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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Department Cancels AMP and Other Computer-based Tests

JUNEAU – Concerned that repeated technical disruptions to computer-based testing this week have rendered the affected tests invalid, the Department of Education & Early Development canceled them for this school year.

Canceled are: the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP), which are assessments in English language arts and mathematics for students in grades 3-10; alternate assessments in those subjects and grades for students with severe cognitive disabilities; and science tests in grades 4, 8, and 10.

“The purpose of assessment is to provide valid, useful results. To have valid results, all students must be given the test under the same conditions. At this point, some students have been interrupted by online connectivity problems while they tested, in some cases repeatedly. We cannot with certainty say that this year’s assessments will provide an accurate reflection of all students’ knowledge and performance,” said Dr. Susan McCauley, Interim Commissioner of Education & Early Development.

“I am not willing to keep Alaska’s schools in this state of uncertainty given that we do not know if or when we can resume testing successfully,” Dr. McCauley said. “We cannot allow students’ learning to continue to be disrupted. Teachers need to know how to prepare their lessons for the week ahead. Superintendents and principals need to know how to arrange their schools’ schedules and staffing.”

Computer-based testing in Alaska was interrupted Tuesday when a construction worker accidentally severed a fiber optic cable at the University of Kansas. The university houses the state’s testing vendor, the Achievement & Assessment Institute. Severing the cable cut the online connection between Alaska’s test-takers and the vendor. When testing resumed on Thursday, Alaska schools experienced interruptions in the connection, and they reported that some students’ answers had been lost.

“Statewide assessments are an important source of information about student achievement, but only when the results are valid,” Dr. McCauley said.

This was to be the last year for the Alaska Measures of Progress. The department will request proposals for a new test to begin in spring 2017.

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