

Superintendent - David Vadiveloo

Chief School Administrator - David Vadiveloo

Utuqqanaavut kisuiḡukkitka – sivulliit utuqqanaallu, paṇmami utuqqanaagiravullu, utuqqanaaḡuḡumaaqtuallu. Quyanaaḡitka paṇmamuraglaan aullatimmagit savaktivut iḷiññaqtuagiravullu. Nalunaḡuṇmigiga sulī iñuuniaḡuutilaaqput savaguutilaaqpullu nunanjīñī lñupiat. Igliqtitchirauvluta minjuaqtuḡvinḡik kamasuuttaḡigikput ikayuiyumiñaaqpta tamatkunani nunani.

Members of the Board and members of the North Slope community

On behalf of the administration we thank the community of Nuiqsut and the school administration, students and staff for hosting us today. It is always a pleasure to be in our communities with our students and the sense of renewed optimism about the direction of this school is evident to everyone.

As a District we want to pay our respects to those who have lost loved ones in tragic circumstances this past month. We send our strength and prayers to all families affected by recent events and thank our staff, our regional leaders and partner organizations who have rallied together to support the affected community members.

Once again it has been our elders who have grounded us and reminded us of the values that guide and inform our lives and our work and we want to pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging and re-state how honored we are to work and live on the self-determined sovereign lands of the lñupiaq people. We thank the community for entrusting us as partners in the education and growth of their children and we thank our Board for supporting the operations of our administration.

March madness is over and we're in the home stretch to graduations. The past month has seen great success at regionals, exceptional sportsmanship, dedication, hard work mixed with heartbreak at the State tournaments. We've been deep in the strategic planning process for our next 5 years, deep in the recruiting cycle for the next 12 months and deeply grateful for the generosity of our region supporting our students to participate in activities and events to grow them into the next generation of leaders.

With those highlights in mind I'd like to present to the Board and our community the following highlights by way of an update on District operations for the month of January, as mapped against our Strategic goals and objectives.

Strategic goal 1: Student success

Pedagogy Domains: Culturally Responsive Instruction, Family & Community Collaboration, Authentic assessment of the whole child

As we've heard from the IT Department in their featured department report, the coverage of the regionals reached across the slope as Kali School hosted the 1A Regional Basketball Tournament. 9 total teams played over the 3-day tournament with Nunamiut Amaguq's coming out on top in both the boys and girls brackets. A big congratulations to

all 1A teams and thanks to the community of Kali, Principal Granatir and the staff for hosting the games and making the Prom a memorable event for those attending. The Amaguq's girls team went on to secure 7th spot at State and the boys were eliminated in the second round, but both teams did the District and themselves proud with the entire girls team symbolizing the unity of the village by taking out the player of the game award.

Tikiġaq girls were successful at the 2A regional tournament in Anchorage. The Harpoonerettes came out on top while the boys won the first day but were unable to advance to the State tournament. The Harpoonerettes went all the way to the State 2A final but were unable to bring home the silverware this year. Despite not winning the championship this year, the team again displayed its trademark high standards and discipline on the court and off with their studies. Great work on another great season.

The 3A Regionals came to Utqiagvik for the first time in 17 years and BHS Principal TenBroeck and his team did a great job hosting the event. The BHS boys and the girls secured pathways to State. The Lady Whalers entered the State championship ranked #1 but fell short in the championship game. The boys also had a great tournament finishing 4th. As with our 1A and 2A teams, the values of sportsmanship and teamwork were a hallmark of the 3A games and we are proud of all our players, coaches and supporters, including the BHS cheer team who came second in the regionals and 3rd overall at State.

To all our teams congratulations once again!

Four teams represented the District in the State Battle of the Books competition. Congratulations to the teams who delivered solid top ten placings with Alak School (gr 3-4) taking 6th place and HMS (gr 7-8) taking 5th place. BHS came in 11th and IPK (gr 5-6) were 21st. To all our students, keep on reading and keep on competing. To ASTAC we say thanks again for your support of Battle of the Books and to the staff and families supporting this event, thank you once again for your commitment to our students.

As the State Reads Act comes to its first year end all Districts are working through the new processes and reporting requirements. One of the new requirements is an individual reading plan for students and in some cases a conversation with parents of K-3 students about potential non-progression to the next grade. This is obviously a new State requirement and we are preparing messaging and communication for all parents. We want to reassure parents and the Board that the ultimate decision to progress the student will be made by the parent/guardian.

As we head toward graduation, Student Records and our C&I Secondary Coordinator are conducting graduation audits, identifying seniors who may be at risk of not graduating, and assisting buildings in problem solving.

The Iñupiaq Education Department were in Atqasuk this month working with their new ILT. The students were taught how to play Taiļaviuŋ which prepares them for the Knowledge of Language competition. The older groups (3rd grade and up) were taught to play Arriljuġiņ (pictionary). Students were having so much fun with the Arriljuġiņ game that they chose to stay in the Iñupiaq language class rather than go play in the gym. The

middle school students learned how to play Atausiq which helps with learning Iñupiaq verb conjugation.

Elder David Stone has been working with the Department to help ensure Iñupiaq resources are accurate to the Tikiġaq dialect and Taġnak Rexford continues to develop the early reader series of culturally responsive readers.

An Artist in Residence is planned for April 22-26 at the QLC offering an intensive mask making workshop for high school students. We're anticipating participation from every site, but specifically from our sites without full time art teachers. Each student (up to 24) will complete their own carved wooden mask.

The District priority on anti-bullying has seen a focus on the Tavra Anti-bullying program developed by Atqasuk counselor Patti Lloyd. This month all School counselors attended a training provided by Ms Lloyd. The training was to share this place-based anti-bullying program based on the Iñupiaq Values. The program will be implemented District wide as part of a Tier 1 PBIS initiative.

Through our CTE and voc-ed program students at Tikiġaq School had a culinary class that delivered learning on the economics of running a coffee shop business (online activity), knife skills, pasta and bread making, and testing for their Alaska Food Workers Card. And this past month also brought middle school students from Kali and Alak schools into Qatqiñġiagvik to learn about plants and hydroponics. From dissecting flowers to looking at microbes they grew from homemade fertilizer and learning to plant the week was filled with hands-on science.

A very exciting event is also occurring this week with Barrow High School hosting the College & Career Fair co-sponsored by the Qatqiñġiagvik Learning Centre. There are 33 entities that are attending with 90 representatives here to meet with BHS, Kiita, and 25 students from the villages. The students from the villages are also working with Mayors Youth Advisory Council staff before and after the fair each day.

On the curriculum enhancement front we were notified this month that Senator Murkowski secured a significant congressional appropriation of \$580,000 for the NSBSD to fund our *Repair, Rebuild, and Revitalize ("RRR") Traditional Language Initiative*. This funding will support the development of targeted online units for language acquisition and will dovetail with our district wide support of all students through distance delivery classrooms.

We can also report that 55 students have signed up to take the ACT this year and 9 have enrolled for RAHI. This is an increase in numbers for RAHI but ACT numbers in particular have dropped. We believe this is the result of Colleges including Ilišagvik no longer requiring the ACT.

And finally, the Spring Alaska Association Student Government (AASG) Conference is scheduled for April 18-21 at Barrow High School. We're looking forward to this event being hosted in on the North Slope for the first time in over 20 years. The BHS organizing committee are working hard and we are extremely grateful to each department and their

staff. From BHS students and admin to transportation to food services to the Iñupiaq Education Department, we thank students and staff for their commitment to student voice and leadership development across the region and state.

Strategic goal 2: Community engagement

Pedagogy Domains: Culturally Responsive Instruction, Family & Community Collaboration

Central office has once again been busy visiting our village sites this past month. Dr Bolen had a lengthy visit in Anaktuvak Pass and both he and Assistant Superintendent Mulvenon spent time in Tikiġaq supporting administration and aligning buildings with District processes. Superintendent Vadiveloo travelled to Kaktovik for a community meeting to introduce SY 24-25 Principal Dr Crystal Coleman to the community. Dr Coleman took the opportunity to travel up from Texas on her Spring break to meet with students and teachers and families. It was a wonderful visit and at the community potluck the community overwhelmingly endorsed their new Principal.

As discussed in our February Board meeting the District administration and staff continue to focus on partnerships with all our stakeholders and this month saw MOA's being signed with Maniilaq and ASNA regarding student wellbeing and health. This month has also seen further strengthening of our partnerships with the NSB. Our M&O have been supported by the NSB with electrical and mechanical trades support, our communities have been supported with police support at regionals and we have reciprocated by supporting the NSB with their upcoming Encounters visit of foreign and national dignitaries to the North Slope.

With the AASG conference around the corner we send a huge thanks to all our community partners and supporters for making this event possible and we send a special thanks to Rotary, the City of Wainwright, City of Utqiagvik, ASRC, BUECI and Conoco for their much needed donations.

And of course this month saw our annual joint board meeting with Iḷisaġvik College. As our partnership with Iḷisaġvik continues to strengthen the two Boards were facilitated in a significant student centered conversation that focused on the wellbeing of our students and ways to amplify opportunities. The joint resolution that was crafted will be presented during our April meeting.

Strategic goal 3: Staff success

Pedagogy domain: Staff Support & Professional Development

After nearly a year of dialogue with partners and the development of our Iḷisaṛriġuqta initiative we are very pleased to report that we have 5 local staff enrolled in Iḷisaġvik's Ed194 course, which is an introductory course in the education degree that leads to teacher certification. We want to congratulate those staff and encourage more interested staff and community members to take this path. To support local staff on this pathway,

the District has provided them with paid time release to participate in their college courses during work hours. The administration is also waiting for our budget numbers to be finalized in order to determine whether we can provide a support system similar to what LKSD offer to staff under their “two and done” program.

Along these lines, we are also pleased to advise that the ASCF teacher apprenticeship program was a recipient of an appropriation secured by Senator Murkowski. As the board is aware, the District provided a letter of support to ASCF for its application and we are listed as the employer of choice which will give our staff an opportunity to select this apprenticeship pathway toward teacher certification.

As the State moves toward the highly qualified paraprofessional pathway as a requirement, we are also pleased to report that we have 23 paraprofessionals enrolled in the Master Teacher Program working toward their highly qualified status.

Also this month our SPED teachers attended a training provided by Robbin Perkins-Askew to provide guidelines for IEP Teams to determine what SPED students will qualify for Extended School Year (ESY) services. And Fred Ipalook Elementary School provided 42 of their certificated staff an on-line module as part of the verbal-de-escalation training during their site in-service.

In closing, as the District works hard to recruit into vacant teaching positions we are pleased to announce that we have recently filled the following key administrative positions: Director of M&O, Director of Finance, Director of Student Services, Principal Qatqiñniagvik Learning Centre, Principal Harold Kaveolook School Kaktovik, Assistant Principal Ipalook Elementary and Assistant Principal Barrow High School.

Strategic goal 4: Financial and operational Stewardship

Pedagogy Domain: Financial & Operational Stewardship

This month we’ve completed the next critical phase of the strategic planning process. The facilitators, Directors and CO team spent three days (including a Saturday for CO and the instructional team) unpacking the directions provided by the Board and converting those into departmental priorities and action areas. It was three days of deep consideration and planning and we are looking forward to a draft being presented to the Board in the April meeting.

Also this month the business office have worked closely with the Superintendent to finalize the budget binder for the upcoming budget hearings before the Assembly. The binder has been communicated to the NSB and we’re looking forward to our hearing on April 3rd.

Since last months meeting, the Superintendent has received confirmation from the Mayor that the recommended level of financial support from the North Slope Borough to the North Slope Borough School District for FY24-25 will be \$38,766,371. This would represent a match of the total local contribution provided last year by the NSB which included \$1.9M of additional revenues received in July 2023. The Mayor acknowledged

that the amount recommended for FY25 is \$2M lower than the request by the District and has indicated that as the fiscal year progresses the NSB will look for further opportunities to collaborate with the School District. The Mayor also noted that his office is committed to continuing supplemental support for Educational Initiatives with support levels to be determined upon completion of signed memorandums.

As the Board heard during our work session yesterday, Maintenance and Operations presented to the NSB Project Review Committee this week and are awaiting the outcome of the Committees final commitments. The District asked for \$20M to support the next phase of the Kaktovik School and \$5M for district wide CIP.

As part of the presentation to the PRC, the Superintendent also brought a proposal from the floor regarding emergency security upgrades in all schools. In the wake of the recent tragedy in Tikiġaq, the District have been fast-tracking research and procurement options for new security and safety options for our schools. The result is a 2-part security upgrade for all sites which will involve i) Detex security devices and panic bars at all door locations. This will sound a high decibel alarm in the event of a student propping a door or exiting the wrong location and ii) Detex panic bars and A-phone (video monitoring with push button entry only from the front desk) devices at the front doors. This will create a “funnel” for visitors coming into the building. Once locked, entry will only be allowed with permission from the front desk.

This infrastructure change will mean that all school entry and exit doors will be locked at school start time and unlocked at school stop time, providing a secure building throughout the day for our students and staff. The first site for installation will be the Tikiġaq school with all other sites to follow. While the PRC committee did not accept the emergency LOI proposal from the Superintendent, the Chair and committee members encouraged the District to implement the measures using existing district wide 201 funds and then request that the committee ‘re-fund’ projects that are moved sideways by the district in order to accommodate this emergency installation.

In IT, the Board have heard today from Director Reggie Santos about the tremendous work that his team have been involved in. In addition to that work, yesterday we executed the contract with GCI for our internet service and as such we will all wait with some anticipation as to whether the 100MB supply minimum makes it through the final stages of the State budget process.

Conclusion:

A community centered, student centered school district with high expectations of students and high expectations of staff – this continues to be the guide track for our administration. We’ve completed the *Repair* phase of our operational plan as presented to the board two years ago, we are well into our *Rebuild* phase, and we are now commencing the exciting *Revitalize* phase. As I mentioned two years ago, this will be challenging work. This is when the ‘blisters on the hands’ start to get callouses. As noted in last months meeting, there is rigor required to get us to a standard of education that the parents of this community are seeking for their children. And it relies upon partnerships between parents and the district, stakeholders and funders.

This past month has seen tragedy of a kind many of us never wanted to imagine in our region. In the face of these changes our schools must remain a constant haven of care, support, and growth. We have a new strategic plan about to be launched. We have a new energy and hope in our district. And we thank the Board for continuing to provide us with the direction and support we need to operationalize the mission. To the community of Nuiqsut and the school administration, thank you again for hosting our meeting today. To all our parents, guardians, families and community partners district wide, thank you for continuing to support your students to grow and thank you also for supporting us as we move our district in a positive direction. Quyanaqpak and Atautchimukta!