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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Cara Heitz Named Alaska Teacher of the Year 2012

JUNEAU – Cara Heitz, a science and health teacher at Cordova Jr./Sr. High School, was named Alaska Teacher of the Year 2012 at a presentation Sunday at the annual conference of the Association of Alaska School Boards in Anchorage. The Alaska 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.

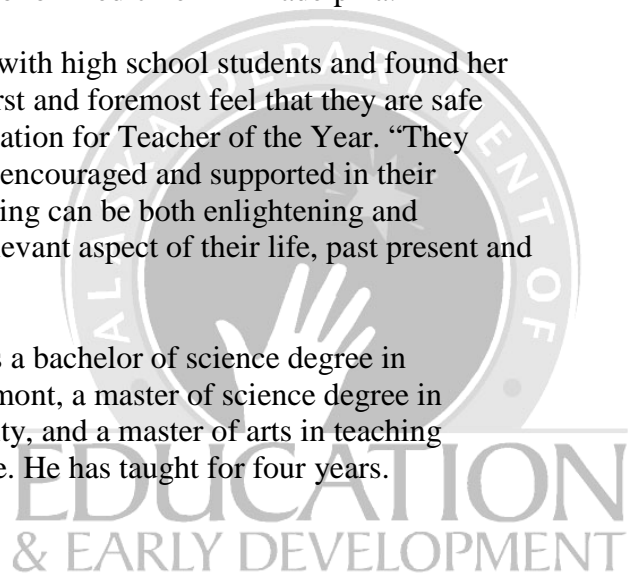
Scott McKim, a teacher of science, math and applied technology at Begich Middle School in the Anchorage School District, was named Alternate Teacher of the Year 2012.

“It is a pleasure to recognize two excellent science educators,” said Alaska Education Commissioner Mike Hanley in a statement. “Ms. Heitz and Mr. McKim represent all of those teachers whose infectious enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, their subjects brings out the best in their students.”

Heitz has taught for 10 years, five in her present position. She holds a bachelor’s degree in zoology from Miami University of Ohio and completed her coursework toward a medical doctorate at the MCP/Hahnemann School of Medicine in Philadelphia.

When Heitz was a medical student, she worked with high school students and found her calling as an educator. “I want my students to first and foremost feel that they are safe and valued in my class,” Heitz said in her application for Teacher of the Year. “They should be empowered to think freely, as well as encouraged and supported in their learning. I want my students to realize that learning can be both enlightening and thrilling, and that science is an important and relevant aspect of their life, past present and future.”

McKim, the Teacher of the Year alternate, holds a bachelor of science degree in meteorology from Lyndon State College in Vermont, a master of science degree in watershed science from Colorado State University, and a master of arts in teaching degree from the University of Alaska Anchorage. He has taught for four years.



In McKim’s application, he cited as his contributions “getting students excited to learn, involved in authentic and meaningful experiences, and creating an environment where students are comfortable in their own skin and taking responsibility for their education.”

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 Lorrie Heagy of Juneau. The committee considered a written application, a video snapshot of the teacher in the classroom, and an interview.

Cordova Jr./Sr. High School: 424-3266; Begich Middle School: 742-0501.

For more information:

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