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SEAL OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT**

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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Christopher Benshoof Named Alaska Teacher of the Year 2013

JUNEAU – Christopher Benshoof, a mathematics teacher at Lathrop High School in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, was named Alaska Teacher of the Year 2013 at a presentation Nov. 4 at the annual conference of the Association of Alaska School Boards in Anchorage. The award is given by the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development as part of a nationwide program sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers.

Brandy Bishop, a teacher of English and reading at Houston Middle School in the Mat-Su Borough School District, was named Alternate Teacher of the Year 2013.

“Mr. Benshoof and Ms. Bishop represent the many Alaska teachers who selflessly serve their students and their communities,” said Alaska Education Commissioner Mike Hanley in a statement. “The Teacher of the Year award reminds us to be grateful for the many successes in Alaska’s schools.”

Benshoof has taught for four years, all in his present position. He holds a bachelor of science degree in mathematics and a master of education degree in curriculum and instruction, both from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

“True success in teaching comes when students are both able and willing to ask mathematical questions of the world around them, and then use their knowledge and intuition to explore the question, develop their own answer, and communicate their results to their peers,” Benshoof said in his application for Teacher of the Year. “All of this only happens when students and families work alongside teachers and administrators to meet the varied needs of each student.”

Bishop, the Teacher of the Year alternate, holds a bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Utah. She has taught for nine years, three in her current position.

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“I spend a lot of time building respectful relationships with kids,” Bishop said in her application for Teacher of the Year. “Respect is the key to any successful working relationship. Once the relationship has been formed, then I can push and challenge students to work harder, try again, risk an incorrect answer, and raise a hand.”

The Alaska Teacher of the Year may be called upon to speak at education conferences and participate in various statewide education working groups. The teacher is the Alaska nominee for national teacher of the year. The alternate teacher of the year would serve as Alaska teacher of the year if the latter were named national teacher of the year.

Additionally, the Alaska Teacher of the Year receives technology for his or her school, awards a college scholarship to a student, receives a scholarship to pursue an advanced degree, and attends an international space camp.

The Alaska Teacher of the Year and the alternate were chosen by a committee composed of members of major educational associations and the current Teacher of the Year, who is Cara Heitz, now of Anchorage. The committee considered a written application, a video snapshot of the teacher in the classroom, and an interview.

Lathrop High School: 456-7794; Houston Middle School: 892-9500.

For more information:

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