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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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## Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**September 12, 2012**

### **Kenai and Petersburg Schools Meet HealthierUS Challenge**

JUNEAU – The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District and the Petersburg City School District have received national recognition for supporting the health of children and communities. As part of their efforts in the federal HealthierUS School Challenge, the districts feature healthy items on their school menus and emphasize physical education and activity. They are the first two Alaska school districts to achieve this award.

The districts will receive a monetary incentive for establishing the bronze level at \$500 per school certified (four schools in Kenai and three in Petersburg), a plaque from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a banner to display at each school, and their name listed on the USDA Team Nutrition website.

The HealthierUS School Challenge is a voluntary national certification initiative for schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, the initiative encourages all schools to take a leadership role in helping students to make healthier eating and physical activity choices that will last a lifetime.

Participating districts, such as Kenai Peninsula and Petersburg, work hard to make changes to their school nutrition environment in order to: 1) improve the quality of foods served; 2) provide students with nutrition education; and 3) provide students with physical education and opportunities for physical activity.

To qualify for an award, districts submit a formal application and meet criteria that reflect the recommendations of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Institute of Medicine recommendations for foods that should be served in schools, including other than the organized school lunch meals. HealthierUS Schools must have a local school wellness policy, as mandated by Congress. Schools receiving an award commit to meeting the criteria throughout their four-year certification period.

The award application process was led by Dean Hamburg of the Kenai Peninsula district and Carlee Wells of the Petersburg district. Recognition also is due to the districts' entire

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school nutrition staff for their efforts in achieving school lunch menu changes leading to the bronze-level awards.

See <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthierus/index.html>.

For more information, contact Jo Dawson, Child Nutrition Programs administrator of the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, at [jo.dawson@alaska.gov](mailto:jo.dawson@alaska.gov) and 907-465-8708.

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