

Administrative Report

Chief School Administrator - David Vadiveloo

Utuqqanaavut kisuiġukkitka – sivulliit utuqqanaallu, paŋmami utuqqanaagiravullu, utuqqanaaġuġumaaqtuallu. Quyanaaġitka paŋmamuraglaan aullatimmagit savaktivut iliññaqtuagiravullu. Nalunaigunmigiga sulii iñuuniaguuutilaaqput savaguutilaaqpullu nunaniññi Iñupiat. Igliqtitchirauvluta miñuaqtuġviññik kamasuuttaġigikput ikayuiyumiñaqapta tamatkunani nunani.

Members of the Board and members of the North Slope community, on my recent trip to Atqasuk I had the great honor of spending time with Elder and Iļisaurri, Mrs. Ethel Burke. The time spent listening to her reminded me yet again of the extraordinary wealth of knowledge we have in our communities and how urgently we must act to integrate this knowledge and wisdom into our learning systems.

So, we begin this Admin report by acknowledging our Elders, past, present and emerging. We thank them for continuing to provide guidance and wisdom to our District, our staff members and all the students that make up our educational community.

We also acknowledge that we stand on the sovereign lands of the Iñupiaq people. We are proud as a District to be trusted to serve the community on these lands.

This past month has been busy with February testing, basketball regionals, niqipiaq in Iñupiaq Classrooms (as we prepare to introduce niqipiaq to our school meals!), further meetings to plan for immersion classes next year, more students attending Alaska Excel and of course, recruiting! We are just a few months away from graduating a new group of students and a few months away from welcoming a new batch of staff – lots of exciting change. So with that in mind I'd like to present to the Board and our community the following update on District operations mapped against our Strategic goals and objectives.

Strategic goal 1: Student success

Our featured department this month will be Curriculum and Instruction, so to avoid duplicating the details of their presentation I'll note that our students have been busy participating in testing programs that will provide important benchmarking for many of the standards and essential growth points that were not able to be assessed during the 2 years of covid. I also note the great outcomes of our Battle of the Books teams and send a District thanks and congratulations to all who participated and all who organized and coached. Numerous teams went forward to compete at the State competition and all represented strongly. These events provide memories for our students and grow bonds not only with their fellow students but with education and learning that will serve them for a lifetime. Thanks again to ASTAC for their support for this important celebration of our students reading and literacy skills.

Speaking of lifelong memories and fellowship, the 1A basketball regionals and Prom took place in Atqasuk this past month and all reports confirm it was a great success. We're proud of all our students who represented their villages and we send our congratulations to all the teams for their fierce and fair competitiveness. When all was said and done, it was Anaktuvuk Pass who triumphed in both the boys and girls competitions – a great achievement for AKP and a great tournament by all teams. A special thanks to Principal Shaffer, all the staff at Atqasuk, our interim AD Mr Hanson and our travel and procurement staff for organizing and hosting such a successful regional tournament. Special thanks also to our Mayor and the Assembly for continuing to provide the supplemental funds for the travel of our teams across the Slope for these events. We will all be cheering for AKP as they head to the State championships in 2 weeks. Congratulations to all our

sport and academic teams this month including our wrestlers and cheerleaders – you’ve done us proud.

I’m pleased to report that this past month the postings for District wide Student Council were distributed and we look forward to a strong council forming from across the villages. This council will be announced at the next Board meeting.

Director Judkins and I met again with our past immersion program teachers this month and we were also joined by a couple of the Iñupiaq staff who will be joining the immersion program next year. This is part of an ongoing planning process as we ensure we are building on the strength of the past program and planning for our new program in 2023/24.

Thanks to the hard work of our students and communities, 3 of our schools are no longer on school improvement status. Nunamiut School, Barrow High School, and Kali School have all met the State criteria and we want to congratulate them for their work in moving off this status. This movement is based on data from the last school year. Unfortunately, Ipalook Elementary has moved from Universal status to targeted status but we are confident they will resume their universal status in the coming year.

Unfortunately, this month there has also been a drop in student attendance across all sites except Kiita. The drop in most sites has been marginal and is reflective of the increase in cases of covid over the past month. However, we have set our target attendance at an 80% minimum across all sites and we will keep working with our students and families to achieve that goal.

To complete our student success section we have another four students currently in Anchorage participating with Alaska Excel. Two of the students are going through the fixed wing pilot program so we hope that as charter flights become more and more expensive, both of them will go on to complete their training and come back to fly for the District! We also have 7 students who have submitted to attend RAHI (Rural Alaska Honors Institute) this year.

Finally, we have over 100 students from 9 of our 11 school sites registered to take the ACT college entrance exam. This is a wonderful statement by our students of their intent to pursue education beyond high school and we applaud and encourage all of them.

Strategic goal 2: Community engagement

M&O Director Fischer and the site architect were scheduled to fly to Kaktovik on February 23rd, but due to weather in the interior they were not able to make it out of Prudhoe Bay. As a result they conducted a meeting with the community via zoom and the conceptual design for the new site was approved by the community. This an exciting next step forward and those documents will be before you for approval at the regular meeting.

As mentioned earlier, my visit to Atqasuk this month allowed me to visit another community and meet with families and staff. Many of the challenges we face as a District were evident during the visit including our staffing shortage, our student engagement and our infrastructure support. But importantly, many of the things that make us strong as a community and school district were also on display including the remarkable foundation that Rod and Patti Lloyd provide to our early childhood students, the powerful presence of our Elder and language speaker Ethel Burke, the passion of our counselor Robyn Askew Perkins and the enthusiasm of Iñupiaq staff and community members who wish to get on the certification track to become teachers. These trips allow me to hear from community first hand and speak with students and staff to understand their needs and their hopes. Next week I will be in Kali and I look forward to spending time with community, students and staff.

The school climate connectedness survey is now open so we look forward to seeing some growth in engagement after a period of stability. However, we are also focusing on recruiting more staff under ESSER III grant funds into that SEL space to provide better supports for our students. Recent and scheduled meetings with ASNA are part of our Districts intentional push for more depth and engagement in our partnerships and the ASNA event at IPK on the weekend as well as their recent trips to villages and programs in our schools reflect that ongoing commitment.

In response to their recent targeted status, IPK launched a strong School Improvement initiative this month, setting up a series of tables over a period of weeks to allow parents and staff to discuss strengths and areas for improvement at the school during the parent teacher conferences and at other times. Thanks to all the parents who have taken the time to share their thoughts and contribute to an open dialogue designed to strengthen the school and its delivery of education. Given the success of the initiative we are now planning to make this a District wide initiative.

Strategic goal 3: Staff success

Staff success this month is focused on recruiting and certification plans for local teachers.

Exciting news for the District is that we have recruited and confirmed new site administrators for all our villages. Using the new District recruitment process for site administrators, the candidates were interviewed on zoom by admin and community members, flown in to meet with and be interviewed by the community in person and then approved or non-approved for hire. The new approach gives all our villages a strong sense of ownership over the process and builds an early connection with the new administrators. New Administrators will fill positions at Nuiqsut, Anaktuvuk Pass, Wainwright and Tikigaq.

A new Principal has also be appointed to BHS. Dr Charles TenBroeck has successfully completed the same community and administration interview process and will assume that role next year. We congratulate all successful candidates and look forward to the energy and passion they will bring to their new roles. The District now has only a few site admin appointments to focus on: HMS Principal and Ipalook Elementary Principal.

An HR team attended the Anchorage ATP on February 24 and were successful in hiring two new teachers, as well as making great contacts with four more. The department still plans to attend the Whitworth Job Fair in Spokane in mid-March, as well as the Tacoma Job Fair at the end of March. We are currently developing a targeted recruiting campaign for the lowest paying states in the US and will coordinate college visits to Schools of Education across the country and establish relationships for future recruiting efforts. We are also working with Mr. Lamar who is now in Texas and has delivered over 25 long term subs to us over the past months.

Certification programs for local teachers must become a core focus for our District to ensure sustainability and local knowledge in our schools. The administration has met several times with UAF to look at their 'Grow your own' Program and in mid-April they will send 4 of their team to Utqiaġvik to meet with us to help develop our Iḷisaurriġuqta program.

In broader staff training, we have started running the new District Pedagogy sessions for staff ahead of further planned PD and training. Also, on February 24th Iḷisaġvik College provided NCCER Training and we

had four CTE Teachers participate. NCCER (National Center for Construction Education and Research) provides standardized training and industry-recognized credentialing with specializations in over 70 craft areas. Also, Eric Thul (AKP) and John Turnure (AIN) came to Utqiaġvik to attend a boiler training put on by Iḷisaġvik, and other Plant Managers will attend the same training in the future.

Finally, we close by congratulating the State's recently appointed Commissioner for Education, Ms. Susan McKenzie. Ms. McKenzie presented to the Board at the February meeting to discuss the Reads Act implementation. A former teacher at Ipalook Elementary we like to think her career success was forged here on the North Slope! We wish the Commissioner the best in her new role.

Strategic goal 4: Financial and operational Stewardship

The Business office has spent the month preparing for the preliminary budget to be introduced to the Board for approval at the regular session. This preliminary budget will be presented in preparation for the NSB Assembly Budget hearings.

Mr. Niedermeyer has been supporting us by working with Grants Manager Brian Krosschell to discuss our Federal Impact Aid grant with the Department and the implications of recent reductions in Impact Aid. As we clarify the changing landscape in Impact Aid the Finance department is working to establish what the reductions will mean for the District and what percentage of the reduction can be offset with the Departments 'hold harmless' provisions. These are critical conversations and we will continue to keep the Board updated.

We are excited to have Tammy Stromberg onboarding as our new Director of Finance. Ms. Stromberg comes with a wealth of experience and knowledge of school district operations. We are pleased to have some time for her to transition into the new role and ensure a smooth handover from Lila Peterson.

M&O Director Fischer and her team continue to work with CIPM on the current capital projects and getting those completed and closed out. All contracts, bids and projects are a priority but as the District has pressed to get the Kaktovik project back on track we have directed resources in the most targeted way possible. Vehicle replacements for the villages are out to bid. The design contract for Ałak School Renovation is next to go out to bid. BHS Phase II is currently waiting for the contracts to be executed in order for the project to begin.

Our Plant Managers and Maintenance staff have been working hard to maintain our facilities and housing during the cold months by addressing the numerous freeze ups throughout the month of February. Our plumber travelled to Nuiqsut to assist with boiler and summer project complications. Our Plant Manager received assistance in Wainwright to get the boiler there up and running and keep the school warm during the cold snap.

M&O staff are busy also compiling the information required for the upcoming Preventative Maintenance audit by the State DEED. Food Services have been addressing the corrective action plan items presented by the State during their audit visit and are also moving forward with steps and protocols for native foods in our schools.

Finally, our building leader Charlie Gifford was required to take unexpected leave from Nunamiut School and we thank Kathleen Fisher from C&I for stepping in at very short notice to keep the building and operations running smoothly.

Conclusion:

With recruiting, testing, regionals and state championships, there's a lot happening. Once again I thank all our community members, families and Elders for providing their guidance and support to us. I want to thank our students and families for their commitment to learning and growth whether it is in tests or in sports. Organizational reform is an exciting time but it can be a very big lift. I believe the direction our Board is taking us in has placed us in the best possible place to begin the long road back from our staffing shortages and you are pressing us to deliver as is needed. Our plans are comprehensive and much needed for our students and our District. So we will keep moving forward – repairing, rebuilding and revitalizing. Atautchikun!