



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**June 16, 2016**

### **Dr. Michael Johnson Named Education Commissioner**

JUNEAU -- The State Board of Education and Early Development announced today the appointment of Dr. Michael Johnson as Commissioner of Education and Early Development. Governor Bill Walker has approved the appointment, which will officially begin July 1, 2016.

“I am pleased to welcome Dr. Michael Johnson as the Department of Education and Early Development Commissioner, and as a new member of my cabinet,” said Governor Walker. “As a longtime educator, administrator, and the President of the Alaska Superintendents Association/Alaska Council of School Administrators, Michael brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this position.”

“With 53 school districts across the state, Alaska’s education system has unique challenges and opportunities associated with it,” said Lt. Governor Byron Mallott. “Having spent a large portion of his career in rural Alaska, Dr. Michael Johnson brings a perspective to this job that will serve our students well.”

“The State Board of Education and Early Development has unanimously selected Dr. Michael Johnson to be the next Commissioner of Education and Early Development. We look forward to Dr. Johnson’s leadership and the support he will give to Alaska’s dedicated educators as they provide every student the opportunity to succeed,” said Board Chair James Fields.

Dr. Johnson has served in the Copper River School District as superintendent, school principal, district curriculum and staff development director, elementary teacher, and special education program assistant. During his tenure as its principal, Glennallen Elementary School was named a Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Johnson also is a recipient of the prestigious Milken Educator Award.

Dr. Johnson holds a bachelor of arts degree and a master of arts in teaching degree in elementary education from Columbia International University, and a doctorate of philosophy in education and intercultural studies from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

“It is an honor to be named the Commissioner of Education and Early Development by the State Board of Education and Governor Walker,” Dr. Johnson said. “During this time of economic transition for Alaskans, the mission to improve academic achievement for all students remains crystal clear. I am eager to work with Alaska’s outstanding educators to support their work in the classroom.”

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development oversees and provides assistance to Alaska’s 53 school districts, and oversees operations of Mt. Edgecumbe High School in Sitka. Additionally, the department is in charge of the Alaska State Archives, the Alaska State Library, the Alaska State Museums in Juneau and Sitka, and the Alaska State Council on the Arts. The Professional Teaching Practices Commission is part of the department, as well. The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education is included in the department’s budget.

As chief executive officer of the Department of Education & Early Development, the commissioner serves at the pleasure of the board for no set term and is a member of the Governor’s cabinet. Additionally, the commissioner serves as ex-officio secretary of the board.

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