

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

March 2, 2022

From: Dr. Michael Johnson, Commissioner

Agenda Item: 7C

◆ ISSUE

The board is being asked to open a period of public comment on a proposed regulation, 4 AAC 06.077, establishing an Alaska state Seal of Biliteracy that recognizes students who have studied and attained proficiency in English language arts 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.
- The Department of Education and Early Development 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 school districts interested in offering a Seal of Biliteracy to their students.
- The proposed regulation can be found behind this cover memo.
- Susan McKenzie, Director of the Division of Innovation and Education Excellence, and Sondra Meredith, Administrator of Teacher Education and Certification will be present to brief the board.

◆ OPTIONS

This is a work session item. Action will take place under Agenda Item 12C.