



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **DEED Announces Finalists for 2019 Teacher of the Year**

JUNEAU – Jacob Bera, Eagle River High School; E. Ingrid Cumberlidge, Sand Point School; Steve Hall, Houston High School; Chohla Moll, Mt. Edgecumbe High School; and Danielle Riha, Alaska Native Cultural Charter School; are the finalists for the 2019 Alaska Teacher of the Year.

Mr. Bera has been teaching art in the Anchorage School District for fifteen years. He serves as the Fine Arts Department Chair at Eagle River High School building a comprehensive visual arts program that serves students of all abilities, including a successful AP Studio Art program. He organizes an annual event called the Fine Arts Cabaret, which celebrates the creative efforts of all his students.

Ms. Cumberlidge has been a teacher at Sand Point School in the Aleutians East Borough School District for over twenty years. She is a third grade teacher with sixteen years' experience at the intermediate level. Previously, she taught at the high school level primarily in social studies in a variety of team teaching experiences. Her leadership as a community and cultural advocate brings benefit to her teaching.

Mr. Hall, a twenty-one year professional, teaches Advanced Placement Chemistry, General Chemistry, Physics, Physical Science, and Math at Houston High School in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District. A strong advocate of hands-on learning with compulsory participation, he champions technology-infused inquiry labs. Student engagement proliferates because he uses data to create cooperative groups, along with actively monitoring and mentoring students to facilitate their growth.

Ms. Moll has taught high school science at Mt. Edgecumbe High School in Sitka for thirteen of her fifteen years in the profession. Her early experiences in research science set the stage for her teaching philosophy, which includes an emphasis on hands-on, place-based, culturally connected experiences for her students. Ms. Moll became a teacher to share her enthusiasm about the world of science with others.

Ms. Riha helped develop the curriculum and open the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School (ANCCS) in Anchorage. She has taught middle school for ten years and implemented the Morning Gathering and Culture Week at ANCCS. Prior to working at ANCCS, Ms. Riha was an

instructor for seven years in rural Alaska for Southwest Region School District, where she engaged community elders in working with students, developed a successful reading program, and created a collaborative teaching model to support all staff. These early successes continue to positively influence Ms. Riha's practice in her current position at ANCCS.

A committee composed of the 2018 Alaska Teacher of the Year and members of major Alaska educational associations will interview the finalists. The committee considers a written application, a video snapshot of the teacher in the classroom, and an interview. They will recommend a 2019 Alaska Teacher of the Year and an alternate to DEED Commissioner Dr. Michael Johnson.

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, and serves as a member of Commissioner Johnson's Teacher Advisory Council.

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