

Superintendent's Report
Denali Borough School District
Thursday, September 17th, 2026 - Cantwell

Appreciations/Congratulations

I want to give a shout out to all of the members of the Denali Borough District that made the start of the 2026-2027 school year a success! Tri-Valley started with Mr. Frisbie leading the charge, as Mr. Gurley dealt the first case of new school year illness, with almost no impact to the calm and efficient start to the school year. All four of our schools have adjusted to staffing losses and with the help of all of the people involved we have kept education for our students moving forward. This would not have been possible without the help of some of the members of the DBSD educational community.

Thank you for supporting DBSD! -

Sandi Trombower - Filled the temporary vacancy at Anderson School

Emma Blom - Working with the Tri-Valley Special Services program

Katelyn MacIver - Teaching in Special Services program

Katie Stone - Supporting the DBSD Pre-K Grant program

I also want to recognize the district staff that attended the start of the year in-service days to get the 2026-2027 school year off to a great start. Especially to Karen Martin, who with help from Anna Switzer, established the continued Denali Learning process that will show some exciting "expeditions" for our students and staff this year! I am really looking forward to seeing our teacher and students' educational imagination!

Finances

We have received official word on the legislative one-time BSA funding (\$630,000) that became official on August 31st after state oil prices remained high. We also were notified that the energy fund grant money will also arrive this month (\$140,000) to be a stop gap for the increase of energy costs for school districts. Denali Borough School District spent far more on energy than it will receive this year but the reimbursement will offset the overrun of energy costs that occurred in 2025-2026.

Currently with the additional \$700,000 added to the 2026-2027 budget we tentatively have erased the anticipated deficit predicted for this year!

The DBSD audit will take place the first week of October and the Business Department is deep in preparation to provide advance documents for the remote audit. The ability to

have a remote audit is not only a savings to the district but also a sign that the DBSD Business Department is considered “high trust and low risk” which deserves recognition!

Facilities

Curtis has been working on officially closing out the summer CIP projects and submitting documentation to the state for final reimbursement. This includes both the funded projects (Electrical and Septic Upgrades at Tri-Valley)

The possibility of funding generators at Anderson and Cantwell is still active and with Alaska crude prices currently north of \$100 a barrel the possibility that prices will remain at an \$80 average is still a real possibility. (Decision - December 31, 2026)

Strategic Planning

The district is continuing the process with Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA) with a simple wide-reach survey going out this week with three initial questions. This is an early opportunity to see what the DBSD Educational Community wants to see as a focus in the new plan. Encourage everyone to participate in the survey!! Karen Martin has been added to the development team and has been essential in providing ACSA with longevity information over years of EL/Denali Learning through previous Strategic Plans. This project will continue through the 2026-2027 school year, with the development of the plan to take place in stages over the winter of 2026 and the spring of 2027 for board acceptance with roll-out to start the 2027-2028 school year.

During 2026-2027 we will continue to use and update the current DBSD Strategic Plan and Denali Learning.

Legislative

No new legislation has been passed/veto overridden since the last meeting

State Assessment Results

Alaska Department of Education and Early Development has released the Spring 2026 AKSTAR and Alaska Science Assessment (ASA) results broken down by district and individual schools. Note that not all of the results can be seen due to low numbers in some schools/groups. Results can be found at: [AKSTAR](#) and [ASA](#) - Student reports will be sent by schools to parents this month.

Personnel

We are hoping that both our Pre-K instructor and our TVS Special Services teacher will arrive in the first week of October. One is just waiting on final paperwork and the other we hope will have a final visa appointment later this month. Teena has been working on travel and meeting with AERRC to provide appointments and necessary documents in Anchorage before flying to Fairbanks and on to Healy!

Introducing New Staff:

Joseph Kaiser - Anderson Secondary Teacher

Samantha Frazer - Cantwell School Long Term Sub Pre-K/Teacher's Assistant