.Gov)

Juneau, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 31, 2020**

## **DEED Launches Alaska Statewide Virtual School**

*Partnerships Ensure Student Learning Continues During COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond*

JUNEAU – While school buildings throughout Alaska are closed, “an excellent education for every student, every day” continues to be the mission of the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED). In an effort to support Alaska’s school districts and ensure ongoing opportunities for all students to learn, DEED is launching the Alaska Statewide Virtual School (AKSVS). “School is more than a location - education can happen anywhere,” said Alaska Education Commissioner Dr. Michael Johnson.

In addition to meeting immediate educational needs across the state in light of the Novel Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, AKSVS increases educational opportunities for Alaska’s students. The statewide virtual school will serve as a support for students, educators, and districts in the short-term and will remain an option for Alaska families. AKSVS will offer courses for students at every level, kindergarten through grade 12.

“While the world around us is scrambling with uncertainty, I believe our students and teachers can and will reimagine teaching and learning,” said Commissioner Johnson. “We must not let a virus keep our students from becoming all they are meant to be. The launch of the Alaska Statewide Virtual School is evidence of DEED’s commitment to our mission and vision.”

“COVID-19 has changed many aspects of our daily lives, but it has not changed Alaska’s commitment to student learning,” said Governor Mike Dunleavy. “We need Alaska’s students to keep learning so they can become leaders for times like this in the future.”

DEED will be supported in its efforts by Florida Virtual School (FLVS) Global and Alaska Telecom Association (ATA) in keeping Alaska’s students, families, and educators connected through online educational programs. DEED chose to partner with FLVS Global because of the organization’s long-standing success and reputation as an education leader with a history of innovation. Many of Alaska’s telecommunication providers are offering assistance to support families and schools as they transition to a new method of learning. This added support is crucial, especially for some of Alaska’s rural communities.

“I applaud the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development for moving quickly to ensure students have the ability to stay on track with their education, and I thank the Florida

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Department of Education for their support as we all navigate these unprecedented times together,” said Dr. Louis Algaze, President and CEO for Florida Virtual School.

“Alaska’s broadband providers are committed to keeping Alaskans connected during this challenging time,” said Christine O’Connor, Executive Director of ATA. “We have offered free internet to students and teachers, increased speeds and usage allowances, and are working with school districts to find ways to expand service to support education in the most remote parts of Alaska.”

“DEED is committed to ensuring opportunities for students all across Alaska,” said Commissioner Johnson. “Our partnership with FLVS Global and support from ATA means that learning can and will continue regardless of the challenges we face as a state, nation, or world. Alaska’s students deserve every chance to learn and grow, and the establishment of a statewide K-12 virtual school is just one way we are ensuring equity and opportunity for all.”

If you are a student, parent, educator, or administrator, please go to [www.aklearns.org/aksvs](http://www.aklearns.org/aksvs) for more information. Course registration begins on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Additional information and resources for distance-delivered education are also available at DEED’s Teaching and Learning Support website at [aklearns.org](http://aklearns.org).

*The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development provides information, resources, and leadership to support over 130,000 students in 503 public schools across Alaska. The mission of the department is to ensure an “**Excellent Education for Every Student Every Day.**”*

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