



NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT MEMORANDUM

TO: Esther Evikanna, President
Members of the Board

THROUGH: Dr. Bobby Bolen, Assistant Superintendent BB

FROM: Qaġġuna Tenna Pili, Director of Iñupiaq Education TJ

DATE: January 16, 2026

SUBJECT: Contracts over \$50,000 – Uncivilized Films
Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission History Film

Memo No: SB26-092
(Action Item)

NSBSD Policy Manual:

BP 3311, Bids: The district shall purchase equipment, supplies and services on a competitive bidding basis when required by law and whenever it appears to be in the best interest of the district to do so.

Board Policy 3312, Contracts: The Superintendent of designee may enter into contracts and memoranda of agreement (MOA's) on behalf of the District. All contracts and MOA's with a dollar value of \$50,000 or greater must be approved by the School Board.

NSBSD Strategic Plan Summary:

Family & Community Collaboration

Goal 1: Prioritize and implement intentional and purposeful partnerships.

Student Social & Emotional Wellbeing

Goal 5: Facilitate & maintain culturally, emotionally, & physically safe learning environments

Issue Summary:

The Iñupiaq Education Department (IED) seeks approval to proceed with the production of *History of the Iñupiat: Navigating Currents*, the fourth installment in NSBSD's acclaimed Iñupiaq curriculum and documentary film series. This new film will address a critical gap in the District's educational resources by documenting the political, cultural, and historical significance of subsistence whaling from an Iñupiaq perspective.

Rachel Najinaaq Edwardson, an immediate family member of Superintendent David Vadiveloo, is the owner of Uncivilized Films, a production company that has partnered with NSBSD since 2001 to produce award-winning educational documentaries and curriculum content. These film-based resources now form a foundational part of the District's cultural and place-based instructional materials.

This project will directly support the content revision and expansion of two compulsory high school courses—*North Slope History and Culture* and *North Slope Government*—ensuring that every NSBSD graduate receives instruction that is historically accurate, place-based, and aligned with our District's mission to graduate empowered, culturally rooted, and informed lifelong learners.

The current proposal will contract Uncivilized Films to produce *Navigating Currents*, which will document the political and cultural history of subsistence whaling on the North Slope. No comprehensive film currently exists that tells this story from the perspective of the Iñupiat people.





This project will ensure that the voices of Elders, leaders, and subject matter experts are recorded, preserved, and made accessible to students, staff, and the wider community.

The project is expected to result in a completed documentary film by the end of the fiscal year. Upon completion, the film and resources will be integrated into classroom instruction and reported to the Board through scheduled curriculum update presentations.

The budget from this contract will solely go to the production of the film through the direction and project management of Uncivilized Films.

Background:

In prior board action, the Iñupiaq Education Department received approval to contract with Rachel Nanjinaaq Edwardson for strategic planning and programmatic support. As part of her approved scope of work, Ms. Edwardson has supported district-wide curriculum development, staff and leadership training, and the integration of Iñupiaq-based social-emotional learning frameworks.

Building on the success and impact of prior films—*The Duck-In, Nipaa Iliquisipta: The Voice of Our Spirit*, and *Project Chariot—Navigating Currents* will serve as both a culturally grounded educational tool and a historical archive. These previous works have been utilized locally and internationally, enriching student learning, supporting community engagement, and enhancing staff professional development. This next film will continue that legacy, further anchoring our curriculum in the lived experiences, values, and knowledge of our Elders and community leaders.

The timing of this work is critical. The high school graduation requirements include two courses—*North Slope History and Culture* and *North Slope Government*—which are currently undergoing curriculum review and enhancement. This film will directly inform and strengthen those updates, providing high-quality, locally relevant content that aligns with Iñupiaq Learning Framework Performance Expectations, State and National Standards and the District's broader strategic goals.

Length of Contract:

The length of the contract would be January 29, 2026, through June 30, 2026.

Funding Source, Available Budget, and Purchase/Contract Amount:

This contract would come out of the IED Purchased Services Budget Account Code: 100.200.120.000.440, in the amount of and not to exceed \$163,200.00.

Compliance with BP 3311:

This contract is not funded through a federal award that would require a bidding proposal; However, this contract would be exempt from formal bidding procedures as a curriculum/instructional development expert that has been selected for a unique expertise.

Proposed Motion:

“I move that the NSBSD Board of Education approve the above \$50,000 and greater proposal and related contract with Uncivilized Films in an amount not to exceed \$163,200, as described in this memo and related attachments.”

Moved by _____ Seconded by _____

Advisory Vote _____ Vote _____

