

**To: Members of the State Board of  
Education & Early Development**

**June 8, 2023**

**From: Heidi Teshner, Acting Commissioner**

**Agenda Item: 10**

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**◆ ISSUE**

The board is being asked to approve the establishment of the Alyeska Reading Academy and Institute (ARAI), which may be referred to as Alyeska Reading Institute or Reading Institute.

**◆ BACKGROUND**

- The Alaska Reads Act (House Bill (HB) 114, Chapter 40, SLA 2022) was signed into law by Governor Dunleavy in 2022 to ensure all students read proficiently by the end of the third grade. This act establishes four new programs to support early literacy:
  - Early Education Grant Program;
  - Department Reading Program;
  - District Reading Intervention Program; and,
  - Virtual Education Consortium.
- The Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) is presently engaged in the development of the framework for each of the four programs. The Governor requested additional funds in the FY2024 operating budget to establish a reading tutoring and professional development (PD) institute to service students as well as to provide PD to teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals. ARAI will serve as a resource as Alaska's schools implement best practices aligned with the Science of Reading, in compliance with the requirements of the Alaska Reads Act.
  - ARAI will provide direct tutoring services to students with identified reading deficiencies.
  - ARAI will provide professional learning opportunities for teachers, paraprofessionals, and leaders.
- Alaska Statutes (AS) 44.17.020 provides that:
  - The principal executive officer of each department may, with the approval of the governor, establish divisions, or other administrative or organization units within the department in the interests of economy and efficiency and in accord with sound administrative principles and practices.
- The commissioner of education is the principal executive officer of the department (AS 14.07.145(a)) and the State Board of Education and Early Development is at the head of DEED. AS 14.07.075; AS 44.27.010
- The proposed concepts of support and services can be found behind Agenda Item 3.
- Susan McKenzie, Director of the Division of Innovation and Educator Excellence, and Dr. Deena Bishop, Special Assistant to the Governor as an Education Policy Advisor, will brief the board.

**◆ OPTIONS**

Support the establishment of the Alyeska Reading Academy and Institute.  
Seek more information.

**◆ ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION**

Support the establishment of the Alyeska Reading Academy and Institute.

**◆ SUGGESTED MOTION**

I move that the State Board of Education and Early Development authorize and approve the acting commissioner to establish the Alyeska Reading Academy and Institute, with the Governor's approval, and with the following conditions:

- the Alyeska Reading Academy and Institute shall be established within the Department of Education and Early Development to support students and educators in meeting the outcomes of the Alaska Reads Act; and,
- the Department of Education and Early Development shall retain oversight over the Alyeska Reading Academy and Institute.