

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

December 9, 2021

From: Dr. Michael Johnson, Commissioner

Agenda Item: 6C

◆ ISSUE

The board is being asked to open a period of public comment on proposed amendments to regulations to add the definition of “world languages,” expand the opportunity for students to meet any world language requirements and update the term “foreign language” to “world language.”

◆ BACKGROUND

- Alaska Federation of Natives 2019 Annual Convention Resolution 19-59 calls for the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development to include teaching Alaska Native Languages as a foreign language requirement for high school graduation with funding.
- The proposed amendments add a definition for “world languages” in 4 AAC 04.900, to define the term in 4 AAC 04.140 (Content standards), 4 AAC 06.065 (Challenging courses) and 4 AAC 33.490, to define the term in 4 AAC 33.426 (Core course requirements for correspondence programs). The definition provides that world languages means “non-English languages including Alaska Native, American Indian, and American Sign Language.”
- The proposed amendments repeal and readopt 4 AAC 06.075 (High school graduation requirements) to define world languages and provide that if a district awards units of credit for world language courses, it shall also award units of credit for postsecondary world language courses or world language courses offered by tribes or tribal entities.
- Alaska Native language courses are by in large not being offered across the state. Including them in the world languages definition and providing additional options to take these courses will create more opportunity for students who are working to meet Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) requirements, graduation requirements, and college entrance requirements with an Alaska Native language.
- The proposed amendments change the term “foreign language” to “world language” in the regulations addressing requirements for the APS, 4 AAC 43.030 (Curriculum requirements).
 - Foreign is an antiquated term that has negative connotations associated with it in the geo-political world. The term “foreign” in the context of linguistics is intended to convey that the language of study is not the language the student is accustomed to speaking in the mainstream. “World” helps convey this linguistic description in a respectful way.
- Behind this cover memo is the proposed regulations and the Alaska Federation of Natives 2019 Annual Convention Resolution 19-59.

- Joel Isaak, Tribal Liaison, will be present to brief the board.

◆ **OPTIONS**

This is a work session item. Action will take place under Agenda Item 9C.