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## Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Students have opportunity to earn career-readiness certificate**

JUNEAU – Alaska's public school 11<sup>th</sup>-graders will take three job skills assessments this school year under a program called Alaska Career Ready. Students will be eligible to receive a nationally recognized career-readiness certificate.

The goal of Alaska Career Ready in the schools is to provide families with a free resource that helps them prepare their students for the world of work. Students who earn a career-readiness certificate show employers that they possess -- and recognize the value of -- foundational workplace skills. Alaska Career Ready does not replace a solid high school education or job-specific training. But it gives students a leg up in getting that all-important first job.

Starting this school year, Alaska high school juniors will take ACT WorkKeys assessments in reading for information, applied math, and locating information (in visual formats). The assessments measure foundational skills that employers look for in entry-level employees.

Good scores on WorkKeys assessments also fulfill one of the eligibility requirements for an Alaska Performance Scholarship in a career or technical education certificate program.

In addition, students can use ACT's free online job profiles to see what levels of WorkKeys scores are desirable for entrants in thousands of different occupations.

Alaska also offers students free access to voluntary online courses in the WorkKeys subjects, making it possible for students to improve their skills at home -- and take the assessments a second time at school if they wish to.

In recent years, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development has administered WorkKeys assessments to approximately 1,700 job-seeking adults, resulting in the award of more than 970 national career readiness certificates.

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EDUCATION  
& EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Over time, more employers in Alaska and nationwide are becoming familiar with WorkKeys and the career-readiness certificate. The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development has contacted more than 18,000 businesses in the state to educate them about the program. Information about Alaska Career Ready is now a critical component of ALEXsys, the state's online job bank.

Students do not need to study for the WorkKeys assessments, each of which takes 45 to 55 minutes to complete. Students are allowed to use a calculator in the math assessment. Students with disabilities can receive accommodations. Each school district determines when to give the assessments, which are proctored.

Sample test questions, practice tests and job profiles are available at [www.workkeys.com](http://www.workkeys.com).

The Alaska Career Ready web site is at <http://www.careerready.alaska.gov/>. It contains a wealth of information for parents, students and employers.

ACT, a major nonprofit education organization, is best known for the ACT college entrance exam. The voluntary online curriculum, called KeyTrain/Career Ready 101, is a product of Thinking Media of Chattanooga, Tenn., and is geared toward WorkKeys assessments.

For more information, contact Krista Heard at EED at 907-465-6410 or [krista.heard@alaska.gov](mailto:krista.heard@alaska.gov).

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