

Northwest Arctic Borough School District



Youth Leaders Program

2025-26



YOUTH LEADERS

Purpose

The purpose of Youth Leaders is to empower young people to develop essential life skills, drive positive change, and become engaged, responsible citizens by providing them with opportunities for growth in areas like communication, problem-solving, and community involvement.

Activity 1: Statewide Elders and Youth Conference and AFN

10/13/2025 to 10/18/2025, Dena'ina Center - Anchorage

The AFN Conference Theme was “Standing Strong, Standing United”; and the Statewide Elders and Youth Conference appropriately provided an opportunity for the NANA Youth to spend time with the NANA Elders. Both conferences are principal forums for the Alaska Native Communities, and they focus on strengthening the Alaska Native voices, in particular as it pertains to public policy and government.

2025 Statewide Elders & Youth Conference			
Hosted by the First Alaskans Institute -- Northwest Region Schedule			
Sunday, October 12	Monday, October 13	Tuesday, October 14	Wednesday, October 15
8:00am 8:30am - 12:00pm Dena'ina Center Main Ballroom	Registration Opens - 1st Floor Conference Begins Opening Protocols FAI Welcome Conference Overview Elder or Youth Keynote Plenary Dialogue Special Guest Introductions Regional Caucus - Tukhugneng 4, 2nd Floor @1pm Select 2026 Elder and Youth Representatives Aviññaq to go over Representative responsibilities	Registration Opens Conference Begins Opening Protocols FAI Welcome Conference Overview Elder or Youth Keynote Plenary Dialogue Special Guest Introductions	Registration Opens Conference Begins Re-Set Agreements Plenary Presentation House Descriptions & Instructions Women's, Men's, LGBTQIA2+ Houses
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Lunch Talks with Elders & Youth We will have box lunches in the same room as our regional caucus	Lunch & Learns @Dena'ina ATH Hosting Language Learning Dialogue Box lunches provided as we talk about language learning	Plenary Reconvene Dance Group Closing Ceremonies
1:00pm	Registration Opens - 1st Floor Plenary Session Kiana Opt-In Dancers @1pm	Plenary Session Dance Group Workshop 1 (Aqqaluk Trust Beginner Ilupiaq) Come learn Ilupiaq with us! We will cover basics, and you will learn how to introduce yourself in Ilupiaq as you practice with our Elders.	Lunch w/ NANA/ Aqqaluk Trust/ Akina/ Teck • Summer Opportunities - Internships • Taco Bar • Ice Breakers • Scholarship Application Readiness • NANA History: Past to Present • Introducing NANA Works • Robert's Rule 101
1:30pm-3:00pm	Warning of the Hands Go Pagala People	Workshop 2 (Skin Sewing/ NYO Ball Making) Come learn how to skin sew from our Elders by making your own leather NYO ball.	(We will start after the Conference is over, Location TBD)
3:30pm-5:00pm	Elder & Aviññaq on Stage to talk about theme @3pm Kiana Opt-In Dancers @4pm	Workshop 3 (Aqqaluk Trust Intermediate Ilupiaq) Come learn Ilupiaq with us! We will cover how word parts come together, and play a matching game as you practice Ilupiaq with our Elders. Workshop 4 (Donut Making with NANA) Learn how to make dough and donuts with us! Our communities gather around food, and this is one of our favorites.	
5:00pm	Closing for the day	Closing for the day	
5:00pm	Dinner - on your own	Dinner - on your own	Dinner - on your own
7:00pm Optional	Natives Got Talent & Chin'an Performances Dena'ina Center	Teen Dance @8-10pm Alaska Native Heritage Center	

As we get more details and updates, we will make updates to the schedule

WORKSHOPS

There are many workshops going on Monday and Tuesday afternoon. The workshops highlighted are ones that are being lead by the Aqqaluk Trust and NANA. Please feel free to attend any workshop you choose. For NW Youth Leaders, make sure you are in your groups. Once we get the workshop descriptions, we will share the with you all.

A total of 12 youth leaders, chaperoned by 5 Youth Leader advisors, represented their villages and towns situated in Northwest Arctic Borough, in Anchorage.



As they learned more about their Inupiat heritage and ways of life, they shared new experiences, strengthened friendships and kinship ties, and formed deep bonds with one another. Ariigaa!

From the dance floor to the Anchorage skyline, the Northwest Arctic Youth Leaders captured every moment and fully enjoyed their time in Anchorage.



The conference created a much-needed opportunity for NANA youth and elders to spend quality time together. Through these moments, Youth Leaders learned more about their heritage and the Inupiat values passed down by their elders, while recognizing their responsibility to protect these teachings and carry them forward to the next generation.

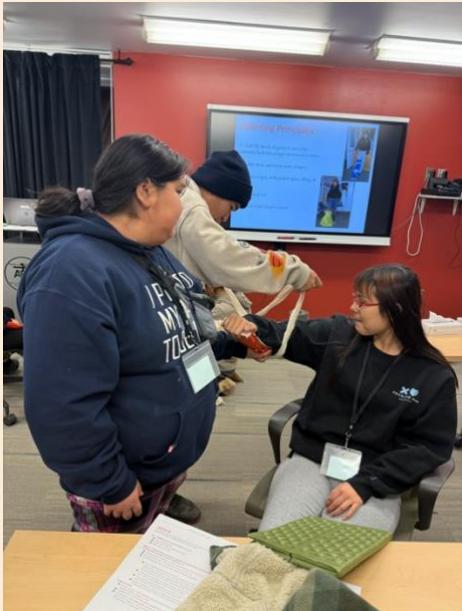


Activity 2: Wilderness First Aid Train

10/22/2025 to 10/24/2025, ATC - Kotzebue

This course was hosted by Wilderness Emergency Medical Education (WEME) based out of Palmer, Alaska. Accidents happen. People get hurt, sick, or lost. The temperature drops, the wind picks up, and it starts to rain or snow. Would you know what to do? The Youth Leaders do!

A total of 37 youth leaders represented their villages and towns of Ambler, Buckland, Noorvik, Selawik, Noatak, Kivalina, and Kotzebue, at ATC.



All Youth Leaders were especially excited and appreciative at the prospect of one day helping their community with this knowledge!







AASB's 72nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE & Youth Leadership Institute

Activity 3: Youth Leadership Institute

11/13/2025 to 11/16/2025, Dena'ina Center - Anchorage

The AASB Conference centered on the theme “Coming Together for Alaska’s Students.” As Alaska’s largest gathering of district-level education leaders and board members, AASB and its Youth Leadership Institute create an important platform for students to share their voices with the state’s educational decision-makers.

**AASB's 72nd
ANNUAL CONFERENCE
& Youth Leadership Institute**

This November, we're excited to host our Annual Conference at a **new venue** — the Dena'ina Convention Center in Anchorage! As Alaska's largest gathering of school board members and district leaders, this event offers unparalleled opportunities to connect, learn, and lead.

This year's program includes expert keynote speakers, roundtables, like-sized district forums, shared meals, and over 15 breakout sessions on timely education topics. Plus, the Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) returns, bringing high school students together to build leadership skills and inspire change in their schools and communities.

Friday Keynote Speaker
Jeff Utecht
Jeff Utecht Consulting

Jeff Utecht, global education leader and innovator, will explore the intersection of education and technology, highlighting Generational Leadership & Understanding. With experience supporting over 75,000 educators worldwide, he inspires schools to reimagine learning for the next generation.

Saturday Keynote Speaker
Benjamin Mallott
President, Alaska Federation of Natives

Ben Mallott serves as President of the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), a role he assumed in 2024 after serving as Vice President of External Affairs. He previously worked for U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski as a Legislative Assistant on issues impacting Alaska Natives and rural communities.

Breakfast starts at 7:00 am each day.

Thursday, November 13: Pre-Conference Sessions (8:30 am - 4:30 pm)

- **Ready, Set, Govern!**: New School Board Member Training
- **Experienced Board Member Academy**: Finance Essentials for School Boards
- **Resolutions Committee Meeting**: Make sure your district has a voice to review and shape resolutions that will guide AASB's advocacy and priorities for the coming year.
- **Youth Leadership Institute**: Day 1 (goes through Sunday)

Lunch on your own: 12:00 - 1:30 pm

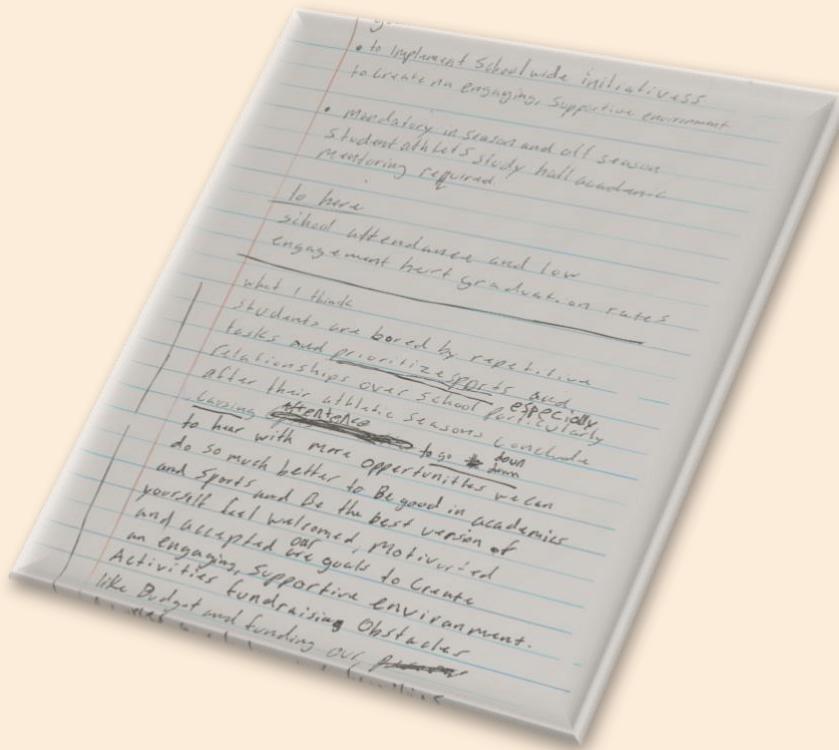
For more information, visit www.aasb.org

A total of 5 youth leaders, chaperoned by 4 Youth Leader advisors, represented various Northwest arctic villages and towns, in Anchorage.

Reflecting on her experience at the AASB Conference and Youth Leadership Institute, Youth Leader Sylvia Oviok put her thoughts into words and later shared them with her peers at YLI and during a Zoom meeting with Youth Leaders and advisors.



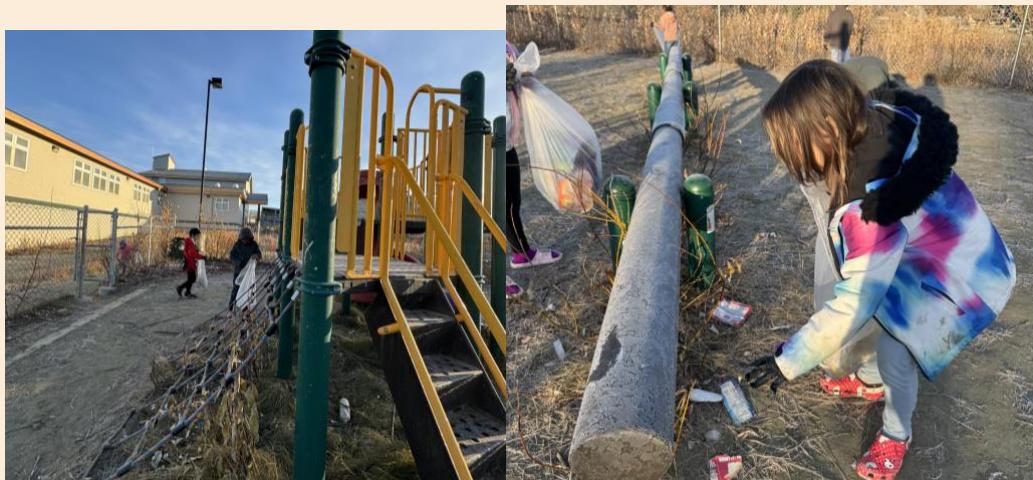
Youth Leaders showcased donated items from school districts across the state, which were auctioned to raise funds for the June Nelson Memorial Scholarship.



Dwight, Youth Leader from Deering, helping the NWABSD Board Members with their meal at lunch time!

Youth Leaders in Action!

Our Youth Leaders just love to take care of their communities!



The Youth Leaders, their advisors, and Cheyenne, the Youth Leader Coordinator, meet via Teams each month!



Ongoing Youth Leader Engagement

Youth Leaders, their advisors, and **Cheyenne Ticket-Foote, Youth Leader Coordinator**, meet monthly via Teams to share updates, build skills, plan events, and stay connected across villages.

These consistent virtual meetings help maintain momentum, provide leadership development opportunities, and strengthen relationships across the district.

Conclusion

The first half of the 2025–2026 school year has been filled with growth, learning, and service. From cultural engagement to emergency medical training and statewide leadership opportunities, Youth Leaders continue to embody the values of their communities while preparing to lead future generations.

Their dedication, curiosity, and compassion are a testament to the strength of our region's youth—and the bright future they are shaping.