

*May Special Education Report - Mary Donaldson
Highlighting Beltz Special Education Team*

Nome Special Olympics State Champs



***Congratulations to Coach Spencer and Coach Holmes and team
for bringing home the championship!***

New Learning Space at Beltz

What began as a simple idea transformed into a vibrant mosaic of growth, resilience, and achievement.



From poems and journals to newspapers and comics, students engaged independently, with peers, and alongside family members. Each moment of that journey is reflected in this visual masterpiece. The window display, crafted with textured cards, gently guides students through practices in meditation and self-regulation. And if those strategies take hold, the reverse side encourages the next step: meaningful conversation and connection.



Opposite the side, another wall proudly showcases Nome-Beltz Middle High School's inaugural participation in Unified Sports through Alaska Unified Champion Schools. Students were celebrated for their involvement in Bowling, Field Hockey, and, in just one week, 3v3 Basketball. This recognition illustrates the Special Education Department's unwavering commitment to inclusion, in and out of the classroom—highlighting collaboration, equity, and diversity at its finest.

As if that weren't enough, the space now includes cutting-edge tools to support student wellness and innovation:

Technology for social-emotional and music therapy Introductory engineering (coding) activities Video game therapy Flexible bikes and seating

Yet, above all, this space has become a haven—a place of safety, nourishment, compassion, and shelter for students navigating life's challenges.

And the best part?



Its purpose is beautifully versatile. The Sensory Space doubles as a SPED Resource Office for IEP meetings, a mock-trial setting for independent studies, and a hub for project-based and differentiated learning. Following the AK STAR assessments, it will also serve as a creative studio for students to design personalized Nanook Swag Hoodies—a tangible celebration of a year well spent.

This transformation was made possible by: A Mini-Grant of \$800 from our Superintendent An investment of approximately \$3,000 from Special Education

******Over 100 hours of personal, non-contractual time and dedication over the last nine days The investment in our NBMHS Special Education students and families? Absolutely priceless. GO TEAM!*

We would like to invite board members to visit!!



2024-2025 Highlights

- 150 annual IEP meetings held - 100% parent participation- paperwork compliant
- 42 initial referrals Age 3 - 18 referrals 28 qualified
- 49 3 year evaluations - 100% parent participation - paperwork compliant
- 6 new intensives for a total of 24 intensives 21 funded

- Passed state audit - with minimum corrections
- **ALL itinerates returning**
- Team hired for 2025-2026 school year

- **NWEA/MAP assessment increase of an average of 2.8 grade level growth in grades K-8 (based on Winter data)**
- Began a true team teaching model at middle school
- Established a sensory room at Beltz
- **Increased Special Olympics Involvement**



GOALS FOR 2025-2026

ONE

Increase parent learning involvement outside of IEP meetings through a minimum of 6 events held throughout the year.

TWO

Increase learning opportunities for special education staff and regular education staff through an established calendar of training. Topics based on a needs assessment of current special education staff and relevant to each building.

THREE

Integrate culturally relevant pedagogy through programs and practice to increase graduation rates of our students in special education.