

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 7, 2025

3:36 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Löki Tobin, Chair
Senator Gary Stevens, Vice Chair
Senator Jesse Bjorkman
Senator Jesse Kiehl
Senator Mike Cronk

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S): PROFESSIONAL TEACHING PRACTICES
COMMISSION

Professional Teaching Practices Commission

Angie Alston - Fairbanks
Kathryn Baird - Fairbanks
Patrick Frymark - Fairbanks

- CONFIRMATIONS ADVANCED

SENATE BILL NO. 13

"An Act relating to the summer electronic benefits transfer program for children."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

ANGELA ALSTON, Appointee
Professional Teaching Practices Commission
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as the governor's appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

KATHRYN BAIRD, Appointee
Professional Teaching Practices Commission
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as the governor's appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

PATRICK FRYMARK, Appointee
Professional Teaching Practices Commission
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as the governor's appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:36:53 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:36 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Bjorkman, Kiehl, Stevens, and Chair Tobin. Senator Cronk joined thereafter.

CHAIR TOBIN announced an ease at 3:37:32.

CHAIR TOBIN reconvened the meeting at 3:37:44.

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S): PROFESSIONAL TEACHING PRACTICES COMMISSION

[3:37:59 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN announced the consideration of the governor's appointees Angela Alston, Kathryn Baird, and Patrick Frymark to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

[3:39:04 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN stated the committee would first hear from Ms. Alston.

[3:39:24 PM](#)

ANGELA ALSTON, Appointee, Professional Teaching Practices Commission, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified as the governor's appointee to the professional Teaching Practices Commission. She provided a brief personal and work history detailing her experience as an educator. She stated that as a teacher, she supported new educators in adapting to school and community norms while helping them build relationships with students and families. She explained that as a professor in the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) education program, she trains future

secondary teachers from across the state and supervises student teachers in various Alaskan communities. She emphasized the importance of the Professional Teaching Practices Commission (PTPC) in maintaining ethical and safe teaching standards and reinforcing public trust in the profession. She expressed her commitment to serving Alaska and the teaching profession, drawing on her experience as a rural teacher, teacher educator, and parent.

[3:41:43 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN asked the committee members if they had questions.

[3:41:49 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL asked whether the standards applied by the PTPC have any weaknesses or if improvements are needed. He inquired whether, in Ms. Alston's opinion, the standards themselves or their application could be strengthened in the future.

MS. ALSTON stated that the existing code of ethics is comprehensive, covering responsibilities such as protecting student health, preventing discrimination and harassment, cooperating with statewide assessments, and honoring teaching contracts. She emphasized that these standards reflect important commitments educators should uphold. She noted that the detailed guidelines do a strong job of outlining how to support students through ethical, honest, and safe teaching practices.

[3:43:29 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL asked for clarification on whether Ms. Alston believes any changes to the code of ethics are justified or necessary.

MS. ALSTON stated that she does not currently recommend any changes to the Code of Ethics. She noted that her first meeting with the Professional Teaching Practices Commission is scheduled for Thursday and Friday, which will give her the opportunity to observe its operations. She added that her perspective might evolve with more experience.

[3:44:01 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN asked for Ms. Alston's opinion on one or two scenarios where the PTPC might reach a different conclusion regarding probation or revocation of a teaching license than a school district or school board.

MS. ALSTON stated that one situation where the PTPC might reach a different conclusion than a school district involves a breach

of contract. She explained that while some districts may not consider a mid-year resignation a serious issue, such actions can significantly disrupt students' learning and emotional well-being. She shared an experience where a teacher left shortly after winter break, leaving students confused and hurt, and the school struggling to find a replacement. Based on that experience, she stated her belief that a breach of contract can have deeper impacts than may be apparent to others with different perspectives.

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CHAIR TOBIN found no further questions for Ms. Alston and invited Ms. Baird to give her testimony.

[3:46:39 PM](#)

KATHRYN BAIRD, Appointee, Professional Teaching Practices Commission, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified as the governor's appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission (PTPC). She gave a brief work history including having served as a law clerk. She stated that her experience as a law clerk required her to approach each case with impartiality, a principle directly applicable to service on the PTPC. She explained that as an assistant district attorney, she analyzed cases and evidence, applied legal standards, and worked collaboratively to determine appropriate outcomes—skills that align with the PTPC's responsibilities. She shared that she became a teacher in 2019 to have a more direct impact on her community and now teaches third grade at a Title I school, serving on the school leadership team. She emphasized that her background in law and education has prepared her to uphold high standards for Alaska educators and ensure a safe, quality education for all students.

[3:49:17 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS asked why she transitioned from working as an assistant district attorney to becoming a teacher. He requested insight into how that change occurred and what factors influenced her decision.

MS. BAIRD stated that she chose to leave her role as an assistant district attorney because she believed she could make a greater impact by helping children grow into responsible adults. She explained that working with youth offers a proactive way to influence future outcomes, compared to trying to redirect adults who have already made bad decisions. She noted that research links academic success to reduced future problems, and

she felt that teaching allowed her to help more people more effectively.

[3:50:49 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS stated he wished more people would transition into education.

[3:51:02 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL asked whether Ms. Baird sees any weaknesses or areas for improvement in the standards applied by the PTPC in Alaska. He inquired if there are specific changes she hopes to make.

MS. BAIRD stated her belief that the Code of Ethics is robust and covers many important areas. She explained that if selected to serve on the commission, reviewing specific cases may reveal areas that could be strengthened. However, she said at this time she does not have any specific changes to recommend.

[3:52:29 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN asked Ms. Baird to identify one or two situations where, as a commissioner, she would be willing to impose probation or revoke a teaching license even if a local school board chose not to take such action.

MS. BAIRD stated that decisions by the PTPC are made collectively, so her individual opinion would be part of a group consensus. She noted that responses to incidents can vary by district size, as what is seen as significant in a small district might not be viewed the same way in a larger one. She emphasized that the appropriate action would depend on the specific details and context of each complaint.

[3:54:22 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN asked whether Ms. Baird is currently employed as a teacher since she is seeking the teacher representative position on the commission.

MS. BAIRD replied she is currently employed as a third-grade teacher in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District.

CHAIR TOBIN invited Patrick Frymark to provide his testimony.

[3:55:03 PM](#)

PATRICK FRYMARK, Appointee, Professional Teaching Practices Commission, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified as the governor's appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission

(PTPC). He provided a brief personal and work history stated that in 2012 he was transferred to North Pole Middle School, where he served as a building representative and helped foster trust between staff and administration through open communication and policy development. He explained that his work with the Fairbanks Education Association's teacher rights team involved supporting colleagues facing professional and ethical challenges, often in cases involving potential harm to students. He emphasized the importance of due process and peer accountability, noting that feedback from fellow educators carries a unique credibility. He shared that his experience mentoring student teachers and completing coursework for his Type B administrative certificate deepened his understanding of professional standards and the role of administrators in addressing unethical conduct. He concluded that accountability strengthens trust in schools and helps ensure students are served by qualified, ethical educators.

[3:59:21 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL asked Mr. Frymark whether he sees a need to explore or pursue any changes in the standards applied by the PTPC. He inquired if there are any weak points or areas he would seek to improve.

MR. FRYMARK stated that the Code of Ethics is comprehensive, covering areas from student safety and ethical behavior to testing standards and contract obligations. He identified the main weakness not in the content of the code, but in its perceived distance from everyday classroom practice. He noted that while educators are contractually and professionally bound to follow the code, many may not be familiar with its full content beyond the basic expectations. He emphasized the need to help educators see the code as a living, practical guide that outlines how to create safe learning environments.

[4:01:05 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN asked Mr. Frymark to explain his future professional goals, given that he is pursuing a provisional principal certificate, while being appointed to a teacher representative seat on the Professional Teaching Practices Commission. She asked him to confirm that he is still currently employed as a teacher and to explain his career aspirations in relation to the reserved teacher seat he would fill.

[4:01:34 PM](#)

MR. FRYMARK stated that he is pursuing the teacher representative seat and understands it requires him to remain a

classroom teacher. He confirmed he has no short-term plans to enter administration. He explained that his career has involved exploring various aspects of the profession, including teacher rights, curriculum development, professional development, and mentoring new teachers. He added that obtaining an administrative certificate is part of his broader professional growth, intended to keep options open, but it does not signal an intention to leave the classroom in the near future.

CHAIR TOBIN asked if he plans to renew his teaching certificate that expires on July 20, 2025.

[4:02:44 PM](#)

MR. FRYMARK replied he has already filed for renewal.

SENATOR BJORKMAN asked Mr. Frymark to provide an example of a situation where, as a member of the Professional Teaching Practices Commission (PTPC), he would be willing to take further action, such as probation or revoking a teaching certificate, even if a local school board had decided not to pursue disciplinary measures.

[4:03:28 PM](#)

MR. FRYMARK stated that the commission's role is to examine all facts, including both mitigating and aggravating circumstances, recognizing that complex cases involve varying perspectives and levels of information. He emphasized that decisions should prioritize student safety, the integrity of the profession, and, at times, the well-being of the individual educator. He acknowledged that local school boards may choose not to pursue credential action due to unique district circumstances but said the commission must assess whether the infraction caused or could continue to cause harm. He stated he would support going beyond a local board's decision if removing the educator serves the best interest of students or the profession.

[4:04:50 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN announced that at 3:58 p.m. Senator Cronk joined the meeting.

[4:05:10 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN opened public testimony on the appointments of Ms. Alston, Ms. Baird, and Mr. Frymark to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission; finding none, she closed public testimony.

[4:05:42 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN solicited a motion.

[4:05:44 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS moved Angie Alston, Kathryn Baird, and Patrick Frymark, appointees to the Teaching Practices Commission, be advanced to a joint session of the legislature for consideration.

Signing the report(s) regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflects individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointees; the nominations are merely advanced to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

[4:06:09 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN stated [that in accordance with AS 39.05.080,] the Senate Education Standing Committee reviewed the following and recommends the appointments be advanced to a joint session for consideration:

Professional Teaching Practices Commission

Angie Alston - Fairbanks

Kathryn Baird - Fairbanks

Patrick Frymark - Fairbanks

[4:06:55 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Tobin adjourned the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting at 4:06 p.m.