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AWARDS

ALASKA TEACHER OF THE YEAR:

The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development named **Denise Lisac**, a reading teacher in the Dillingham City School District, Alaska Teacher of the Year 2014 at a presentation during the annual conference of the Association of Alaska School Boards in Anchorage in November 2013.

Trisha Kenney, an English teacher in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District, was named Alternate Teacher of the Year 2014.

ALASKA PRINCIPALS OF THE YEAR:

The Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals selected **Sven Gustafson**, principal of Romig Middle High in the Anchorage School District, as the Alaska Middle School Principal of the Year.

Dan Gallego, principal of Bartlett High School in the Anchorage School District, was chosen as Alaska High School Principal of the Year by the Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals.

Cheryl Stickler, principal in the Haines Borough School District, was named National Distinguished Principal 2013 by the Alaska Association of the Elementary School Principals.

ALASKA SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR:

The Alaska Association of School Administrators announced that Petersburg City School District Superintendent **Robert Thomason** has been selected by his peers as Alaska's Superintendent of the Year. Mr. Thomason arrived in Alaska as the Nenana City School District superintendent in 2005, serving until 2009 when he was selected as the Petersburg School District superintendent.

MILKEN AWARD:

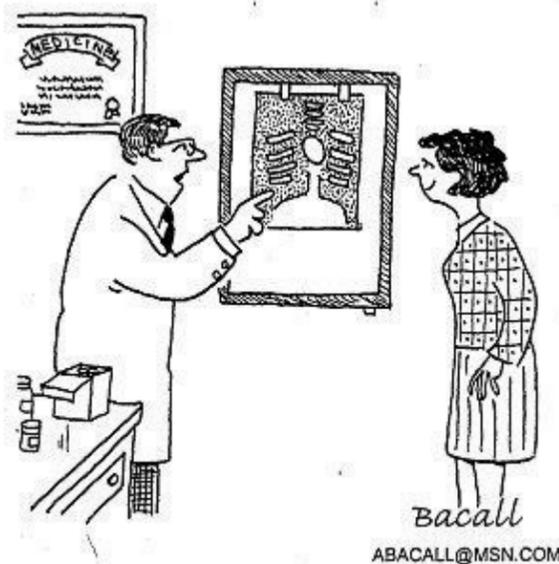
Molly Yerkes received the 2013 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award for Alaska. Yerkes is the Dzantik' I Heeni Middle School Principal in the Juneau School District.

The Alaska Teacher of the Year is called upon to speak at education conferences and participate in various statewide and national education working groups. The teacher is the Alaska nominee for national teacher of the year.

Nominate a deserving colleague for Alaska Teacher of the Year. Contact your district office for details.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

~Nelson Mandela~



"You're heart is slightly bigger than the average human Heart, but that's because you're a teacher."



PTPC Annual Newsletter January 2014



Social Networking and Teacher Misconduct

Teachers are discovering that off-campus statements via social networking sites can result in workplace sanctions. An obviously frustrated elementary school teacher in New Jersey posted these comments on her Facebook account: "I'm not a teacher - I'm a warden for future criminals!" and "They had a scared straight program in school - why couldn't I bring first graders?" Her first grade class consisted of 23 students, all minorities. She had 300 "friends" on Facebook. Word of her statements soon reached her principal and the media. She was removed from the classroom and eventually fired by the school district. After a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge, her dismissal was affirmed by an appellate court. The courts stated that she showed "a disturbing lack of self-restraint" and demonstrated actions "inimical to her role as a professional educator." They further stated, "Thoughtless words can destroy the partnership between home and school that is essential to the mission of the schools." She had taught for a little more than a decade and had an unblemished record up until the Facebook incident. (In the Matter of Jennifer O'Brien)

Another case, this one in New York City, ended in favor of the teacher but not after much prolonged anguish. After a frustrating and trying day in the classroom she posted, "After today, I am thinking the beach sounds like a wonderful idea for my 5th graders! I HATE THEIR GUTS! They are the devils [sic] spawn." Her comment about the beach was in reference to a New York City student from a different school who had recently drowned during a field trip. In response to a post from a "friend" asking, "Oh, you would left little Kwame float away?" she posted, "Yes, I would not throw a life jacket in for a million!!" The teacher was charged with misconduct, neglect of duty, and conduct unbecoming her profession. The hearing officer recommended termination. She appealed that decision and the trial courts agreed with her. Although they were repulsed by her reference to a child's death, they cited her 15 year unblemished teaching record and her remorse for what she had done. In addition, they noted that she had "privacy settings" on her account which limited her communications to a small, private, adults-only audience. Again, even though she was exonerated, there was quite a price that she paid on account of a few comments posted three years earlier on Facebook. (In re Christine Rubino v. City of New York)



"Don't say anything online that you wouldn't want plastered on a billboard with your face on it." ~Erin Bury~

"Neither privacy nor publicity is dead, but technology will continue to make a mess of both." ~Danah Boyd ~

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COMMISSION MEMBERS

- Jill Exe (Chair)**
Teacher Representative
- Lou Pondolino (Vice Chair)**
Principal Representative
- Richard Lum, (Secretary)**
Teacher Representative
- Dr. Steve Atwater**
Superintendent Representative
- David DeVaughn**
Teacher Representative
- Eric Fry**
DEED Representative
- Melody Mann**
Teacher Representative
- Francie Roberts**
Teacher Representative

- PTPC STAFF**
- James A. Seitz**
Executive Director
- Atiya Barlow**
Administrative Assistant

COMMISSION ACTION

During its February 2013 meeting:

- the Commission **reinstated** the teacher and administrative certificates of Ronald E. Friehe effective February 15, 2013.
- the Commission **suspended for one year** the professional teacher certificate of Brett C. Ducher effective January 28, 2013..
- the Commission issued a **reprimand** to administrator Michael A. Brawner.
- the Commission accepted the **surrender** of the teacher and administrative certificates of Joseph R. Robidou.

During its May 2013 meeting:

- the Commission **suspended for one-year** the initial teacher certificate of Bethany A. Fray effective May 11, 2013.
- the Commission accepted the **surrender** of the professional teacher certificate of Jeffrey L. Wheaton.
- the Commission agreed to the **revocation** of the professional teacher certificate of Roy Baxter.
- the Commission **suspended for one year** the professional teacher certificate of Emily G. (Orange) Radewahn effective May 11, 2013.
- the Commission accepted the **surrender** of the right to apply for reinstatement/renewal of the professional teacher certificate of Justin E. McCaslin.
- The Commission **suspended for one year** the professional teacher certificate of Mary Ellen Young effective April 23, 2013.

During its August 2013 meeting:

- the Commission **suspended for one year** the initial teacher certification of Matthew Byrd effective August 29, 2013.
- the Commission accepted the **surrender** of the professional teacher certificate of Christopher Rogers.
- the Commission issued a **reprimand** to teacher Patricia Brown.
- the Commission **suspended for one year** the professional teacher certification of Deborah Merle effective August 1, 2013.
- the Commission denied the request for **reinstatement** of the initial teacher certificate of Shawn Mercer.

MANDATORY REPORTING

IMPORTANT: What violations MUST be reported to the Commission?

The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession **requires** that knowledge of physical abuse of a student or sexual conduct with a student by an educator **must** be reported to the Commission. (20 ACC 10.020 (b)(4))



Commission staff is available to provide presentations on the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession and the role of the Commission. The presentation includes discussions regarding professionalism and professional responsibilities.

Contact the State of Alaska Professional Teaching Practices Commission to arrange presentations in your district.
 344 West Third Avenue, Suite 127, Anchorage, Alaska 99501
 Phone: 907-269-6579
 Fax: 907-269-5070
 Email: jim.seitz@alaska.gov
 Webpage: <http://education.alaska.gov/ptpc>

The Professional Teaching Practices Commission will meet in general session **February 13-14 and April 21-22, 2014**. Commission meetings are held in the Willawaw conference room of the Alaska State Library, 344 West 3rd Avenue in Anchorage. Meetings are open to the public.

PTPC HAS A NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jim Seitz is the new Executive Director of the Professional Teaching Practices Commission. He replaces Patricia Truman, who retired from the Commission on May 31, 2013 after serving almost 7 years in the position.

Mr. Seitz taught secondary mathematics in the Anchorage School District for 22 years. For the last 13 years he was in the UAA College of Education working in the area of teacher preparation. He was one of the first mathematics teachers in Alaska to be recognized as the State Awardee for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Math Teaching. He has also held statewide office with the Alaska Council of Teachers of Mathematics and has been an instructor for the Alaska Math Consortium.

Previous PTPC Executive Directors have been Patricia Truman (2006-2013), Bonnie Barber (2000-2006), Sanna Green (1987-2000), Dr. Charles Craig (1979-1987), and Bob Lintott (1973-1978).

NEW COMMISSIONERS

These new Commissioners began on March 1, 2013.

Melody Mann currently teaches Art at Colony High School in the Mat-Su Borough School District. She has taught for 22 years, all in Alaska, both with the Northwest Arctic School District (6th grade in Kivalina) and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District at both Palmer and Colony High School (Social Studies and Art). Melody has facilitated and taught a wide range of professional development courses with special interests in Equity and Diversity issues. Melody states, "Education opened the world to me, and I love being able to do so for my students."

Frances (Francie) Roberts currently teaches mathematics at Homer High School in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. Her entire teaching career has been at Homer High School where she has been involved in a variety of school wide programs including Academic Decathlon, Future Farmers of America, Homer High School Student of the Month Program, as well as class sponsor. She was named a BP Teacher of Excellence and was also a state finalist for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Math Teaching. She is also involved in various civic activities in Homer.

David DeVaughn currently teaches social studies, health and physical education at Ben Eielson Jr./Sr. High School in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. He has taught for 13 years. In addition to teaching, he coaches a variety of boys and girls sports at both the junior high and senior high level. David has been a member of the Fairbanks Education Association Board of Directors for the last 6 years. He is "an enthusiastic educator with a passionate commitment to student development and the learning experience."

Commission members are appointed by the Governor for three-year terms. Appointments are subject to approval by the Legislature. Commissioners are allowed to serve two, three-year terms. The Professional Teaching Practices commission is comprised of nine members: one superintendent, one principal, five classroom teachers, one representative from high education, and one representative from the Department of Education and Early Development.

Need more newsletters?

Newsletters are published on the PTPC website:

<http://education.alaska.gov/ptpc/>

In The News



A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops. ~Henry Adams~