



GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

P.O. Box 240249 • Anchorage, Alaska 99524-0249 • Phone: 907-269-8990 • Fax: 907-269-8995 • Toll Free 888-269-8990

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Contact: Teresa Holt, 907-2698994 teresa.holt@alaska.gov

2011 Inclusive Practice Award

The Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education established the Inclusive Practice Award to recognize outstanding educators who work to ensure students with disabilities have the opportunity for an inclusive education with their peers as part of the general education curriculum. Nominations are made by parents, students and educators. The award is given each February at the Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference.

The 2011 winner of the Inclusive Practice Award is the team at Sterling Elementary School in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. The team includes: Connie Best, Connie Ferguson, Gail Frasher, Carolyn Hitzler, Amy Hogue, Nancy Kimball, Barbara McNinch, Brenda Moody, Bethany Nyboer, Trina Uvaas, and Susie Ward. The team at Sterling Elementary decided that all Sterling area children could be served at the local elementary school. In the past, students with significant disabilities were bused to a neighboring community to attend an intensive needs program. The Sterling Elementary Team worked diligently to cultivate the belief that all Sterling children should be able to learn together at their community school. This passionate belief evoked feelings of protection, a strong sense of community, and a desire to expand the school program to serve the needs of all children in their community. Now Sterling Elementary families of students with special needs know that their children are wanted, loved, and supported at Sterling Elementary School. Data on individual students reveals that the team's effort to promote student independence has been hugely successful.

The Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education would like to commend the other 2011 Inclusive Practice Award nominees:

- Rick and Jennie Asiala from Kiana School in Kiana
- Tricia Barnett from CyberLynx K-12 Correspondence School in Wasilla
- Bartlett High School Team in Anchorage: Valance Barber, Georgia Berry, Dianne Dabrowski, Lindsey Honemann, Warren Rhodes, and Stacey Woodward
- Darlene Bishop from Ladd Elementary in Fairbanks
- Cindy Corcoran from Badger Road Elementary in Fairbanks
- CyberLynx Correspondence School in Anchorage: Sue Button, Katrina Cooper, Deanne Shiroma-Carroll, Ann Slabaugh
- Michaela Kelly from Lake Hood Elementary in Anchorage
- Monica Charles-Leinberger from Lower Kuskokwim School District in Bethel
- Janet Long from Benny Benson School in Anchorage
- Ruth Mandsager from Huffman Elementary in Anchorage
- Soldotna Elementary Team in Soldotna: Tina Gilman, Kristin Sisneros, Zita Spann
- Watershed Charter School in Fairbanks

For more information on nominees go to the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education website at: <http://health.hss.state.ak.us/gcdse/> . If you know any of these great educators, send them an email congratulating them on a job well done!