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## **Superintendent Report** **David Vadiveloo**

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Utuqqanaavut kisuiġukkitka – sivulliit utuqqanaallu, paŋmami utuqqanaagiravullu, utuqqanaaġuġumaaqtuallu. Quyanaaġitka paŋmamuraglaan aullatimmagit savaktivut iġiññaqtuagiravullu. Nalunaġuŋmigiga sulii iñuuniaġuutilaaqput savaguutilaaqpullu nunajiññi Iñupiat. Iġliqtitchirauvluta minuaqtuġviññik kamasuuttaġigikput ikayuiyumiñaqapta tamatkunani nunani.

Members of the Board and members of the North Slope community

Last week the District completed the hosting of the Alaska Association of Student Government (AASG). It was a huge success underpinned by the motivation and energy of our students, our staff, community Elders, leaders and families who once again demonstrated the depth and strength of home grown leadership on the North Slope.

The students who led the AASG committee reinforced the values that guide and inform our lives and our work - and in doing so they remind us to pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging who have guided this community and re-state how honored we are to work and live on the self-determined sovereign lands of the Iñupiaq people. We thank the community for entrusting us as partners in the education and growth of their children and we thank our Board for supporting the operations of our administration.

As Spring takes hold and we enter our last month of schooling, seniors are preparing to graduate and K4 students are preparing to enter Kindergarten next year. And in that context I'd like to present to the Board and our community the following highlights by way of an update on District operations for the past month, as mapped against our Strategic goals and objectives.

### **Strategic goal 1: Student success**

Pedagogy Domains: Culturally Responsive Instruction, Family & Community Collaboration, Authentic assessment of the whole child

Student success this month is illustrated by the efforts of the students who lobbied for, planned for, fundraised for, facilitated and flew in from villages to attend the 2024 Spring Alaska Association of Student Government conference at Barrow High School. With just a few short months to prepare, the BHS student council and BHS administration hosted nearly 200 student delegates from around the State plus over 50 chaperones. The conference was a great success and all students should be rightfully proud of their efforts. We're very proud of all our North Slope students who attended AASG and the Alaska Education Foundation Future leaders summit in the days leading up to AASG. A special shout out to teacher Theresa Knapp for leading the students on their AASG hosting journey, to Dr TenBroeck and Mr Brown for providing unwavering building and leadership support and to our Student Board representative and President of the Barrow High School student council, Magdalena Stringer, who demonstrated once again throughout AASG why she is such a highly regarded young leader. And a big shout out to BHS who won the most spirited region award, Jayden Lampe, a junior from Utqiagvik was chosen to be the AASG Executive Board Parliamentarian for the 2024-25 school year, Utqiagvik freshman Qiġaavsuk Vadiveloo wrote the Resolution of the conference and was the Region 1 delegate of the conference and Austin Bennett, a senior from Nuiqsut was recognized for best placard.

As we draw to the end of the year AKSTAR testing has begun and the End of Year benchmark for MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) testing (which measures student knowledge in reading, language usage and mathematics) and mClass (a universal screener that measures the development of reading skills of all students in grades K-5) is underway. This end of the year data

is critical to our understanding of how students grew throughout the year, as well as looking forward to necessary changes needed for the coming year.

The Uqautiluᅇa Iᅇupiatun immersion program received an exciting boost this past month with Jaime Kakianaaq Patkotak and Donna Makiana Westdahl committing to co-teach in the Kindergarten immersion classroom next school year at Ipalook Elementary school. This is a vital step in the continued success of the Uqautiluᅇa Iᅇupiatun program as it is the district's goal to open up a new classroom each year at Ipalook. We have also set a goal to identify a classroom in one of our villages this school year so that we can support the opening in SY25-26. Once again we remind all communities that we are ready to open an immersion program in your school as soon as we have a speaker to support the class.

Our attendance at most sites has improved but we have set our targets higher heading into FY25. To further support our push on student attendance in FY25, we will be presenting a monthly award to the school with the best attendance and to track periods of drop off, Student Records will be providing a weekly report tracking daily attendance data. This will be a critical data source in tracking periods of drop-off and planning forward for school calendars in the coming year, scheduling winter and spring breaks, etc.

A survey to assist in planning courses and intensive sessions for the FY25 Qatqiᅇniagvik Learning Center program and for village workshops was provided to all high school students and can be found in the Board packet. This survey gathered the courses students are interested in. The CTE courses that are on the NSBSD approved course list were combined with suggested intensive courses for the students to select the ones of interest. 139 students in grades 9 through 12 responded to the survey and these responses will help plan for FY25 programs.

As we head toward graduation, Student Records and our C&I Secondary Coordinator continue to provide graduation audits and are supporting seniors to maximize their opportunities to graduate. Preparations are also underway for Summer School at a majority of our sites and Curriculum & Instruction and Student Services are supporting multiple summer support initiatives including extended year, online libraries and resources.

Finally, it has been a huge year of activities with great successes in all schools and regions. An activities report summary is available in the board packet and in the next few weeks we will be meeting with all sites to discuss planning and scheduling for next year. The District wide student council is open for nominations so we encourage all students to put their names up for consideration to represent their student group in their village.

## **Strategic goal 2: Community engagement**

Pedagogy Domains: Culturally Responsive Instruction, Family & Community Collaboration

All Community School Expectation Agreements (CSEA's) are completed and are in the Board packet. This is a developing process and these agreements will be revisited each year with the community, students and SAC. CSEA's are a cornerstone for us partnering with the community and have been a significant undertaking to ensure the community voice is present in our school operations.

We are close to finalizing an agreement with Arctic Slope Community Foundation for the teacher apprenticeship program. This will offer a potential new pathway for prospective teachers to work as they gain credits toward an AA and eventually teacher certification through UAA. At the same

time we continue to support staff studying with Iḷisaġvik who are following the pathway to certification through UAF.

Information is currently being sent out to parents about the “non-progression” section of the Alaska Reads Act legislation. Per the Reads Act, parents and guardians of students who are not at benchmark in grades K through 3 must be made aware of their student’s reading deficiency, and given an opportunity to have their student non-progressed to the next grade level. We understand that this is a big conversation, and so C&I have made supports for teachers and parents to guide the conversation, look at multiple data points, and document student strengths as well as areas requiring further growth.

Piuraaġiaqta was the theme for our cultural in-service for teachers and staff in Utqiaġvik with community participation and cultural experts as well as student volunteers. These in-services are an important way of reminding our teachers who we are as a school district and the mirrors that our students need to see around them to feel included and reflected on their education journey.

And of course this month was AASG which captured the strength of our community and its future. This event would not have been possible without the generous support of our community and we once again want to thank the North Slope Borough, ICAS, ASRC, BUECI, Iḷisaġvik College, City of Utqiaġvik, City of Wainwright, UIC, Rotary and our corporate sponsors Conoco and BP.

### **Strategic goal 3: Staff success**

Pedagogy domain: Staff Support & Professional Development

As we continue to recruit new staff into the District we are also looking at ways to support and strengthen existing staff development and retention. Before the Board today are 3 action items for consideration which include another 2% raise for hourly classified staff to further align the District remuneration offerings with the region, a step jump for paraprofessional staff who achieve highly qualified paraprofessional status and an extension of the existing salary schedule for 260 day contracted staff to attract candidates. The District is also very close to finalizing milestone retention bonuses for staff who have committed their time and experience to the District for over 5 years.

Meade River School, Nunamiut School, Trapper School, Alak School and Ipalook Elementary have been selected for support from the State of Alaska Department Reading Program. Staff at the sites will receive coaching, data, and systems support for early literacy for the next school year. Support will be tailored to the individual needs of each site and consist of in person and virtual meetings.

In the coming weeks the instructional team will be receiving a professional development series from Ed Northwest on developing a coaching model as well as a data collection strategy to assess the effectiveness of the time curriculum experts are spending in our buildings.

This is the first school year that sites have implemented two cultural in-services in the school calendar and this past month Utqiaġvik staff had the opportunity to learn more about their community through Piuraaġiaqta. Also in Utqiaġvik, the new staff who will lead the Kindergarten class for Uqautiḷuḡa Iḷupiatun immersion visited the Iḷisazaqta Iḷupiaqtun immersion classrooms in Nome Public School to provide them with further exposure to a successful immersion program in a public school.

And finally, as the District works hard to recruit into vacant staffing positions we're pleased to announce that we have recently filled the key administrative positions of Principal Ałak School and Director Student Services. We continue to advertise and seek new ways to recruit new staff and will continue to do so through the summer and beyond.

#### **Strategic goal 4: Financial and operational Stewardship**

Pedagogy Domain: Financial & Operational Stewardship

At our work session the Board were presented with a draft of the proposed strategic planning document that will be finalized with the Board at their retreat in July. This is an exciting moment for the administration and we look forward to amplifying the work we have been focused on for the past two years with a clear new 5 year road map from our Board.

Also this month the Finance Director and Superintendent appeared at budget hearings before the NSB Assembly. The hard work of our Board and District staff over the past two years was commended by many members of the Assembly and we are extremely grateful to the Mayor for confirming a local contribution for FY24-25 of \$38,766,371. This represents a match of the total local contribution provided last year by the NSB which included \$1.9M of additional revenues received in July 2023. During the hearing the Mayor acknowledged that the amount recommended for FY25 is \$2M lower than the request by the District and indicated that as the fiscal year progresses and additional revenues are more clear, the NSB will look for further opportunities to collaborate with the School District. The Mayor also noted that his office is committed to continuing supplemental support for Educational Initiatives with support levels to be determined upon completion of signed memorandums. Following that presentation the BO is now preparing the final budget for consideration by the Board before June 30.

As the Board heard during the highlighted department report, Maintenance and Operations are knee deep reviewing, clearing backlogs and re-shaping the Department to deliver a higher level of service and meet the needs of our students and staff in buildings. The administration is excited to have our new Director of M&O bringing a fresh set of eyes and a new approach to many areas of operations while maintaining a respectful recognition of past practices that have worked.

The IT Department is pleased to report significant advancements in our district's internet connectivity. Historically, our district has faced challenges with internet speeds, ranking among the slowest in the state. This year, transformative steps have been taken to address this issue, significantly enhancing our digital infrastructure.

With the implementation of Starlink LEO satellites and the enactment of the State of Alaska Broadband Assistance Grant 100 (BAG100), our schools are now in a position to access internet speeds of 100Mbps. This will mark a fourfold bandwidth increase for most of our schools, ensuring a robust and efficient digital learning environment.

#### **Conclusion:**

As our administration approaches the end of year two, there's strong evidence of a foundation being built and things turning around in our District. This year has seen growth in attendance and a clear direction from our Board for more in FY25.

We've seen growth in many areas of learning and once again, a clear plan is in place to ensure that growth increases further. The Iñupiaq language is back in our schools and our community are back in our schools, sharing their wisdom and getting more involved in their student's

education. We have created pathways to certification and are reviewing our classified compensation packages to try and recruit more local staff.

As we've made clear for two years, there's rigor required to get us to a standard of education that the parents of this community have been seeking for their children. But this is a community that understands hard work and the need for us to work together for success. To get where we need to go will require partnerships between parents and the district, stakeholders and funders.

Thank you to our Board for continuing to provide us with the direction and support we need to operationalize your mission. To our communities, our parents, guardians, families and partners district wide, thank you for continuing to support your students to grow and thank you also for supporting us as we continue to move our district in a positive direction. Quyanaqpak and Atautchimukta!