

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #158 (2008-09)

December 15, 2008

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: DENALI AWARD RECIPIENTS - FALL 2008

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 ASD employees selects a number of co-workers and teams of colleagues that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to its mission of educating all students for success in life.

Cindy Petrovich, a social studies teacher at Mears Middle School is the award winner in the certificated category. Petrovich spends hours in preparation for new and innovative instruction and continues to learn cutting-edge techniques for engaging her students. Nominator and school principal Michael Perkins said one of Petrovich's most impressive aspects is her ability to support and inspire other teachers. In a letter of support, fellow teacher Tara Bivins wrote, "I truly admire her love of teaching and the incredible amount of energy she invests each day to help her students learn and grow." Petrovich has spent the majority of her 29 years in the district at Mears and plans to retire at the end of this year.

The classified/support winner is Hyun Shin, BPO at Goldenview Middle School. Shin has worked for ASD for eight years. In school principal Julie Maker's nomination letter, she wrote that one of Shin's greatest gifts is his ability to touch each student as an individual. She said Shin is generous with his time, energy and love. Those sentiments are included throughout the dozens of letters of support submitted by students. Staff members also noted Shin's strong work ethic, eagerness to assist, and his warm smile. Goldenview's Technology Coordinator, Andy Holleman, said Shin is a person who chooses every day to make himself a crucial part of the school's staff. Staff members are also grateful of his gardening skills and his ability to keep the plants in the school alive.

Rebecca Midles, assistant principal at Highland Tech Charter School, won the award in the administrator category. Midles routinely communicates high expectations, strong professionalism and is respected and admired by staff and students. Her nominator, Principal Mark Standley said Midles has “super hero” status among students who presented her with an embroidered cape to show their appreciation for her unyielding efforts to help them succeed in the face of obstacles. Standley went on to say that a number of students received their diplomas as a direct result of Midles care and guidance, along with her vigilance towards their continued progress.

There were several outstanding teams nominated for the Denali Award this season. Two groups of coworkers have done such outstanding jobs, their exemplary efforts created a tie for top honors. The Fall 2008 Denali team award goes to the Safe and Drug Free Schools staff and Orion Elementary School bus drivers.

The Safe and Drug Free Schools team has been a part of ASD in one form or another since 1986. Since then, the team has provided high-quality staff trainings, personalized assistance on mini-grants, led the annual Assets Fair and mediator rally, implemented the School Climate and Connectedness Surveys, and facilitated a number of other collaborative programs. The SDFS team also leads the Social and Emotional Learning program in the district. Michael Kerosky, supervisor of SDFS, noted the team constantly seeks ways to involve students through peer education and mediation, Change of Heart, and other programs that help this community remember the power and potential of our young people. Scenic Park Elementary Principal Pollard supported the team’s nomination and noted SDFS stays on top of current research and has been the driving force in positive change in ASD schools. In Begich Middle School Principal Jeanne Fischer’s letter of support, she remarked all of the team's efforts, from the specific classroom interventions and activities to the districtwide initiatives, establish the foundation for a healthy, open and proactive district. The SDFS team is made up of Stan Mayra, Julie Vincek, Ann McKay Bryson, Heather Coulehan, Becky Severson, Vickie Blakeney, Mike Burbridge and Christina Sumey and is supervised by Michael Kerosky.

The other team receiving the Fall 2008 Denali Award is the school bus drivers at Orion Elementary School. Drivers Scott Stubberud, David Bybee and Charlie Grive work for Forsythe Transportation, a contractor to the Anchorage School District. Nominator Ruth Tweto, Orion’s principal, said the drivers pleasantly worked through road construction challenges at the school and went out of their way to drop students off at each home when a bear was spotted in the area. The school notes that under these drivers’ supervision, complaints have decreased and students’ positive attitudes about riding the bus have increased. Nearly 20 students submitted letters of support, each wrote about how the drivers are timely, care for them, keep them safe, and even bring the students books to read while on the bus.

It is recommended that the School Board recognize these Denali Award recipients, and all of the nominees, for the example of excellence that they set for the entire Anchorage School District community.

Attachment

CC/HS/HE

Prepared by: Heidi Embley, Senior Communications Specialist

Approved by: Heather Sawyer, Executive Director, Communications

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
FALL 2008 DENALI AWARD NOMINEES

Certificated:

Judy Osborne, Klatt Elementary
Cindy Petrovich, Mears Middle*

Classified:

Yolanda Fuerer, West High
Hyun Shin, Goldenview Middle*
Annette Tilbury, South High
David Wilson, South High

Administrator/Principal:

Rebecca Midles, Highland Tech Charter*

Team:

Aquarian staff, Aquarian Charter
Begich PE staff, Begich Middle School
Orion bus drivers, Orion Elementary School*
Safe and Drug Free Schools, ASD Education Center*
Special school staff, Residential/various
Training and Professional Development, ASD Education Center

* denotes award recipients

Denali Award Nomination Review Committee:

Pam Butcher, publications technician, King Career Center
Denise Hardy, payroll assistant, Payroll
Tisha Hudspeth, secretary, Ocean View Elementary
Theri Kelley, administrative assistant, Ocean View Elementary
Glen Nielsen, supervisor, Elementary Education
Peggy Rankin, human resources specialist, Human Resources