

MEMORANDUM

TO: NWABSD Board of Education
Members

DATE: January 02, 2025

FR: Office of the Superintendent

SUBJECT: Iñupiaq Programs
Report

Paulette Aniġayuk Schuerch, Director of the Iñupiaq Programs Department, reports on the following:

2019 Task Force Report

A task force on the Iñupiaq language and culture, which concluded in 2019, submitted a final report to the Board of Education with several recommendations:

Separation of Curriculum Department and Iñupiaq Programs

NWABSD created its first Iñupiaq Programs Department to develop the Language and Cultural programs further. It is no longer under the direction of the Curriculum Department.

Iñupiat Iłitsutri PD

Every Monday, from 9:30 to 11:30, all the Iñupiaq Teachers meet for Professional Development. They are writing their own Lesson Organizers, much like the lesson plans the teachers prepare. The organizers include processes for sewing, telling stories, and daily routines. It includes what Iñupiaq values they are working under (may consist of more than one value), like Domestic Skills, Hunter Success, Sharing, and Respect for Elders. These lessons use vocabulary words and phrases and are translated into Iñupiaq.

In November 2025 the Iñupiaq held its first Iñupiaq In-service for all the teachers. They were happy to share with their colleagues across the region. Lorena Williams was available to teach phrases and to provide Elders Advice.

The Spring Semester Chukchi College is offering a 1 credit class focusing on Iñupiaq Verbs, this was offered to all Iñupiaq Teachers if they are interested.

Last Semester we started bi-weekly words and phrases District-wide. We provided a list of words to start using with all students, Ii, Naagga, Suli, Tavra, Nakrruq and Uvva. Every two weeks or so all District employees should be using these words with all students. Once students/staff return from Winter break another simple set of words will go out. It is neat when Directors use these words in meetings

Physical/Earth Science Curriculum

The Administration re-established a Taskforce to focus on place-based Physical/Earth science and will move on to Biology when completed. There are four science teachers from Shungnak, Noatak, Buckland, and Selawik. They met with local knowledge bearers from Ambler and Kotzebue. They will be completed with this first step prior to the end of this school year and pilot the class next Fall, in August 2026.

Inventory

An inventory was conducted of all material for the Iñupiaq program that Tatqavin began several decades ago. There is a lot of information and to have them cataloged, it'll be amazing what material we must turn into books and teaching lessons. In partnership, Aqqaluk Trust will be visiting the district office to review what we have to potentially utilize to build curriculum.

Ilisaqativut in Nome, Alaska

This past Fall Nome hosted a one-week program for Ilisaqativut between the North Slope, Northwest Arctic and Bering Straits regions. Three Iñupiaq teachers, and several community members and Elders attended the well participated intensive program. The next one will be hosted by our region and Aqqaluk Trust is wanting to sponsor a two-week program, to be held the last week in July and the first week in August.

National Indian Education Conference – Spokane, WA

The National Indian Education Association sponsored a conference in Spokane, Washington. Each day there were breakout sessions. The focus was on the program the Salish Tribe of Spokane began with the last two fluent language speakers, they met with the Maori people of New Zealand and built their program where they can flourish. This year they graduated nine new fluent speakers. A husband and wife lived with the material grandparents until they became fluent speakers and grew from there. For several decades we've been saying how our language was taken from us and was forced to speak English. I appreciate that they believe "when you walk into the room, the healing already begun", this is so telling and ingenious. Rather than teaching from memorizing the Iñupiaq Language our focus will be on place-based learning and learn from our Elders and carrying on our traditions by understanding them.

Language Immersion Conference - Spokane

The Salish Tribe is hosting a two-day language immersion session in February. The Aqqaluk Trust and I will be attending this. We look forward to learning more.

Board Report

The committee met April 18–19, 2019 for the last time. Participants were Terri Aviñaq Walker, Marie Kuutuuq Nelson-Gregg, Alice Iriquraq Melton-Barr, Christina Qaiyaan Fields, Hannah Paniyauq Loon, Pearl Artanayiq Greist, Raymond Qaliag Woods, Lance Qalurag Kramer.

Items Accomplished

- Inupiaq Learning Framework review – Attached is a final draft. It will be worked on to be finalized for the start of the school year.
- Immersion finalized – A copy is attached.
- Scope and Sequence reviewed – A copy is attached.
- District office Staff recommendations:

Community outreach – A call for volunteers to assist instructors.

Elders Council – Provide a report to council of the Language Task Force and make recommendation for Elders guidance, presence and involvement in the classroom.

Youth Leaders and Young adults – Language revitalization awareness.

Provide Staff Development:

Daily schedule – focus on Fluency and Dialogue (student to student, teacher to student, student to teacher), involve songs, movement, all senses, and emotions in lower grades.

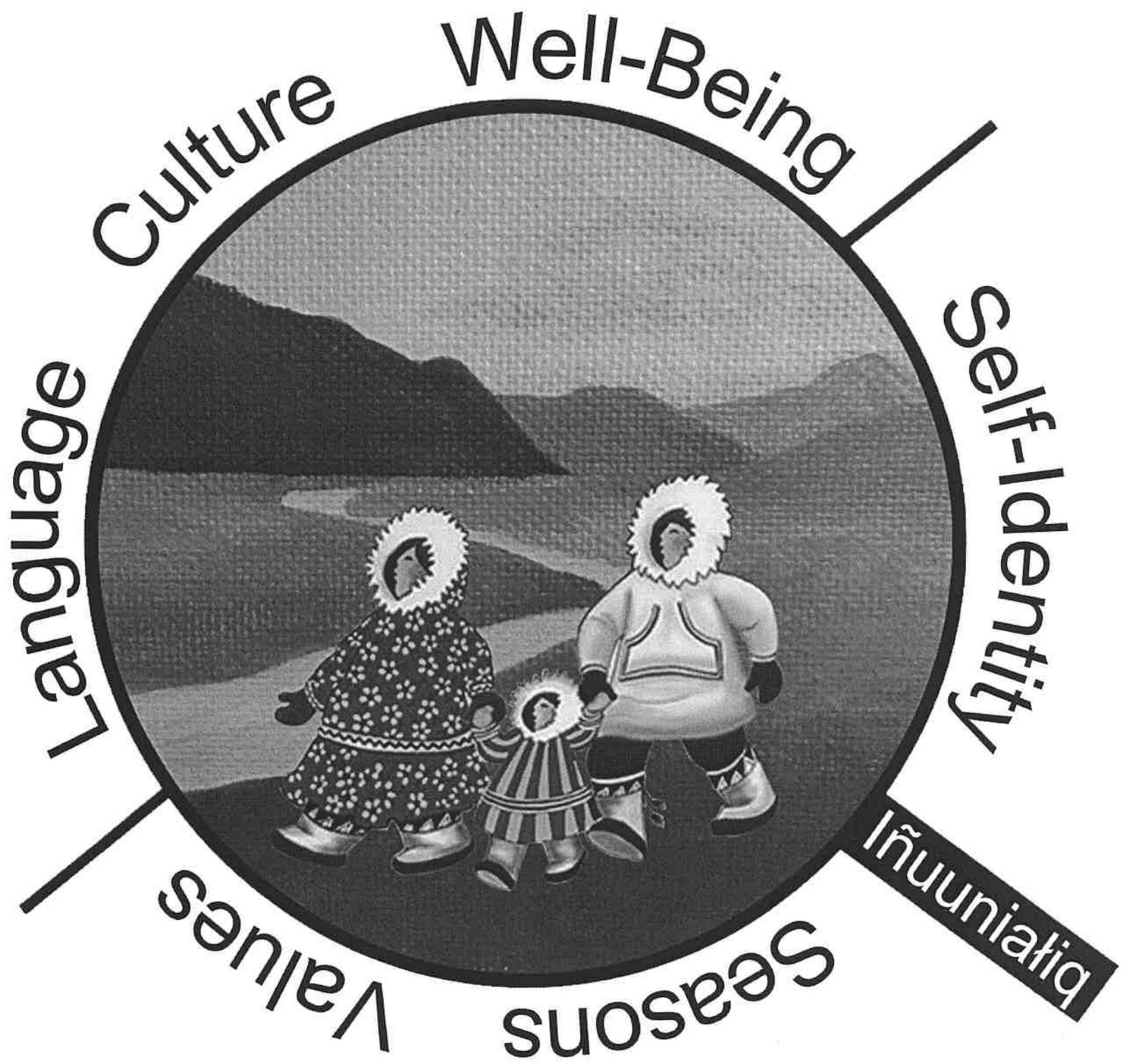
Prepare, plan, review and reinforce lessons taught.

Homework – involve parent participation.

Student files – Keep a file on students personal growth.

Board Recommendations

- Request from Kotzebue IRA to adopt the Nikaitchuat curriculum for Pre/K students. The program is student centered in language. It is all about the identity of a child and focuses on the whole person (i.e. Senses, values, emotion, spirituality, culture, physical and social well-being).
- Increase instructional time across all grade levels.
- Provide funds for Professional Development of Bilingual Instructors.
- Build a Teacher training program for Bilingual Instructors.
- Call to Action of Sovereign Nations (local IRA's) the importance of language revitalization.
- Call to Action of local organizations/corporations to partner together for language revitalization.
- Add fluent speakers (Elders) to be available in classrooms (request funding from Elders council).
- Work to build culturally relevant schools to support vs hinder – See attached.



Ukiaksraaq Early Fall	Ukiaksraaq Fall	Ukiuq Winter	Upingaksraaq Early Spring	Upingaksraaq Spring	Auraq Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunting & Food Gathering (Berry Picking) • Songs • Cultural Skills • Storytelling • Beading • Traditional Plants/Medicine • Knowledge of Family Tree • Weather & Geography • Tanning • Sewing (Machine/Skin) • Traditional Healing • Celebration & Games • Caribou Collaring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunting & Food Gathering (Preservation) • Songs • Cultural Skills • Storytelling • Beading • Traditional Plants/Medicine • Knowledge of Family Tree • Weather, Geography & Survival • Tanning • Sewing (Machine/Skin) • Traditional Healing • Celebration & Games • Ice Fishing • Net Setting • Winter Survival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunting & Food Gathering • Songs • Cultural Skills • Storytelling • Beading • Traditional Plants/Medicine • Knowledge of Family Tree • Weather, Geography & Survival • Tanning • Sewing (Machine/Skin) • Celebration & Games • Winter Survival • Trapping • Ice Fishing • Net Setting • Winter Survival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunting & Food Gathering • Songs • Cultural Skills • Storytelling • Beading • Traditional Plants/Medicine • Knowledge of Family Tree • Weather, Geography • Tanning • Sewing (Machine/Skin) • Environment • Games • Animals • Winter Survival • Trapping • Ice Fishing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunting & Food Gathering • Songs • Cultural Skills • Storytelling • Beading • Traditional Plants/Medicine • Knowledge of Family Tree • Weather, Geography • Tanning • Sewing (Machine/Skin) • Medicine • Environment • Games • Animals • Winter Survival • Trapping • Ice Fishing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunting & Food Gathering (Berry Picking) • Songs • Cultural Skills • Storytelling • Beading • Traditional Plants/Medicine • Knowledge of Family Tree • Weather, Geography • Tanning • Sewing (Machine/Skin) • Medicine • Environment • Games • Animals • Winter Survival • Ice Fishing • Net Setting

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mudshark Traps		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Net Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Winter Survival• Overland Survival Trip (High School)	
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All Inupiaq Values will be integrated into the themes.

Inupiaq Values: *Knowledge of Family Tree, Love of Children, Avoid Conflict, Knowledge of Language, Cooperation, Family Roles, Sharing, Hard Work, Humor, Humility, Respect for Elders, Spirituality, Respect for Others, Respect for Nature, Domestic Skills, Responsibility to Tribe, Hunter Success.*

May 1996

Contributors: Agnik, Siikauraq, Aqpik, Misrak, Nigrugruk, Bobbe, Aliitchak, Anallaq, Avinnaq, Nanqaaq, Kappiasuk, Nasruk

Inuuniaq						
	PreK-2nd grade Observation with guided practice	3rd - 5th grade Observation with guided practice	6th - 8th grade Independent practice with supervision	9th - 12 grade Teaching others with supervision		
Fish	Identify types of local fish, their parts, and tools used to gather and prepare Scale and wash, hang to dry	Identify types of local fish in the region and tools used to gather and prepare Know when, where, and how to catch Catch, process, prepare, preserve,	Know when, where, and how to catch Catch, process, prepare, preserve, share	Know when, where, and how to catch Catch, process, prepare, preserve, share		
Plants and Berries	Identify edible plants/berries, their parts and tools used to gather Know when, where, and how to pick. Pick and share	Identify edible, non-edible plants/berries, their parts and tools used to gather and prepare Know when, where, and how to pick. Pick, Prepare, share	Identify edible, non-edible and medicinal plants/berries, their parts, and tools used to gather and prepare. Know when, where, and how to pick. pick, prepare, preserve, share	Identify edible, non-edible and medicinal plants/berries, their parts, and tools used to gather and prepare. Know when, where, and how to pick. pick, prepare, preserve, share		
Birds and animals	Identify the bird/animal, their parts, and tools used to harvest Assist with preparation and preservation of birds and animals.	Identify the bird/animal, their parts and tools used to harvest. Assist with preparation and preservation of birds and animals.	Identify the bird/animal, their parts and tools used to harvest. Catch, process, prepare, preserve, share Know the uses of the whole bird/animal	Identify the bird/animal, their parts and tools used to harvest. Catch, process, prepare, preserve, share Know the uses of the whole		
Safety	Know basic survival skills. Observe and identify seasonal weather conditions.	Know local place names. Know basic survival skills. Observe and identify seasonal weather conditions. Know local dangerous areas and conditions.	Know local and regional place names. Observe and identify seasonal weather conditions. Know local and regional dangerous areas and conditions. Know Survival skills for all conditions; Know the survival gear to prepare and pack.	Know local and regional place names. Observe and identify seasonal weather conditions. Know local and regional dangerous areas and conditions. Know Survival skills for all conditions. Know the survival gear to prepare and pack.		
Lifeskills:	Roles and responsibilities of family members to the family and tribe.	Roles and responsibilities of family members to the family and tribe.	Roles and responsibilities of family members to the family and tribe. (community involvement)	Roles and responsibilities of family members to the family and tribe. (Ikayugnaqsikman - when help is needed) (community involvement)		
Inupiaq Values	Learn to live and practice the Inupiaq Values.		Learn to live and practice the Inupiaq Values. Be aware of other cultural values.			
Self-Identity	Knowledge (deep) of family tree, Knowledge of your origin (where you are from/land place). Knowledge of your tribe. Knowledge of tribal/family styles, Namesake awareness, awareness of your feelings/emotions.					
Festivities	Celebrate and share through community gatherings with song, dance, games, potluck, and stories.					
Inupiaq Language	PreK/K-Be able to speak core words relating to the lesson. 1st/2nd - Be able to speak, read and write simple sentence structure.	Be able to speak, read and write fluently.				