

Dr. Michael Johnson
Commissioner

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Department of Education
and Early Development

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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Alaska's innovative assessment to improve value of English Language Arts and Math testing for students, educators and families

JUNEAU – Beginning next school year, Alaska's students will have the opportunity to benefit from an innovative assessment system designed to better reflect learning throughout the school year and target instruction to students' individual needs. DEED has selected NWEA, a not-for-profit, research-based assessment developer, to provide Alaska's innovative assessment.

The new assessment will replace the current PEAKS English language arts and math summative assessments for 3rd through 9th grade students. Included in the innovative assessment system developed in collaboration with NWEA will be interim assessments and other culturally relevant resources to influence future instruction, improve student outcomes, support teachers, and inform parents.

Forty-nine of Alaska's 54 school districts already administer NWEA's MAP Growth assessments three times throughout the school year in addition to the state-required PEAKS assessment. Alaska's new assessment system will streamline the testing experience for students, families, teachers, and administrators by consolidating assessment and reporting to one platform. Once fully implemented, the new assessment system will reduce the number of standardized tests for most students in Alaska and will provide teachers immediate results from interim tests.

"We must answer essential questions for every student about their learning. An effective assessment system is essential for student success and educational effectiveness," DEED Commissioner Michael Johnson said. "Alaska's innovative assessment will provide parents and teachers with valuable information to adapt instruction to meet the needs of individual students and help ensure the most appropriate and effective learning opportunities possible. In addition, the interim assessments will provide parents with information they need to feel confident their students are learning and progressing."

The Department of Education will be working with teachers, administrators, tribes, partner organizations, and families to develop an assessment implementation plan and additional resources to support an excellent education for every student every day. A new webpage with additional information regarding the new assessments and contact information will be available at education.alaska.gov.

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The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development provides information, resources, and leadership to support over 130,000 students in 505 public schools across the state of Alaska. The mission of the department is to ensure an "Excellent Education for Every Student Every Day."

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