

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION



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DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

BUSINESS OFFICE

Working with insurance carriers to get a good rate for spring.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Finalizing Highly Qualified and certification issues.

SPECIAL EDUCATION & PARENTS AS TEACHERS

Assessing program and creating a training plan for staff.

INSTRUCTION

Math in a Cultural Context, eRate and Assessments have been our focus.

TECHNOLOGY

Site support, network and systems upgrades have been the focus this past month.



a new focus moves instruction ahead...

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

Jack Foster, Superintendent

Changes in Our Schools

If you visited your school today, you would hear a new vocabulary being used by teachers and the principals. You would hear them discussing the Alaska Computerized Formative Assessment (ACFA) that is being used in the classrooms. This online student formative assessment system has questions with the same format being used in other state assessments like the Standards Based Assessments (SBA) and High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE). While the students are practicing on an area of weakness, they will be seeing the same format used in their Standards Based Assessment test given at the end of the year. Koliganek teacher, Pam Johnson, noted that when her students took ACFA assessments, they encountered difficulty because they were not used to the format used in the test questions.

With the practice that ACFA provides the students should do much better on the tests given in the spring on which the state bases its measure of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The state bases Adequate Yearly Progress on Standards Based Assessment scores.

You might also hear staff discussing good news on the Learning Upgrade program. This program is used mostly after school and students are having success with it as well. We used this program last year and the staff felt this was one of the reasons why so many of our students made Adequate Yearly Progress.



Clarks Point staff & students are busy learning!



Clarks Point students hard at work during a recent visit to the school.

Education Summit

On November 13-14, 2008 a team from the district will be attending an educational summit hosted by Commissioner of Education, Larry LeDoux. The summit, "Building Alaska's Future One Student at a Time" will be attended by over five hundred people from across the state in Anchorage. The conference promises to be a great start in trying to figure out how we might build success for our students one at a time.

Student Count

The student count has been turned into the state for Southwest Region School District. Our official count for the 2008-2009 school year is 633.5. This has not been certified yet, but will be very close to the final count. We had a certified count of 657 for the 2007-2008 school year, so we are 24 students down from last year.

On an even more serious note, since the end of the count period our enrollment has risen to 646 students. The rise in numbers is due to returning students that were enrolled in other districts (Dillingham, Lower Kuskokwim and Anchorage) from September 29 to October 24, 2008, during the twenty day count period. They are now enrolled in our district for the remainder of the school year, but SWRS will not receive any funding these students. The late arrival of these students will result in a loss of about \$60,000 in

revenues to the district. The issue of enrollment changes not reflected in funding is one that needs to be looked at in our planning and in our discussions with the state.

AASB Quality Schools: Community Engagement Education Program

Suzie Gaffney will be out to the sites over the next two months working with staff and community members as part of the community engagement program.

New School & New Teacher Housing

The new school is on schedule and we feel that the move will take place during Christmas Break. It is hard to believe that a new school can be built in one year, but things look like they are on schedule for a December finish.

Teachers should be moved into their new teacher housing very soon. We want to thank everybody for all the help in making this happen. A lot of the thanks goes to Rick Dallmann for writing the grant and heading up the construction. Our teachers have a beautiful new place to live.



Clarks Point teacher, Rochelle Bushey, works with students.



BUSINESS OFFICE

Lee Ann Andrew, Director of Administrative Services

Insurance Rates

With the revised budget approved we can move on to bigger and better things. New health insurance rates effective January 1 are in the works. Currently, they are 15% higher than last year, however our agent is working hard to get that dropped by a percent or two. We may have to consolidate our life insurance with our health insurance to get the break. There would be no change in the coverage. When the final numbers come in they will be sent out to staff so that they can be aware of their 50% of the increase effective January 1, 2009.

State Waiver

We were successful in justifying why we don't spend 70% of our state revenue on instruction due to the high cost of maintenance and operations. The state approved our waiver from that requirement.

Business Officials Academy

Denise Gregoire, Aileen Walsh and I will be attending the Alaska Business Officer's conference December 8th through the 12th. The 11th and 12th will be training with all ALIO users in the state. We are looking forward to learning the latest in TRS/PERS, 403(b) regulations, purchasing, and many other administrative topics. I was invited to the first ever new business manager academy which is being presented by experienced business managers through out the state.

Staffing

Genny is back on a part time basis and is in full force finishing the migrant education database. We will continue to be short staffed until after the holidays. Dianna, our part time accounts payable is taking the time off she had planned prior to being offered the job. As I said before the business office staff is fantastic at doing whatever it takes to get the job done.



CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

David Piazza, Director of Instructional Programs

Curriculum (Deb Endicott)

The Curriculum Specialist has continued to work with the Math in a Cultural Context (MCC) project. Attendance at a workshop in Fairbanks to further develop the MCC leadership component of the program took place this past month. We will be working on a district plan to further involve the supplemental program within the

classroom learning environments. We are determining the responsibilities for staff who fill the role as a teacher leader. We continue to analyze how to use the MCC tools to supplement the District's Math Curriculum. We have ordered art supplies and materials so that teachers and students may build the different projects associated with each module. We will be developing a warehouse of supplies to make classroom pack-

ets available for teachers to use this supplemental math program. This is being financed through a grant from the UAF program.

We have continued the planning for the writing assessment procedures. We are bringing in a team of teachers representing all levels of learning to score the papers for a two-day session at district office. We are looking to develop the report that will be sent back to teachers after the writing samples have been scored. Our goal is to have a four-year history of scores that will show a student's progress through the components of Six-Trait Writing. From this report, the classroom teacher can change their lessons accordingly to prepare students for the Standards Based Assessments (SBA) and High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) in the Spring.

We are preparing for an upcoming Webinar with Reader's Journey on Literature Circles. November 13, Readers Journey will have a one-hour training on using the strategy of literature circles with the program for Jr. High students. This can be attended by anyone looking to learn more about using this popular teaching technique for learning literature.

We have begun to formulate the outline for the January in-service. Some topics/program possibilities include Math in a cultural content, Six-Trait Writing, Science projects, Technology, Response to Instruction, Professional Development, State Mandated Trainings, Core Curricular Teams and others.

We continue to assist teachers and administration by responding to questions as they come up.

Counseling/Assessments (Steve Ito)

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) student / grade enrollment was submitted to Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. NAEP is known as the "Nations Report Card" as it is the only nationally

representative assessment of what students know and can do in different subjects. NAEP will be administered to selected schools / grades in the district in February - March.

We are currently completing the Alternate Assessment Mentor Training, by identifying and selecting Special Education staff to train in procedures and protocols of being an Alternate Assessment Proctor.

The Idea Proficiency Testing (IPT) Coordinator training covering new and updated materials, will be taking place in early December.

Student Records/PowerSchool Support (Nate Preston)

The 20-day count period for Foundation Formula computation concluded on October 24th and the OASIS and Foundation Count reports were submitted to the State before the deadlines.

We have gained 13 students since the end of the Count Period. Ten (10) from Dillingham City Schools, 2 from out of state, and 1 from another western rural district. These students did not figure into our Foundation formula for funding purposes.

eRate

While we have not heard any more information regarding our current year's application, we anticipate that all is normal with this year's funding.

We have completed the paperwork to receive the reimbursements for last year's telephone bills that were paid in full but qualified for our E-Rate subsidy. While we pay reduced bills for Internet and Distance Learning services, this is a normal process to receive our reimbursements for local and long distance phone services.

We have started the process for completing next year's E-Rate application process as well. Since we have existing contracts in place, we anticipate the processes will not include any major changes this year.



Computer Aided Instruction Specialist conducts training via the district's video conferencing system on the implementation of the Alaska Computerized Formative Assessment (ACFA) program.

Media Center (Shannon Clouse)

The Media Center has had requests for the following units/books: The Trap, Anne Frank, the Diary of a Young Girl, Animal Farm, Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece, Alaska Myth and Folklore, Bats, Egypt and Egyptians, Lord of the Flies, Puberty (sex education), Latin America (Mexico, Chile, etc.), writing assessment curricula material, Alice in Wonderland, and Brian's Winter. There have also been two requests for Interlibrary Loans. We are continuing to weed old curriculum and organize the flow of the Media Center. Currently we have been working on getting a better idea of what books we have for the new Junior High and High School trade books.

The books for the new school library in New Stuyahok have been shipped from Perma-Bound. We expect the books to start arriving at site by the middle of November. There are 5429 books being sent to the site. Plans are to combine the old library, which is automated, with the new books in the new library. An order has been placed for an update in licensing for the Alexandria software. As soon as that arrives we will begin transferring old data onto the library computer onto a new one.

Southwest Region Schools contract with RIF ends in December. All distributions need to be completed by the first week of December to ensure that the required paperwork be completed before we leave for our Winter Break. Distribu-

tions need to be held 30 days apart. The end-of-year performance report and the proposal for next year's Books for Ownership need to be completed before we are allocated new money for the next contract year.

Proposals for the upcoming distributions are: Aleknagik: Distribution #3 the week of November 10th, Clarks Point: TBD, Ekwok: Finished!, Koli-ganek: Finished!, Manokotak: Distribution #2 October 31st and Distribution #3 the first week of December, New Stuyahok: Distribution #2, October 31st and Distribution #3 the first week of December, Togiak: Finished!, Twin Hills: TBD

RIF provides such a wonderful service, providing three new books for our students every year, as well as giving them the opportunity to participate in a fun motivational activity that is literacy based. Thank you to each of the hard working RIF coordinators.

Computer Assisted Instruction (Corey Evans)

Most of the students completed the Alaska Computerized Formative Assessment (ACFA) system in October to provide further data as to the student's performance on specific Grade Level Expectations (GLE). We provided training and discussion during our last administrative meeting. We held 3 weekly training sessions to assist teachers in administering the assessments and utilize the data afterwards to refine instruction.



FEDERAL & STATE PROGRAMS

Jon Clouse, Federal/State Programs Director

No Child Left Behind

School improvement plans for Togiak, Twin Hills, Manokotak, New Stuyahok, and Ekwok were completed and submitted to the state on November 3rd. The principals of those schools worked hard to create school improvement plans that target areas of need in their school. All of the migrant education certificates of eligibility were entered into the state database on November 15th, which was the due date. Highly qualified status information is still being gathered from the teaching staff. There is Title I set-aside money available to assist staff in becoming highly qualified for the classes in which they are teaching. The state looks at the number of classes being taught by highly qualified staff. Letters to parents of students identified as limited

English proficient (LEP) have been sent. The letter informs parents of the exit requirements, the limited English proficient program, and current assessment scores.

District Improvement Plan

After the district improvement plan is submitted to the state, the state reviews it to see whether it is in compliance or not. If it meets the necessary criteria, then the state approves it, and notifies the district and implementation of the plan continues as planned. If the plan is not approved, a checklist will be sent to the district asking for clarification or more information or even requesting changes if appropriate. Monitoring of the district implementation plan occurs through a desk audit (done at a distance) or an onsite visit.

Spotlight: Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

The **No Child Left Behind Act** (NCLB) was a law passed in 2001 that dictates that students, will make **Adequate Yearly Progress** (AYP) at the school and school district level. In order to meet AYP, each individual school and district must show significant growth or meet the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) in mathematics and language arts (reading and writing). In addition, either graduation rate (for schools with a high school) or attendance rate (for schools without a high school) must meet a minimum requirement.

There are thirty categories in which the school and/or school district must meet AYP. There are three areas with ten subgroups in each area. The three areas are math, language arts, and participation rate. The student subgroups in each of the three areas include six ethnic student groupings, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. The thirty-first category is the graduation or attendance rate as discussed above. If AYP is not met in any one of these 31 categories, the individual school or school district will be listed as a school or school district "in need of improvement."

Now that the thirty-one categories make perfect sense, five of the schools in Southwest Region School District made AYP in all categories. This means that significant growth in all thirty categories was shown on the standards based assessments and the attendance rate or graduation rate indicator was also met. One of our schools missed making AYP in only three categories, while the other two schools missed making AYP in only one category. The district also missed making overall AYP in only one category.

The accomplishments of each of the schools have been tremendous and are very exciting. The instructional leaders and staff at each school have done an incredible job of raising achievement across the district. The efforts and caring attitudes of each staff member have been critical to each schools success.



SPECIAL EDUCATION

Lee Webster, Director of Special Education

Service Providers Visit

October was a time when our related services providers were at school sites throughout the month, except for one week. Our school psychologists have done 36 evaluations reports and our remarkable speech pathologist from SERRC, Alissa Thurman, has written over 65 reports on students, 13 of which were full speech evaluations. By completing these early in the school year, dubious travel hampered by bad weather is alleviated. We will only have a few students in April left to re-evaluate for the year, and any new referrals that occur during the year. This will greatly enhance our chances of focusing on special education programs, instead of special education paperwork.

Response To Instruction

As the district goes more and more toward a Response to Intervention (RTI) model for identifying disabled students, the data generated from the progress monitoring can be used in lieu of cognitive testing which has been used for 3 decades to determine discrepancy between a child's IQ and their academic achievement. Under the discrepancy criteria children are often misdiagnosed with disabilities. With RTI the data is driven by how the child learns, not what can or cannot do. The state of Alaska allows us to still use the discrepancy criteria when no other data is available, but more and more states are discarding discrepancy criteria and using RTI to demonstrate more authentic and useful identification of learning disabilities.

Distance Delivery Training

We have been using the distance delivery capability of this district to reach teachers new to teaching and special education in October. It has been a valuable resource during a time when budget constraints inhibit travel. By logging into the website for our special education documents, I am able to demonstrate in real-time some of the more subtle legal requirements of the IEP. We've also used the distance delivery to allow me to actually conduct an IEP meeting for inexperienced teachers assigned to special education case loads. During such meetings, an informal confidentiality agreement is signed to assure that others are not in the room or within earshot of the meeting.



Ekwook student works on a scaling exercise for a project.



EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Steve Noonkesser, Technology Coordinator

Outstanding Technology Integration

Togiak teacher, Jon Sharp was this year's first recipient of the Outstanding Technology Integration Award this year for his innovative use of the 3 dimensional drawing program, SketchUp, and the integration of the interactive SMART Board with Senteo clickers into his classroom instruction. The SMARTBoard is an



interactive electronic whiteboard and the Senteo clickers are wireless devices that allow students to respond to classroom activities.

Site Technology Support

Many hours of troubleshooting and support have been provided to Clark's Point, New Stuyahok, Koliganek, Manokotak, Twin Hills, and Togiak. Computer repairs have been performed for New Stuyahok, Manokotak, Togiak, and Ekwok. Student images have been completed for Ekwok, Clark's Point, and Twin Hills with deployment to be scheduled soon.

A technology-rich classroom at Clarks Point. Southwest Region Schools students have access to up to date technology in all of our classrooms.





FACILITIES & MAINTENANCE

Rick Dallmann, Maintenance Director



New teacher housing is nearly complete!

NEW STUYAHOK UPDATE PROJECT IS NEARING COMPLETION!

New teacher housing project is completed, the Certificate of Substantial Completion was

signed off November 5, 2008 and at this time we are waiting for ADEC approval to operate the water and sewer systems before we can move into the units.

The new school project is in the final stages of construction, we are working through Mechanical and Electrical systems commissioning, installation of casework and acoustical panels, flooring schedule as yet to be determined.

We will be working with Unit Co. & USKH to finalize Substantial Completion dates and actual Occupancy dates.

Manokotak

The four new teacher housing units are occupied! There are a few outside items to finish before winter.

Togiak

The soils Re-remediation was completed on the old school site. Contaminated soils were stockpiled up at the city landfill in a contained area. The intent was to spread the soils to start the re-remediation process, but the ADEC determined we would cover the stockpile for the winter and ensure that the placement of the materials meets our needs and does not have an adverse affect on the area. ADEC expects to have sufficient funding to continue this work in the spring.

All Sites

Fuel deliveries are completed (Clarks Point as the ice was closing the bay). All fire alarm and fire suppression system inspections are completed. Class A water system training has been completed, all systems are current with ADEC

sampling requirements. Janitorial orders have been received. We continue to work on Preventative Maintenance and unscheduled work orders as we get them.

Koliganek

Working with Alaska Energy Authority on Koliganek Energy Infrastructure Upgrade Project (for full details see SWRSD web site) this project would replace our existing 50 year old tank farm with two new code compliant 30 thousand gallon tanks, the upgrades to the city power plant will also allow the school to be tied into the Supplemental Heat Recovery System this could potentially save 20-25 % on our heating costs, depending on funding this project would start construction in the spring of 2010

Nov. 15th the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development preliminary list for school construction will be released (We hope to crack the top ten)



Aleknagik School

Jeff Ambrosier, Lead Teacher

ACFA & Writing Assessments

This past month, the students in Aleknagik have really done well and have risen to our expectations. We have had the district writing assessment, the end of the first quarter, as well as Formative testing on the computer (ACFA). Although this is a lot of testing, the results from these tests help drive our curriculum and this leads to better overall student achievement.

In the classrooms...

In the 6-8th grade class, the students are working towards developing an understanding of the concepts, models, theories and facts that explain the physical world. They have been incorporating technology into their science class by using the program Inspiration to create concept maps of the periodic table. They are given a basic outline to follow but then can do some independent research on their favorite types of elements.

In the K-2 classroom, Melody Noden works very well with Ms. Bates in giving support to their students. Melody is currently working with the Kin-

dergarten kids on the reading strand: *Strategies to Decode and Comprehend Meaning of the Words in Text*. They have sent home picture cards to help assimilate letters to these pictures. In math, they are using the Bingo game to help the kindergartners learn their numbers.

Melody also works with the 6-8th graders in Bi-cultural activities. They have gathered beach grass, weaved them into mats to dry, and are now learning how to put the grass together to create something.



Last week, the school put on a carnival, and we would like to say thank you to all the Dillingham and Aleknagik organizations that donated money and prizes for the big event. The youngsters (and adults) had a great time.



William 'Sonny' Nelson School

Stan Dancer, Lead Teacher

School is Progressing Well!

Whew! The writing assessments are done. The first wave of AFCA and AIMSweb tests are complete. The Alaska Learning Labs after-school assistance is up and running. The 5th through 8th grade students have completed research of their chosen country. This included drawing a scaled map of the country, identifying cities, geographic features, and products the country produces. Countries included Ireland, Italy, Mexico, and Scotland. Part of the research included comparing how Halloween is cele-

brated there compared to our culture. The project was concluded with the students giving oral presentations to the village.

Parent/Teacher conferences went well with over 75% of the parents meeting with the teachers during their scheduled appointments.

The students will be learning about life cycles this month. The tadpoles arrived, but unfortunately, they were dead on arrival. The next batch should be here in a couple of weeks.



Ekwook student enlarging a spider web to scale. They had to make the spider web 6 ft. x 6 ft. This was the guided lesson that they did before I had them enlarge the map of the country they were studying.



Manokotak 'Nunaniq' School

Herman Gerving, Principal

Students are making serious efforts at their education. Fourteen students made Perfect Attendance, two the Honor Roll, nine the Principal's List and two the Superintendent's List!

Students participating in Mock Elections - The Manokotak Student Council also helped with the General Election.



Parent-teacher Conferences - October 23, 2008



Twin Hills School

Rod Lindberg, Lead Teacher

Since our last report, we've been very busy at Twin Hills. While Rod was at the Principal's Conference in Anchorage, Twilly Gosuk came over from Togiak and taught carving to the students. This is his second year doing this and it has become an annual event that the kids look forward to. They really enjoyed working with both soapstone and ivory.

The Alaska Learning Lab after school program is going well and the kids are having a great time. They seem to get a second wind at 3:00 and work hard until 4:30 Monday through Thursday.

We finished the District Writing Assessments and have begun the ACFA testing. Parent teacher conferences were also held recently.

Report cards went out and we've completed our School Improvement Plan and budget.

We had a Halloween Party on Friday afternoon and it was a lot of fun. We added kid made



decorations to some we purchased and the gym was transformed into a scary room filled with ghosts, bats and spiders. We played games, ate food and had the traditional costume contest. Several parents joined in the fun.

We have a RIF distribution planned for mid November and are still working on our Hidden Valley Veggie grant.

The kids are doing well and discipline has become a very minor issue. RTP helps in this area. We are having a great year with students that are enthusiastic about being in school.



Koliganek School

Joel Lovesee, Principal

Off to a Successful Start!

The school year continues to be a success. This past month our school completed a barrage of testing across the board. HSGQE retakes were administered to our high school students. Our first round of reading and math testing was completed using the ACFA website, and all of our students finished the district writing assessment.

Halloween Carnival

It was not all work; there was time for a little play. Our high school hosted their home wrestling meet October 17 and 18 and we had a fall carnival on October 30 for the students and our community.

Rules and Responsibilities

In the classroom we had a panel of respected community members talk to our kids about acceptable behaviors, rules and responsibilities. The students were very responsive to see that even adults have to follow rules.

Cross-Curricular Activities

A great cross-curricular activity involving science, mathematics, and language arts was aided by "Skin," the husband of 7th and 8th grade teacher Anu Wysocki (picture at left). He demonstrated how to skin a beaver to the 3rd-8th grade classes. Each student took part in the activity. They later stretched, dried, and measured the fur and cooked the meat.





Clarks Point School

Doug Bushey, Principal

AFN Student Trip

The second quarter began with our students attending AFN Conference in Anchorage. This trip was possible due to the support of “Clarks Point Village Council” and a Big Thanks to them. Besides attending the conference the students had several field trips. They visited the Sea Life Center in Seward, Anchorage Museum, Alaska Native Center, Happy Trails Kennel to meet Martin Buser, and H2Oasis.



Students at the Anchorage Fine Arts Meuseum

ACFA

Upon returning the students jumped right in and took their first computer-based assessment through ACFA for reading and math. The Six + 1 Writing Traits was introduced to students grade three through sixth and produced a writing sample for the district writing assessment team.

Student Activities

The student body and staff helped create a wonderful Halloween Carnival for all residents of Clarks Point. There was a costume contest and carnival booths. The Clarks Point Village Council sponsored split the pot and raffles. One raffle prize was a roundtrip ticket on “Frontier Air” to Anchorage. Staff and students sold hotdogs and nachos to all. The evening activity raised over \$1,500 gross. It was a great night for activities, visiting, and fund-raising.

This coming month the student body will sponsor the “Turkey Shoot” with an “All You Can Eat Pancake Breakfast.” There will be activities in the gym, and lunch in the afternoon. The day before Thanksgiving Break the students will sponsor a “Pot Luck” lunch for all community members.



Togiak School

David Wick, Principal

Improving Student Achievement

Togiak School has been very busy during the month of October and heading into November. We have been doing all the district required formative assessments and meeting in collaborative teams to discuss the data and how to best modify our instruction to target the identified student academic weakness areas. I believe that targeting those areas will strengthen our instructional delivery and aid all our students in learning at higher levels.

Curriculum Mapping

Togiak School is continuing our efforts at mapping our entire K-12 curriculum. The eventual finished product will provide an invaluable tool in our on-going efforts to improve instruction and to raise our student's proficiency levels on the state-wide tests.

We are continuing our successes in providing a more productive learning environment for all our students using the Responsible Thinking Process. Our referral numbers to the RTC are at the lowest levels yet since starting the program in 2005. Disruptive behaviors within the school are at minimal levels and the responsible behavior of the majority of the students has helped teachers create much more effective learning environments within the classrooms.

Togiak Alternative Program (TAP)

Another on-going intervention project this year is the Togiak Alternative Program (TAP). The program was designed and implemented this year for the express purpose of aiding and assisting high school students to get a standard high school diploma outside of the normal constraints of the regular classroom. I am pleased to report that we currently have 17 students enrolled in the TAP. Seven of those students had formerly dropped out of school. A number of those students are making very good progress and this past quarter, three TAP students achieved Honor Roll status and have been acknowledged for their academic efforts with their inclusion on the Togiak School Honor Roll.



Students in the TAP program at Togiak School.

Special Thanks...

I sincerely believe the efforts of all of us involved with our students, from parents, to teachers, to administration, to district office staff, to Board members, are having a greatly beneficial and positive impact on all of our children. Thanks for all you do.