

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

June 8, 2023

From: Heidi Teshner, Acting Commissioner

Agenda Item: 3

◆ 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.

- A supplemental document of the proposed concepts of support and services will be provided during the meeting.

- 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 be present to brief the board.

◆ OPTIONS

This is a work session item. Action will take place under Agenda Item 10.