



Pegge Erkeneff
Director of Communications, Community, and Government Relations
907.714.8888
Fax 907.262.5867
148 N. Binkley Street
Soldotna, Alaska, 99669

e: Pegge@KPBSD.org
Facebook: [KPBSD](https://www.facebook.com/KPBSD)
Twitter: [@KPBSD](https://twitter.com/KPBSD)
www.kpbsd.k12.ak.us

KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

Homer Middle School educator is going to Finland!

Soldotna, September 21, 2020—Jennifer Booz of Homer Middle School in Homer, Alaska, has been selected for the Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching Research (Fulbright DA) Program to Finland, a program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board. Booz is one of approximately 22 U.S. citizens who will travel to 10 countries around the world in spring 2021 on the Fulbright DA Program.

Ms. Booz said, “The world is becoming increasingly connected both to itself and to information. Gone are the days when the teacher imparted all knowledge onto students, revealing the mysteries of the universe. Beyond the critical skills of reading and writing, it will no longer be appropriate to teach facts and ask for recall. Students have this information at their fingertips. Educators would be foolish to not evolve along with our students. I see the role of education and teachers evolving into that of a guide and interpreter. I want students to realize they have a powerful voice, and take what they learn in school to use it. ... The Fulbright DA is the ultimate in professional learning experiences for teachers. It combines living and studying abroad with high level learning and professional development. When choosing my host country, Finland stood out for a few reasons. First, their education system is generally regarded as being the best in the world. I want to learn from the best. Also, in 2016, Finland implemented a country-wide curriculum reform which, among many things, mandates Phenomenon-Based Learning (PBL) in all schools. PBL is near and dear to my heart so I hope to learn from Finnish teachers about best practices in PBL in hopes of bringing them back to my classroom in Alaska.” [Read the full KPBSD interview with Ms. Booz.](#)

Recipients of Fulbright grants are selected on the basis of academic and professional achievement, as well as record of service and demonstrated leadership potential. [Learn more about the Fulbright Program](#), a the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S government, and created to increase mutual understanding and build lasting connections between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. [Read the Fulbright news release.](#)

John O’Brien, Superintendent of Schools said, “Jen is a student centered teacher who always puts her students’ needs above her own. She is always at the cutting edge of embracing innovated instructional practices and is an amazing role model for her students. She will represent KPBSD wonderfully in this Fulbright experience and I am certain that when she returns her students and colleagues will also benefit from this amazing learning experience.”

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 SEPTEMBER 21, 2020

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Homer Middle School Principal Kari Dendurent wrote, “Ms. Jennifer Booz is an exceptional physical science teacher who consistently represents her colleagues in leadership roles, and continually strives to further improve herself professionally. Our school is located in a small coastal town at the end of the road in Homer Alaska, has a student body of approximately 200 seventh and eighth grade students from a high diversity of families and cultures including Alaska natives, commercial fishermen, and oil and gas industries. Jennifer’s physical science curriculum routinely incorporates community engagement including local scientists from a broad range of disciplines and teaches physical sciences through local relevant and current topics. Jennifer’s students are consistently engaged in high-level thinking and rigorous learning activities. Her ability to establish rapport and connect with the students, which has resulted in, improved student self-motivation.”

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