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SEAL OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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State Board Approves Waivers for 23 Districts

JUNEAU -- The State Board of Education & Early Development, meeting Oct. 29 by tele-videoconference, approved 23 school districts' applications for waivers from the statutory requirement that at least 70 percent of their operating funds be budgeted for instruction. State law allows for waivers when districts cannot meet the 70 percent threshold because of circumstances beyond their control, such as the cost of operating and maintaining facilities.

Additionally, the State Board sent out for public comment a revised proposed regulation regarding school districts' evaluations of teachers and principals. The Department of Education & Early Development revised the original proposed regulation to eliminate duplication; clarify the application of cultural standards; differentiate among teachers, administrators, and special service providers; and make the evaluation requirement less prescriptive for districts.

The revised proposed regulation will be considered at the State Board's meeting on Dec. 6 and 7 in Anchorage. The date for submitting written comments, which may be done electronically, has been extended to Nov. 30. The public also is welcome to submit comments Dec. 6 at the State Board meeting in person or telephonically through Legislative Information Offices.

The State Board also sent out for public comment a proposed regulation regarding the Alaska Performance Scholarship. The proposed regulation: 1) would allow high school-level courses taken prior to high school to count toward scholarship eligibility, if the courses are on a student's high school transcript; 2) would allow International Baccalaureate courses as approved courses for scholarship eligibility, just as Advanced Placement courses are now treated; and 3) clarifies that the ACT and SAT tests used for scholarship eligibility are the reading, writing and math tests, not tests in other subjects.

To see the school districts' applications for waivers and the proposed regulations, go to http://education.alaska.gov/State_Board/. Scroll down to the October packet.

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To submit written comments electronically about proposed regulations, go to <http://education.alaska.gov/regs/comment.cfm>.

The State Board also approved an update to the Alaska Education Plan. The update summarizes actions -- often collaborations among state agencies, districts, and advocates -- that have been taken to implement the plan since its inception in late 2008. See the updated plan at http://education.alaska.gov/edsummit/pdf/alaska_education_plan.pdf.

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