



Cover Memo

To: Members of the State Board of Education & Early Development
From: Dr. Deena Bishop, Commissioner
Date: October 14, 2026
Item: 12.0

Issue

The State Board of Education and Early Development will review the public comments received and consider adopting Alaska's Education Challenge Strategic Plan SMART Goals.

Background

In September 2016, the State Board of Education established five strategic priorities to improve outcomes for Alaska students. In 2017, Alaska's Education Challenge was launched to support statewide collaboration and improvement efforts aligned with those priorities.

In January 2026, the board reaffirmed its commitment to Alaska's Education Challenge and directed the Department of Education and Early Development to develop a strategic plan grounded in the board's priorities and focused on measurable outcomes.

The board released the draft Alaska's Education Challenge Strategic Plan SMART Goals for public comment through August 10, 2026. The department received five comments, all of which are attached. Two comments provided substantive feedback:

- One commenter supported the five priorities and the move toward measurable goals but urged broader structural reforms, including a stronger focus on foundational literacy and numeracy, student-centered funding, school-level governance and accountability, parent and teacher involvement, expanded educational choice, greater transparency, and changes to labor and election policies.
- One commenter emphasized the effects of school building conditions and indoor air quality on student and staff health, learning, and behavior. The commenter recommended required environmental testing and stronger indoor air quality standards for Alaska schools.
- The remaining three comments were requests for bid or request for proposals documents and did not provide feedback on the substance of the strategic plan.

At this time, the department does not anticipate issuing requests for proposals to support implementation of the strategic plan. The department intends to harness its internal workforce, strengthen existing initiatives, and collaborate with the Northwest Comprehensive Center (NWCC) once new contracts are awarded by the federal government.

The department made minor grammatical revisions to the strategic plan.

Behind this cover memo are the Alaska's Education Challenge Strategic Plan SMART Goals and all five public comments received.

Options

This is a work session item. Action will take place under Agenda Item 21.0.