

## **Administrative Report – April 2025**

### **Superintendent David Vadiveloo**

Utuqqanaavut kisuigukkitka – sivulliit utuqqanaallu, panmami utuqqanaagiravullu, utuqqanaagugumaaqtuallu. Quyanaagitka panmamuraglaan aullatimmagit savaktivut iliniiaqtuagiravullu. Nalunaigunmigiga sulii iinuuniaguutilaaqput savaguutilaaqpullu nunaniinni lnuipiat. Igliqtitchirauvluta minuaqtugvinjik kamasuuttaigigikput ikayuiyumiinaqapta tamatkunani nunani.

Members of the Board and community, the first agviqs of Spring have been landed and fresh uunalik is already making its way across the slope. Thousands of years of knowledge is being passed from umialiks to our young students - and so our administration wants to acknowledge all Elders past, present and emerging, for entrusting us as partners in the education and growth of their children. It is a responsibility we hold close to our hearts and commit to each time we step foot in our schools and buildings. And with that in mind, the following highlights are presented to our Community and Board by way of an update on District operations, as mapped against our new Strategic goals and objectives.

### **Domain: Family & Community Collaboration**

*Goal: Prioritize and implement intentional and purposeful partnerships.*

MAYOR'S TAIGUAQTA INITIATIVE: The District is excited to announce a new literacy partnership funded by the Mayors office. Mayor Josiah Aullaqraq Patkotak's Taiguaqta Initiative, will see the free distribution of books for kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students for summer. These culturally responsive, relevant, and age-appropriate books will help develop foundational literacy skills and increase early reading proficiency among NSBSD students. Thanks to the Mayor's initiative we can continue to feed student hunger for learning and keep our students' literacy growing throughout summer.

WORKING WITH OUR TRIBAL COLLEGE: As part of our continually strengthening partnership with Iqisaqvik College, we want to thank their administration for supporting our request to have 2 dual credit courses at the College aligned with our NSBSD school day bell schedule. This significant schedule shift means our students have an opportunity to take higher level math and ELA during their school day, instead of after hours.

NSB BUDGET HEARING: Earlier this month the District presented its budget to the NSBSD Assembly and Mayor. After another year of successful collaboration, planning and open communication with the NSB, the hearing went smoothly and the District anticipates receiving the funding required to maintain current services and further expand its vocational education program and social emotional student support services through further Mayor's supplemental grants.

### **Domain: Culturally Responsive Instruction**

*Goal: All students perform at or above grade level*

UNIFIED SCHEDULE & INSTRUCTIONAL MINUTES: After many hours of collaboration and dialogue with sites and departments, for the first time in more than 15 years, bell schedules across the district will be aligned next school year. This will allow several important things to happen: Firstly Ilisaġvik College dual credit courses can now be taken by high school students across the Slope during their school day. Secondly, we will be able to offer more NSBSD courses and activities over distance (for example conversational Iñupiaq, district wide music classes and art classes etc) and thirdly when there are staffing issues in buildings affecting course offerings we can work to provide remote alternatives from local teachers.

Also in the Boards packet today is an action item to standardize instructional minutes across the district also. As we continue to find equity and congruence for all our students we are standardizing instructional minutes which will mean increasing the instructional minutes for some of our elementary students which will assist with increased student learning and growth.

IÑUPIAQ EARLY READER SERIES: Cathy Tagnak Rexford and Jana Pausauraq Harcharek are close to completing the first series of the Iñupiaq Early Readers series, currently finalizing the 3rd grade level texts. This work includes meticulous side-by-side Iñupiaq-English manuscript review to ensure accuracy and fluency in translation. Each bilingual story will be accompanied by complementary informational texts across varied formats for instructional integration. Plans are in place to complete Kindergarten next, followed by 1st and 2nd grade stories in FY26.

*Goal: All students are prepared for their pathway of choice post-high school*

CTE & VOC ED: Qatqiññiagvik Learning Center hosted approximately 20, 5th grade students from the villages who came for the ANSEP (Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program) 5th Grade STEM Ready (Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics) program. This is the first hosting this event and we will be sponsoring the same event in the first week in May for Ipalook Elementary students.

Meanwhile for the final set of intensives for high school students this year, students will be attending Intro to Construction (a dual credit course held at Ilisaġvik College), ATV/Snowmachine Repair, and Introduction to Drones.

*Goal: Graduate bilingual students*

IÑUPIAQ LANGUAGE IN OUR SCHOOLS: Following discussions at the 2024 Board Winter retreat, and then again at last months work session, and finally during a policy committee meeting last week, the first reading of a board policy amendment will occur at today's meeting which will lead to the Iñupiaq language finally being made a requirement for graduation. This has been no small journey for our community and our District. As Dr Jana Pausauraq Harcharek stated so powerfully during the policy committee meeting, "No longer are we forced to give up our language, no longer are we forced to give up our practices. We are a very strong people...if it weren't for our early leaders we would not be having this discussion – we would continue to be forced to not speak our language if we did not have home-rule government. Lest we forget, we must never forget."

So after 50 years of expectation, this Board of Education will finally implement a policy which has been anticipated by generations of leaders and elders – the school district honoring and institutionalizing the importance of the Iñupiaq language in the learning of all students – recognizing the importance of the language to continuity of culture and identity for our community.

### **Domain: Student Social & Emotional Wellbeing**

*Goal: Facilitate & maintain culturally, emotionally, & physically safe learning environments*

ATUUTIT, ATUUTIT, ATUUTIT!: Music, music, music! Our children's wellbeing is enhanced by music and after over a year of discussion and planning between myself and 'Mr C' Jake Calderwood, this month the first District wide Disney choir trip is taking nearly 50 students including 20 village school elementary choir students travelling and singing. In addition in this past month the first phases of the first district wide elementary music programs are being rolled out at several sites with pianos and instruments arriving in villages and dedicated rooms being prepared. And finally a nearly full house at the BHS auditorium was entertained this week by the HMS and BHS band students. Led by Dr Roseboro the band program continues to grow and we are now discussing ways to extend this program into our villages next year also.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SERVICES: Interviews for social workers, clinicians and a pilot program for a behavior specialist at IPK are underway as we look to build a new team to pilot a district-wide program providing a fuller continuum of care not previously offered as NSBSD. Also good news as the SPED recruitment stipend that was approved by the Board last month has already reaped rewards with several new appointments of SPED teachers.

SPED & IDEA UPDATE: With recent executive orders impacting the education department at a Federal level the administration wants to advise parents that we have still not been notified of any concrete changes to SPED funding or IDEA (the Individuals with disabilities education Act). We are expecting some reduction in Title funding but currently believe we can cover that with the available general fund budget. I wanted to take this opportunity to remind our Board and community that the IDEA Act is guided by some core principals including Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), Appropriate Evaluations, Individualized Education Programs (IEP), Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Parent and Student Participation, and Procedural Safeguards. We have not been advised any of those principles are being challenged. The Supreme court is currently hearing a major case about curriculum and parent rights but no cases to date on IDEA and no advice to the district re/ cuts at Federal or State level.

### **Staff Support & Professional Development**

*Goal : Build and sustain a thriving workforce aligned with the mission of this District*

RECRUITMENT & HIRING: After attending a number of traditional job fairs in March the HR team has participated in a number of virtual hiring fairs recently and Dr Bolen is currently recruiting in Spokane. We've seen some successes from these fairs but the market is tough and few candidates are available even at the peak of the recruiting season. But we persist and will get the job done.

**STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:** We were excited to advise all returning teachers that next years opening District wide in-service will be held in person for all teachers in Utqiagvik. This will be a critical gathering, creating a new hands on in-service model that focuses on instructional modeling and demonstrating, hands on practice for all staff, and clear expectations being set for the new school year.

**STAFF ACHIEVEMENT:** This morning the Ipalook Elementary staff honored kindergarten teacher Sandra Galcon for winning a state Science Of Reading award. Our district focus on excellence in instruction and raising literacy for our students is captured in this award and we congratulate Ms Galcon for modeling such excellence every day.

### **Financial & Operational Stewardship**

Goal 7: Standardize high-functioning, efficient, student-focused operations

#### **FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT AND REPORTING:**

**BUDGET:** A budget revision for FY25 is presented at this meeting and after presenting to the Assembly, the FY26 budget is nearly complete and is also on track for presentation to the School Board during the May meeting. This year's budgeting process has involved a thorough review of staffing and expenditures to ensure alignment with District priorities and to make the most of available resources.

**PRINCIPALS BARGAINING AGREEMENT:** After a short and productive 5 month bargaining process the Board is being presented today with an Action item for ratification of the NSBSD/NSEAA (North Slope Educational Administrators' Association) collective bargaining agreement. The agreement has been ratified by the NSEAA, and presented to the Board negotiations committee and now awaits ratification by the Board.

**LIVESTREAMING OF DISTRICT WIDE EVENTS:** To ensure that family members, community members, and regional stakeholders from across the North Slope and beyond could watch and celebrate their student athletes during the recent NYO Regionals, the IT Department successfully livestreamed the event. As we continue to grow the number of activities offered across the slope our staff are working hard to ensure the whole community can enjoy whenever possible.

#### **STUDENT ACTIVITIES:**

**NYO REGIONALS:** For the first time in over 20 years, NSBSD hosted a Regional NYO event at BHS this month, to qualify athletes for the State NYO Championships in Anchorage. All 8 villages participated with over 50 athletes competing in the 11 traditional NYO events.

A huge congratulations to all the athletes for competing with pride and passion and a special congratulations to our state qualifying athletes who start their State competition tomorrow:

Kali: Willie Tukrook, Violet Anniskett, Charles Anniskett, Luke Tukrook-Oyagak - Ulguniq: Jared Akpik - Nuiqsut: Noah Hopson, Lucyann Ipalook - Kaktovik: Lucas Aishanna

BHS: Flossie Olemaun, Dayna Olemaun, Holly Kaigelak, Cora Kaigelak, Lillianna Simmonds-Rexford, Georgia Fischer, Isabel Drake, Kamella Rexford, Manuluk Olemaun, Samuel Arey, Andrew Hopson, Drew Hopson

ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS: Our students continue to grow and thrive and a group of HMS students attended the Alaska Science Olympiad last month with great success, taking 1st Place in Anatomy and Physiology, 2nd Place in Code Busters and 3rd Place in Building a Tower. Congratulations to Adele Thomas, Avery Aina, Ellis Thomas, Alivia Aina and Ella Monin and thanks to teachers/coaches Harlee Bress and Loveli Flores.

This month we also had a student, Miranda Brown, participate in the 2025 SkillsUSA Alaska Introduction to Welding competition. Miranda is the first student since the year 2000 to compete in the competition and we look forward to reestablishing and expanding this tradition to bring more students to participate in the competition next year.

Finally, we congratulate the following students on their participation in the Athena Honor Band. This event took place over the entire month of February and part of March and allowed students to work with well-known composers, professional conductors, collegiate music professors, collegiate music education students, and other female band students from across the country. Congratulations to Eben Hopson Middle School (Athena Empower Ensemble 2025): Ava Burnell – Clarinet, Emma Kanayurak – Clarinet, Skylar Monexay – Flute, Adele Thomas – Trombone, Kaleta Toelau - Flute  
And congratulations to Barrow High School (Athena Inspire Ensemble 2025): Victoria Ahsoak – Clarinet, Dhanaya Alcantara - Baritone Saxophone, Jazzlynn Clarke - Alto Saxophone, Antonet Kaleak - French Horn, Cassandra Ortilla - Alto Saxophone, Olivia Sakeagak – Trumpet, Qilaavsuk Vadiveloo - French Horn

### **In closing**

Another year is almost over and our students have shown once again their brilliance and willingness to learn when our instruction, our curriculum and our partnerships with community and stakeholders align to support them. Like all districts, we still face serious challenges in recruiting staff but our initiatives and learning expectations are delivering strong growth and achievement for our students.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our students for their persistence and hard work all year. To our families, carers, community and staff we say thanks for providing the conditions for learning that our children need to thrive. To our transportation team who collect students and deliver them safely back home; to site administrative teams, office staff, cooks, custodians, paraprofessionals and volunteers; to teachers and Principals, contractors and consultants and to all our department staff, directors and our wonderful CO team; I say Quyanaqpak!!! Thanks to your tireless work we're able to implement the mission of the Board and strive for excellence. And of course to our Board – thank you for continuing to provide clear direction, measured governance, always modeling the Iñupiaq values for us in the way you lead and guide our District

and support our staff. We have turned this District around and our students are showing us the results in their growth and achievement. We stand strong together, proud to work and live on the lands of the Iñupiaq, working every day to help build a strong future for all. Atautchimukta asi Pisigilugit Qitunġavut – together and in the best interests of our children!

**End report DSV**