

Larry LeDoux
Commissioner
P.O. Box 110500
Juneau, AK 99811-0500
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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 12, 2008

Two schools named Alaska's distinguished Title I schools

JUNEAU -- Ursa Minor Elementary School in the Anchorage School District and Chapman School in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District have been named National Title I Distinguished Schools by the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, Commissioner Larry LeDoux has announced.

Ursa Minor Elementary – a Fort Richardson school of 245 students in grades kindergarten through grade 6 -- was recognized for exceptional student performance for two or more consecutive years. Chapman -- an Anchor Point school of 100 students in grades kindergarten through 8 -- was recognized for significantly closing the achievement gap between student groups.

Title I schools receive federal funds to support programs that supplement instruction to meet the educational needs of low-achieving students in high-poverty schools. The National Title I Distinguished Schools Program is a project of the National Association of State Title I Directors. Selected schools must have a poverty rate of at least 35 percent and have met or exceeded state standards for making adequate yearly progress for two or more consecutive years. Each state, using its own selection process, may select two schools for the honor.

"I am very pleased to recognize the inspiring achievements of the staff, parents and students at Ursa Minor and Chapman," Commissioner LeDoux said. "All of Alaska's students deserve a good education, and these distinguished schools remind us that vision and hard work pay off with meaningful results."

Alaska identifies eligible schools for the award based on their students' performance on state standards-based assessments in reading, writing and math. Identified schools then must choose to apply for the honor, providing evidence of effectiveness in research-based instructional strategies, providing opportunities for all children to achieve, coordination of Title I with other programs, professional development of staff, and partnerships with parents, families and communities.



EDUCATION
& EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Chapman's professional focus is on high achievement for all students by providing solid, research-based instruction. In particular, at Chapman, the students in the economically disadvantaged subgroup have seen significant gains.

Ursa Minor is one of the top 10 percent of Title I schools in the state. It is a participant in the federally funded Reading First program. Additionally, the school has established an assessment framework that exceeds its district's requirements, and it monitors the progress of students in order to guide modifications to instruction.

For more information: Information Officer Eric Fry, 907-465-2851 or eric.fry@alaska.gov.

###

