

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

June 8, 2022

From: Dr. Michael Johnson, Commissioner

Agenda Item: 5C

◆ ISSUE

The board is being asked to adopt regulations establishing an Alaska state seal of biliteracy that recognizes students who have studied and attained proficiency in English and at least one other world language by high school graduation.

◆ BACKGROUND

- Studying world languages in elementary and secondary schools enhances students' cognitive development.
- Protecting Alaska's rich heritage of multiple cultures and languages, as well as building trust and understanding across multiple cultures and languages of diverse communities, requires multilingual communication skills.
- Increasing proficiency in multiple languages would enable Alaska to participate more effectively in the current global, social, and economic context.
- A seal of biliteracy program encourages students to pursue biliteracy, honors the skills our students attain, and provides evidence of skills that are attractive to future employers and school admissions offices.
- 45 of the 50 states have state seal of biliteracy programs. At least two of Alaska's school districts have local seal of biliteracy programs.
- DEED worked with a committee of Alaska language educators and consulted with national experts to develop the proposed regulations.
- The proposed regulations would provide a framework, guidance and encouragement to Alaska schools districts interested in offering a seal of biliteracy to their students.
- Based on public comment, the following changes were made to the proposed regulations:
 - Instead of grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or higher on a scale of 4.0 in English language arts classes being a minimum requirement, the English language arts GPA is now one of six options to demonstrate proficiency in English.
 - Students may begin the qualifying process as early as their sophomore year instead of their freshman year.
- The proposed regulations and public comment can be found behind this cover memo.
- Susan McKenzie, Director of the Division of Innovation and Education Excellence; Sondra Meredith, Administrator of Teacher Education and Certification; and Susan Sonneborn, Assistant Attorney General will be present to brief the board.

◆ **OPTIONS**

This is a work session item. Action will take place under Agenda Item 11C.