

Barbara Thompson
Interim Commissioner
P.O. Box 110500
Juneau, AK 99011-0500
www.eed.state.ak.us



Eric Fry
Information Officer
907.465.2851
cell: 907.321.5564
eric.fry@alaska.gov

Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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Two Alaska schools win national award

JUNEAU -- Delta Junction Elementary School and Richard Johnson Elementary School in Metlakatla have been named 2007 No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education.

"I congratulate the students, the schools' staffs, and their communities for this well-deserved recognition," said Alaska Interim Education Commissioner Barbara Thompson. "They represent the many Alaska schools that strive to improve academic achievement for all their students."

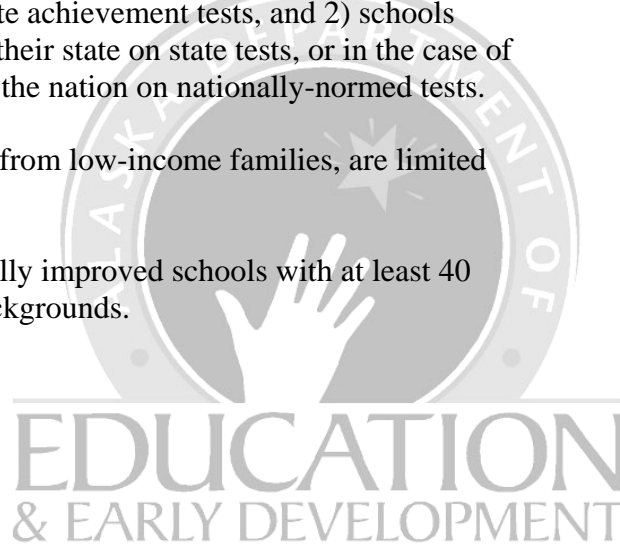
Delta Junction Elementary, in the Delta-Greely School District, serves nearly 400 students in prekindergarten through grade five. Richard Johnson Elementary, in the Annette Island School District, serves nearly 150 students in kindergarten through grade five in a predominantly Native community.

They are among 287 schools nationwide to win the award, which honors schools for helping students achieve at very high levels or for making progress in closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and other students.

Specifically, awarded schools, which may be public or private, are selected based on one of two criteria: 1) schools -- with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds -- that improve dramatically on state achievement tests, and 2) schools whose students achieve in the top 10 percent of their state on state tests, or in the case of private schools, achieve in the top 10 percent of the nation on nationally-normed tests.

"Disadvantaged" is defined as students who are from low-income families, are limited English proficient, or are migrant students.

Both of Alaska's awarded schools are dramatically improved schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds.



Only 413 schools nationwide can be nominated by the states, apportioned by state student enrollments. Alaska was allowed three nominations. Nominated schools are then invited to submit an application if they want to be considered for the honor.

See: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/2007/index.html>. The web site includes the awarded schools' applications, which provide detailed information about the schools' philosophy, staff, curriculum, and assessment results.

Representatives from the awarded schools will be honored at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., on November 12-13.

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