

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #226 (2001-2002)

April 1, 2002

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: DENALI AWARD RECIPIENTS

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 several co-workers and one team of colleagues that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to our mission of educating students for success in life.

The certificated Denali Award winners for the first semester of the 2001-2002 school year are Jan Slattery, Lee Tomco, Sandra Anderson and Sandy Anderson.

Jan Slattery chairs the math department at East High School and has taught everything from pre-algebra to AP calculus. She engages students with interactive and hands-on activities. According to principal Mike Graham, "Her classroom is always a pleasure to enter, it is exciting to watch how she manages to facilitate a classroom in which students are so focused and positively engaged in their own learning." Graham says Slattery's passion extends beyond her own classroom and department. For example, she has successfully implemented the Carnegie Cognitive Tutor program for Algebra classes and wrote a grant that helped secure 30 computers for the program. In addition, she works with students to develop posters emphasizing standards and performance indicators in all content areas. Each week a different poster is displayed throughout the school.

Lee Tomco has been the nurse at Dimond High School for over 25 years. Principal Guy Okada says Tomco is an accomplished school nurse with an "approach to students and her profession that is as loving and dedicated as it was the first day she began as a nurse and teacher." Tomco combines her gentle approach with vast medical knowledge to win over students who won't confide in anyone else. She addresses all things with a positive attitude and never misses an opportunity to mentor a nurse in training. Okada says, "Whether it is a skinned knee, a teacher who has fainted, or a student who needs a hug, Mrs. Tomco is just a phone or radio call away."

Chugiak High School teacher Sandy Anderson spends every moment of her day helping students become more successful young adults. According to assistant principal Juliana Armstrong, “she is our ultimate answer when a challenging student has refused to learn in other classrooms. No student leaves her presence without being motivated. She cares for them and will not tolerate being given a half-hearted effort.” Like other Denali Award recipients, Anderson is active outside her own classroom and plays a key role in setting the tone of the school. Anderson is the leader of the Chugiak High School Affective Skills Program and the Peer Mediation Program. She sponsors hockey cheerleaders, provides after-school tutoring and volunteers for Alpine Alternatives.

East High School has its own Sandee Anderson, who is also a Denali Award recipient. East High’s Anderson is a Bilingual teacher who makes a connection with all of her students. She strives to meet the needs of culturally diverse students as well as students with a range of academic abilities. Her classroom is filled with students before school, at lunchtime and after school. Assistant principal Catherine Jones says, “She is the perfect person to teach our ESL students. Even when she has to reprimand them, she does it in a quiet and respectful way that they accept. Students that tend to give other teachers a hard time, never challenge Ms. Anderson’s authority.”

The two classified staff members receiving Denali Awards are Jan Washington and Sheree O’Brien.

Jan Washington has worked for the district for over 30 years and is currently the family school coordinator at Creekside Park Elementary. PTA president Vicki Thompson says, “She’s the one staff members turn to for help when children don’t have proper clothing, come to school hungry or tired every day, or don’t seem to get the proper love and attention they need at home. Jan works hard to help parents and families get involved and wants every student to blossom in their learning.” Washington is active in training other family school coordinators and working with the Title I family compact. She is retiring at the end of April.

Sheree O’Brien is a paraeducator in the special education program at Romig Middle School. Teacher Barbara Koval says, “Sheree brings a wealth of caring, empathy and joy to our classroom and the entire school. She is intuitive about how to support students and teachers in the classroom and is invaluable to the atmosphere of positive learning in our middle school team setting.” O’Brien is an active parent volunteer and is organizing a schoolwide memory book, taking photographs and recording events that affect all groups at the school.

Executive Director of Elementary Education, Patricia McRae, recently praised Jimmie Daniels for his instructional leadership. Daniels, a Denali Award recipient and principal at Ptarmigan Elementary, responded that he is good at “followship” of his extraordinary staff.

In a letter of recommendation, parent Patty Paiz writes, “He waves at every parent in the morning and afternoon while he directs traffic and is always on the

playground with the children. He always has a smile on his face, regardless of how many children he has counseled for bad choices. He is a voice for so many children in our school that, for various socio-economic reasons, would not otherwise be heard. He has developed a plan that has seen test scores rise from year to year. Ptarmigan's transience rate has lowered in part because of the trust that Ptarmigan parents have in Mr. Daniels. They know that he truly cares about their students." Daniels is retiring at the end of this school year.

Members of the Elementary Special Education Program Team are recipients of the Denali team award. The ten professionals on this team provide specialized training for teachers and teaching assistants. They designed and implemented an innovative behavioral supports intervention program called "Kids Clinic" and regularly advise administrators on school-wide programs. Six elementary principals provided compliments supporting the team's nomination. According to Tudor Elementary principal, Lindsay Henry, "Our school has experienced a great positive shift thanks in large part to the full understanding, professionalism, dedication and perseverance of this team. Our school has received support for implementing new ideas that have turned into successful programs for not-so-successful kids. Where school had been an everyday challenge for kids, it is now engaging and purposeful."

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/LW/ME

Prepared by: Michelle Egan, Public Relations Director

Approved by: Lawrence A. Wiget, Director, Public Affairs

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
FIRST SEMESTER 2001-2002 DENALI AWARD NOMINEES

Certificated:

Jan Slattery, East*
Lee Tomco, Dimond*
Sandra Anderson, East*
Sandy Anderson, Chugiak*
Chris Backstorm, Dimond
Suzanne Brown, Fairview
Andrea Sharp, Dimond
Jan Thompson, Dimond
Laurel Vorachek, Dimond

Classified/Support:

Jan Washington, Creekside Park*
Sheree O'Brien, Romig*
Kim Bouwens, Aurora
Evelyn Dunham, Fairview
Janie Gabel, Orion
Randy Laws, Service
Dee Rinner, Government Hill
Mike Tomco, Dimond
Willie Williams, Dimond
Dave Wilson, Bartlett

Administrator/Principal

Jimmie Daniels, Ptarmigan*
Scott Grant, Family Partnership
Denise Greene-Wilkinson, Polaris
Dennis Tidwell, Risk Management

Team:

Elementary Special Education Team, Boniface*
Advisory Committee, Dimond
Instructional Technology Team, Boniface
Night Crew, Service
Security, Service
Tech Support, Service

Nomination Review Committee:

Sharon Baker, Chinook Elementary
Pam Butcher, Public Affairs/Publication Services
Deborah Cunningham, Nunaka Valley
Mike Henry, High School Education
Ricki Jovanovich, High School Education
Jennifer Westrom, Business Management

* award recipients