

Dr. Michael Johnson  
*Commissioner*



Department of Education  
and Early Development

[www.Education.Alaska.Gov](http://www.Education.Alaska.Gov)

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Two Alaska Schools Named National ESEA Distinguished Schools**

JUNEAU – Evergreen Elementary School in the Wrangell School District and Tustumena Elementary School in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District have been named National ESEA Distinguished Schools by the Department of Education and Early Development, Alaska Education Commissioner Dr. Michael Johnson announced today.

Tustumena Elementary School was recognized for exceptional student performance for two or more consecutive years. Evergreen Elementary School was recognized for excellence in serving special populations of students.

The National Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Distinguished Schools Program (formerly known as the National Title I Distinguished Schools Program) is a project of the National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators that publicly recognizes schools for their positive educational services. It highlights the efforts of schools across the country making significant improvements for their students. Because only two schools per state can be selected as a National ESEA Distinguished School each year, this award is an especially prestigious honor for the schools, staff, and students.

“It is an honor to recognize these two outstanding schools in our state,” said Commissioner Johnson. “Both Tustumena Elementary and Evergreen Elementary have demonstrated effective strategies to ensure student success. I am proud to congratulate the educators, students, and families of these communities on the recognition of their hard work and dedication to Alaska’s students.”

Alaska identifies eligible schools for the award based on their students’ performance on the Performance Evaluation for Alaska’s Schools (PEAKS) assessment in English language arts (ELA) and Mathematics. Identified schools chose to apply for the honor, providing evidence of effectiveness in evidence-based instructional strategies; providing opportunities for all children to achieve; coordination of Title I with other programs; professional development of staff; and partnerships with parents, families, and communities.

Tustumena Elementary School is located in Kasilof, a small rural community in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. Tustumena Elementary School has always been the heart of the community where locals come together for community building activities. Tustumena Elementary School provides the best education possible where students learn in a positive

atmosphere. Data driven decision making has been an important part of the overall school planning. Increased student success is a result of the positive relationships between teachers and parents at Tustumena Elementary School.

Evergreen Elementary School is nestled in the northern part of Wrangell Island in Southeast Alaska. Evergreen Elementary School is one of three schools on the island. Of the school district's student population of 309, Evergreen Elementary School enrolls 158 students. Supports for students are strengthened by parents, families and the community. Setting goals and objectives, cooperative learning, rewards/incentives, and high expectations are just a few things that provide students of the school opportunities to succeed.

For more information about the National ESEA Distinguished Schools Program visit [www.ESEAnetwork.org](http://www.ESEAnetwork.org).

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