



NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
MEMORANDUM

TO: Esther Evikana, President
Members of the Board

THROUGH: David Vadiveloo, Superintendent *DSV vadiveloo*

FROM: Qag̃guna Tenna D. Pili, Director of Iñupiaq Education

DATE: March 2, 2026

SUBJECT: **Participation in Literacy Screeners
for Alaska Indigenous Languages Pilot Project**

Memo No. SB26-106
(Information Item)

NSBSD Policy Manual:

NA - Operational

NSBSD Strategic Plan Summary:

Family & Community Collaboration

Goal 1: Prioritize and implement intentional and purposeful partnerships.

Culturally Responsive Instruction

Goal 2: All students perform at or above grade level

Goal 4: Graduate bilingual students

Issue Summary:

The North Slope Borough School District (NSBSD) is participating in a statewide research initiative to pilot Literacy Screeners for Alaska Indigenous Languages (LSAIL). The project, led by the University of Oregon's Center on Teaching and Learning and funded by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, aims to develop early literacy screeners in Alaska Native languages. These tools will support districts in assessing early literacy skills in Indigenous languages and help meet requirements under the Alaska Reads Act.

Participation allows NSBSD to contribute to the development of culturally relevant literacy assessment tools for the Iñupiaq language while supporting statewide efforts to improve literacy outcomes for Alaska Native students.

As part of the next phase of the project, participating districts will assist with pilot data collection in early 2026 to evaluate the appropriateness and difficulty of screener items across grade levels. Currently, due to the structure, success, and advancements of our Iñupiaq Language Programs, NSBSD will be the only district participating in the pilot at this time.

Background:

The Literacy Screeners for Alaska Indigenous Languages project is developing screening assessments that measure foundational literacy skills such as letter-sound knowledge, phonological awareness, word reading, passage reading, and comprehension for students in kindergarten through upper elementary grades. These screeners are being created through



collaboration with Alaska Native educators, linguists, elders, and community members to ensure cultural and linguistic accuracy.

NSBSD will identify students enrolled in the Iñupiaq language program, coordinate testing schedules with the University of Oregon research team, and provide relevant student demographic and assessment data in accordance with research protocols and federal privacy requirements.

The University of Oregon Institutional Review Board has approved the study as minimal-risk educational research involving student educational records and literacy screening data.

Through this partnership, NSBSD will contribute to the development of literacy assessment tools specifically designed for Alaska Native languages. The University of Oregon will reimburse the district for data collection activities and travel costs associated with the pilot implementation.

Signature: *DS Vadiveloo*

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Signature:

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