



Commissioner Roger Sampson
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Arlene Sandberg named 2006 Alaska Teacher of the Year

Alaska's 2006 Teacher of the Year is Arlene Sandberg, who teaches English as a second language at Mountain View Elementary School in Anchorage.

Commissioner Roger Sampson announced the appointment of Sandberg in Anchorage today at the annual conference of the Association of Alaska School Boards. Her term begins January 1, 2006.

"Arlene exemplifies the many Alaska teachers who make a positive difference in children's lives," Commissioner Sampson said. "Teaching in a school with a diverse student body, many from low-income families, Arlene has been an integral part of Mountain View's wonderful growth in English proficiency. Arlene believes in the innate goodness of her students, and she provides them with a safe and nurturing environment."

Sampson also announced that Linda Julliard, who teaches grades three and four at Aquarian Charter School in Anchorage, is the alternate Alaska Teacher of the Year. Julliard would serve in the position if Sandberg is named National Teacher of the Year.

Sandberg has taught for 26 years, including seven in her present position. She also has taught in Virginia, Massachusetts, Hawaii, Pennsylvania, and New York.

Sandberg holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Kansas State University and a master's degree in special education from Fitchburg State University in Massachusetts.

Sandberg said she became a teacher because as a child she appreciated that school was a safe place to be. The teachers "were wonderful role models in my life. They made me believe in myself. What better gift than to become a teacher and be a role model for students," Sandberg said in her application to be Alaska Teacher of the Year.

Sandberg said she sees herself as the voice and advocate for her students with limited English proficiency whose parents might not have enough oral skills to speak on their behalf.

“Their parents knew that in my classroom they would be safe, given the highest quality education and their culture would be respected and celebrated. We spoke the same language when it came to the future of their children,” Sandberg said.

Sandberg’s students have made outstanding progress in gaining proficiency in English. Many spend one to three years in her learning center and afterward spend all their instructional time in regular classes. She follows the progress of those who still live in Anchorage.

Commissioner Sampson will enter Sandberg as the Alaska candidate for the 2006 National Teacher of the Year competition in Washington, D.C., in late February. The Council of Chief State School Officers sponsors the event.

A statewide selection committee appointed by Commissioner Sampson recommended Sandberg from a field of four finalists. Members of the committee were: Debra Mullin, past president of the Association of Alaska School Boards; Ronnie Stanford of Barrow, Alaska Teacher of the Year for 2005; Tim Doran, board member of the Alaska Council of School Administrators; Bill Bjork, president of NEA-Alaska; and Dee Parsons, president of the Alaska PTA.

Besides Sandberg and Julliard, the other two Alaska finalists were: Vivian Meyer, who teaches grades four, five and six in the Skagway City Schools, and Mark Robinson, who teaches choir in grades seven to twelve at Homer High School.

Sandberg also will receive a SMART Board package, with a retail value of about \$20,000, for her classroom from the Smarter Kids Foundation. SMART Board is an interactive whiteboard that connects to the teacher’s computer.

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