



## AK-TRAILS BOARD REPORT August 2025



**Summer Fun:** Over the summer, AK-TRAILS families have been busy! Some chose to continue with lessons, while others took time to participate in travel, subsistence, or cultural activities. Many high school students spent time working summer jobs, which can earn them work study credits through SISD.





**Staffing:** This year AK-TRAILS will have two contact teachers! New hire Melanie Pitka will serve students in her area up north (on the “mainland”), and Cassandra Christopherson will continue to be the program coordinator and contact teacher for local and remote families, including all of Southeast. April Hoy and Robbin Perkins will continue helping us assist our students with special education needs. This summer, we also brought on Jamie Merenciano to help us with rebranding and social media.

**Enrollment:** AK-TRAILS is expecting around 40-45 students. Many of these will be students that followed Melanie over from a previous program, with around 15 students from Southeast. Three of the local students are partially enrolled in another SISD school and using AK-TRAILS for specialty classes. Families are busy getting their documents in and familiarizing themselves with the new online enrollment system.



**Student Spotlight:** This summer, AK-TRAILS rising senior Tia Christopherson applied for and completed the Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI) in Fairbanks. During the 7 week program, Tia was proud to earn a 4.0 GPA, 9 college credits, and multiple awards—including top student in two classes, as well as RAHI's first-ever Denali Award..the highest honor given this year! On the weekends, Tia had the opportunity to see sights and complete activities such as white water river rafting in Denali National Park, climbing Angel Rocks, soaking in Chena Hot Springs, volunteering, and competing at a “fun Olympics” at Camp Bingle. Overall, Tia represented our district *extremely* well, receiving distinction for

completing the program with both academic and citizenship honors, and even being chosen to speak during the commencement ceremony.

**Sports:** Local students have the opportunity to participate in sports at an SISD school. Athletic director Jennifer Andis has sent out notices about high school volleyball, and parents and students are busy getting sports physicals and updating their Big Teams accounts. We anticipate 3-5 AK-TRAILS students joining the volleyball team, with a few possibly interested in elementary and middle school cross country.

**Social media:** Cassandra and Melanie met with Jamie regularly over the summer to get our social media accounts up and running, and to discuss the content that should be posted. Check us out on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)!

**Website Development:** Updates to the AK-TRAILS website will be coming soon.

**Professional Development:** Cassandra attended lead teacher training on Monday, 8/18, and Cassandra and Melanie (remotely) both attended an all-staff inservice in Thorne Bay on Tuesday, 8/19.

Report Respectfully Submitted by Cassandra Christopherson

**SISD Vision:**

*"Students are equipped to achieve their dreams and aspirations"*

**SISD Mission:**

*"Set a foundation by cultivating experiences for students to develop goals and thrive in an ever-changing world"*