



*Photograph by: Aiko Brandon*

# **PROFESSIONAL TEACHING PRACTICES COMMISSION**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2015**

## ***INTRODUCTION***

The Alaska State Professional Teaching Practices Commission (PTPC) submits its report for Fiscal Year 2015. This report cites the activities and services of the PTPC as authorized by Alaska Statutes, Title 14, Chapter 20, Article 5, entitled “The Professional Teaching Practices Act.” For FY 2015, the PTPC was funded through the Department of Education and Early Development’s general fund.

The Commission governs matters of ethical and professional standards of educators and their compliance with state law and contractual obligations.

This report contains a synopsis of activities of the Commission from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015. It is prepared on behalf of the Commission by the Executive Director, James A. Seitz and Secretary, Atiya Barlow.

## ***WHAT IS THE PROFESSIONAL TEACHING PRACTICES COMMISSION?***

In 1966, the education profession in the State of Alaska was granted the right and responsibility to define and to enforce ethical standards of its members. The Alaska Legislature established and empowered a nine-member Commission to impose sanctions against the certificates of educators who engaged in illegal, immoral, or unethical conduct. The *Professional Teaching Practices Commission* is composed of five teachers, one superintendent, one principal, one representative of the Department of Education & Early Development, and one representative of higher education. Constituent groups nominate candidates and the governor appoints the Commissioners upon the approval of the Legislature.

Commission staff investigates allegations of misconduct and partners with Department of Law to present cases to the Commission. As a quasi-judicial body, the Commission has the power to impose sanctions against the certificates of those found, by a preponderance of the evidence, to be in violation of the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession.

The Commission has jurisdiction over all certificated members of the education profession, including administrators and instructors in higher education. The Commission’s order is final in disciplinary matters regarding a teacher. Before the certificate of an administrator is sanctioned, the Commissioner of Education & Early Development must concur. A final order of the Commission may be appealed to the Superior Court.

Educators are assigned the responsibility of caring for children and are placed in a position of public trust. Education is a profession, that by its very nature, stresses the value, worth, and dignity of all individuals. Educators are tasked with developing each student’s potential, and as such, act as role models for students. It is essential, therefore, that educators sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.

In their commitment to quality education, the members of the Professional Teaching Practices Commission hold their colleagues to the higher ethical standard that is demanded of a profession entrusted with the care and teaching of children.

Cover Photo (*Fireweed*) by: Aiko Brandon

## ***DISCIPLINARY ACTION***

Pursuant to Alaska Statutes 14.20.470, the PTPC has the power to:

1. **Warn:** A warning stipulates that the considered conduct is unethical, and if not corrected, a more serious sanction could be imposed. A warning is private communication with the educator; however, it is a matter of public record.
2. **Reprimand.** In the event of a reprimand, members of the education community are informed of the action, and record of the sanction is placed in the certification file. A reprimand is reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse for national distribution.
3. **Suspend.** In the event of a suspension, members of the education community are informed of the action. A suspension may include conditions which must be met before the certificate will be reinstated. A suspension means loss of a certificate for a specific period of time. A suspension is reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse for national distribution.
4. **Revoke.** In the event of a revocation, members of the education community are informed of the disciplinary action. Unless a certificate is revoked for life, an educator may reapply for a reinstatement in accordance with Alaska Statutes, at which time the Commission would review the case for another determination. A revocation is sent to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse for national distribution.

### **AS 14.20.030. Causes for Suspension or Revocation:**

- (a) The Commissioner or the Professional Teaching Practices Commission may revoke or suspend a certificate for the following reasons:
  - (1) *Incompetency*, which is defined as the inability or the unintentional or intentional failure to perform the teacher's customary teaching duties in a satisfactory manner;
  - (2) *Immorality*, which is defined as the commission of an act which , under the laws of the state constitutes a crime involving moral turpitude;
  - (3) *Substantial noncompliance* with the laws of the state or the regulations of the department; or
  - (4) upon the determination by the Professional Teaching Practices Commission that there has been a *violation of ethical or professional standards or contractual obligations.*

## ***PUBLIC HEARINGS***

Complaints may be filed with the Commission by anyone. If the alleged action is a violation of the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession, the laws of the State of Alaska, or the Regulations of the Department of Education & Early Development, Commission staff conducts an investigation.

If there is sufficient evidence to indicate that a violation has occurred, an accusation is written and a hearing is held before the Commission. During the hearing, a hearing officer, appointed by the governor, presides. The hearing is held in accordance with the Alaska Administrative Procedure Act. All hearings are open to the public.

## **INQUIRIES**

PTPC staff reviewed one hundred thirty-eight (138) applications for certification in which there were fingerprint checks indicating convictions. Sixty-two (62) applicants who had revealed convictions on their applications for certification and/or provided the requested details were approved for certification.

Seventy-six (76) applicants for certification failed to divulge past convictions for criminal violations. The applicants were informed that all convictions must be divulged and details provided on any application that requests that information, even convictions that have been set-aside or had a suspended imposition of sentence. Failure to do so in the future could be considered willful misrepresentation and a cause for revocation. Seventy-five (75) applications were subsequently approved while one applicant withdrew his application.

## **INQUIRIES FROM OTHER STATES AND CANADA**

PTPC staff responded to five (5) requests from other states for information regarding candidates for certification who reported that they have held, or do hold, an Alaska teaching certificate or who were listed on the NASDTEC Clearinghouse as having been sanctioned in Alaska.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS**

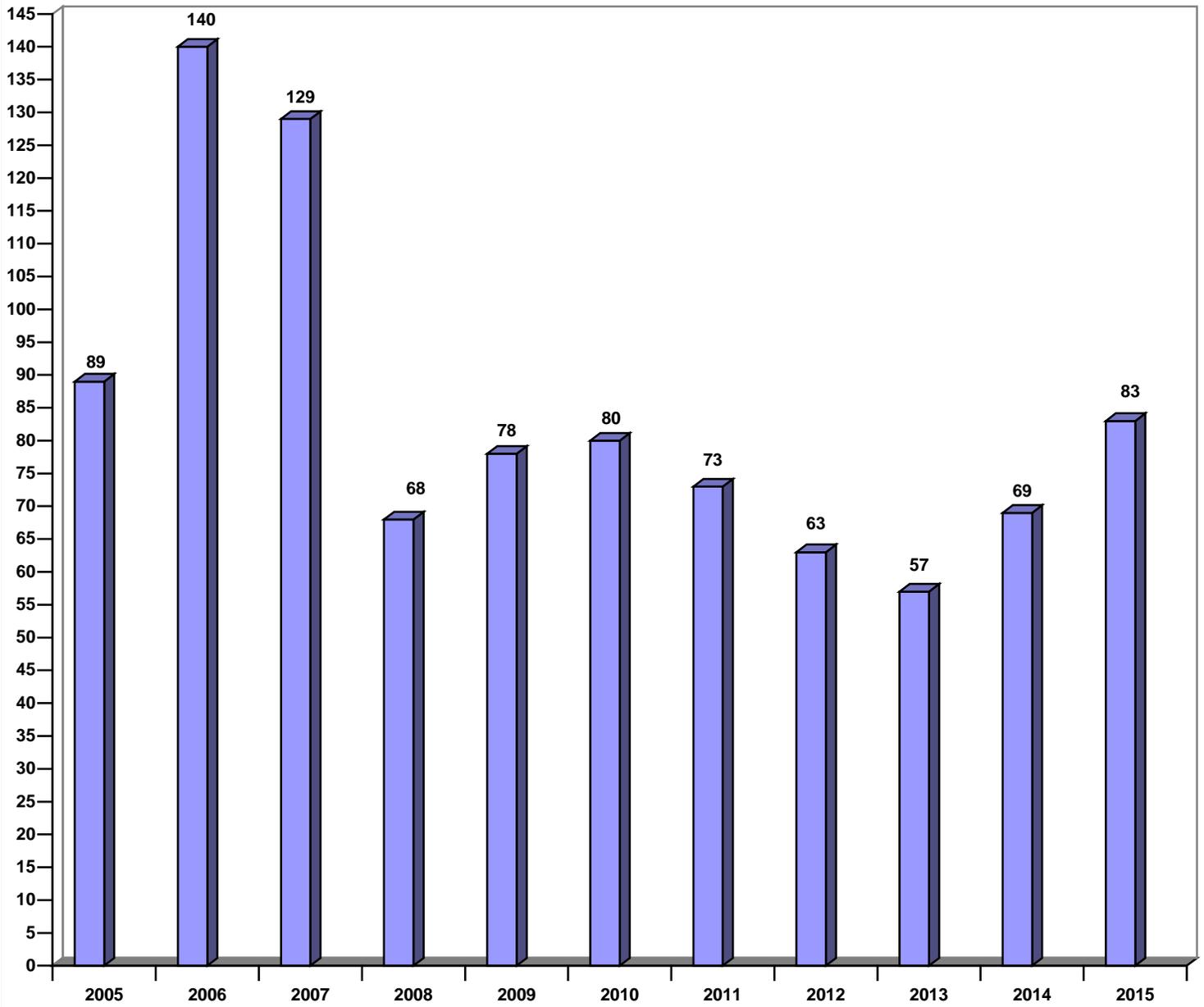
Administrative Reviews are held to evaluate PTPC staff's decisions to dismiss a case. There were 17 Administrative Reviews held this year. In all 17 cases the Commission voted unanimously to uphold PTPC staff's decision to dismiss the cases.

## **NEWSLETTER**

The annual newsletter was published and distributed to all educators in Alaska through local schools and school districts and to other interested parties.

## **PRESENTATIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

Presentations on professionalism, professional ethics, and the role of the Commission were given to both elementary and secondary pre-service teacher candidates at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) and Alaska Pacific University, as well as early childhood interns at UAA. Additional presentations were given to a variety of UAA and UAS educational leadership classes. Executive Director's activities included attending the Alaska Teacher Placement Job Fair, overseeing the Alaska Teacher of the Year Program, and attending the annual NASDTEC Professional Practices Institute.



**PTPC CASES BY YEAR**

***FY 2015 IN REVIEW***  
***(July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015)***

The Commission met in general session three times.

**DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS:**

- 14-22            During its meeting on September 11, 2014, the Commission issued an order of **reprimand** of **John A. Wahl**, who holds an Alaska Professional Teacher certificate.
- 14-32            During its meeting on September 11, 2014, the Commission issued an order for a **one-year suspension** of the Alaska Special Services Certificate (Type C – School Psychologist) of **Jeffrey E. Crowe** effective September 11, 2014.
- 14-51            During its meeting on September 11, 2014, the Commission issued a **warning** to a **principal**.
- 14-56            During its meeting on September 11, 2014, the Commission issued a **warning** to a **teacher**.
- 15-01            During its meeting on September 11, 2014, the Commission issued an order for a **one-year suspension** of the Alaska Professional Teacher Certificate and the Alaska Administrative Certificate of **Garrett W. McMullen** effective July 17, 2014.
- 15-04            During its meeting on September 11, 2014, the Commission issued an order for a **one-year suspension** of the Alaska Professional Teacher Certificate of **Michael A. Dilworth** effective August 7, 2014.
- 14-12            During its meeting on January 22, 2015, the Commission issued an order for a **three-year suspension** of the Alaska Profession Teaching Certificate of **Wilma Osborne**.
- 14-40            During its meeting on January 22, 2015, the Commission issued an order for a **one-year suspension and the right to apply for renewal** of the Initial Alaska Teaching Certificate of **Jacob Ciesielczyk** effective June 30, 2014.
- 14-48            During its meeting on January 22, 2015, the Commission issued a **warning** to a **teacher**.
- 14-55            During its meeting on January 22, 2015, the Commission issued an order for a **one-year suspension** of the Alaska Professional Teacher Certificate of **Keenan M. Hollister** effective June 1, 2014.
- 14-57            During its meeting on January 22, 2015, the Commission issued an order for a **reprimand** to Kathleen J. Galau who holds an Alaska Professional Teacher Certificate.

- 15-12 During its meeting on April 24, 2015, the Commission issued an order for a **one-year suspension** of the Alaska Professional Teacher Certificate of **LaRee Eldridge** effective February 18, 2015.
- 15-27 During its meeting on April 24, 2015, the Commission issued a **warning** to a **teacher**.
- 15-37 During its meeting on April 24, 2015, the Commission issued an order for a **three-year suspension** of the Alaska Profession Teaching Certificate of **Sean P. Costello** effective April 24, 2015.
- 15-61 During its meeting on April 24, 2015, the Commission issued a **warning** to a **teacher**.
- 12-02 During its meeting on April 24, 2015, the Commission **denied** the **reinstatement** of the Alaska Professional Teaching Certificate of **Christopher Rogers**.
- 13-40 During its meeting on April 24, 2015, the Commission **approved** the **reinstatement** of the Alaska Professional Teaching Certificate of **Janice Glover** effective July 1, 2015.



**Final Orders**  
*(Frequency of Sanctions Invoked)*

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Sexual Harassment of Staff</b>									1		
<b>Sexual Misconduct with Students</b>	1	2	1	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	
<b>Drug, Alcohol Offenses</b>	3	2			1	1					
<b>Criminal Conduct, Non-Drug</b>			2	1	1					2	1
<b>Fraudulent Certificates/Applications</b>	2	1									
<b>Contract Violations</b>	2	1	3	3	6	3	7	7	7	3	4
<b>Professional Misconduct</b>	3	2	1	4	1	7	2	9	3	5	10

## **TEACHING PROFESSION (14.20.370)**

Teachers required by state law to be certificated, instructors in institutions of higher learning, school administrators, and school counselors are within the teaching profession.

## **EFFECT OF THE CODE OF ETHICS (14.20.480)**

Members of the teaching profession are obligated to abide by the professional teaching standards adopted by the Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

## **CODE OF ETHICS (20 AAC 10.020)**

The Commission staff provides copies of the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession upon requests from any Alaskan.

## **MANDATORY REPORTING (20 ACC 10.020 (b)(4))**

The Code of Ethics requires that knowledge of physical abuse of a student or sexual conduct with a student by an educator must be reported to the Commission.

## **NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE**

The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) maintain a clearinghouse where disciplinary action against an educator in any state and Canada is recorded.

## **PTPC WEB SITE**

The PTPC Handbook for Alaska Educators, which includes the Alaska statute that created the Commission, the Code of Ethics, the complaint form, and the investigative procedures of the Commission, can be found at [education.alaska.gov/ptpc/](http://education.alaska.gov/ptpc/). PTPC newsletters and annual reports are also available on the Web site.

## **DISTRIBUTION OF HANDBOOK (20 AAC 10.310)**

Copies of the Alaska State Professional Teaching Practices Commission's Handbook for Alaska Educators shall be conspicuously displayed and available, at every education institution in the state whose employees are members of the teaching profession under AS 14.20.370.

## **COMPLAINTS**

Complaints may be submitted to the Commission by members of the education profession or by the public. Notification by a state agency to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission that an educator has committed a crime may also result in action by the PTPC. Pursuant to 20 AAC 10.210(b): *Unless the alleged act would be grounds for discipline under AS 14.20.030, the staff may not investigate school district personnel actions, including hiring, evaluation, transfer, reassignment, or dismissal of staff; or curriculum actions.*

**FY 2015 FINANCIAL REPORT**  
**July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015**

	Authorization	Actual Disbursements	Encumbrances	Authorization Balance
<b>Personal Services</b>	\$207,000.00	\$211,322.00		\$-4,322.00
<b>Travel</b>	\$16,700.00	\$12,131.00		\$4,569.00
<b>Contractual</b>	\$73,500.00	\$46,419.00		\$27,081.00
<b>Commodities</b>	\$2,600.00	\$713.00	\$200.00	\$1,687.00
<b>Totals</b>	\$299,800.00	\$270,585.00	\$200.00	\$29,015.00

Personal Services: Salaries (including benefits)

Travel: Executive Director, Commissioners

- Conferences
- Commission Meetings
- Presentations
- Investigations

Contractual: Interagency Services

- Department of Administration
- Department of Education
- Department of Law
- Postage
- Print/Copy/Graphics
- Telecommunications

Commodities:

- Business Supplies
- Equipment and Furniture
- Information Technology Equipment

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>DATE APPOINTED</u>	<u>REAPPOINTED</u>	<u>TERM EXPIRES</u>
<b><i>David DeVaughn</i></b> Teacher Representative (FNSBSD) 3993 Lentine Court North Pole, AK 99705	3/1/2013		3/1/2016
<b><i>Eric Fry</i></b> DEED Representative P.O. Box 110500 Juneau, AK. 99811	3/1/2010	3/1/2013	3/1/2016
<b><i>Rebecca Himschoot</i></b> Teacher Representative (SSD) P.O. Box 6075 Sitka, AK 99835	3/1/2015		3/1/2018
<b><i>Dr. Martin Laster</i></b> Higher Ed Representative (UAS) 8133 Pinewood Dr. Juneau, AK 99801	8/15/2012	3/1/2015	3/1/2018
<b><i>David Legg</i></b> Principal Representative (ASD) 16525 Birchwood Loop Rd Chugiak, AK 99567	3/1/2015		3/1/2018
<b><i>Melody Mann, Chair</i></b> Teacher Representative (MSBSD) 1850 E. Village Loop Wasilla, AK 99654	3/1/2013		3/1/2016
<b><i>David Piazza</i></b> Superintendent Representative (SWRSD) 574 Kenny Wren Road Dillingham, AK. 99576	2/1/2014		2/1/2017
<b><i>Frances Roberts, Secretary</i></b> Teacher Representative (KPBSD) 495 Mountain View Dr. Homer, AK 99603	3/1/2013		3/1/2016
<b><i>Maureen van Wagner, Vice Chair</i></b> Teacher Representative (ASD) 11526 Discovery Park Drive Anchorage, AK 99515	3/1/2014		3/1/2017
<b><i>James A. Seitz</i></b> Executive Director 344 West 3 <sup>rd</sup> Ave., Suite 127 Anchorage, AK 99501	6/1/2013		