

STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Virtual Meeting
Regulatory Revisions - Administrative Order 360

Chapter 9 - State Support of Schools
Chapter 27 - Transportation of Pupils

PUBLIC COMMENT

November 21, 2025
4:00 p.m.

Pages 1 - 6, inclusive

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S
 2 **JAKE ALMEIDA:** Okay, everyone, I'd like
 3 to welcome you to today's Administrative Order, or AO,
 4 360 stakeholder input session on Chapter 9, State
 5 Support of Schools, and Chapter 27, Student
 6 Transportation regulations. Thank you for joining us.
 7 The purpose of this meeting is to hear
 8 directly from stakeholders and members of the public
 9 regarding regulatory burdens or barriers you believe
 10 should be addressed as part of Alaska's AO 360 reform
 11 project.
 12 Your input is critical in helping us
 13 shape meaningful changes that support students and
 14 schools, and to honor your time today this session will
 15 end promptly on the hour.
 16 These stakeholder meetings are
 17 opportunities for us to listen to your perspectives
 18 before any regulations should be drafted, amended, or
 19 repealed. This is not the formal public comment
 20 process under the Administrative Procedure Act, or APA.
 21 That process would only begin later after draft
 22 regulations have undergone official legal review and
 23 have been formally approved for public comment.
 24 So as part of our regulatory reform plan,
 25 the department must create a list of all comments we

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1 receive during this stakeholder process along with
 2 whether we intend to implement each recommendation that
 3 you as stakeholders make. And if we don't adopt a
 4 recommendation, we are required to explain why not.
 5 And that's why your feedback is so valuable, as it will
 6 directly shape our department's analysis and inform you
 7 of the next steps of this project.
 8 So to proceed today, we'll first hear a
 9 short overview of the regulations for this meeting,
 10 then we'll move into the comment period where you may
 11 share your input. Verbal feedback will be recorded,
 12 summarized, and included in the department's reform
 13 plan. And written feedback can also be accepted for 30
 14 days following this session. So please refer to the
 15 chat for information on submitting written feedback and
 16 signing up for verbal comment as well today.
 17 And with that I will now hand it over to
 18 Ms. Heather Heineken. She's our director of Finance
 19 and Support Services for the department, and she will
 20 walk through Chapter 9 and Chapter 27 and what the
 21 regulations are at a high level. So over to you,
 22 Heather.
 23 **HEATHER HEINEKEN:** Thank you, Jake. Good
 24 afternoon. Today I'm providing an overview of 4 AAC
 25 Chapter 9 and 4 AAC Chapter 27, which together set

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1 statewide standards for how we count students for
 2 funding, manage district finances, and provide safe,
 3 reliable transportation for Alaska students.
 4 Chapter 9, school finance and
 5 accountability focuses on how students' count and
 6 district finances are handled for state funding
 7 purposes. It includes rules for adjusting average
 8 daily membership, or ADM; how eligible federal impact
 9 aid is the treated; and how correspondence and
 10 part-time students are counted. It also establishes
 11 requirements for secondary boarding programs, including
 12 admissions, student services, and program oversight.
 13 The regulations outline expectations for
 14 budget review, require annual independent audits, and
 15 set permanent -- parameters for how districts manage
 16 and report year-end fund balances. The overall intent
 17 is to ensure transparent, consistent, and accountable
 18 use of public education funds.
 19 Chapter 27, pupil transportation, sets
 20 out the framework for transporting students safely and
 21 efficiently. It describes the basic program
 22 requirements for pupil transportation, how regular and
 23 special education routes are established, and when, in
 24 lieu of transportation, payments to families may be
 25 used instead of running a bus route.

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1 It also addresses hazardous routes and
 2 how those are identified and approved, as well as
 3 required transportation reports and documentation
 4 districts must submit.
 5 Additional sections cover charter
 6 schools, transportation policy, competitive bidding for
 7 pupil transportation contracts, and the incorporation
 8 of national and state standards for school buses.
 9 Finally, Chapter 27 establishes minimum
 10 standards for school bus driving training -- school bus
 11 driver training, approval of driver training courses,
 12 certification and revocation of instructors and
 13 drivers, and how distance to an attendance center is
 14 measured for transportation eligibility.
 15 These regulations are designed to ensure
 16 that students are counted fairly, funds are managed
 17 responsibly, and transportation is safe and consistent
 18 across the state. We're looking for your feedback on
 19 what is working well, what may be unclear or outdated,
 20 and where changes might be better supported to support
 21 districts, families, and students. Thanks so much,
 22 Jake.
 23 **JAKE ALMEIDA:** All right, thank you for
 24 that, Heather. We are now in the comment section
 25 agenda of this meeting. And as stated before, you'll

1 find links in the chat for the sign-up sheet to give
2 verbal comment in this meeting.
3 Of course, please state your name and any
4 affiliation you have, and you can speak for two
5 minutes. And if you can't access the link, you can
6 also click the raise hand icon on the bottom of your
7 Zoom task bar and you can be acknowledged that way as
8 well.

9 So seeing that there is no one with us in
10 the waiting room to give comment at this time, we will
11 just go on hold and end the meeting at 20 or so after
12 if no one joins us. We are on hold, thanks.

13 (Pause)

14 **JAKE ALMEIDA:** We will now conclude this
15 public stakeholder meeting for Chapter 9, State Support
16 of Schools, and Chapter 27, Student Transportation
17 regulations.

18 If you're watching this recording and
19 would still like to submit feedback regarding these
20 regulations, you can go to our website at
21 education.alaska.gov/ao360, and your written comments
22 will still be submitted for the record that way. Thank
23 you so much, and we will now close this meeting.

24 (Meeting concluded)

25

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