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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 3, 2014

Three Alaska Schools Named Blue Ribbon Schools

JUNEAU – Peterson Elementary School in Kodiak, Haines Elementary School in Haines, and Crawford Elementary School at Eielson Air Force Base near Fairbanks have been named Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education. They are among just 337 schools nationwide to receive the honor.

“Student, parents, educators, and community members are the foundation for the academic success of Peterson Elementary, Haines Elementary and Crawford Elementary,” said Alaska Education Commissioner Mike Hanley. “We are pleased that their hard work has been recognized.”

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.

Peterson Elementary is a pre-kindergarten to grade 5 school serving 286 students last year. About 70 percent of the students are from military families. “The focus on a positive school climate is one of our greatest strengths,” the school said in its application. “We believe in teaching behavior expectations, informing students of learning targets, and preparing students for success.”

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Haines Elementary served 172 students in kindergarten to grade 8 last year. It was named a Title I National Distinguished School in 2012. Over the past three years, over 90 percent of its students were proficient or advanced in language arts, and nearly 85 percent were proficient or advanced in math. The students enter school through a doorway above which is engraved: I gu.aa yax k'wan, meaning be strong, have courage, be honorable.

Crawford Elementary, in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, served 302 students in grades 3 to 6 last year. “We have a collaborative culture within our school community where students are regarded as belonging to all the staff, rather than assigned to one classroom teacher,” the school said in its application. “Teachers consistently join forces to discuss and plan activities looking to serve the whole child.”

For more information about Blue Ribbon Schools, see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/index.html>.

School contacts: Peterson Elementary, Principal Beth Cole, 907-481-6400; Haines Elementary, Principal Cheryl Stickler, 907-766-6700; Crawford Elementary, Principal Barbara Sperl, 907-372-3306.

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