FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 1, 2018

**Three Alaskan Schools Honored As National Blue Ribbon Schools**

JUNEAU ‐‐ The U.S. Department of Education has honored three Alaskan schools as 2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools. This year’s recipients are Homer Middle School in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, Pioneer Peak Elementary School in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District and Steller Secondary School in the Anchorage School District. Each year, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) nominates a cohort of schools for this honor.

“These three diverse Alaskan schools are excellent examples of educational communities coming together to support all students, every day,” said Alaska Education Commissioner Dr. Michael Johnson. “I am pleased that Homer Middle School, Pioneer Peak Elementary School and, for the second time, Stellar Secondary School are being recognized as National Blue Ribbon Schools. Congratulations to the students, staff, and families of these schools. Alaska is very proud of you!”

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools where students achieve very high learning standards or are making notable improvements in closing the achievement gap. School performance is demonstrated by student

scores on statewide assessments in English language arts and math. In nominating schools,

DEED also considers participation rates in assessments, attendance rates, and graduation rates

where applicable.

All three schools this year are being recognized as high‐performing schools. High‐performing schools must be in the top 15th percentile among all students and in the top 40th percentile in traditionally underserved subgroups as measured by state assessments, and as compared to similar schools assessing the same grade levels.

Homer Middle School serves a population of students with nearly half reported as economically disadvantaged, with disabilities, or English learners. Traditionally underserved subgroup performance at Homer Middle was between the 94th and 97th percentile in both English language arts and mathematics among schools serving grades 7 and 8.

Pioneer Peak Elementary School has a population of students with over half reported as economically disadvantaged, with disabilities, or English learners. Traditionally underserved subgroup performance at Pioneer Peak ranged between the 89th and 98th percentile in English language arts and mathematics among schools serving grades 3, 4, and 5.

Stellar Secondary School is the only school serving grade 12 to meet the National Blue Ribbon School Program minimum qualifications in Alaska during the 2017-2018 nomination cycle and had the highest percentage of traditionally underserved students of any qualifying lottery school. It was the highest performing school in English language arts and mathematics among schools serving grades 7-12, and was ranked either first or second in performance among students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and Alaska Native / American Indian students. Steller Secondary School previously received Blue Ribbon recognition in 2004-2005.

For more information about Blue Ribbon Schools visit http://www.ed.gov/nationalblueribbonschools.

School contacts: Homer Middle School Principal Kari Dendurent [kdendurent@kpbsd.org](mailto:kdendurent@kpbsd.org), Pioneer Peak Elementary School Principal Mary Watts [Mary.Watts@matsuk12.us](mailto:Mary.Watts@matsuk12.us), Steller Secondary School Principal Reed Whitmore [whitmore\_reed@asdk12.org](mailto:whitmore_reed@asdk12.org).

###