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**Press Release**

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Deputy Commissioner of Education to Retire**

JUNEAU – Les Morse, Deputy Commissioner at the Department of Education & Early Development, will retire March 1.

In his 30-year career as an educator, Morse taught in Hooper Bay and Juneau, and served as a principal in Juneau. He joined the department in 2003 as Director of Assessment, Accountability & Information Management, and became Deputy Commissioner in 2008.

As a Juneau high school teacher, Morse created and taught at a school-within-a-school with a team of teachers. Its focus was standards and project-based learning with a heavy use of technology. As a Juneau middle school principal, Morse used an innovative model of placing students in one of four “houses” to gain a stronger personalized education.

At the department, in response to legislative mandates at the federal and state levels, Morse developed and implemented Alaska’s first statewide assessments – the Standards Based Assessment for grades 3-10 and the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam.

As Deputy Commissioner, Morse supervised department activities with six directors and a staff of 215. The department includes K-12 oversight and support; the state archives, museums and library; the state arts council; and Mt. Edgecumbe High School.

Morse has served as president of the deputies’ organization at the Council of Chief State School Officers and as a director at Education Northwest, which offers research and development services to schools and communities.

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