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**State Board to survey public about education reform**  
*First step in meeting Governor Walker's Alaska Education Challenge*

JUNEAU – Alaskans are encouraged to express their priorities for public education reform in a new online survey at <https://gov.alaska.gov/education-challenge>.

The survey is the first step in the State Board of Education's participatory process to meet Governor Bill Walker's Alaska Education Challenge: *to establish an efficient, sustainable, and comprehensive system that will provide an excellent education for every student every day.*

On Jan. 18, 2017, in his State of the State address, Governor Walker said, "We must do a better job of preparing our youth for the challenges of the future. To meet this challenge, we need to rethink our entire system of public education. Alaskans must be at the heart of this effort."

The ultimate goal is to graduate students ready for career training and college, whether in the workforce, the military, apprenticeships, technical education courses, or associate degree and bachelor's degree programs.

"Alaska faces obstacles to student achievement unlike those that exist in any other state in the nation. Alaska's Education Challenge is to address our student achievement gaps and increase our graduation rate by making sure every student across our state has an equal opportunity to learn and succeed," said Dr. Michael Johnson, Alaska Commissioner of Education. "Our students, their families, and teachers deserve a focused effort to support the public education system through reform. Though many students in our state are getting a very good education, a large and tragic achievement gap exists."

The State Board of Education will lead a process of listening, gathering input, and reporting information that will shape recommendations to improve Alaska's public schools. The board will present its final report to the Governor and Legislature by Dec. 29, 2017.

Commissioner Johnson will establish five committees to gather input from a broad range of Alaskans regarding: 1) student learning, 2) educator excellence, 3) modernization and finance, 4) tribal and community ownership, and 5) safety and well-being.

Students, parents, educators, business leaders, tribal representatives, community leaders, and legislators will be invited to serve on the committees, co-chaired by members of the State Board of Education.

The public will be able to follow the process and participate through the Alaska Education Challenge website: <https://gov.alaska.gov/education-challenge>. All meetings will be open to the public, and meeting documents will be made available online.

“There have been well-meaning efforts in the past to improve our schools,” said James Fields, chair of the State Board of Education. “What will distinguish the Alaska Education Challenge is its comprehensive analysis, well-publicized opportunities for public participation, and strong support from the Governor.”

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