



# Cover Memo

**To:** Members of the State Board of Education & Early Development  
**From:** Dr. Deena Bishop, Commissioner  
**Date:** June 4, 2026  
**Item:** 15

## Issue

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The Board is being asked to provide provisional approval to the University of Alaska Southeast, UAS Master of Arts in Teaching Indigenous Languages (MAT IL) program.

## Background

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- Many districts across Alaska offer language immersion programs where instruction is provided within local Indigenous languages. Many of the Indigenous language teachers in these programs hold a Type M certificate based on their demonstrated language competency but have not completed an education preparation program. The Type M is not a full professional certificate, and it is district sponsored, so does not provide mobility or transferability.
- There is not currently an education program in Alaska with a focus on Indigenous language instruction aligned to the needs of language immersion programs.
- The University of Alaska Southeast is seeking approval of the MAT IL as a solution to district needs, establishing a pathway for fluent speakers and advanced learners of Alaska Native languages to earn full teacher certification while living and working in their home communities.
- Graduates will be prepared to teach Indigenous languages in PK–12 schools, contribute to culturally grounded education, and support language revitalization efforts across Alaska.
- Upon approval, UAS will enroll a small cohort of approximately six candidates for the Fall 2026 semester.
- The board is being asked to provide provisional approval to the MAT IL program so that UAS can enroll students and track appropriate data to full CAEP approval in the next round of accreditation review.

## Suggested Motion

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I move the State Board of Education & Early Development provisionally approve the University of Alaska Southeast Master of Arts in Teaching Indigenous Language program.