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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT**

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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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John Bruce is Named Alaska Teacher of the Year 2015

JUNEAU – John Bruce, a math teacher at Romig Middle School in Anchorage, was named Alaska Teacher of the Year 2015 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.

Lee Butterfield, a teacher of English and electronic media at South Anchorage High, was named Alternate Teacher of the Year 2015. The other finalists were Ruth Segler of North Pole and Erika Schneider of Dillingham.

“The Alaska teacher of the year stands for all of those many educators who are devoted to nurturing a love of learning, creativity, and citizenship in our students,” said Alaska Education Commissioner Mike Hanley in a statement. “Mr. Bruce, Mr. Butterfield, Ms. Segler, and Ms. Schneider remind of us of how much we have to be grateful for in our schools.”

Bruce has taught for 12 years, 10 in his present position. He holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the University of Alaska Anchorage and a master of arts in teaching from Alaska Pacific University.

In his career, Bruce has taught at-risk students and students in a highly gifted program. “Both groups carry an elevated risk of dropping out of school, both are very easy to stereotype, and their true potential may be equally hard to coax out,” Bruce said in his application. “My greatest professional reward has been inspiring these tremendously interesting and challenging groups of students.”

Butterfield, the Teacher of the Year alternate, holds a bachelor’s degree in English teaching from the University of Montana. He has taught for six years. Butterfield served in the Army and was stationed in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iraq.

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“I teach because I love to learn and believe all humans do,” Butterfield said in his application. “An excellent teacher must create an environment where students are actively involved in the creation of novel ideas.”

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 Denise Lisac of Dillingham. The committee considered a written application, a video snapshot of the teacher in the classroom, and an interview.

For more information:

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