



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Potential Effects on Department of Education and Early Development Services During a Government Shutdown

JUNEAU – Commissioner Dr. Michael Johnson announced today that the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) is working with the Department of Law to analyze the potential effects of a government shutdown, and is developing a contingency plan for a shutdown of its services if a fully funded state budget is not passed before July 1.

Governor Walker is hopeful the legislature will reach a compromise so this shutdown does not occur. But out of an abundance of caution, he wants Alaskans to understand how services provided by DEED would be potentially at risk.

The following services are potentially at risk of being shut down, delayed, or interrupted if the legislature fails to pass a fully funded budget before July 1:

- Early learning and Head Start programs, and federal Title programs and grants that support the state's most vulnerable students;
- Processing of teacher certifications;
- The operation of Alaska State Council on the Arts, the Professional Teaching Practices Commission, the Alaska State Library, the Alaska State Archives, the Alaska State Museum, and the Sheldon Jackson Museum;
- Operation of the Father Andrew P. Kashevaroff Building in Juneau, which includes the Alaska State Museum. The summer season is the busiest time for visitors, and closure of the facility would result in a reduction of fees collected as well as affect scheduled events and standing agreements with tourism companies;
- State and federal data reporting, including statewide assessment results; implementation of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); and Alaska's Education Challenge timelines would be negatively affected.

Minimal staff would likely continue to work to meet constitutionally and federally mandated requirements, such as payments to formula funding and summer food programs for children, and administrative and fiscal support to ensure essential services of DEED and the State Board of Education continue, such as closing out fiscal year 2017 obligations and state facilities maintenance. The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education and the Alaska Student Loan Corporation would also likely maintain minimal staffing to meet federal and bond trust loan requirements.

“I am hopeful that the legislature will pass a fully funded budget before July 1 so that DEED can continue to provide valuable and important services to support our state’s students and their families,” said Commissioner Johnson.

This year’s preparations for a shutdown of government services are different from those of 2015, when the legislature had passed a partially funded budget. This year, the legislature has not appropriated any money to be spent on government services. As a government shutdown in Alaska is unprecedented, Department of Law is examining what money could be spent to continue vital state services if the legislature has not fulfilled its constitutional obligation to pass a budget.

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