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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Three Alaska Schools Named Blue Ribbon Schools

JUNEAU – The U.S. Department of Education has honored Bear Valley Elementary School in Anchorage, Kaleidoscope School of Arts and Sciences in Kenai, and Mat-Su Career and Technical High School in Wasilla as Blue Ribbon Schools for 2015.

The national award honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools in two categories: 1) exemplary high-performing schools that are among their state's highest-performing schools as measured by state assessments or nationally-normed tests; and 2) exemplary improving schools, which have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds and demonstrate the most progress in improving student achievement levels as measured by state assessments or nationally-normed tests.

All three Alaska awardees were recognized as exemplary high-performing schools.

The U.S. Department of Education requests nominations from the top education official in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and the Bureau of Indian Education. The Council for American Private Education nominates private schools.

“Each of Alaska’s three Blue Ribbon Schools has its own special character, but they all share the belief that students can meet high expectations,” said Alaska Education Commissioner Mike Hanley. “I am very pleased that the staffs and families of these schools are being recognized at the national level. They inspire all of us.”

Bear Valley Elementary School serves approximately 380 students in grades K-6. Bear Valley’s application as a Blue Ribbon School said: “We are sure a balanced learning environment is the key to motivating and engaging students through differentiating instruction, setting high expectations, providing enriching curriculum, recognizing cultural awareness, developing healthy habits, and encouraging safe, respectful, and responsible behavior.”

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Kaleidoscope School of Arts and Sciences, a charter school, serves approximately 250 students in grades K-6. Kaleidoscope’s application said: “At Kaleidoscope’s core lies the idea that children construct knowledge through an interaction between their own ideas and life experiences to which they are exposed. The engine that feeds children these life experiences is a deep integration of the arts and science into all aspects of our academic curriculum.”

Mat-Su Career and Technical High School serves approximately 460 students in grades 9-12. It is not a charter school, but students apply for entrance. Mat-Su CTHS’ application said: “Our instructional goal is that student learning is either hands-on or part of our guaranteed and viable curriculum. Academic courses share grading and content goals. Direct instruction, cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, and project-based learning are seen in abundance every day in our classrooms.”

School contacts: Bear Valley Principal Michelle Prince at 907-742-5900; Kaleidoscope Principal Robin Dahlman at 907-283-0804; Mat-Su Principal Mark Okeson at 907-352-0402.

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