

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #274 (2006-2007)

May 14, 2007

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: SPRING 2007 DENALI AWARD RECIPIENTS

ASD Goal: *Establish and maintain a supportive and effective learning environment by continuing to retain, recruit and train highly qualified staff.*

PERTINENT FACTS:

To Alaskans, Denali means "great one," and the Anchorage School District is proud to have employees that display greatness in the areas of achievement, service and dedication. Twice each year, a committee of Anchorage School District employees selects a number of co-workers and a team of colleagues that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to its mission of educating students for success in life. The Denali award is the highest level of recognition a staff member may receive from the district.

The certificated Denali award winners for Spring 2007 are Kathy Adamich, special education teacher at Gruening Middle School and Kelly Dennis, music teacher at Chugach Optional.

Kathy Adamich applies a caring demeanor and strong work ethic to interacting with parents and students. She is an active community volunteer coordinating educational gifts for young mothers and babies and working with Operation Hero, an after-school tutoring program for children of military parents. One parent describes Kathy's work with her son in this way: "She never gave up on him, even when he exasperated her to the limit. She did not let my son's "label" prevent her from pulling out the potential she knew was within him."

Kelly Dennis brings the joy of music to Chugach Optional students while integrating classroom study themes. She spends her lunchtime teaching African drumming and organizes the choir after school. Students so enjoy the way she

uses humor and games to teach that one teacher says she often has to tell students “walk, don’t run” as they head to the music room.

Pat Walker, assistant principal at South Anchorage High School, is the administrative recipient of the Denali Award. Pat has dedicated 27 years to education and has made her mark at five Anchorage high schools. Pat seeks out problems to be solved, is thorough and always has an attitude of helpfulness. According to her colleagues, Pat is a loyal, dependable, hard-working and kid-centered educator, perfectly suited for a Denali Award.

Two exemplary teams of ASD employees earned the Denali Award. The four-person Assistive Technology team provides services to a growing number of special education students. The devices and training they provide make it possible for non-verbal children to tell stories, children with low-vision to read independently and hearing impaired children to listen to music. They are the cheerleaders, counselors, coaches and advocates working behind the scenes to make classroom participation possible for all children.

The Eagle River Elementary Special Education staff includes aides, teachers, speech-language specialists, school psychologists and occupational and physical therapists. They work cooperatively, balancing their strengths and bringing out the best in their students. One parent summed up praise for this team by saying, “Instead of finding basic, simple support for our son, we found a team of individuals implementing complex strong support, who have the willing ability to not only adapt to the needs of our son, but also adapt differently to the needs of other classmates.”

This is a request that the Anchorage School Board recognize Kathy Adamich, Kelly Dennis, Pat Walker, the Assistive Technology team and the Eagle River Elementary Special Education staff for their outstanding achievement, service and dedication.

Attachment

CC/ME

Prepared by: Michelle Egan, Director, Communications
Approved by: Michelle Egan, Director, Communications

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPRING 2007 DENALI AWARD NOMINEES

Certificated:

Kathy Adamich, Gruening Middle School
Kelly Dennis, Chugach Optional
Mike Hansen, Mirror Lake Middle School

Administrator:

Pat Walker, South Anchorage High School

Team:

Assistive Technology staff, Related Services
Design Team, Central Middle School
Purchasing/Warehouse department
Freshman Academy staff, Service High School
Special Education staff, Eagle River Elementary

Denali Award Nomination Review Committee:

Edie Knapp, Project Manager, Facilities
Sharon Macsurak, Administrative Assistant, Begich Middle School
Glenn Nielsen, Principal, Denali Montessori
Jennifer Westrom, Executive Secretary, Business Management