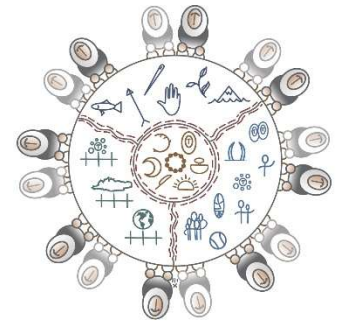


2026



NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES & PRIORITIES



1. \$33M to support Phase II of the Harold Kaveolook School classroom rebuild that burned down in Kaktovik of 2020
2. Funding to increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA) allocation and account for inflation annually
3. Funding for culture-based curriculum, including language immersion
4. State-based initiatives to prepare, attract, increase, and retain teachers, administrators, and District staff with an emphasis:
 - Teaching Housing
 - Defined Benefits
 - Grow-Your-Own
 - J1/H1B Visas
5. State based initiatives and funding to support student wellness, mental and emotional health
6. Improved broadband infrastructure to all North Slope villages



MANNUQPUT

OUR FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENT



MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT
DAVID ANNİK VADIVELOO
AND SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT
ESTHER EVIKANA

Iñuk una qauriñinaniñ iñugullaḡmi ilisimmatiniguuruq
ilisausiamiñiñ naipiqtuḡniñani!lu aasii taima
isumalaalgusiv!uni sulī ilisimmaḡiksiv!uni. Tainnamik aasii
kisuutilaani pautāḡivlugu iñuguqhuni iñulluatauvluni.
Isumaptiktun ilitchipkairugut sivunīqaḡuta Iñupiaḡniptinnik,
iñuuniaqatigiimmaḡiḡniptinnik, iluaḡniptinnik sulī
iñukkuksaiñiptinnik iñulluatanik, ataramik kisuutilaaqput
suaḡḡasiqsimalaan.

This is a powerful statement in Inupiaq and a very difficult one to translate into English. An interpretive, rather than a literal, translation might read as follows:

The North Slope Borough School District is committed to embedding, through our curriculum and teaching practices, traditional Iñupiaq ways of raising and educating children. This principal, Iñuguqsiñiq, guides our work with the children and communities of the North Slope. We share in the responsibility to support our students' development as iñulluatat good human beings – able to navigate successfully in today's world.

We honor and recognize the unique process of learning that is deeply tied to the land, culture, language, and knowledge of the Iñupiat. This approach, that engages the Iñupiaq worldview, respects how children learn as they become aware of their surroundings and expand their knowledge into adulthood.

For fifty years, the North Slope Borough School District has educated some of Alaska's most important and influential leaders. Our District introduced immersion language programs to the State's largest elementary school (Iplook Elementary) over 27 years ago. We also proudly own one of the most highly regarded place-based curriculum frameworks in the nation (the Iñupiaq Learning Framework). As we implement a re-alignment of our District with these successful programs, we seek your support to continue our critical contribution to the growth of our region and our State.

THE NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT . . .

- is situated in the State's largest oil producing region.
- is the largest (89,000 square miles) school district in the USA.
- measures 320 miles north to south by 575 miles east to west.
- is home to 11 schools in eight villages.
- teaches nearly 2000 students from pre-school to grade 12.
- employs more than 210 certificated staff (teachers & principals).
- employs more than 200 local classified staff.
- is led by seven board members.

PRIORITY ONE

\$33M TO SUPPORT PHASE II CLASSROOM REBUILD OF OUR BURNED-DOWN SCHOOL IN KAKTOVIK

*February 6, 2020 –
Kaktovik school fire*

*Phase I – Kaktovik School
Rebuild (Exterior) In Progress*

*Phase I – Kaktovik School
Rebuild (Interior) Completed*

*Kaktovik School Ribbon
Cutting Ceremony*

In 2020, a heater fire burned the Harold Kaveolook School to the ground. Students are currently being taught in a temporary facility that was converted from an unused 'man-camp'. With the grand opening of the gymnasium/vocational education facility on December 1, 2025, students now have a dedicated space for physical activity. With Phase II commencing in February for the rebuild of classrooms, currently funded through the North Slope Borough, the expected cost is \$33 million.

With multiple phases for the rebuild, the District is requesting funding to support the multiple phases for the rebuild of the entire school. With decreasing oil revenues, our District is the only district in Alaska that is building its own school facilities. Aging infrastructure soaks up all recurrent funding and there is a clear and pressing need for capital support.

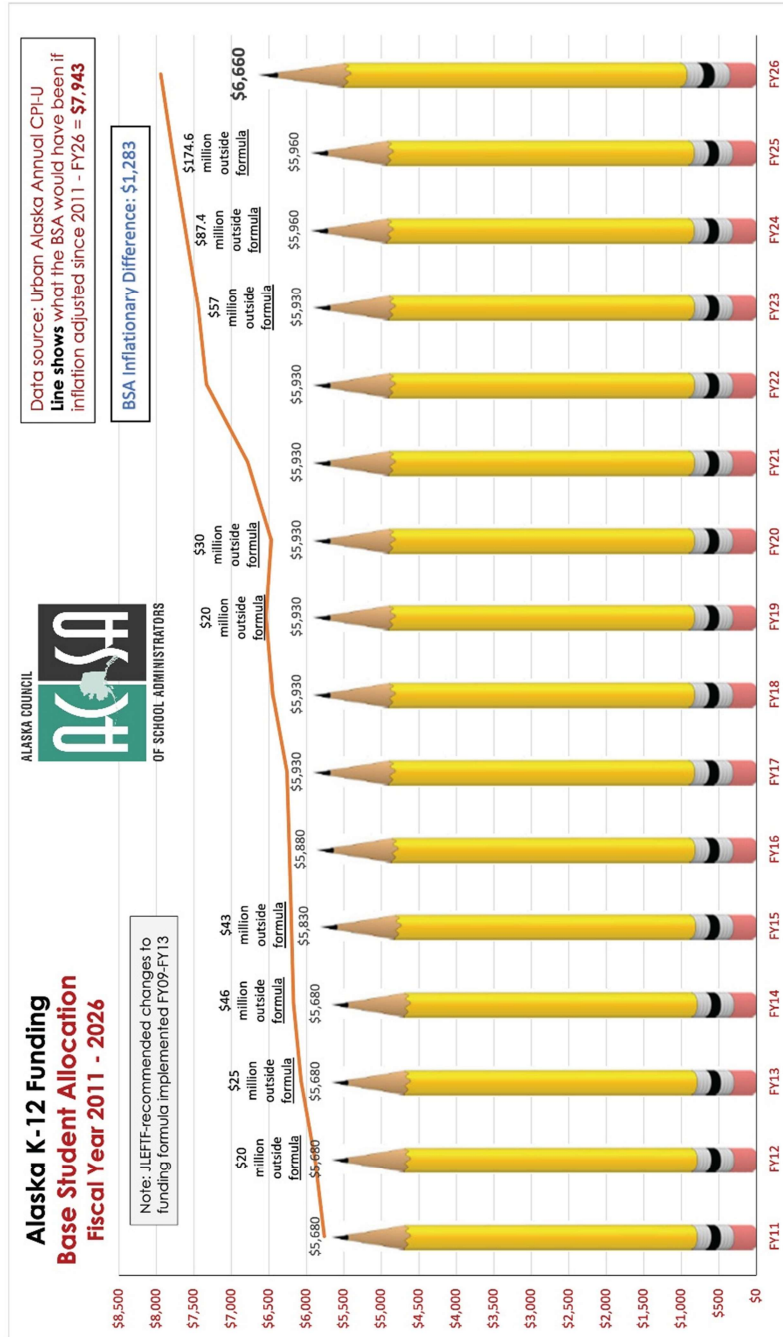
SCHEDULE

Phase 0 (remediation of the site, grading and pilings) was completed in November 2024.

Phase I (rebuild of the Vocational education wing and Gymnasium) was completed in December 2025.

Both of these phases were paid for with proceeds from insurance and the North Slope Borough.

Phase II (construction of all classrooms & admin space) will cost an additional \$33M. We are asking that the State support half the cost of that phase of the rebuild (\$16M). Construction will commence in February 2026.



PRIORITY TWO

FUNDING TO INCREASE THE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION (BSA) AND ACCOUNT FOR INFLATION ANNUALLY

We are grateful to the Legislature for successfully overriding the Governor's veto for an increase of \$700 to the Base Student Allocation, raising per student funding from \$5,960 to \$6,660. However, we would like to remind legislators that to account for inflation, schools and communities require an \$1,283 increase in the Base Student Allocation based on the Urban Alaska Annual CPI-U Calculation to reduce the impact of prolonged flat funding, historic inflation, and rising costs in health care, transportation, operations, and maintenance.

The North Slope Borough School District has outperformed the State percent change for movement of students on the AKSTAR test in Grades 3-9 from "Needs Support" to "Approaching Proficient," as well as moving students from "Approaching Proficient" to "Proficient" in literacy. Our greatest leap toward proficiency was in grade 3, with over 20% less students in the "Needs Support" category over 3 years.

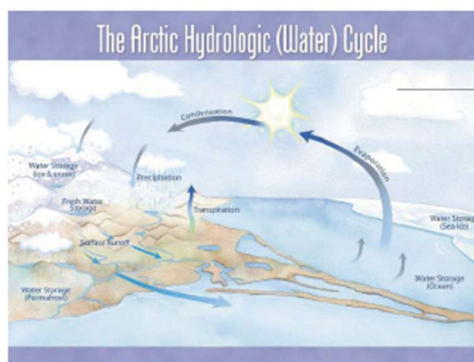
This was achieved in part through adherence to the Reads Act, and the addition of essential interventionist positions at 11 sites. We are also seeing a similar trend in our early literacy screener, with a change in the number of students benchmarking at a proficient level increasing by ~5% a year.

PRIORITY THREE

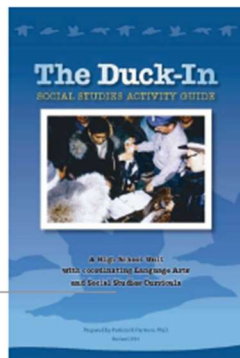
FUNDING FOR CULTURE-BASED CURRICULUM, INCLUDING LANGUAGE IMMERSION

As recognized by the State of Alaska, NSBSD understands that for many of our students we must deliver an education program that not only reflects their Iñupiaq values but incorporates language and culture into all aspects of learning. The NSBSD Board of Education is committed to graduating students with bilingual proficiency in English and Iñupiaq. Studies show the benefits of raising children who speak more than one language include:

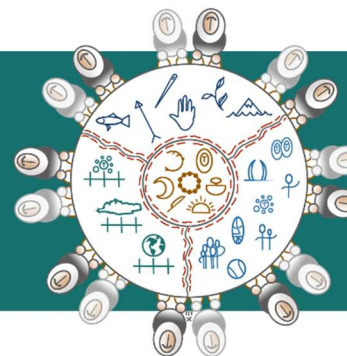
- Improved ability to solve math and word problems;
- Better self control;
- Improved planning skills and abstract reasoning;
- Less prone to distractions from external stimuli (increased attention); and,
- Increased neural brain density



Poster for the Science
Unit Immiugniq: Winter
Sources of Drinking Water



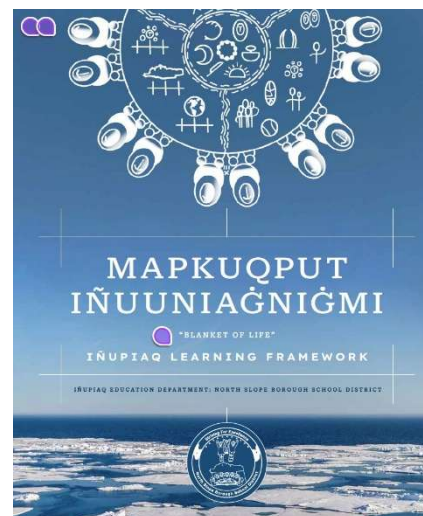
Teacher's Guide to High School Social Studies
Unit on the Historic North Slope Duck-In



*Mapkuqput Iñuuniagnigmi:
Our Blanket of Life, the visual
representation of the Iñupiaq
Learning Framework*

Studies also demonstrate increased student engagement when curriculum and content are based on the local culture of the student. NSBSD have already produced 329 culture-based units that teach state-standards aligned school subjects through the lens of Iñupiaq culture. With the Iñupiaq Learning Framework as the foundation of our curriculum and instruction, we need to expand our culture-based curriculum to develop more units across all grade levels and content areas.

In 2023, the District recommenced the Iñupiaq Immersion program. After three successful years at ECE, Kindergarten and first grade, the program requires funding to expand and open a second grade immersion classroom in FY27.



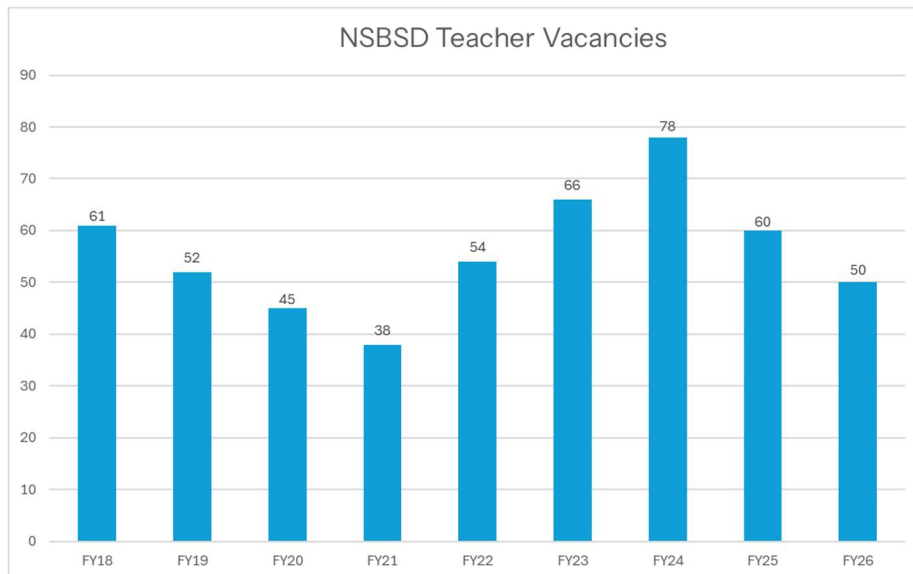
*Ipalook Elementary School students
learning about the biology of a caribou
and food sustainability*

PRIORITY FOUR

STATE-BASED INITIATIVES TO PREPARE, ATTRACT, INCREASE, AND RETAIN TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND STAFF

NSBSD TEACHER RETENTION FACTS

- In Fall of 2025, we had to replace more than 22% of our teaching staff, which represented over 50 new teachers.
- Despite a focused recruiting drive, we currently employ seven long-term substitutes.
- The majority of our teacher vacancies are in the most remote villages.
- In 2025, the District paid over \$100,000 (excluding salary) to recruit 28 new teachers from overseas.



TEACHER ATTRITION

- is costly to student growth and school district finances
- has a negative impact on student attendance and achievement
- requires costly and time-consuming district administration to recruit new teachers
- has a negative impact on teacher morale
- burdens Districts with expensive agency fees for foreign teachers
- costs a great deal to orient new teachers to our district, our students' culture, and life in rural Alaska.
- To try and meet recruiting needs, the District paid over \$100,000 (excluding salary) to recruit 28 new teachers from overseas.

The District supports **HB 78** Introduced by House Finance (Carried by Representative Kopp) and **SB 28** Introduced by Senator Giessel, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Claman, Tobin, Kawasaki, Bjorkman, Dunbar, Stevens, Wielechowski relating to retirement systems and defined benefit options. In addition, the District supports **HB 231** Introduced by Representative Frier, based on Alaska's Teacher Retention and Recruitment Playbook (as of 2023) as an alternative to **HB 78** should it not pass.

PRIORITY FIVE

STATE-BASED INITIATIVES AND FUNDING TO SUPPORT STUDENT WELLNESS, MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- **There is a clear research and data link between social and emotional well-being and academic performance in school.**
- NSBSD students provide regular feedback on the need for more social and emotional support services. This is a priority of our District-Wide Student Council.
- The two years of COVID have disrupted the social and emotional development of students nationally, especially the youngest. This prolonged period without academic and social emotional stimulation has resulted in increased family stressors, increased sense of isolation, and ultimately a lack of academic and social- emotional growth.
- Internet costs and restricted availability results in limited online academic and social emotional programs.

- Many of our students carry a baseline level of trauma brought on by a variety of factors – not least of which is the damage to self-image caused when parents and grandparents were taught in school that their culture and language were not valued.
- Federal and State agencies have recognized that the impact of this accumulated psychological, social and emotional damage requires new interventions.
- State-funded interventions are urgently needed to reverse dramatic increases in self harming and loss of self worth amongst students

To provide adequate supports to our students, NSBSD requires funding for social emotional support services, including clinicians.

The District supports **SB90** Introduced by Senator Giesel and **HB 232** Introduced by Representative Gray relating to behavioral and mental health treatment for minors.



Culturally relevant anti-bullying initiatives in our schools

PRIORITY SIX

IMPROVED BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE TO ALL NORTH SLOPE VILLAGES

The NSBSD is located in the northernmost part of the State. Our students and teachers are dependent on download speeds for a range of educational needs including:

- State testing
- Student research and teacher research
- Access to culture-based curriculum
- Distance learning
- Professional development training for educators
- General operations of the District

FACTS

- Alaska ranks 51st in broadband coverage in the United States.
- Our schools experience internet outages on average 30 times per school year.
- We need Fiber or at least Microwave services in Point Lay, Anaktuvuk Pass, and Kaktovik schools.

We urgently request support enhancing our region's fiber optic infrastructure.

The North Slope region remains heavily dependent on subsea fiber for all internet and communication services. While the Quintillion Homer Express Project will help improve redundancy, an additional overland fiber route from Prudhoe Bay, connecting Nuiqsut, Utqiagvik, Atkasuk, Wainwright, Point Lay, and Point Hope, would provide critical resiliency for the region.

This overland route would help bypass vulnerable areas such as Oliktok Point and ensure continued connectivity for education, healthcare, and emergency response in the event of a subsea disruption. In addition, our schools often serve as community evacuation centers during disasters. To fulfill this role, each school must be equipped with reliable generators, emergency and medical equipment, and backup communication systems.

We recommend incorporating **FirstNet deployable communication systems**, such as the **Rescue 42 Compact Rapid Deployable (CRD)** units, which can create cellular and Wi-Fi coverage even during fiber or power outages. These units provide internet and FirstNet coverage via satellite and can operate independently for extended periods—ensuring continuity of communication for first responders, schools, and community members during emergencies.

Strengthening both our connectivity infrastructure and our schools' readiness will ensure the North Slope is prepared to support our communities in times of crisis.

We request State support to:

1. Facilitate Federal Support: Urge federal agencies to expedite the release of FEMA funds and streamline the permitting process for the land bridge project.
2. Support State-Level Initiatives: Champion state initiatives that can provide additional funding or resources to accelerate these critical infrastructure projects.
3. Promote Public-Private Partnerships: Encourage collaborations between government entities and private companies to ensure the swift completion of these projects.