

Dr. Michael Johnson
Commissioner



Department of Education
and Early Development

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Juneau, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 25, 2020

Two Alaska Schools Named National ESEA Distinguished Schools

JUNEAU -- Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School in the Sitka School District and Knik Elementary from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District have been named National ESEA Distinguished Schools by the Department of Education and Early Development, Alaska Education Commissioner Dr. Michael Johnson announced today.

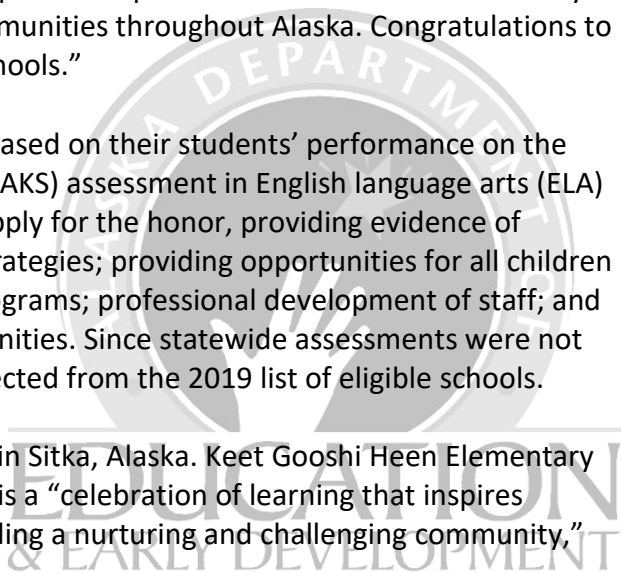
Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary was recognized for exceptional student performance for two or more consecutive years. Knik Elementary was recognized for excellence in serving special populations of students.

The National Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Distinguished Schools Program (formerly known as the National Title I Distinguished Schools Program) is a project of the National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators that publicly recognizes schools for their positive educational services. It highlights the efforts of schools across the country making significant improvements for their students. Because only two schools per state can be selected as a National ESEA Distinguished School each year, this award is an especially prestigious honor for the schools, staff, and students.

"I am pleased to recognize these two schools for their continued efforts for educational excellence," said Commissioner Johnson. "While both schools are unique, they both strive to meet the needs of each student in a supportive partnership with families and the community. I look forward to sharing their example with communities throughout Alaska. Congratulations to the students, their families, and staff of both schools."

Alaska identifies eligible schools for the award based on their students' performance on the Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools (PEAKS) assessment in English language arts (ELA) and Mathematics. Identified schools chose to apply for the honor, providing evidence of effectiveness in evidence-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. Since statewide assessments were not administered this spring, both schools were selected from the 2019 list of eligible schools.

Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School is located in Sitka, Alaska. Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary enrolls approximately 380 students. The school is a "celebration of learning that inspires children to discover their full potential by providing a nurturing and challenging community,"



according to the school's mission statement. Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary students represent a diverse community focused on inclusive cultural and academic programs. Guided by evidence-based professional learning, staff work alongside community partners and dedicated families to ensure the students' continuing growth.

Knik Elementary School is located in Wasilla, Alaska. Knik Elementary enrolls approximately 320 students. The school's mission statement is to partner with families to nurture, educate, and inspire life-long learners. They envision a school where all students are motivated and inspired by their own progress and growth is celebrated at all levels. The school believes education is a partnership of educators, students, parents, and the community.

For more information about the National ESEA Distinguished Schools Program visit www.ESEAnetwork.org.

School Contacts:

Casey Demmert, Principal, Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School, (907) 747-8395

John Gardner, Principal, Knik Elementary School, (907) 352-0300

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The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development provides information, resources, and leadership to support over 130,000 students in 505 public schools across the state of Alaska. The mission of the department is to ensure an "Excellent Education for Every Student Every Day."

Media Contact: [Erin Hardin](#), Special Assistant, (907) 465-2803