



## NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Robyn Burke, President  
Members of the School Board

**THROUGH:** Tracy Mulvenon, Assistant Superintendent TM

**FROM:** Tennessee Judkins, Director of Iñupiaq Education TJ

**DATE:** August 09, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Employment of Relatives –  
Rachel Najinaaq Edwardson

**Memo No. SB24-010**  
(Action Item)

---

#### NSBSD Strategic Plan Goal:

1.4 Iñupiaq Language & Culture: Implement language and culture programs to revitalize the Inupiaq language.

1.6 Place-Based Learning: Implement place-based units across academic subjects including life-skills, connection to the land and experiential learning in the field.

2.2 Community in the School: Include Elders, parents and community members in school academics and activities and utilize community resources and expertise in learning.

3.0 Staff Success: Strengthen the recruitment and retention of highly effective staff and inspire more Iñupiaq teachers and administrators.

3.2 Homegrown Workforce: Support the systems that inspire, develop, and recruit local/homegrown teachers, administrators, and staff.

3.4 Staff Cultural Integration: Provide cultural training and hands-on experiences for teachers and Principals to enhance cultural understanding and integration.

4.0 Financial & Operational Stewardship: Effectively employ our operational and financial resources to support the long-term stability of the district.

#### NSBSD Policy Manual:

Board Policy 4112.8/4212.8/4312.8 Employment of Relatives: ... An immediate family member of the Superintendent may be employed by the district with written approval of the Board. (AS.14.14.140)

Board Policy 2300, Conflict of Interest: The School Board recognizes that certain positions may involve an employee's participation in decisions affecting his/her financial interests. Employees shall refrain from participating in official district financial decisions in which they have substantial financial interest.

#### Issue Summary:

In SY22-23, the NSBSD Administration started working with elders and language and cultural experts who have previously worked for the District and who understand and support the urgent need to address the learning outcomes of all of our students. As we continue these efforts with the implementation of the NSBSD Pedagogy, implementation of the Iñupiaq Learning Framework and Mapkuqput Iñuuniagnigmi into our school district, the Iñupiaq Education

Department is seeking to contract with Rachel Nanjinaaq Edwardson to support, enhance, and add to the repository of culture-based curriculum at the NSBSD, as well as supporting several other district initiatives like Iḷisaurriḡuqta (Let’s Become Teachers – Grow Your Own program) Uqautiluḡa Iḡupiatun (Speak Iḡupiaq To Me – Iḡupiaq Language Immersion Program).

**Background:**

In her work with the NSBSD, she has committed time to the development and production of the *History of the Iḡupiat Documentary and Curriculum Series* which currently include three films: The Duck-In, Nipaa Iḡtqusipta: The Voice of our Spirit, and Project Chariot. All three of these films are used in the district alongside culture-based units which include teacher guides and student resources.

Prior to this administration, Rachel Nanjinaaq Edwardson has worked with the NSBSD and the Iḡupiaq Education Department in various capacities for almost 20 years. She is the daughter of Debby and George Edwardson, grand-daughter of Edward Edwardson and Elizabeth Ahmaogak Thibedeau and Sue and Paul Foss, and the great-grand-daughter of Roy and Isabel Ahmaogak and Dora Inuuraq and Anton Edwardson. Nanjinaaq is the wife of Superintendent David Vadiveloo and together they are raising three Iḡupiaq children within the District.

Born and raised in the Arctic, Nanjinaaq’s Iḡupiaq, Sami and Norwegian ancestors continue to provide guidance and grounding for her work. An educator and award-winning film director, Nanjinaaq has spent the past 15 years leading practice reform and strategic project design in North America and Australia in film & arts, education, health and grassroots community sectors. She is committed to education reform, community control, and cultural revitalization in film and education. She understands the depth of knowledge and multifaceted complexity when it comes to our culture, history, language and traditions. She has a wealth of knowledge, experience, and expertise in the Iḡupiat ways of being and knowing and is invaluable when it comes to the collaboration, support, and consultation of the Iḡupiaq Education department and its staff.

**Recommendation:**

As required under BP 4112.8/4212.8/4312.8, Employment of Relatives, and AS 14.14.140 Restriction on employment; ... (b), the Iḡupiaq Education department is recommending the Board of Education waive the restriction set out in AS 14.14.140 and approve the Iḡupiaq Education department to discuss the contracting of Rachel Nanjinaaq Edwardson, an immediate family member of Superintendent David Vadiveloo, in order to support, enhance, and add repository of culture-based curriculum at the NSBSD and support other district initiatives such as the Iḷisaurriḡuqta (Let’s Become Teachers – Grow Your Own program) Uqautiluḡa Iḡupiatun (Speak Iḡupiaq To Me – Iḡupiaq Language Immersion Program).

**Proposed Motion:**

“I move that the NSBSD Board of Education waive the restriction set out in AS 14.14.140 and approve the Iḡupiaq Education department to discuss the contracting of Rachel Nanjinaaq Edwardson, an immediate family member of Superintendent David Vadiveloo, as discussed in SB24-010.”

Motion by \_\_\_\_\_

Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_

Advisory Vote \_\_\_\_\_

Vote \_\_\_\_\_

Signature:   
Tennessee Judkins (Aug 10, 2023 08:10 AKDT)

Email: tennessee.judkins@nsbsd.org

Signature:   
Tracy Mulvenon (Aug 9, 2023 15:20 AKDT)

Email: tracy.mulvenon@nsbsd.org