THE STATE of ALASKA
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Education & Early Development
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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MEMORANDUM

TO: **School District Superintendents**

FROM: **Dr. Michael Johnson, Commissioner**

DATE: **March 20, 2020**

SUBJECT: **Statewide School Closure Preapproval**

Pursuant to the Declaration of Public Health Disaster Emergency issued by Governor Mike Dunleavy on March 11, 2020, and Alaska Statutes 26.23.020(g)(1) and (7), the Governor is suspending the regulatory requirement that school districts apply to the Commissioner for approval to substitute emergency closure days or up to ten in-service training days for days in session under AS 14.03.030 and 4 AAC 05.090(h). All other requirements of 4 AAC 05.090 are suspended. This suspension applies to any school closure during the period of March 20, 2020 through May 1, 2020.

The suspension of these requirements is contingent upon districts providing distance-delivered educational services to students throughout the duration of the school closures. The suspension of regulatory requirements shall not apply if such school closure extends beyond May 1, 2020, unless otherwise directed by the Governor.

The COVID-19 pandemic has broad implications for all Alaskans and school closures can be an important component of either statewide or locally determined mitigation efforts. Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) Commissioner Michael Johnson has determined that, given the disaster declaration, a universal preapproval relating to school closures is necessary to adequately respond to the COVID-19 crisis and empower districts closing schools to fully dedicate their efforts to prioritizing public health.

While a universal preapproval is being provided, DEED will require all districts that institute COVID-19 related school closures to submit a summary report, which shall include the categories of information listed in 4 AAC 05.090(h)(1)-(8), to DEED no later than 45 days after the Declaration of Public Health Disaster Emergency is lifted by the Governor. These summary reports will provide DEED, policymakers, and the public with valuable documentation of the educational services students receive during the school closures.