

Administrative Report

Chief School Administrator - David Vadivelloo

Utuqqanaavut kisuiġukkitka – sivulliit utuqqanaallu, paŋmami utuqqanaagiravullu, utuqqanaaġuġumaaqtuallu. Quyanaaġitka paŋmamuraglaan aullatimmagit savaktivut ilĩññaqtuagiravullu. Nalunaigunmigiga suli iñuuniġuutilaaqput savaguutilaaqpullu nunañiññi Iñupiat. Igliqtitchirauvluta miñuaqtuġviñnik kamasuuttaġigikput ikayuiyumiñaqapta tamatkunani nunani.

Members of the Board, members of the Kaktovik community and members of the North Slope community, what a great pleasure for our administration and Board to be here in Kaktovik for this Board meeting. The resilience, perseverance and commitment of this community over the past few years is a reflection of the spirit and strength of Iñupiaq people across the slope.

We acknowledge Elders, past, present and emerging in this community and across the slope. We thank you all 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 and we thank the Kaktovigmiut for hosting us on their land today.

This past month has been very busy with recruiting, student pathways and career exploratory programs, basketball state competition, further meetings to plan for immersion classes next year, and our budget presentation to the Assembly. This is always a time of great activity with spring whaling around the corner and our students preparing to graduate, 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

Let's call it early in this report and acknowledge the great efforts of the Anaktuvuk Pass, Tikiġaq and BHS basketball teams who made it to the State championships. We are very proud of all our students and in particular proud of the way they represented our District. For the Tikiġaq girls team it was a back-to-back championship year. At this point I remind everyone that our basketballers are 'student athletes' and as such we are equally proud of the Tikiġaq girls team for taking out the state GPA award also. Great work all teams and congratulations on another successful year!

State testing commenced last week for students in grades 3-9 who will take State Assessments in Language Arts and Math, while students in grades 4, 8, and 10 will take the Alaska Science assessment. We will also be giving benchmark assessments to students in grades K-2, and 11 to inform our instruction focus. We have now completed nearly a year of post-COVID in-person instruction so this Data will also be used to help us guide instructional needs and also meet the State of Alaska accountability measures, including the Report Card to the Public.

I had the great pleasure of spending time this week with students from Nuiqsut who (along with students from Tikiġaq and Kali school) were involved in the Alaska Excel program. Eevee, Devon, Sam and Everett participated in heavy equipment, welding, carpentry, law enforcement, self-

defense, aviation and photography programs. All reported the thrill of engaging with career focused learning and several will be following up with the month long summer program this year.

Students in grades 6 -12 at Kaktovik will be participating in Workplace basics through April 14th and the Qatqiññaġvik building is hosting students from Kaktovik from April 4 -6 as they participate in a career exploratory field trip to visit/tour post-secondary institutions of learning. They will be touring UAF, UAF's Community & Technical College, Iġsaġvik, and the Technical Training Center in Prudhoe Bay.

Qatqiññaġvik will host the next career exploratory event April 17-21 and will host a dual credit opportunity with Iġsaġvik April 24th - May 5th. The class will be NCCER Introduction to construction Trades core. As mentioned earlier, a number of students from the district have also been accepted into the summer program with Alaska Excel where they'll receive safety training and certification in mining and oil careers.

An exciting ongoing development within the District is the work of the Iñupiaq Education department who've been developing the Iñupiaq Language Scope & Sequence to ensure accountability, alignment, and reference to our language goals across K3-grade 12. Our 17 Iġsaurrit helped articulate the scope and sequence and the department have vetted the language goals with their Iñupiaq language translators. Posters will eventually display language goals by grade level for each language classrooms and school building.

This month we also spent time with the Nikaitchuat immersion program in Kotzebue and the Iġsazaqta Iñupiatun program in Nome to provide further context for the immersion program we will launch in Fall.

Our final highlight for student success has been the continued growth of student voice in our district with the district wide student council now having applications from Tikġġaq, BHS, Kaveolook and Nuiqsut schools while Atqasuk, BHS and Tikġġaq each appear to have students attending AASG.

Attendance across schools has improved this month after a drop caused by illness and large events last month but we are still aiming for our target attendance at 80% minimum across all sites and we will keep working with our students and families to achieve that goal.

Strategic goal 2: Community engagement

The most enjoyable part of my job is visits to our communities to meet students, watch them learn and meet with community and families and staff to hear about how we can keep improving our schools. This month I had trips to Kali and Tikġġaq and took great pleasure spending time in elementary, middle and high school classes. I continue to be impressed by the focus of our students when their curriculum is relevant and responsive and I congratulate our teachers who have aligned themselves with our new pedagogy and are grounding education in culturally relevant, high expectations classes. Our work has just begun however. To recover the lost years of learning we must maintain rigor and focus on the growth of the whole child and this will require us to keep reaching out to community to strengthen relationships and partnerships in our community schools.

The last few months we've been working with the University of Alaska Fairbanks and Iġsaġvik college to facilitate an articulation agreement or strengthen pathways and opportunities for our students and our local community members. The resulting meetings have been fruitful and in mid-April UAF will bring a contingent of staff to Utqiāġvik to meet with Iġsaġvik, NSBSD, Conoco and Arctic Slope Community Foundation to discuss our Iġsaurriġuqta program.

The school climate connectedness survey was completed this month. Participation in this survey a year ago in March 2022 was disappointing and our new administration made a public commitment to improving awareness and engagement this year. Thanks to the collaborative work of the C&I team, sites administrators, home school facilitators and all departments, the results below show a significant increase in engagement that will provide us with a much better idea of family, student and staff attitudes and connectedness to our schools.

Year	Family	Grades 3-5	Grades 6=12	Staff
2023	74	174	431	131
2022	44	61	338	92
2021	47	62	136	132

Results of this survey take some time to be collated by the State and will be reported to the Board and the public (and acted upon) when they are made available to us.

Our final highlight of this section was the time offered and commitment provided by elders Martha Stackhouse and Elise Itta to our immersion planning. Both of these former teachers visited Kotzebue and Nome with us and showed us in the classrooms we visited, exactly why they were such successful teachers. It remains our greatest strength that we have these elders to support us and guide us as we embark on immersion programming again and I want to once again thank them for all they do for our students and staff.

Strategic goal 3: Staff success

After a lengthy search for a new Principal for Ipalook Elementary we have been unable to yet identify the right permanent candidate. However, we are thrilled to announce that Mr Roger Wells, who has held the position as an interim for the past semester has agreed to continue his role next year. This announcement was met with loud applause and excitement at a staff meeting this week and our administration couldn't be happier to have Mr Wells experience and knowledge of our community as we attend to the curriculum and instruction changes that are necessary to lift our students and support their growth.

Before the end of the school year we are planning to send our immersion staff to the Nikaitchuat immersion program in Kotzebue and the Iļisazaqta Iñupiatun program in Nome. This trip will offer them a chance to view operational programs that will positively influence our planned program and provide context and modelling for them to observe and reflect upon.

Ensuring staff feel they are growing professionally must be aligned with outcomes that strengthen teaching practice in our schools. To support this, the Department of Student Services hosted a remote training for all staff at Kali School entitled *Neurological Differences and Crisis Prevention Intervention* during their March building in-service. Deb Evensen provided an overview of the effects of substances on the neurological system and the effect on learning and retaining

information. The tools that our teachers develop in these programs strengthen their ability to support growth for all our students.

The three job fairs attended by staff in March resulted in 22 potential candidates being forwarded to Principals and departments. We continue to recruit across the nation for next year. Yesterday (April 4th) we were finally interviewed by POLO-LA who assess final destinations and employment conditions for H1B visa candidates. We feel the interview went well and are hoping to hear positive news back from them in the next ten days.

As mentioned earlier, we have organized for UAF and Iḷisagvik to meet later this month as part of our Iḷisaurriḡuqta program. How many teachers we eventually recruit from the community for this program is not certain at this stage but the exciting part of this initiative is that more than 30 local people have expressed interest which confirms that our community members want to be involved – we just need to continue to open our doors and create places to partner and support them.

Strategic goal 4: Financial and operational Stewardship

The District presented the preliminary proposed FY24 budget to the North Slope Borough Mayor and Assembly on March 22. The result was the Borough appropriating status quo funding of \$36,828,052 the following day. However, as part of our presentation it was made clear to the Assembly that the Mayor has advised the District that his office will identify other sources to further fund \$1.9M in additional support. This meets our request for this year and if provided will return our revenues to 2020 levels. We believe this increase reflects faith from the NSB in the vision and careful management this Board has demonstrated over the past year and we thank you for that.

We will meet with the Mayor's office in the coming weeks to determine how and when the additional \$1.9M will be provided to us. With increases in the cost of insurance, inflation still impacting purchasing, and salary increases due in the coming cycle for certified, classified and admin staff, this funding will not reduce our deficit but will allow us to manage our general fund and fund balance with greater comfort as we continue to find efficiencies in our operations.

We have commenced meetings with departments and will commence meeting with sites in order to hold budget hearings before the Board in April. The District will then prepare a final proposed FY24 budget for presentation and request adoption by the Board at the June Board meeting. The final adopted FY24 budget is due to the Department of Education and Early Development by July 15, 2023.

To continue our adherence to fiduciary reporting requirements and accountability, the interim audit has been planned for the week of June 12th with final audit work scheduled on July 31st.

DEED monitoring of our title funding is currently underway and we look forward to the results of that audit and the opportunity to further improve our operations and reporting. Details of the Title grants we receive and the areas of focus in the audit are contained in your board packet. We are increasing our focus on grant writing in the coming year with a view to supplementing some of the shrinking or static revenue streams we currently operate with.

In closing this section on financial management, I note that legislation moved through the Legislature this week that would result in an overall increase to foundation funding but no increase in the BSA. We will await the result of that development in the coming months.

In September 2022, the Nuiqsut SAC through Principal Lee Karasiewicz requested an upgrade to Trapper School Security Cameras because of security concerns. In March, following an assessment of the site and sourcing of the cameras, 42 new security cameras were installed. This project is funded through CIP and we thank Director Fischer and Mr Cropsey for working with the NSB CIP staff to make this happen. AFS is now preparing to assess the Kaveolook School for similar installation in the next few months.

Conclusion:

Once again our District staff worked above and beyond this month to recruit staff, test students, and grow our programs in support of our students. I thank all our community members, families and Elders for providing their guidance and support to us in Kali and Tikigaq during our visits. I want to thank our students and families for their commitment to learning and growth whether it is in tests or in sports. Thanks again to our Board for its commitment to our programs and our growth of a new, stronger District that centers our community and our students. Our plans are comprehensive and much needed for our students and our District. So we will keep moving forward – repairing, rebuilding and revitalizing. Atautchikun!