

Dr. Michael Johnson  
Commissioner

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Department of Education  
and Early Development

Juneau, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**May 5, 2021**

## **Anchorage Elementary Teacher Named 2021-2022 Alaska Teacher of the Year** **Utqiagvik Science Teacher named alternate**

JUNEAU – Wednesday Commissioner Michael Johnson announced Kelly Shrein of Northwood Elementary in Anchorage School District the 2021-2022 Alaska Teacher of the Year. Kevin Neyhard at Hopson Middle School in North Slope Borough School District was named alternate.

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced students and teachers to adapt to distance learning, Shrein’s ability to keep students engaged and show them love and support caught the attention of local and national media outlets.

This began with her driving by each students’ house expressing how much they were missed. She then began writing postcards, setting up Zooms, and making phone calls consistently through the Spring and Summer. When classes resumed via Zoom in Fall of 2020, attendance in her class was higher than anticipated and the fruits of the time spent connecting with students outside of class were apparent.

“Congratulations to Mrs. Kelly Shrein,” said Governor Mike Dunleavy. “As a former teacher, principal, and superintendent in rural Alaska, I know the challenges educators face every single day, which is why it’s so rewarding to see students eager to learn. So I thank all of our Alaskan educators across the state. I appreciate everything you do.”

“Kelly Shrein is a shining example of what makes Alaska’s educators among the best in the country,” Commissioner Michael Johnson said. “Even in the face of adversity, Mrs. Shrein goes to extraordinary lengths on a daily basis to connect with her students and ensure an excellent education, regardless of the circumstances. Kelly’s work to reach out to, support, and encourage her students throughout the pandemic shows tremendous creativity and care – not just for who the students are today, but for the adults and leaders they will become in the future.”

As Alaska Teacher of the Year, Shrein will have a seat on Commissioner Johnson’s Teacher and Educator Advisory Council. She will also be Alaska’s nominee for National Teacher of the Year.

“The Anchorage School District is excited and honored to have Kelly Shrein named as Alaska’s Teacher of the Year!” ASD Superintendent Dr. Deena Bishop said. “She is a master of her craft and has earned a tremendous amount of respect among her students, parents, and colleagues



across ASD and our community. Her innovation in the classroom and infectious enthusiasm for educating students is an inspiration to us all. We are so proud that she is being honored for her work!”

Shrein is a 2013 graduate of the University of Alaska Anchorage and has been with the Anchorage School District since 2013. She earned a Master’s of Education in Reading and Learning at Walden University.

Kevin Neyhard has been named 2021-2022 Alternate Alaska Teacher of the Year. He will serve as Alaska Teacher of the Year if Shrein is named National Teacher of the Year.

Neyhard has taught science at Hopson Middle School in Utqiagvik since 2013. He began teaching in Alaska at Point Lay in 2008. Neyhard is a 2005 graduate of Millersville University and earned a Master’s in Teaching and Learning at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

“His true ambition to get better as an educator is inspiration to our staff and has been part of what makes Kevin a great leader,” Hopson Middle School Principal Charles TenBroeck said. “His leadership is felt on many platforms in our school, and we can always rely on his expertise and wisdom.”

Three other educators were named finalists for 2021-2022 Alaska Teacher of the Year: Tracy Bell, Northwest Arctic Borough School District; Kim Leslie, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District; Michelle Heminger, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District.

This year Alaskans nominated 109 educators to be considered for Teacher of the Year. The finalists went through four rounds of evaluation by committee which included interviews, personal essays, sample lessons and letters of recommendation.

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*The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development provides information, resources, and leadership to support over 130,000 students in 505 public schools across the state of Alaska. The mission of the department is to ensure an “**Excellent Education for Every Student Every Day.**”*

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