

April Board Report 2026 Mary Donaldson, Special Education Director



*Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress.
Working together is a success.*

STATE MODELING NOME PROGRAM

Nome-Beltz High School students are again working for the special education department at Nome Elementary School. Due to the inability to hire paraprofessionals to meet the needs of our special education students four years ago we implemented a program of hiring high school students. This program is now being adopted state wide with DEED supporting policy and procedures. We currently have one student at the high school working two hours a day four days a week at the elementary under the supervision of Mr. Jason Brown and Ms Peggy Simpson.

GUESTS FROM ALASKA CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

A program continues as the Special Education Department partners with Alaska Christian College in providing an opportunity for students to observe our program. Dr Nathan Hanna and two students visited Nome Elementary for two days and provided the following feedback.

“During our recent visit to the Nome Elementary Special Education program, we were deeply impressed by what can only be described as an exemplary model of excellence in special education. From the moment we arrived, it was evident that the program operates with a remarkable level of professionalism, organization, and intentionality. Every aspect—from the structured environment to the individualized supports—demonstrated a clear commitment to meeting the complex and diverse needs of students with high needs.

What stood out most was the seamless coordination among staff, whose expertise, compassion, and dedication were visible in every interaction. The team has cultivated a learning environment that is not only highly effective, but also deeply respectful and empowering for students. The thoughtful implementation of strategies, the clarity of routines, the support by consultants, and the evident progress of students reflect a program that is both data-driven and heart-centered.

As visiting college faculty and students, we unanimously agree that this program is a powerful example of what is possible when supportive leadership, high standards, collaboration, and genuine care come together. Nome Elementary's Special Education program should be recognized as a model for others to learn from and aspire to replicate. We are VERY thankful for the opportunity!

P.S. Where can we get an orange shirt!