

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 20, 2025  
8:00 a.m.

Pages 1 - 7, inclusive

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1            P R O C E E D I N G S  
 2            **JAKE ALMEIDA:** Okay, good morning,  
 3 everyone. I'd like to welcome you to today's  
 4 Administrative Order, or AO, 360 stakeholder input  
 5 session on Chapter 9, State Support of Schools, and  
 6 Chapter 27, Student Transportation regulations. Thank  
 7 you for joining us.  
 8            The purpose of this meeting is to hear  
 9 directly from stakeholders and members of the public  
 10 regarding regulatory burdens or barriers you believe  
 11 should be addressed as part of Alaska's OA 360 reform  
 12 project. Your input is critical in helping us shape  
 13 meaningful changes that support students and schools,  
 14 and to honor your time today we will end promptly on  
 15 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 19 repealed, but this is not the formal public comment  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 the comments

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

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

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

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1 section of this stakeholder meeting. And so if you  
2 would like to sign up, there is a link in the chat to  
3 sign up for providing verbal feedback today, and you'll  
4 have two minutes. Please state your name and any  
5 affiliation you have. And you can always click on the  
6 raise hand icon on the bottom of your Zoom task bar as  
7 well if you can't use that link.

8           So seeing no one in the waiting room  
9 right now to give comment, we will just be on hold, and  
10 at 20 or so after we will end the meeting if we don't  
11 hear from anyone. So we just remain on hold, thank  
12 you.

13 (Pause)

14           **JAKE ALMEIDA:** Okay, just a quick  
15 reminder for those of us -- for those just joining us.  
16 We are in the comment section agenda of this  
17 stakeholder meeting for Chapter 9, state support in  
18 schools, and Chapter 27, Student Transportation  
19 regulations. If you wish to give comment on these  
20 regulations, this is now the opportunity. There is a  
21 link in the chat to sign up for verbal comment. If you  
22 can't use the link, then you can also just raise your  
23 hand on the icon on the bottom of your Zoom task bar  
24 and we will acknowledge you that way.

25           So if you wish to give two minutes of

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1 testimony on these regulations, we are now on that  
2 agenda item of this meeting, otherwise we will continue  
3 to wait on hold for anyone who wishes to give comment.  
4 Thank you so much.

5 (Pause)

6           **JAKE ALMEIDA:** Okay, we will now conclude  
7 this public stakeholder meeting for Chapter 9, State  
8 Support of Schools, and Chapter 27, Student  
9 Transportation regulations.

10           If you're watching this recording and  
11 would still like to submit feedback regarding these  
12 regulations, you can always go to our website at  
13 [education.alaska.gov/ao360](http://education.alaska.gov/ao360), and your comments will  
14 still be submitted for the record that way. So thank  
15 you, and we will now close this meeting.

16           (Meeting concluded)

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