

North Star Nabs National Honor

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Diana Gish/KMXT

The U.S. Department of Education has designated 314 schools across the nation as "Blue Ribbon Schools." Three of them are in Alaska: Glennallen Elementary, Larson Elementary in Wasilla and North Star Elementary here in Kodiak.

The Blue Ribbon program recognizes schools in two categories. One category is for those schools that score in the top ten percent of state assessments in language arts and math. The second category is for the schools that show dramatic improvement in those subjects and whose student body includes at least 40 percent disadvantaged students as indicated by disability, economic status, or limited proficiency in English. North Star and the other Alaska schools won distinction in the second category.

Janel Keplinger is the principal of North Star Elementary. And while she wasn't principal during the period for which the school is being honored, she's been there since the beginning.

KMXT's Diana Gish asked her how she felt about the school's Blue Ribbon status:

-- (North Star Blue Ribn "I'm estatic.....we do at North Star.")

Larry LeDoux is the State Commissioner of Education. He served as North Star's principal for 10 years. He spoke with Diana Gish from his office in Juneau:

-- (North Star Blue Ribn 2 "Well, I was.....not an event.")

North Star

Elementary is a Kindergarten to 5th grade school of 215 students with a staff of 48. The school works with the "Response to Intervention" model approach that's employed around the nation as a way to close the gap between academically at risk students and their peers.