Special Education Board Report
Date: 11/04/2026
To: Nome City Public Schools Board of Directors
From: Tricia Shambach, Coordinator of Special Education

1. **Executive Summary**

The Special Education Department continues to focus on improving academic and functional life skills and outcomes for all students. The department believes in providing quality opportunities for learning and growth while maintaining compliance with state and federal guidelines.

2. **Snapshot**

Total Active IEP's: Embrace 145
Active referrals/Evaluations: 9
Triennual Re-evals: 8
Annual IEP's: 76
**This data reflects the total number of students currently being served in Special Education who already have IEP's open in Embrace, note the number of students does fluctuate based on exiting of services and newly referred and identified students throughout the month.

Continued professional development using the new system Embrace is ongoing. Ms. Shambach attended an afternoon training on Embrace at the DEED/CASE Special Education Director Training in Anchorage on Thursday October 1st.

3. **Student Demographics**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	11
Early Childhood Developmental Delay (ECDD)	14
Emotional Disturbance (ED)	12
Cognitive Impairment (CI)	2
Multiple Disabilities (MD)	2
Orthopedic Impairment (OI)	1

Other Health Impairment (OHI)	5
Speech or Language Delay (SL)	25
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	74

4. **Discipline**

Manifestation Determinations: 0
Suspensions: 3
Expulsions: 0
Physical Restraints: 0

5. **Staffing Updates**

High School: 2 Teachers, 2 paraprofessionals
Middle School: 2 Teachers, 1 paraprofessional
ACSA: 1 half time Teacher, 1 paraprofessional
NES: 5 Teachers, 1 Long Term Sub, 4 paraprofessionals

Welcome Kierra Scott, a new paraprofessional at NES-currently completing the onboarding process!!!

Vacancies: 1 paraprofessional-NES, 1 Teacher currently filled by our long term substitute

The District continues to keep jobs posted on the district website, Nome Post, and advertisements have been posted in town.

6. **Parent and Community Engagement**

Special Education teachers worked alongside general education teachers to schedule and coordinate parent teacher conferences. Ms. Luchie Papalid reported 100% attendance at the elementary school in the self-contained special education classroom.

There are no Family nights planned by the Special Education Department for the month of November.

7. **Professional Development**

Embrace-the Special Education staff are demonstrating an increased proficiency with writing evaluation reports and IEP's

IEP writing and presentation-The Special Education staff will receive training in late November on IEP presentation. Having staff present the IEP in the same sequence and style creates a predictable meeting for parents from one year to the next.

Special Education Service Agency(SESA)- SESA personnel continue to schedule site visits and training for staff. SESA has also sent items from their lending library including curriculum, learning games, and a trial app for an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) which is being utilized on an IPad. SESA has also been asked to present some professional development this school year with the schedule upcoming. Scott Hotaling-Emotional Disturbance Specialist will be on site November 9 and 13

Special Education Directors Training-Ms. Shambach attended the DEED/CASE Director Training from October 26-29th. This training included presentations from Stone Soup Group, SESA, Embrace, Help me Grow, Current Legal Updates, the new Special Education handbook and several breakout and networking sessions. See attached Agenda for more information.

Eleanor Vertel, Autism consultant-Mrs. Vertel continues to provide training, support for classroom management and engagement for staff. Additionally she provides weekly teletherapy sessions for students with the educational diagnosis of Autism. Mrs. Vertel provides engaging virtual sessions addressing social emotional topics such as friendships, behavioral supports such as explaining the "autistic brain" to students, and guidance navigating the sensory needs that many students with Autism experience.

8. **Related Service Personnel**

There are no scheduled on site visits until January. Our related service personnel continue to provide services and support virtually to students and staff.

9. **Challenges**

**The district continues to accept applications and conduct interviews for a driver for the Special Transportation van. The am run pays $75/day and the pm run pays $100 per day. The district decided to increase the pm van run pay based on the number of students and time it takes to complete, and to incentivize the position. We have had applicants but none that align with the core requirements. As of Nov. 4, 2026 the district has received one contender that meets requirements and an interview has been offered. The district is hoping this applicant will begin driving as early as November 9th.

**Our special education long term substitute at NES will only be working until December 18th, leaving a vacancy for a specialized classroom. The district has discussed advertising on other platforms such as Indeed.

10. General Updates

**Infant Learning Program-Ms. Shambach met with Patty Olmstead, the Infant Learning representative for Norton Sound during a work session at the DEED/CASE Director Training in Anchorage on October 29th. This was an opportunity to discuss and finalize our Interagency Transition Agreement between Norton Sound Infant Learning Program and Nome Public Schools. This agreement outlines the state and federal requirements for the transition of children receiving services from the infant learning program 0-3 years and into a pre-school program 3-5 years. It provides guidelines and the responsibilities of both agencies. This agreement is agreed upon and signed between agencies every three years. This agreement remains valid until 2029.

**Transition-The Special Education department continues to research local resources for students in transition out of high school and into post secondary education, employment, and independent living. Ms. Peters at the high school hosted a Department of Vocational Rehabilitation orientation meeting for students the week of October 19th. There will be a follow up meeting November 13th between the Vocational Rehabilitation caseworker and Nome Special Education staff to discuss what programs are available to assist students as they transition out of high school.

**Ms. Shambach has been working closely with building administrators to put a proper referral process in place. NES currently has a working referral process and the high school process should be finalized by November 13th.