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**KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## NEWS RELEASE

### ***KPBSD Superintendent John O'Brien named Alaska School Counselor Advocate of the Year***

**Soldotna, November 21, 2019—After he delivered a presentation to school counselors in Anchorage, Superintendent John O'Brien was surprised when the Alaska School Counselor Association (AkSCA) recognized him as their Advocate of the Year!**

"The Advocate of the Year award recognizes a special individual or group for their assistance in furthering the mission of school counselors in Alaska," wrote @MyAkSCA. "The Advocate of the Year may have developed or implemented a new program that affects the well-being of students and staff; they may have initiated improvement in counseling services; or they may have provided outstanding opportunities for the professional growth of counselors. Whether an administrator, community group, or other individual in or out of the school environment, the recipient of this award represents true advocacy for our profession."

**"This recognition by our State's School Counselors is perhaps one of the most meaningful awards that I have received in my career as a professional educator. Our school counselors play such a vital role in the social and emotional well-being of our students. They build capacity in our schools by assisting our teachers, support staff, and school administrators to understand the importance of educating the whole child." —Superintendent John O'Brien, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District**

Skyview Middle School counselor Natalie Kant wrote in the nomination for O'Brien, "I have worked in the KPBSD for 30 years. Of those years, I have been a school counselor for 16 years. Throughout my time with KPBSD, I have seen Superintendent O'Brien always support school counselors. At one point in his career, he was the Director of Secondary Education and oversaw all of the district counselors for four years. Through his leadership and district influence, counselors' voices have been heard. He worked on removing non-counseling duties from counselor's plates, and his efforts led to school counselors no longer had to be school assessment coordinators.

I remember when counselors wanted to be evaluated by the ASCA (American School Counselor Association) national model instead of the same rubric used by teachers. He allowed school counselors to create a district evaluation tool that aligns with the ASCA National Model. This evaluation tool continues in our district. Because of his continuous support of school counselors, Skyview Middle School

**KPBSD: ONE DISTRICT, FORTY-TWO DIVERSE SCHOOLS**

**The mission of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is to empower all learners to positively shape their futures.**  
ANCHOR POINT COOPER LANDING HOMER HOPE KACHEMAK SELO KENAI MOOSE PASS NANWALEK NIKISKI NIKOLAEVSK NINILCHIK PORT GRAHAM  
RAZDOLNA SELDOVIA SEWARD SOLDOTNA STERLING TUSTUMENA TYONEK VOZNESENKA

**FOR RELEASE NOVEMBER 21, 2019**

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and Soldotna High School have become RAMP (Recognized American School Counseling Association Model Program) schools. Making history, these are the first ever RAMP schools in the state!”

What difference does a school counselor professional make in a school? In 2013, former Alaska Governor Sean Parnell proclaimed, “School counselors are an integral part of the educational process and work closely with teachers, administrators, fellow educators, and parents to assist students in exploring their potential and setting realistic academic and career goals.”

Congratulations Superintendent O’Brien! Together let us celebrate our school counselors, district leadership, and the many ways school counselors assist students, families, and coworkers to create a positive school culture!

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**Superintendent John O'Brien  
is recognized as the  
State of Alaska School  
Counselors Association  
“Advocate of the Year”!**

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