

2025



NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES & PRIORITIES



1. \$20M to support Phase II of the rebuild of our burned-down school in Kaktovik
2. BSA (Base Student Allocation) to be increased to reflect inflation
3. Funding for culture-based curriculum, including language immersion
4. State-based initiatives to increase teacher retention
5. Funding support for student mental and emotional health
6. Improved broadband infrastructure to all North Slope villages

MANNUQPUT

OUR FOUNDATION

Iñuk una qauriñinaniñ nukatpiañuñinun
naagga niviaqsiañuñinun ilisimatiniguuruq
ilisausiamiñin naipiqtuñinanillu aasii tavra
isumalaalgusivluni sulisimmaagiksivluni tainnamik
aasii kisuutilaani pautagivlugu iñuguqhuni
iñulluatauvluni.

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.



MESSAGE FROM
SUPERINTENDENT
DAVID ANNİK VADIVELOO
AND SCHOOL BOARD
PRESIDENT JOHN HOPSON JR.

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 (Ipalook 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

\$20M TO SUPPORT PHASE II OF THE REBUILD OF OUR BURNED-DOWN SCHOOL IN KAKTOVIK



*February 6, 2020 –
Kaktovik school fire*

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’. There are no facilities for physical activity in the temporary buildings. There are multiple phases for the rebuild of the entire school.

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) commenced in late 2024.

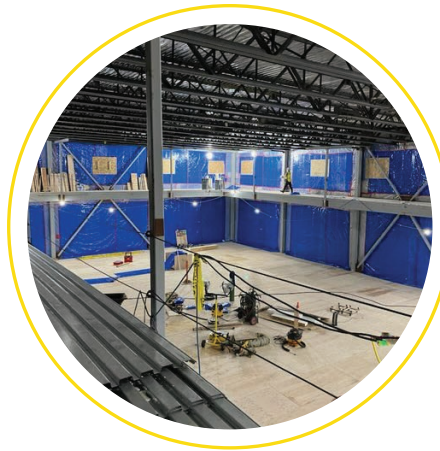
Both of these Phases are paid for with proceeds from insurance and the North Slope Borough.

However, Phase II (construction of all classrooms & admin space) will cost an additional \$40M and **we are asking that the State support half the cost of that phase of the rebuild (\$20M).**

Drawings for phase II are completed and construction will commence in late 2025.



*Phase I – Kaktovik
School Rebuild
(Exterior)*



*Phase I – Kaktovik
School Rebuild (Gym)*



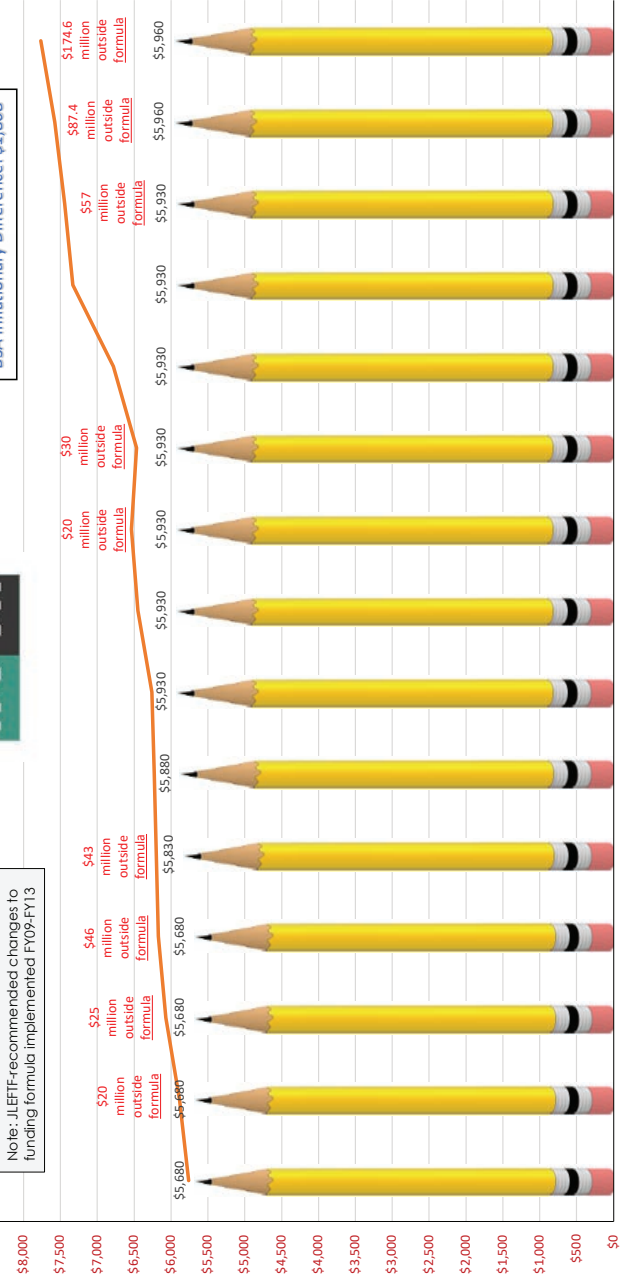
*Marcus Gallagher graduated from
Kaveolook School in 2023 and
started his first job, working on
building Kaktovik's new school.*

*Inupiat Dance
Class held in
front entryway
of temporary
school*



Data source: Urban Alaska Annual CPI-U
Line shows what the BSA would have been if
inflation adjusted since 2011 - FY25 = **\$7,769**

BSA Inflationary Difference: **\$1,808**



PRIORITY TWO

BSA (BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION) TO BE INCREASED TO REFLECT INFLATION

The State Constitution requires the State of Alaska to adequately fund public education. At a time when learning loss caused by COVID has been acknowledged nationally, **our students need more intervention services and education support, not less.**

We are grateful to the Legislature for the one-time outside the formula education funding increase in 2024. However, the lack of a permanent increase inside the formula has exacerbated the impact of prolonged flat funding, historic inflation, and rising costs in health care, transportation, operations, and maintenance.

To keep pace with inflation since FY11, schools and communities require a \$1,808 increase in the Base Student Allocation based on the Urban Alaska Annual CPI-U Calculation.

In FY26 we are requesting a \$1,000 increase to the BSA with a follow up increase in FY27 and FY28 of \$404 per year.

PRIORITY THREE

FUND CULTURE-BASED CURRICULUM, INCLUDING LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAMS

NSBSD recognizes the sovereign rights of the Iñupiat and delivers an education program that not only reflects 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:**

- 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)
- Increased neural brain density



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

Studies 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.

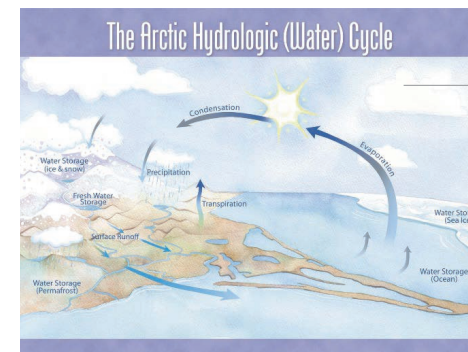
In 2023, the District recommenced the Iñupiaq Immersion program. After two successful years at ECE and Kindergarten, the program requires funding to expand and open a first grade immersion classroom in FY26.



*3rd Grade Anaktuvuk
Pass Students Reading a
Traditional Iñupiaq Legend*

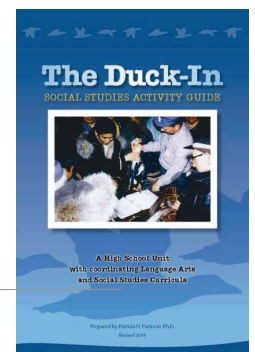


*Ipalook Elementary School
Students learning about
biology of a bowhead whale
and food sustainability*



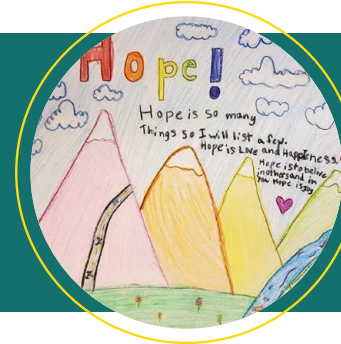
*Poster for the Science
Unit Immiuñiq: Winter
Sources of Drinking Water*

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



PRIORITY FOUR

FUND SUPPORT FOR STUDENT WELLBEING



Student poster promoting emotional well-being

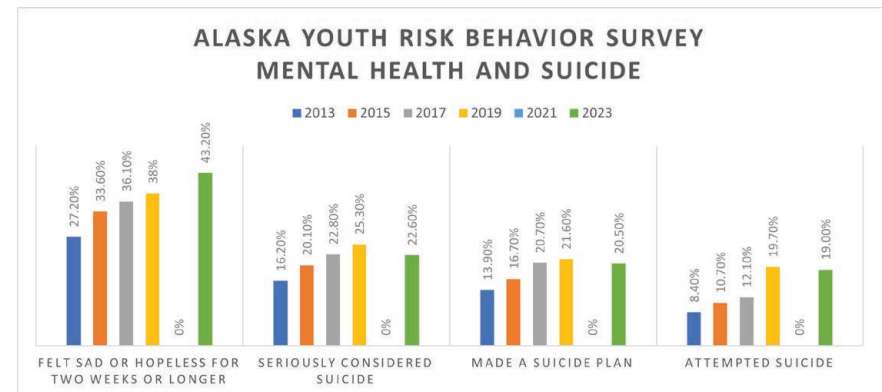
- **There is a clear research and data link between social and emotional well being and academic performance in school.**
- NSBSD students provide regular feedback on the need for more social and emotional support services. This is a priority of our District-Wide Student Council.
- The two years of COVID 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.



Culturally relevant anti-bullying initiatives in our schools

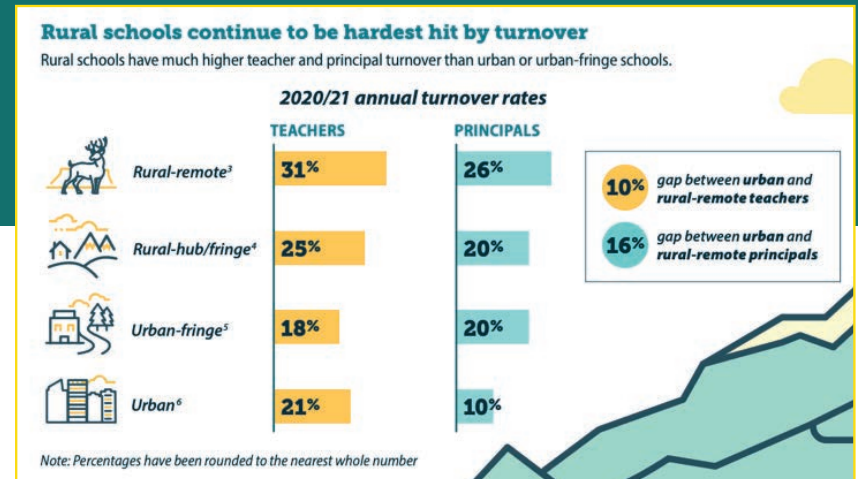
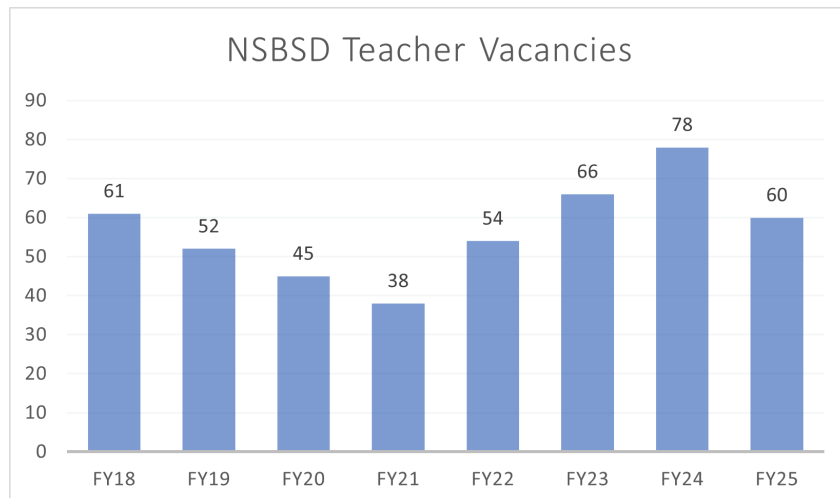


PRIORITY FIVE

FUND MEASURES TO INCREASE TEACHER RETENTION

NSBSD TEACHER RETENTION FACTS

- In Fall of 2024, we had to replace more than 30% of our teaching staff, which represented over 60 new teachers.
- Despite a focused recruiting drive, we currently employ eight long-term substitutes.
- The majority of our teacher vacancies are in the most remote villages
- In 2024 the District paid over \$285,000 (excluding salary) to recruit 28 new teachers from overseas.



Source: Institute of Education Sciences, 2021

Update: Teacher Retention and Turnover in Alaska

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.

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
- To try and meet recruiting needs, the District paid over \$285,000 (excluding salary) to recruit 28 new teachers from overseas.

FACTS

- Alaska ranks 42nd 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 recent subsea fiber cuts in the Beaufort Sea severely disrupted essential services, including education, healthcare, safety, and security, underscoring the critical need for a more resilient network.

A proposal has been made by private sector companies for a terrestrial “land bridge” from Utqiagvik to Deadhorse to bypass the damaged sub-sea section. This project, however, requires significant federal assistance to expedite permits and funding. With full government cooperation, the land bridge could be completed in a matter of months, providing a more reliable connection for our communities.

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.





NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
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www.nsbsd.org/en-US