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News Release

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Top Alaska Education Leaders Form Center To Assure Student Success; Center for Excellence in Schools Aims To Improve Teaching and Learning

University of Alaska President Mark Hamilton and Education & Early Development Commissioner Shirley Holloway have announced the formation of the Center for Excellence in Schools. The center's mission is to attract and keep quality teachers in the state's public school classrooms and to provide teachers with ongoing, state-of-the-art professional development.

Said Commissioner Holloway: "This partnership is one of the most important steps we can take to fulfill our promise to every child in Alaska. That promise is to give them a quality education. We need in our classrooms the best teachers with the latest knowledge and skills and the most effective teaching strategies. The Center for Excellence in Schools, working collaboratively with schools, families, communities, agencies, education associations, universities and businesses, will identify funds, programs and strategies to improve student learning."

"Addressing these issues by providing assistance and resources to help school districts achieve their goals is vitally important to the future of education in Alaska," said Hamilton. "This program is a result of Commissioner Holloway's vision to enhance education for all of Alaska's children who will benefit from persistence, dedication and experience."

The center is funded by a federal grant of \$2.3 million for the current year and \$450,000 given to the university from the University of Alaska Foundation. The center will be housed in Anchorage and the executive director will be an employee of the university. The governing body will comprise Holloway and Hamilton, who will guide the initial direction and activities of the center.

Mark Standley, a long time Alaska teacher, principal and Apple Computer, Inc. executive and an assistant professor for education leadership at the University of Alaska Anchorage, will be the center's director.

Standley, Holloway and Hamilton will meet with Alaska's public school and university officials to chart out a strategic plan and identify the most pressing needs of Alaska's public schools. "It is important that we be able to apply our resources specifically and individually to the needs articu-

lated by the superintendents, principals and teachers who are the people most directly involved in affecting children's lives in each of the schools," Standley said.

Standley, who has taught and administered educational programs in rural Alaska, was an education executive with Apple Computer, Inc., in Alaska for six years before joining UAA earlier this year. In his new position, Standley's salary will be \$100,000 annually.

From 1993-95, Standley was assistant superintendent for federal programs at the Alaska Gateway School District in Tok, and for two years, 1990-92, he was principal of the Mentasta Lake Katie John School in Mentasta Lake. Prior to that, he taught language arts and computers at the Walter Northway School in Northway. Beginning in 1990, he was also an instructor in education technology for the University of Alaska.

Standley received a bachelor's degree in psychology and English from Southwest Texas State University, studied anthropology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and received his master's degree in education technology from the University of Oregon. He was a teacher in the U. S. Peace Corps in the Republic of South Korea from 1976-79, and from 1980-85 conducted research archeology in the Brooks Range and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge with National Geographic, the University of Alaska Museum, and the National Park Service.

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