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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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Seward Elementary and Craig Middle School named Blue Ribbon Schools

JUNEAU -- William H. Seward Elementary School in Seward and Craig Middle School have been named 2008 No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education.

The Blue Ribbon program honors public and private schools that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement to high levels.

"I congratulate Seward Elementary School and Craig Middle School on this exciting award," said Gov. Sarah Palin. "I know that school achievement is the result of hard work by dedicated staff, students and parents. Well done!"

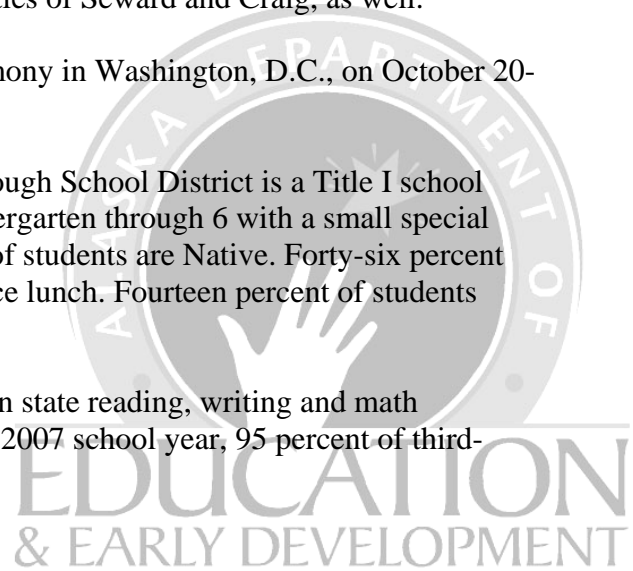
Public schools are selected for the Blue Ribbon Award on one of two criteria: they have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds and show great improvement, or their students, regardless of background, achieve in the top 10 percent of their state on state tests.

"Alaska's Blue Ribbon Schools demonstrate that caring and effective teachers, administrators and support staff are the key to creating a safe, supportive and productive environment for students," said Alaska Education Commissioner Larry LeDoux. "The Blue Ribbon Award truly belongs the communities of Seward and Craig, as well."

The winners will be honored at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., on October 20-21.

Seward Elementary in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is a Title I school with approximately 275 students in grades kindergarten through 6 with a small special needs pre-K component. Twenty-three percent of students are Native. Forty-six percent of students are eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch. Fourteen percent of students receive special education services.

Daily student attendance is 93 percent. Scores on state reading, writing and math assessments are high. For example: In the 2006-2007 school year, 95 percent of third-



graders scored proficient or higher in reading; 43 percent scored advanced. Eighty-nine percent of third-graders scored proficient or higher in math; 35 percent scored advanced.

“Seward Elementary is dedicated to the ongoing process of excellence,” the school said in its application. “The school, parents, and community strive cooperatively to seek innovative ideas that relate learning experiences to real-world situations. Our ultimate aim is to develop enthusiastic, responsible, lifelong learners who are able to adapt, resolve, and interact with our ever-changing world.”

Craig Middle School in the Craig City School District is an 83-student school for grades 6, 7 and 8. Forty-five percent of students are Native. Sixty-eight percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Fourteen percent of students receive special education services.

Daily student attendance is 93 percent. Students score well on state assessments. For example: In the 2006-2007 school year, 89 percent of sixth-graders scored proficient or higher in reading; 41 percent scored advanced. Seventy-two percent of sixth-graders scored proficient or higher in math; 36 percent scored advanced.

“It is difficult most days to get our 83 students to leave the school building,” the school said in its application. “Respect for the student as a valuable human being is the core of what we do at Craig Middle School and children respond to that.”

For more information on the Blue Ribbon School program and the winning schools, see: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/awards.html>.

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