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KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

Paul Banks Elementary Principal Eric Pederson named Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals National Distinguished Principal for 2020

Soldotna, May 29, 2020—“I am so proud that one of our principals received this prestigious national honor when the Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals selected Eric Pederson as the Alaska National Distinguished Principal for 2020,” said Superintendent John O’Brien. “Congratulations to Eric and the entire Paul Banks Elementary School learning community—this recognition is so well deserved!”

Nominated and selected by principals through a statewide search process conducted by the Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals, they wrote in a press release, “Pederson is a true leader in the profession in the state. He has served on the Alaska Association of Elementary School Executive Board since 2018 and is the current board president. In this role, Eric represented Alaska principals in both Washington DC and Juneau as an advocate for students. He has also served on the Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA) board during this time. Outside of school, Pederson has served on the Kenai Borough Legislative Committee, the Teacher of the Year Selection Committee, and the Alaska Council of the Arts. Eric was nominated for the Life Changer of the Year Award as well as the LKSD Teacher of the Year. During the COVID 19 Pandemic, Pederson has stepped up as an educational leader across the state. He is working to make sure that the principal voice is heard and that, as a state, we are making the best decisions possible for our staff and students. Eric believes strongly that a positive school atmosphere is paramount in the overall success. He strives to be present for staff, students, and the community at all times. He will only support new initiatives that add to this atmosphere. He also sees making the community a better place as part of his job as a principal. This past year he started a “Dudes and Donuts” event that allowed fathers to network with one another. Pederson’s job does not end at the close of school each day.”

About Principal Eric Pederson, in his words

Influences – “my principalship is a product of Alaska”

“There are many people to thank for influencing my career path. First my wife and family—this job is a family affair and they have been incredibly supportive and encouraging. My Paul Banks staff! I have had the privilege to work side by side with some of the best teachers in the profession, and I have learned so much from them. Finally, my principalship is a product of Alaska. I have been blessed with incredible leadership throughout my career from my education at the University of Alaska Anchorage

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 MAY 29, 2020

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(UAA) to the statewide new principal mentorship program to my work in the Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD) and the KPBSD. There are amazing people in this state who have had an impactful presence in my life, too many to mention.”

Best part from *A Day In The Life of this elementary school principal*

“I am a morning person and I absolutely love greeting students in the morning. I get high-fives and the latest news about students’ fishing reports, pet reports, moose sightings, upcoming trips to visit grandparents, etc. The energy and eagerness of learning at this age group level is inspiring. Rain or shine it is the highlight of my day. If you ever need a pick me up feel free to meet me in the parking lot at 7:30 a.m.”

The COVID challenge and inspiration

“The way this school year ended was challenging to say the least. I know we relied a lot on our families and used up a significant amount of trust capital we had built with them. A positive outcome of the Covid-Crisis was being part of our schools’ Care Team, who worked with the PTA to provide a lot of support to our families both emotionally and financially. Many of our families were caught in a financial pinch without work and students at home. The strength of our relationships with families was on full display as we shifted conversations from learning academics to the more basic Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. It was very inspiring to work side by side with these people. It’s the type of work that makes you want to get up a little earlier and stay a little later every day.”

A Growth Mindset

“Those of you who know me well, know that I am very qualified to be a principal solely based on the amount of time I spent in the principal’s office as a child. I probably would advise my younger self to be more grateful to my parents who did not give up on me.”

Final words

“Trust is so important. This school year we have had to rely on our parents and families like never before. Many of our schools were very successful when dealing with the remote learning mandate because our relationships we built with families was steeped in trust. I have always viewed the taxpayer as my ultimate boss. I would like everyone to know that we are diligently working to make sure we have an effective and safe environment for next school year.”

Excerpt from the Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals Press Release:

The Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals is proud to announce our National Distinguished Principal for 2020 is Eric Pederson, Principal of Paul Banks Elementary School in Homer, Alaska. The 2020 National Distinguished Principal Celebration marks the 36th year that the National Association of Elementary School Principals has presented this prestigious award.

Pederson graduated from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul Minnesota with a Bachelor’s Degree, he then added a Master’s Degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Alaska, Anchorage. Eric began his administrative career as a principal at Kuinerrimuit Elitnaurviat School in Quinhagak, Alaska in 2007 and moved to Homer in 2013 where he has served as the principal at Paul Banks Elementary since that time.

Pederson will travel to Washington DC in October 2020 for two days of activities planned to honor and bring well-deserved recognition to the elementary administrators selected by their respective states.

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AAESP believes that Eric Pederson is well deserving of the National Distinguished Principals' Award. We are proud to acknowledge his leadership and commitment to Alaska's children representing Alaska's elementary principals.

The NAESP's National Distinguished Principal® (NDP) program was established in 1984 to recognize elementary and middle level principals who set high standards for instruction, student achievement, character, and climate for the students, families, and staffs in their learning communities.

For more information:

Jennifer Schmitz, Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals Executive Director

Lynn Mayberry, Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals Vice President/NDP Chair

Pegge Erkeneff, KPSBD Director of Communications, Community, and Government Relations

Paul Banks Elementary Principal Eric Pederson is Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals 2020 National Distinguished Principal

Principal Pederson strongly believes that a positive school atmosphere is paramount in the overall success. He strives to be present for staff, students, and the community at all times. He will only support new initiatives that add to this atmosphere. He also sees making the community a better place as part of his job as a principal.

PRINCIPAL ERIC PEDERSON

ALASKA ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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