Introduction

Northwest Arctic Leadership Team (NWALT), a partnership among Maniilaq Association, NANA Regional Corporation, the Northwest Arctic Borough and the Northwest Arctic Borough School District, will maximize resources and reduce duplication of efforts to address issues affecting the people of Northwest Alaska, while honoring and perpetuating Iñupiat cultural heritage.

This Strategic Plan provides a tool for NWALT partners to share, support and collaborate on regional activities through an annual work plan process. The plan provides a shared set of enduring long-range priorities that serve as the framework for shared short-term agendasetting for NWALT members each calendar year. Through NWALT's tagline, "Changing the lives of our people through the spirit of cooperation," this plan reflects the collaborative input from NWALT members and acknowledges the important work already underway. This plan outlines focus areas, priorities, and strategies that NWALT partners can support through collaboration so that Northwest Arctic communities can thrive.

NWALT Focus Areas

Over 20 years ago, NWALT identified five areas to focus regional planning, collaboration, and advocacy efforts on. These are called the critical focus areas.



Iñupiaq Language and Culture – The foundation for all our work, and is how we celebrate for our past, present and future.



Education & Workforce Development - Educating young people in our region results in healthy and sustainable communities.



Economic Development - Northwest Alaska's economy can grow and thrive through local and regional partnerships.



Infrastructure & Vital Services - Community infrastructure and vital services are basic needs that must be prioritized.



Healthy Communities and Wellness - Wellness and access to healthcare are aligned with traditional practices and supported through infrastructure and evidence-based practices.

Who is NWALT?

Insert map or images depicting people, region, lands, etc.

How was the plan developed?

Strategic planning began with a two-day convening of representatives from every community in the region in September 2024. At this meeting, leadership and key staff of the NWALT organizations met together in Kotzebue, Alaska. The meeting's theme, *Uvagulli Qiñikkaqput, Uvagulli Itqanaigasraġigikput – Our Vision, Our Responsibility*, set the tone for fostering inter-organizational relationship-building, collaboration, and information sharing. The event also reinforced collective ownership and accountability for shaping the future of the Northwest Arctic region.

Discussions during the meeting focused on NWALT's five key focus areas. These focus areas define the scope of NWALT's work, and therefore the scope of a regional strategy plan.

Timeline graphic to include:

- September 2024 Quad Board Meeting
 - o Informed by participant-wide survey about priorities
 - 2024 Quad Board Meeting Recap
- Winter 2025 Quad Board Survey Existing Activities by Focus Area
 - o Plan development incorporates 1) Existing activities and 2) Quad Board input
- Summer 2025 Plan Document Completed
- December 2025 Year One Work Plan
- January 2025 Implementation Begins

NWALT STRATEGIC PLAN

Focus Area 1

Iñupiaq Language & Culture

Iñupiaq Language and Culture is a foundation for all our work, and is how we celebrate for our past, present and future. Position post for a director for the Iñupiaq language and make the program its own department.

NWALT's shared belief in the importance of teaching, learning, and sharing traditional lñupiaq language and culture is a foundation of regional strength and cooperation. Together, with the support and guidance of Elders, language-speakers, and culture-bearers, the language, culture and people can thrive.

Priorities:

1.1 Promote language revitalization, immersion and curriculum development

• Ensure programs and course offerings emphasize Iñupiat language learning.

Objective Lead: Superintendent		
Strategies and Actions	Key Indicators/Metric	Completion Date/Timeline
1.2.1 Assist Iñupiaq Instructors to obtain their certification through the state of Alaska	 Determine NWABSD Eligibility for Alternative Certification Options Identify Coursework and Professional Development. Develop ongoing support, onboarding, and checkpoints for teacher progress. Identify local partnerships to support local context and culturally responsive professional development. Align our system with UA system for cosponsored courses and alternative path consisting of CEUs (budget item). 	System Developed Spring 2025
1.2.2 Train our Iñupiaq Instructors fluently into immersion methods of teaching Iñupiaq	Identify the path for obtaining fluency a. Develop a roadmap for fluency progression. b. Identify screener/assessment for each level.	System Developed Spring 2025
1.2.3 Provide ongoing professional development for the lñupiaq Instructors.	Build a plan and timeline for professional development.	Ongoing
Objective 3: Cultural Science Curriculum		
NWABSD will create a cultural place-based science currice Objective Lead: Superintendent	ulum using the traditional Native Ways of Knowing and Learni	ing.
Strategies and Actions	Key Indicators/Metric	Completion Date
1.3.1 Develop lessons and activities that align with local traditions and practices utilizing natural resources to make the science curriculum more relevant and relatable for all students.	 Completion of a curriculum map that identifies specific points in the science curriculum where local traditions can be incorporated, with consultation from Elders or cultural leaders. A minimum of 3 hands-on, project-based activities per semester that engage students with the natural environment (e.g., water quality testing of local rivers, plant identification, or studying local wildlife migration patterns). At least 2 community-based science projects per year that involve students working alongside community members (e.g., collaborative projects with hunters, gatherers, or local environmental experts). 	In Progress
1.3.2 Incorporate the Iñupiaq language into the curriculum, promoting language preservation and encouraging students to learn and communicate these concepts in their native tongue. 1.3.3 Design hands-on, experiential learning opportunities that connect students with the local environment and traditional practices.	Develop and use vocabulary lists, with both English and Iñupiaq terms, for key science concepts. Work with local Iñupiaq language experts or Elders to integrate traditional stories, phrases, or terminology into science lessons, ensuring students hear and practice Iñupiaq in a real-world context. Collaborate with local experts, such as hunters, gatherers, or Elders, to guide students in traditional practices while integrating relevant scientific principles	In Progress In Progress
1.3.4 Establish community partnerships with local	like ecology or sustainability. 2. Plan field trips or outdoor lessons where students can observe and interact with the local environment. 1. Form a network with local organizations, tribal councils,	In Progress
organizations and tribal councils to support the development and implementation of the curriculum and ensure ongoing cultural relevance.	 Form a network with tocal organizations, tribal councits, and community leaders to regularly consult curriculum development, ensuring cultural relevance and alignment with community values and traditions. Meet with Iñupiaq Ilisautri and science teachers twice a year to co-develop and review curriculum, ensuring the integration of traditional knowledge, practices, and cultural relevance. 	III Flogress

1.3.5 Involve local elders as educators and mentors, recognizing their invaluable role in passing down traditional knowledge.	1.	Present the curriculum to the Elders' Council twice a year for feedback and to strengthen local partnerships, ensuring accuracy.	In Progress
1.3.6 Empower students to explore and share their own traditional knowledge within the curriculum, creating a learning environment where both the teacher and students contribute to the learning.	1.	Organize an annual "Local Science Showcase" where students present projects that reflect their learning on local traditions, natural resources, and scientific principles, with community members invited to participate.	In Progress
	2.	Create opportunities for students to share personal or family stories that connect with the lesson topics, integrating traditional knowledge into classroom discussions and allowing students to take an active role in contributing to curriculum development.	

• Implement live Iñupiaq interpreter services for meetings, informal settings, and events.

1.2 Cultural advancement by instilling knowledge of cultural skills and community involvement

- Cultivate a culture of continuous learning and growth in cultural competence.
- Build leadership capacity in each community in the areas of subsistence management and cultural activities.
- Promote cultural competency and cross-cultural understanding through active community engagement initiatives.
- Pass down traditional knowledge to youth by teaching respect for nature, conservation through tradition, and adapting to change over time.

improvement data and ongoing adjustments for continuo Objective Lead: Superintendent	ommunity Partnership Plan to provide relevant learning opport ous improvement.	tumiles and support.
Strategies and Actions	Key Indicators/Metric	Completion Date/Timeline
1.1.1 Partner with stake holders to strengthen Immersion Inupiaq curriculum through language and culture programs that include goals and actions.	Schools will support the plan with improvement data and ongoing adjustments for continuous improvement. Sign agreements with stakeholders that include goals and actions.	Submit data every quarter Beginning 2 nd semester January 2024
1.1.2 Connect Curriculum with Cultural Ways and Science Knowledge in a local setting.	Documentation of partnerships between the school and community. Knowledge bearers in the classroom	Quarter 1,2,3,4
1.1.3 Inform all stake holders about the progress of school/community connections	Provide progress report.	Bi-annually in October and March

1.3 Protect subsistence resources and promote food security

- Ensure the continued vitality of Iñupiaq language and culture by safeguarding ancestral subsistence resources.
- Advocate for local and regional food security.

- Build leadership capacity in each community in the areas of subsistence management and cultural activities.
- Promote ongoing engagement and monitoring of subsistence activities and regulatory agency policies.
- Complete subsistence mapping activities.
- Address the impacts of Arctic climate change on communities, subsistence ways of life and wellbeing.

Focus Area 2

Education & Workforce Development



Education & Workforce Development - Educating young people in our region results in healthy and sustainable communities.

Educating young people is an investment in the Northwest Arctic region's future. Aligning, improving and increasing access to educational opportunities prepares youth for employment and future leadership opportunities. This also reduces local reliance on out-of-region support and services. NWALT is dedicated to serving community members and developing a well-educated and trained workforce that is culturally aligned while meeting the human resource needs of this region.

Priorities:

2.1 Align training in life skills and trades with cultural values

• Grounded in cultural values, promote positive and healthy choices, and develop effective coping strategies for use in life and the workforce.

Objective 1: Community School Connections NWABSD will work with each site to establish a Tribal/Community Partnership Plan to provide relevant learning opportunities and support improvement data and ongoing adjustments for continuous improvement. Objective Lead: Superintendent		
Strategies and Actions	Key Indicators/Metric	Completion Date/Timeline
1.1.1 Partner with stake holders to strengthen Inupiaq curriculum through language and culture programs that include goals and actions.	Schools will support the plan with improvement data and ongoing adjustments for continuous improvement. Sign agreements with stakeholders that include goals and actions.	Submit data every quarter Beginning 2 nd semester January 2024
1.1.2 Connect Curriculum with Cultural Ways and Science Knowledge in a local setting.	Documentation of partnerships between the school and community. Knowledge bearers in the classroom	Quarter 1,2,3,4
1.1.3 Inform all stake holders about the progress of school/community connections	Provide progress report.	Bi-annually in October and March

 Develop training programs, including welding training, culinary art training, and NMS Security training.

	NWABSD will develop a plan for ATC to grow alignment between offerings and regional workforce needs. Objective Lead: Director of the Alaska Technical Center				
Strategies and Actions	Key Indicators/Metrics	Completion Date/Timeline	Pı		
5.2.1 Identify regional workforce needs	Complete a Comprehensive Needs Assessment for Regional Workforce Development	Survey sent Out to Stakeholders and Data being collected August 2025	75		
5.2.2 Map Regional workforce needs assessments	Identify common industry trainings Identify skillsets alignment	October 2025	25		
5.2.3 Draft regional workforce map	Develop training schedule5	April 2026	10		
5.2.4 Validate regional workforce map with employers	Regional workforce feedback and revisions	December 2027	09		

- Provide workshops within each community.
- Honor local subsistence seasons in developing training and workforce.
- Support culturally relevant recommendations in the Northwest Arctic Borough Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Will follow up comments on the draft sent by the Borough

2.2 Support workforce development through centralized data repository and workflow engine

- Aggregate data from various resources, including resident inputs, education and training data, employment opportunities, educational resources, and social service support programs.
- Better understand barriers to workforce development, identify pathways to employment, and develop training opportunities to meet the needs of the residents.

2.3 Encourage training and education alignment with jobs forecast

- Increase awareness of regional job opportunities and the training pathways necessary to achieve them.
- Provide students with the necessary academic skills to prepare them for the workforce.
- Develop internship opportunities, situating students' coursework in the realworld setting of work in their community and providing a powerful recruitment opportunity for employers.

Objective 2: Regional Workforce Development NWABSD will develop a plan for ATC to grow alignment between offerings and regional workforce needs. Objective Lead: Director of the Alaska Technical Center			
Strategies and Actions	Key Indicators/Metrics	Completion Date/Timeline	Р
5.2.1 Identify regional workforce needs	Complete a Comprehensive Needs Assessment for Regional Workforce Development	Survey sent Out to Stakeholders and Data being collected August 2025	7:
5.2.2 Map Regional workforce needs assessments	Identify common industry trainings Identify skillsets alignment	October 2025	2
5.2.3 Draft regional workforce map	Develop training schedule5	April 2026	1
5.2.4 Validate regional workforce map with employers	Regional workforce feedback and revisions	December 2027	0

Focus Area 3

Economic Development



Economic Development - Northwest Alaska's economy is stable and can grow and thrive through local and regional partnerships.

Economic development in the region aims to strengthen regional growth by supporting community self-sufficiency and sustainability. This includes identifying opportunities for regional support and maximizing existing resources while pursuing new development opportunities, promoting entrepreneurship through job training and education, and reducing fuel and energy costs.

Priorities:

3.1 Provide regional support to assist with community infrastructure, economic development, and sustainability activities

 Provide and advocate for monetary support through local and regional grant programs.

Objective Lead: Director of the Alaska Technical	Objective Lead: Director of the Alaska Technical Center and Director of Curriculum and Instruction				
Strategies and Actions	Key Indicators/Metric	Completion Date/Timeline	F		
5.1.1 Develop overarching plan for complete alignment	Have a timeline and review cycle. FY25- Completed Perkins 4 Year Plan	August 2025	1		
5.1.2 Design procedure and template for pillar alignment.	Implement pillar template	March 2025	5		
5.1.3 Assess current CTE Alignments	Organize and identify current CTE courses and Career Technical Education Pathways. Identify deficiencies in pathways and course offerings.	August 2025	3		
5.1.4 Identify best practices for CTE alignment for NWABSD students.	Review national CTE curricula standards and alignments Compare and examine other CTE institutions pathways with NWABSD pathways	December 2025	3		

5.1.5 Develop aligned pillars for High School and	Education	December 2027	00
Adults	Culinary Arts		
	Construction Trades		
	Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)		
	Business		
	Process Technology		

• Support the expansion of childcare options to make it easier for parents to participate in the workforce.

Partnership with regional entities to begin a pilot daycare program in Kotzebue. School district will provide the facility and the workers will get trained and receive certification through ATC.

3.2 Maximize current resources while expanding future resource development

- Pursue economic and community growth while protecting subsistence as a key economic activity.
- Promote and support existing sources of jobs, income, and economic development.
- Explore options for expanding mining and developing new ore deposits to extend economic stability beyond the life of Red Dog Mine.

3.3 Promote entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency by building job pathways into training experience

- Create additional trainings specific to the region's high-demand jobs.
- Build on skills needed to prepare for employment, vocational training, or postsecondary education, preparing residents for jobs in this region.
- Provide assistance to families, help pay for trainings related to gaining employment.
- Focus efforts early by identifying youth opportunities.

Objective 2: Regional Workforce Development NWABSD will develop a plan for ATC to grow alignment between offerings and regional workforce needs.			
Objective Lead: Director of the Alaska Technical (Center		
Strategies and Actions	Key Indicators/Metrics	Completion Date/Timeline	Pı
5.2.1 Identify regional workforce needs	Complete a Comprehensive Needs Assessment for Regional Workforce Development	Survey sent Out to Stakeholders and Data being collected August 2025	75
5.2.2 Map Regional workforce needs assessments	Identify common industry trainings Identify skillsets alignment	October 2025	25
5.2.3 Draft regional workforce map	Develop training schedule5	April 2026	10
5.2.4 Validate regional workforce map with employers	Regional workforce feedback and revisions	December 2027	09
5.2.5 Develop a consortium to focus on training and workforce development. Scholarship application for the whole region	Region wide scholarship application	May 2026	59

3.4 Reduce Fuel and Energy Costs

- Establish Bulk Fuel Purchase Loan Program, promoting a lower cost of fuel sold at the pump for each village.
- Reduce the cost of energy and reliance on expensive diesel fuel through installation of alternative energy and home heat pumps.

Focus Area 4

Infrastructure & Vital Services



Infrastructure & Vital Services - Community infrastructure and vital services are basic needs that must be prioritized.

The Northwest Arctic region's infrastructure and vital services must be prioritized. Broadband, housing and essential services are critical to the economic stability, public safety and quality of life in this region. Aging systems pose health and safety risks, especially in remote villages. Limited broadband access restricts communication, healthcare, education and market participation. A severe housing shortage results in outmigration of the region's youth, causes workforce retention challenges and overall community resilience.

Priorities:

4.1 Establish reliable, affordable, high-speed phone and internet connections

 Build out Broadband infrastructure to provide true, reliable, high-speed internet to the residents in regional communities.

4.2 Ensure communities have adequate supporting infrastructure and operational sustainability for maintenance and repair.

• Secure funding and cost share opportunities to repair and/or replace aging infrastructure including water and sewer, solid waste, energy, transportation and health facilities.

- Building office buildings in each village to provide safe workspace for employees, for residents to access resources, and for training/meeting space for the community.
- Address concerns unique to coastal communities, such as erosion, barge accessibility, and runway operation.

4.3 Address the lack of available and affordable housing in the region

- Develop a housing plan for each community, to include resources available to each respectively.
- Prioritize joint planning efforts with commitment from each organization to contribute and share in the planning efforts.
- Seek funding opportunities to develop housing and infrastructure activities to support housing development.
- Train residents for the skills needed to build the homes such as carpenters, plumbers, electricians and to find grant funds or apply for housing loan.
- Meet the identified need for more housing for health professionals, public safety and teachers.

4.4. Support efforts to promote availability of affordable childcare

- Find spaces within local organizations that can support childcare, and training for childcare providers. In Partnership with other local organizations, working on a plan to open a child care center utilizing the Kotzebue school building. The staff would be trained by the Alaska Technical Center (ATC) to receive certification in early child care. Have people from the villages come in to Kotzebue to get their child care license through the ATC so they can then go back and start this program in their community.
- Promote community collaboration and exploration groups, including Kotzebue Community Childcare working group.
- Enhance and coordinate programs such as Workforce Innovation Act, Maniilaq
 477 program (childcare assistance), technical assistance opportunities for 105
 leasing, and other opportunities to support expanded childcare options.

4.5. Decrease regional high energy costs

- Address aging basic energy infrastructure, replace bulk fuel systems and upgrade rural power system.
- Invest in renewable energy to reduce reliance on imported fuels.

Focus Area 5

Healthy Communities & Wellness



Healthy Communities and Wellness – Wellness and access to healthcare are aligned with traditional practices and supported through infrastructure and evidence-based practices.

Local access to healthcare that integrates traditional practices results in prevention. Well-being includes physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and relational health. Subsistence practices promote resilience, nutrition, intergenerational knowledge, and physical activity. All of this is strengthened when providers are trained locally and have this understanding. Measures to improve access to healthcare services while protecting subsistence are crucial to health and wellness in the Northwest Arctic region.

Priorities:

5.1 Embed Iñupiaq values and traditions into wellness programs

- Promote holistic wellness by integrating cultural values into healthcare, mental health and education.
- Emphasize the importance of youth actively practicing and embracing cultural traditions while simultaneously developing skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly technological world.
- Integrate the protection of lands and subsistence into health and wellness
- Incorporate subsistence way of life into all aspects of health and wellness in the region.
- Protect, preserve and advocate for community resilience

5.2 Ensure that residents are safe and have access to sustainable healthcare services

- Improve local access to high-quality healthcare services.
- Develop long-term sustainability for health and social services including mental health and substance use treatment.

Objective 1: Sustainable Counseling Program NWABSD staff will develop the program with an imp	plementation plan leading to an operationalized program to incl	ude docume
Objective Lead: Director of Student Services		
Strategies and Actions	Key Indicators/Metric	
4.1.1 Obtain Grant to receive full funding -Our Youth	Obtain a grant for to support the training and practice of	
Positive Vision for Future by 2027	school counseling in NWABSD	
4.1.2 Define all potential partnerships for counseling	March 2024:	
programs	Maniilaq and Compassionate Counseling partnerships	
	Sept. 2024: Initiated Behavior Health cooperation/meetings	
	to facilitate counseling services. Release of information for	
	shared programming.	
	June 2025: 2025: Compassionate counseling MOA for fy 26	

completed and paid for through counselor grant.

entation of cou

	Laptops purchased with grant monies for Maniilaq Partnership/Behavioral Health in Schools. Currently ~45 students being served via duel school/Maniilaq partnership. August 2025: fy26 school year start up beginning with Manillaq continuation or care with current students. Monthly care meetings set up with school district liaisons and staff.
4.1.3 Establish harm-to-self follow-up protocols, training and tracking data/procedures	Harm to Self or Others protocol or others established and yearly training with principals and counselors. To be completed yearly: 22-23 = yes completed 23-24= yes completed 24-25= yes, completed 25-26= yes completed in-service (principals and counselors) 26-27
4.1.4 Obtain funding for continuation of Programming after funding -Our Youth Positive Vision for Future no longer available.	Grant or general fundings. Sept. 2024: Initiated conversation with Grants regarding timing on potential new grants: Spring 2025: Initial discussions on what use of general funds for counseling services could be worked into site funding. Possible funding options: Could include counselors as part of the student teacher ratio. Or Counselor vs. Assistant principal at larger sites. Or could use Title I and/or IV grant funds and/or Mig. ed funds can be used too. OYOF grand continues for 2.5 more years. No changes have been announced.
	Spring 2026 Spring 2027

- Grow healthcare workforce through regional education initiatives
- Ensure every community has a public safety law enforcement presence.
- Create healing environments, trauma-informed services, and promote wellness and prevention within the region.

Objective Lead: Director of Student Services		
Strategies and Actions	Key Indicators/Metrics	Completion Date/Timeline
4.2.1 Train-the-trainer for Trauma Informed Practices	Obtain Train -the-trainer certification.	Completed Trainer #1 May 2023 Trainer #2 Dec. 2023
4.2.2 Inservice training ongoing yearly through length of this strategic plan	Training completed as evidenced by sign in sheet during beginning of the year in-service and monthly office hours on TEAMS	Aug. 2023 completed all staff Aug. 2024 Completed all staff training during in-service. Aug. 2025 Staff training completed in Aug. 14,2025 Aug. 2026 Aug. 2027

4.2.3 Trauma informed professional Development and supports to be made available to all staff on a yearly basis. Obtain grant funds for yearly presenters on trauma informed teaching practices and/or resiliency and restorative practice PD

FY 23:

FY 24: March 2024

Weekly Trauma informed and Resilience Focused Office hours initiated for teachers

Sept. Office hours continue, and Trauma Informed inservice planned for Oct. 2024

FY 25 Oct. 2024 District-wide professional development with Trauma informed specialist: Linda Chamberline

June 2025: Empower U programming used about 60% of sites for social stories/Social emotional

supports/social/emotional skills, problem solving and deescalation techniques. Developing trauma informed classroom management training for fy 26.

FY 26 see above

FY 27

2024 Grant funds used for Inservice Professional Development. 2025: Empower U being implemented in school, resiliency

lesson.

60



Next Steps: Annual Workplan

Develop annual workplan that will create actionable items guided by the strategic plan.

Draft Annual Work Plan

NWALT Focus Areas	Leads	~	Y1Q1	•	Y1Q
Iñupiaq Language and Culture – The	Insert individuals, organizations, those		Steps or actions to achieve		
foundation for all our work, and is how	responsible for implementation		desired/		
we celebrate for our past, present and			individual strategies		
future.					
Education & Workforce Development -					
Educating young people in our region					
results in healthy and sustainable					
communities.					
Economic Development - Northwest					
Alaska's economy can grow and thrive					
through local and regional partnerships.					
Infrastructure & Vital Services -					
Community infrastructure and vital					
services are basic needs that must be					
prioritized.					
Healthy Communities and Wellness –					
Wellness and access to healthcare are					
aligned with traditional practices and					
supported through infrastructure and					
evidence-based practices.					