

Dr. Michael Johnson
Commissioner



Department of Education
and Early Development

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PRESS RELEASE

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DEED Releases Restart and Reentry Framework Guidance for K-12 Schools

JUNEAU – Today the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), in cooperation with the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), released the [Alaska Smart Start 2020 framework guidance](#) for the reentry and reopening of K-12 schools for the 2020-2021 school year. The modular framework is based on student learning and presents a tiered approach for how schools can safely operate in low, medium, and high-risk environments to support districts and communities in planning and strategies for safely reopening schools based on COVID-19 pandemic risks.

“An excellent education prioritizes the health and safety of every student every day,” said DEED Commissioner Dr. Michael Johnson. “We look forward to continuing to work closely with district and school leadership, teachers, staff, and communities as they create plans to deliver education to their students for the upcoming school year. In a year of unprecedented uncertainty, teaching and learning must be consistent and reliable.”

Alaska Smart Start 2020 is built upon the guidance and recommendations of health officials and collaborative conversations with education stakeholders; it is aligned to the reopening guidelines that provided by state and federal leaders; and it is designed to help districts prioritize the health and safety of students and teachers as they deliver instruction for the 2020-2021 school year. “Alaska Smart Start 2020 provides clear guidance for districts while allowing for responsiveness at the local level,” said Dr. Monica Goyette, Superintendent of Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District.

“Through community mitigation strategies and guidance from our health professionals Alaskans have been doing a tremendous job moderating the spread of COVID-19,” said Governor Mike Dunleavy. “With the Alaska Smart Start 2020 guidance, and through the support of DEED and DHSS, school districts can plan educational opportunities for their students in the upcoming 2020-2021 school year.”

“On behalf of NEA-Alaska members I appreciate Commissioner Johnson’s efforts to include educators in the important decisions related to Alaska Smart Start 2020,” said Tim Parker, NEA-Alaska President. “In almost every district, our members are working with superintendents and school boards to determine the best path forward for each school district. This collaboration will make sure that student learning happens in the safest possible way for students and public school employees.”

*The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development provides information, resources, and leadership to support over 130,000 students in 503 public schools across Alaska. The mission of the department is to ensure an “**Excellent Education for Every Student Every Day.**”*

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