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SEAL OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
STATE OF ALASKA

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT**

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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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UAS to Operate Alaska's Learning Network

JUNEAU -- The University of Alaska Southeast School of Education will operate Alaska's Learning Network, a resource of online high school courses for Alaskan students, under a memorandum of agreement with the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development. The partners signed the agreement July 24 at the UAS Juneau campus.

"This partnership will provide great opportunities for students across the state to access online and blended learning models, as well as dual-credit courses and introductions to Alaska's university system," said Alaska Education Commissioner Mike Hanley.

For the past two school years, Alaska's Learning Network, also called AKLN, has offered online courses taught by highly qualified Alaska teachers, as well as professional development for teachers who create and use online courses.

Under the agreement, UAS will ensure that AKLN course content is aligned with Alaska's rigorous new K-12 standards in English language arts and mathematics; contract with Alaska's best high school teachers to work with university faculty to develop AKLN courses; contract with experienced high school teachers to teach AKLN courses; develop an online seminar to introduce students to online learning; and develop a plan to rigorously evaluate AKLN courses.

UAS also will provide professional development in online teaching; offer a certification endorsement in e-learning and distance education; and evaluate and support online teachers. UAS will receive for the program state general funds through the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development.

AKLN helps provide an equitable education for rural students. AKLN's courses meet all curricular eligibility requirements for the Alaska Performance Scholarship and for college entry in general. Students from 33 school districts enrolled in AKLN courses in the 2012-2013 school year. Several courses offered dual credit with a postsecondary institution.

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Courses in 2012-2013 included: world, American, and British literature; algebra, geometry, and pre-calculus; earth science, physical science, biology, marine biology, chemistry, and environmental science; U.S. history, world history, geography, economics, U.S. government, and Alaska studies; French; health; and digital arts, image design and editing, game design, and audio engineering. Through UAS leadership, courses in coastal studies, NASA aeronautics, and an interactive Alaska studies course are being added for the upcoming school year.

AKLN is not a school in itself. The network partners with all 53 Alaska school districts, and it will continue to have an advisory board of school district officials. Alaska's school districts oversee their students' use of AKLN's courses and grant credit. Courses often blend face-to-face learning from local teachers with online learning. All of the online courses are taught by Alaska teachers, as well.

AKLN is funded this fiscal year by \$1.1 million in state general funds and by course fees, which are paid by school districts, not students. AKLN's courses are free to students as part of their public education.

See www.aklearn.net. For more information, contact Kelly Sorensen, the Education Technology Coordinator at the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, at 907-465-8578 or Kelly.sorensen@alaska.gov. Also contact Deborah Lo, Dean of the UAS College of Education, at 907-796-6050 or Deborah.lo@uas.alaska.edu

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