

REPORT TO THE SWRS BOARD OF EDUCATION

Educating our future...



**"Ikayurtarluten
yuullgutevnun.**

**Be helpful to one
another"**

--Bristol Bay Yup'ik Values

Board of Education

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Superintendent's Office

David J. Piazza, Superintendent

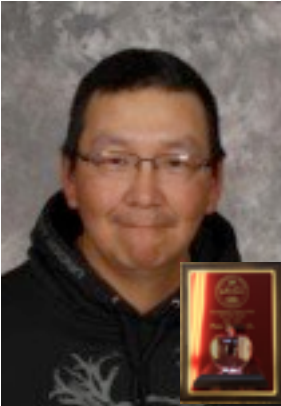
Site Visits

While the weather was not conducive for site travel on the first day of the school year, Superintendent Piazza was able to make site visits to all seven sites within the first two weeks. On Thursday, August 25th, Dave and Associate Superintendent, Steve Noonkesser were able to make a quick visit to the school at Aleknagik. The following day, Dave and Steve were able to arrive at the Manokotak 'Nunaniq' School before the start of the school day. Superintendent Piazza, even had a chance to set up a new copy machine for the school in addition to visiting the students and staff in the classrooms. On Sunday, August 28th in the afternoon, Dave was able to fly into Togiak. He spent all day Monday visiting the classrooms. After spending the night in Togiak, on Tuesday morning, Dave flew over to Twin Hills just as school was beginning to spend the day and returned to Dillingham that afternoon. The following morning on Wednesday, August 31st, the fog lifted in time for an early morning departure for Dave to arrive at the William "Sonny" Nelson (Ekwok) School before school started as well. Dave spent most of the day at the school and took a boat ride up the river to the "Chief" Ivan Blunka (New Stuyahok) School where he had a little bit of time to visit the classes in the afternoon and then spent the night. On Thursday morning, Dave visited with the students and staff and then flew up to Koliganek for the remainder of the afternoon. After spending the night in Koliganek, Superintendent Piazza, was able to visit each classroom again and returned to Dillingham in the early afternoon.

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Awards

Each Spring the District solicits candidates for three Employee of the Year awards. The following individuals were selected for additional recognition.



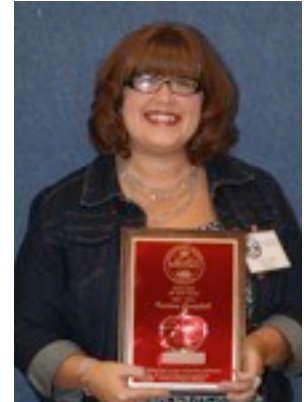
Classified Employee of the Year

Billy Ayojiak
Manokotak



Instructional Aide of the Year

Justin Gumlickpuk
New Stuyahok



Teacher of the Year

Katrina Campbell
Manokotak

The following staff have been recognized at the beginning of the year with longevity awards for their time working at Southwest Region Schools.

5 Years

Audra Finkenbinder - Aleknagik
Randall Finkenbinder - Aleknagik
Ivan Gumlickpuk - Koliganek
Anuska Hanson - Koliganek
Darlene Wyagon - Koliganek
Mary Andrew - New Stuyahok
Herbert Lockuk - Togiak
Marlene Einhellig - District Office
Guy Snyder - District Office

10 Years

Natalia Pauk - Manokotak

15 Years

Rhona Shavings - Manokotak
Jackie Neketa - New Stuyahok
Nathaniel Preston - Twin Hills

20 Years

Lester Parks - District Office

25 Years

Sarah Andrews - Aleknagik
Fanny Parker - Togiak

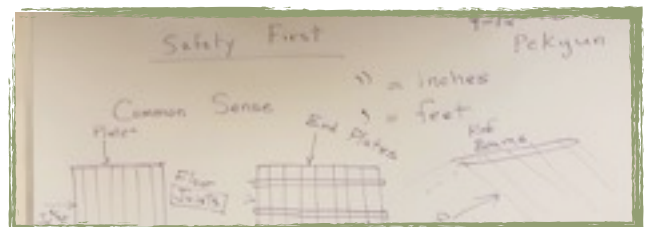
30 Years

Denise Gregoire - District Office

Exploration Week Teaching Opportunity

During the Exploration Week classes, Superintendent Piazza was requested by the Togiak School to participate as a guest speaker for the Introduction to Photography class. Dave prepared a presentation including photos that he has taken over the years to help the students understand various career options in the photography field. Additional topics that were presented included the type of education required for employment and tips and tricks to take more interesting pictures.

Exploration Week One: September 12–16, 2016



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Instruction & Information Systems

Steve Noonkesser, Associate Superintendent

Another year is off to a great start! We opened school this year with a number of exciting new possibilities. We spent most of our fall inservice time with staff preparing for some big changes.

High School Programs

We have opened high school programs in Aleknagik and Twin Hills this fall for the first time in nearly thirty years, if memory serves correctly. It was an amazing feeling to have a student comment, when I was visiting Aleknagik, that her father was part of Aleknagik's last high school graduating class and that she was happy to be able to attend school at home. This has been a long time coming and while we are still working out a lot of details and fine tuning programs to work in smaller schools, we have ten students in Aleknagik and five in Twin Hills in high school.



INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT TEAM



Les Parks
Technology Coordinator



Dianna Schollmeier
Elem. Ed. Specialist



Corey Evans
Technology Specialist



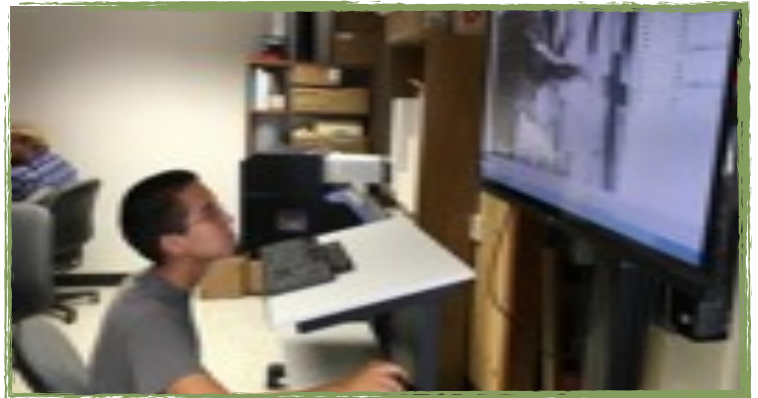
Charles Becker
Sec. Ed. Specialist

Exploration Weeks

After a number of years of discussion with students, parents and community members, we are finally happy to be moving more culturally-related and regionally-focused, career & technical education (CTE), and fine arts courses back into our students options. During the week of September 12-16, 2016 middle and high school students at our sites participated in a new type of course. Week-long, special topics courses for either a half or full day are being offered. Topics range widely and include cooking, art, cultural activities, vocational and business education among others. Students were able to choose from a wide variety of course and reports from sites are that student are excited and enjoying themselves. This new type of course opens a door for staff to teach on topics they are truly passionate about and students to pursue studies in areas not available for a number of years in our schools. It has been an exciting week.

BBRCTE

This year we also began hosting courses in conjunction with our partner school districts for the Bristol Bay Region Career and Technical Education Consortium. Our first course was a fabrication and design course hosted by the UAF Bristol Bay Campus. It has been exciting and students are enjoying the learning.



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Instructional Team Notes

Exploration Week

- Teachers and principals began preparing for Exploration Weeks last May when teachers sent proposals for new courses; from cooking to sewing (both traditional and modern), from music to drawing, and from building computer programs to building furniture.
- Supplies were purchased last spring to take advantage of the reduced cost of shipping by barge versus air. With much help from the business office and maintenance department, most supplies were received, inventoried, and distributed by the time teachers arrived on site for the first day of school.
- Some courses were developed during new staff inservice and teachers worked diligently to complete thorough course descriptions – a necessary step in recording grades as well as ensuring that students have verifiable skills on their transcripts. Student Support Specialist Kyle Schneider was instrumental in helping teachers to meet a tight deadline.
- Teachers have felt invigorated and empowered by the opportunity to use their interests outside of academics as instructional opportunities, as well as a chance to bond and develop rapport with students.
- Students have responded favorably to the opportunity to pursue non-academic activities; many of which compliment their day-to-day activities outside of school and expand their knowledge base thus allowing them to become more efficient and productive in daily tasks such as home and vehicle repair, or collecting and storing food. Other courses have allowed students to venture into pursuits that are normally reserved for students at larger schools.
- Regardless of the activity students participated in this week, even if it was not their first choice, the overwhelming response has been, “This is something that I got to choose. Where I wasn’t told, ‘You are doing this.’ But instead was asked, “What would you like to do?””

Fall Inservice

- This fall inservice was focused on the new direction of our district. At the new teacher training the focus was centered around our district’s vision and goals, our Yup’ik program, and our curriculum/resource programs that are implemented within our schools. The all staff inservice was focused on our district’s new calendar equipped with Exploration Weeks, Plato training, and Reading Mastery training.

Academic Vocabulary

- This year we are running two programs to build our students tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary skills. Tier 2 our cognitive verbs that allow us to read to understand. Tier 3 words are our content specific words. The



elementary staff is using a program called SpellingCity and secondary is using Vocabulary.com. Word lists are getting finalized and incentive programs will be in place by October 1st. For the month of August, our top students are:

Alfredo Jimenez (KMO) with 60 words mastered

Malachi Blue (TOG) with 44 words mastered

Frederick Byayuk (TOG) & Bobby Gust (TOG) both with 36 words mastered

PLATO

- The adoption of the online curriculum, Plato, is off and running. It was a busy month of course building and class assignments. Currently our High School English, US History, and Government/Citizenship courses are being taught using Plato exclusively. Our small sites with new high schools are using it as a support program in classrooms that may have more than two content areas being instructed. We continue to work out the challenges any new program has and continuously thank our teachers for their support and willingness to join the district on a path of continuous improvement.

Technology Team Notes

In the midst of a busy start of year, we rolled out new equipment purchased in the spring to instructional paraprofessionals and teachers. In the midst of the busy start of the school routine, Les and Corey have just completed a trip to every site in the district to bring new computers to staff. After this last round of technology visits students, teachers, and instructional aides now all have new computers.

The technology team has been busy engaged in many other activities including:

- MAP testing is underway and will be completed this Friday the 16th. NWEA has made some changes to the system and now all of our elementary student are taking the MAP test on their iPads. This change over caused some issues during the first week of testing at a couple sites but Corey was able to work with the sites that had problems and now testing is operating smoothly.
- eRate / School BAG Funding Year 2016 ->
 - Received and answered nine sets of PIA Review questions regarding eligibility of Category 1 services.
 - Received and answered one set of PIA Review questions regarding eligibility of Category 2 services.
 - Received a full Funding Commitment Decision Letter for Category 2 services (network upgrades).
 - Form 486 filed and certified for Category 2 services.
 - SchoolBAG funding commitment pending application review by EED.
- eRate / School BAG Funding Year 2016 ->
 - Filed Forms 472 for telephone services; payment received from USAC via direct deposit.

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State & Federal Programs

Jon Clouse, Director

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The 2016-2017 school year will be a transition/planning year between the regulations in NCLB and ESSA. The Title grants will be administered under the regulations outlined in NCLB while the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development develops plans and procedures to make the transition to the regulations outlined in ESSA. The plans include developing a new accountability system, which is a change from the current but “frozen” Alaska School Performance Index (ASPI). Other changes include school improvement identification and support process, and determining the criteria for “out-of-field” and “effective” teachers. Jon Clouse sits on the state-wide ESSA Advisory committee and provides feedback from the perspective of SWRS and rural Alaska. However, anyone can provide feedback and get information at the following website:

[ESSA Information from EED - https://education.alaska.gov/akessa/](https://education.alaska.gov/akessa/)

[ESSA Public Feedback - https://education.alaska.gov/akessa/#c3gtabs-stakeholder](https://education.alaska.gov/akessa/#c3gtabs-stakeholder)

Included in the board packet is a document from EED about the ESSA changes versus the current reality in the state of Alaska.

Site Visit: School Improvement

- EED has continued to “freeze” the star-rating for schools because AMP assessment was cancelled last year. That being said, Togiak continues to be identified as a Focus school and will receive additional support from EED for school

improvement including school improvement funding. Last year, this funding was used to implement the first year of the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) process. This is not a program than can be purchased, it is a process that is customized around the values and culture of the school and community. One of the main goals is to use positive feedback to reinforce the desired behavior. Behavioral data is used to identify students that need additional support and interventions, as well as, identify trends during specific times and/or locations where additional process need to be implemented. Togiak has a core PBIS team that meets regularly to review data, make adjustments, and celebrate successes.

- Jon Clouse travelled to Togiak (August 15th and 16th) during their inservice in August that focused on the continued implementation of Tier I and Tier II strategies with the PBIS process. The district has contracted with a Marilyn Rosene, former Dillingham Elementary principal, as a facilitator for the implementation of PBIS. Marilyn successfully brought PBIS into the Dillingham Elementary School and will work with the Togiak staff throughout the year to help implement the process effectively.

Title IC: Migrant Education

Pauline Askoak (New Stuyahok) , Martha Fox (Togiak), Virginia Bartman (Manokotak), Pam Johnson (Nushagak River Villages), Natalia Ishnook (Koliganek), Corina Owens (small sites), Susie Brito (at-large), Kyle Schneider (district office) and Jon Clouse attended the annual migrant recruiting training in Anchorage on August 30th and 31st. This year is a little different because all of the data from the recruiting process will be entered into an online web system. The state of Alaska Migrant

Education Program, SWRS, and five other districts are piloting this new system. We are the first state and districts to complete the recruiting process through this online web system.

In other exciting news, the SWRS migrant program provided summer school to up to 20 migrant student at Manokotak School from July 18 – July 29th. The average number of 22 students attended each day. The focus was on culturally relevant reading and vocabulary, physical activity, and an art/science activity. We also partnered with Dillingham City School District to provide a summer school camp in Ekuk/Clark Point. There were 20 students that attended the Ekuk/Clarks Point summer camp between June 29th and July 20th. Student received reading material and instruction in reading, culturally-based traditions (dance, crafts, etc.) and fishery related math. Lastly, DCSD and SWRS partnered to provide literacy events and books to students in Lewis Point and we were able to bring Deanna Baier to Lewis Point for a science camp.

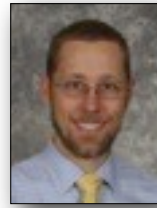
Career & Technical Education: BBRCTE

By the time you read this report, the first session of the Bristol Bay Regional CTE (BBRCTE) program will have concluded. In review, the BBRCTE program is a partnership between Lake & Peninsula School District, Bristol Bay Borough Regional School District, Southwest Region School District, and recently, Dillingham City School District. There will be four different sessions throughout the year in which students can apply to attend. There continues to be a number of sessions offered in Naknek/King Salmon including and SWRS is hosting the first ever session in the Dillingham area as part of this program. SWRS had six students selected to attend the sessions in Naknek/King Salmon and seven

students to attend the session in Dillingham. It is exciting to work with other districts to create a program that serves students from the entire region, through collaboration and sharing of resources. Included is a list of the courses being offered through BBRCTE this year.

Other Information

There were seven students that earned either ½ or 1.0 elective credit for fishing or other employment during the summer. The School Board adopted STW100 School to Work Experience course designed to provide elective credit based on work experience. The employment included commercial fishing and working at local businesses.



Student Information & Support Specialist: Kyle Schneider

Powerschool University

During the summer, Kyle Schneider attended a weeklong PowerSchool training. Over the course of the week, attendees take eight classes for a total of twenty-four hours of instruction. He took courses focused on preparing the district for a transition to the new gradebook.

Inservice

Kyle presented on the changes that had been made to PowerSchool during the summer at the principal's inservice. He also provided training at the teachers' in-service to show teachers how to use their new gradebooks.

School Photography

During the last week of August and the first week of September, Richard Johnson from Purnell

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Photography traveled to all of our schools and took pictures. He photographed the staff and students in New Stuyahok, Koliganek, Ekwok, and Aleknagik during the week of August 29th to September 2nd. The following week he traveled to Manokotak, Twin Hills, and Togiak.

Migrant Ed Recruiting

Kyle Schneider traveled to Anchorage at the end of August to receive training from EED's Migrant Education Program on recruiting and managing Migrant Education records. Staff from Togiak, Manokotak, New Stuyahok, and Koliganek, plus several "at-large" recruiters also traveled into Anchorage to learn about the new Migrant Education computer system. Migrant recruiting at the three smaller schools will be conducted from the District Office.

Children's eligibility is determined by whether or not they have made qualifying "moves". A "move" means that a child took a trip of more than 20 miles for either commercial or subsistence fishing and stayed away from home for 7 nights / 8 days throughout the year. Children can also qualify if they "move" to another district for the required length of time (this can be for fishing or certain other activities). Most of the students we recruit have either "moved" to fish camp or to Dillingham for commercial or subsistence fishing in the summer.

Exploration Weeks

Kyle has spent quite a few hours preparing PowerSchool to handle the exploration weeks that are starting this year. He was able to prepare scheduling templates that principals and teachers could use that helped automate the scheduling process.



Counseling & Assessment Specialist: Steve Ito

The Alaska Developmental Profile for Kindergarten and first grade students that have not attended a public school will begin within a window from September 15th to November 1st. The purpose of the Alaska Developmental Profile is to identify, record and summarize the skills and behaviors students demonstrate at the beginning of their kindergarten year, based on teacher observations. Student skills and behaviors are defined by goals and indicators in five domains Physical Well-Being, Health, and Motor Development; Social and Emotional Development; Approaches to Learning; Cognition and General Knowledge; and Communication, Language, and Literacy.

The annual District Test Coordinator training sponsored by Alaska Department of Education and Early Development was attended. Updates to statewide assessment protocol and procedure were reviewed. Pertinent application district-wide will be implemented throughout the school year.

The State of Alaska, Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) is requesting information from qualified vendors who can provide, administer, score, and report results for a NEW statewide summative assessment to replace the former Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP). This new assessment will target English language arts, mathematics, and science, and will be administered annually beginning no later than March 28, 2017. The purpose of this RFI is to identify vendors that are interested in and can deliver assessments to meet the state specific identified needs within the timeline and cost constraints. DEED anticipates issuing a contract for 2016-2017 and will consider annual renewal options through 2020-2021. DEED estimates a budget of no more \$4,450,000 for 2016-2017 for the implementation of a new assessment.



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Yup'ik Studies
Esther Ilutsik, Director

National Indian Education Association: World Café and Training

Wally Gust, School Board Member and I participated in this one- day session in Fairbanks. The participants included educators most of whom were from the interior. We went through a series of activities – first asking the participants who were assigned groups to respond to this question, “In the next 50 years what do we want our Native education system to look like?” Followed with pinpointing the 3 main priorities for NIEA as we move into our next 50 years? What resources, tools, etc. will education systems need to create this future for our students? Some of the responses included:

- Revitalize our Alaska Native Language
- Alaska Native History needs to be studied within the schools. (That means documenting and developing high quality materials).
- Needs to be a strong paraprofessional training (language and culture) program developed with the universities and school districts working together.
- Cultural standards need to be addressed in all our schools and
- That NIEA have a regional office here in Alaska.
- The session also provided an overview of Every Student Achieves Act (ESSA).

They encouraged all the districts to continue to apply for grants so that the need can be transmitted and become visible. Therefore, the district has developed a language survey that will be conducted this fall with all our K-12 students.



New Teacher Orientation

Angutekayak Louise Gloko of Manuquutaq, Ukayiq Martha Fox of Tuyuryak and Pi'piqAnastasia Ishnook McDowell assisted with the new teacher orientation. The participants were introduced to the Yup'ik language, cross-cultural communication situations and different techniques that would help in those situation especially with their students; each presenter presented an introduction to the villages with photos of the community and/or people engaging in cultural activities. This followed with a field trip down to Kakanak beach where participants were able to see a subsistence set net site (Steve Ito) in action. Afterwards those who wished to participate in cutting the fish were given the opportunity. The session concluded with the participants learning the Akutaq dance (which they performed during the district wide in-service).



New Teacher Orientation

We welcome all our new teaching and administrative staff enrolled in the Ed. F 456 Orientation to Teaching in Rural Alaska (18 have enrolled representing all the sites) with a site based cultural mentor who will introduce them to the community and engage them in some of the subsistence activities.

The cultural mentors for each of the site are:

Jessica Mark in Twin Hills, Panta Paul in Manokotak, Mickia Walcott in New Stuyahok, Ivan Gumlickpuk in Koliganek, David Williams in Ekwok, and Jeneva Andrews in Aleknagik.



Yup'ik Language Survey

Our Yup'ik language survey is underway. Quyanana to all the site administrators for making sure that we are given time and space to conduct this survey.

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Special Education

Sherry Becker, Director

The special education department welcomes back five returning special education teachers and would like to extend a big welcome to five new to district special education teachers this school year. The five new teachers include Nicole Wagner in New Stuyahok, Alyssa Hawkins in Ekwok, Maggie Gray in Aleknagik, Mickey Pender in Twin Hills and Shuk Osborne in Togiak. There is now a certified special education teacher at each of our school sites and it is very exciting to have such a great group of teachers supporting our students with special needs this year.

There has been a lot of activity already this school year with seven special education students exiting from the district, two new incoming students already receiving special education services, and eleven new referrals that are currently going through the eligibility process.

The special education director met with BBAHC Infant Learning Program (ILP) and local HeadStart staff on August 2, 2016 to review and revise the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between our agencies. This MOU covers the state/federal requirements for children transitioning from IDEA Part C (ILP children ages 0-3) to IDEA Part B (school district students ages 3-21) for special education services.

Trainings Provided and Travel

All new to district special education teachers participated in a full day of special education training on Monday, August 8, 2016. Topics included policies/procedures, TIENET training, hearing/vision screening training, etc. All returning and new to district special education teachers participated in specialized training provided to us via distance by the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) on Saturday, August 13, 2016. Topics for this training included Introduction to Hearing Loss/How Hearing Loss Effect the Educational Environment; Augmentative/Alternative Communication Systems (low-tech and high tech solutions); Data Collection for monitoring progress on IEP Goals; and Behavior and Communication. District-wide Inservice on August 11-12, 2016 topics included training for Child Find and for Confidentiality. Additionally, all staff were provided with an introduction to TIENET and detailed instruction on how to complete an Individual Instruction Plan for students going through the RTI/ Intervention process and for students that may eventually be referred for a special education evaluation and/or grade retention.



Business Office

Ryan Ayars, Business Manager

The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development has reviewed and approved the district's FY2017 School Operating Fund Budget. This Budget will be reviewed once more after the State receives our FY16 annual audit. During this review our fund balance will be tested for compliance along with ensuring we met the minimum expenditure for instruction requirement.

Altman, Rogers, & Co. performed the final audit fieldwork. They said our processes throughout the year are working great and are in compliance. We made a handful of suggested corrections, took notes and continue to fine tune our processes. They hope to deliver a final copy of the audit in time for the board meeting in October.

The annual review and update of our Section 125 Plan has been completed. Our Section 125 Plan document details all of the benefits we offer and establishes rules for eligibility and elections. Each year it is reviewed in order to ensure it meets the requirements and regulations of section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code. We will continue to monitor its accuracy as changes may occur.

Our new business software, Infinite Visions, is operational. With this new software we are able to manage our financials and personnel through one system will encouraging a paperless environment. The software has helped streamline process's improving accuracy and efficiency. We have been able to offer employees a portal to access their personal data. As with any conversion we are still working through and fine tuning the software to best meet the needs of the district.

The new Timeclock Plus software has been installed and nearing a go live date. We hope to have a smooth conversion from our old discontinued Timeclock Plus software in the next couple weeks. With this new software the data from the employees who use a time clock will seamlessly be imported into our account software without any manual entry. Currently, all the timeclock data for the entire district is manually entered into the accounting software by one person.

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Facilities & Maintenance

Rick Dallmann, Director

ALEKNAGIK

- New vehicle ordered for transportation, delivered to barge should be here the end of September.
- New high school classroom completed.
- Renovation grant turned into state

EKWOK

- Roof repairs have been completed
- Renovation grant turned into state

MANOKOTAK

- Sewer and Water upgrade grant turned into the state

KOLIGANEK

- new bleachers are scheduled for installation starting September 19th
- Second score board is on site
- Wrestling mats are on site
- Mechanical and Electrical sub contractors are supposed to show back up around September 20th to finish some change order items and take care of warranty items and provide some staff training.
- Scheduling onsite training for custodial staff

TOGIAK

- commons area door glass replaced, other broken glass ordered
- Flatbed truck with plow to be sent over this fall if barging available
- Working with AVEC on new bulk fuel storage project

TWIN HILLS

- new high school classroom completed.
- Old teacher housing unit has been disconnected from all utilities; the village is in the process of moving the unit to a new site.
- Renovation grant turned into state

NEW STUYAHOK

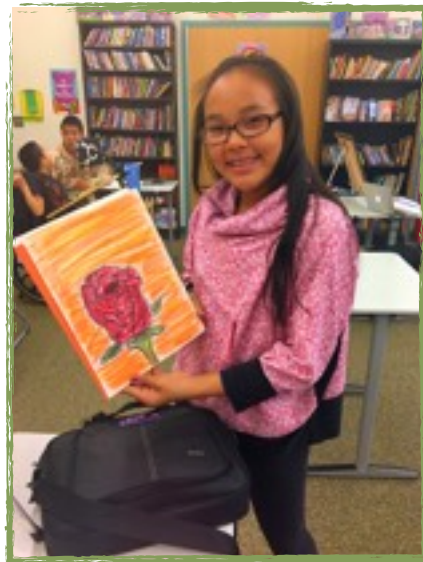
- trying to schedule glass replacement for the entrance and get new glass ordered for the windows that got damaged this summer.
- Working with AK Energy Authority on project to tie in the teacher housing units to the school supplemental heat system.

DISTRICT-WIDE

- Working on bunkhouse addition at central office to accommodate the CTE program.
- Working on long term solution for a Learning Center/ CTE classroom/ Dorm
- Two sites are being considered: Aleknagik or Central Office in Dillingham.
- Fuel deliveries are mostly complete; Manokotak is scheduled for the first part of October.
- New vehicles have been purchased for WKK, KGK, KMO and a new flatbed for DLG, the existing flatbed truck and plow in Dlg will be sent to TOG to replace the worn out truck there.
- Two new 15 thousand gallon bulk fuel tanks have been ordered for Ekwok

The special education director provided training to Manokotak classified and certificated staff on August 16, 2016. This training was entitled “Trauma: Educational Impact and What Schools Can Do to Build Resiliency”. This training provided Manokotak ‘Nunaniq’ School staff with a basic understanding of what Adverse Childhood Experiences are, how these traumatic experiences can affect a child’s education and what school staff can do to help build resiliency through the use of interventions for establishing safety, empowerment, collaboration, choice, and trust. This training discussed various strategies and resources to help the school staff to create a trauma-sensitive school.

The special education director completed site visits to Koliganek on August 29, 2016 for the purpose of completing an early entry screening. The director visited Aleknagik School and provided some mandatory special education paraprofessional training on August 30, 2016 and then visited Twin Hills to provide teacher/paraprofessional training and support on Sept 6, 2016.



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Exploration Week Activities



Student Leadership



Manokotak Nunaniq student, Shayla Gloko received the signed photo from the Lieutenant Governor's office. Shayla was one of three members of Nunaniq Student Council who served the State of Alaska as Youth Vote Ambassadors on the primary election on Tuesday, August 16, 2016.



Aleknagik School

Audra Finkenbinder, Principal/Teacher

May 2016

At the end of the 2015-2016 school year, graduation was held on May 16th with a total of eleven graduates: four kindergarten students and seven 8th graders. The class motto was “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13

August 2016

The first day of school for the Aleknagik Lakers was August 22nd and this year the first day was different than many years in the past as we had high school students walking through the front door to attend classes! Preparations for a high school program in all K-8 sites throughout Southwest Region School District began last spring and Aleknagik happily welcomed nine (9) high school students on the first day of school. We also welcome Ms. Margaret Gray to our staff. Ms. Gray is teaching secondary ELA, history, and health.



The first few weeks of school have been quite busy as all secondary students selected the Exploration Week topics in which they are interested, Purnell Photography was here for community and school pictures, and the first round of MAP Assessments has been completed.

Curriculum-wise, we are in the fifth year of using the science kits for all K-5 students. The students have enjoyed all of the hands-on activities the last four years and I can foresee that enjoyment continuing. We are in the sixth year of using the Reading Mastery program in grades K-5 and in the past five years have seen wonderful gains in the students' reading abilities. This is the third year with GO Math! Although there were some hiccups during the first year of implementation, the second year was smoother so we look forward to seeing the students' level of comfort and understanding increase again this year. We will continue utilizing Reflex Math; the supplemental online math program to assist with fluency in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

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A new program for the secondary students (grades 6-12) is Exploration Weeks. The first Exploration Week was held September 12th -16th and had the following course offerings: Introduction to Demolition and Construction, Skin Sewing, Community Service, Upcycling, and Academic Improvements. The students looked like they enjoyed the change of pace and activities and their finished projects are something they will remember for years to come.

As the new school year begins, we will be continuing the following programs/activities:

- Breakfast Program
- After School Program
- Student of the Month
- Student Council
- Cross Country
- Volleyball
- Basketball
- Spelling Bee
- Battle of the Books
- Science Fair
- Game Nights
- Movie Nights

All students in Aleknagik School will also receive instruction in Basic Internet Safety on a quarterly basis throughout the school year. This training is in accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act and Southwest Region School's Acceptable Use Policy.

If you have not had a chance to meet Ms. Gray, and/or would like to see what we have taking place, or have any questions, please feel free to stop by.

We are all looking forward to a great school year!





William 'Sonny' Nelson School

Heath Hawkins, Principal/Teacher

School is back in full swing here in Ekwok. Our entire staff worked diligently to help ensure our school would be inviting to the students and the community. As we are new, our staff has been invaluable during the whole process. We have worked with the students' schedules to allow for frequent movement and expelling excess energy. There are three recess periods per day plus P.E. As part of our welcome back week, we emphasized the fact that there is a time and place for everything. During class time, we expect full attention and hard work. With schedule designs, the children are never in class for more than one hour without a recess or P.E. in between. We have found this to be an effective way to manage childhood energy while maintaining focus in the classroom. Another implementation this year has been a focus on character growth and the goal of becoming effective student citizens. Our character traits for this year are Optimism, Grit, Social-Intelligence, Self-Control, Curiosity, Gratitude and Zest. Students are not only expected to exhibit behavior consistent with these traits, they are rewarded for being positive student citizens.

My wife, Alyssa, teaches Reading and ELA for K-6 while I teach Math, Science, Social Studies and Health. We feel reading is the backbone of any subject so additional emphasis is placed on our students' fluency and comprehension. We also utilize an Intervention Period into our daily schedule. This period is used for Reflex Math, Spelling City, completing unfinished assignment or one-on-one intervention. This flexibility allows us to work closely with the students in order to meet the individual needs of their education.



We have also implemented a couple programs focusing on character and student leadership. One program is our Student of the Month. Two students are chosen each month for the awards based upon a

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list of character and leadership criteria. This month our K-2 student is Madison Kazimirowicz and our 3-6 student is Cristian Valdez. Both of these students have exhibited polite attitudes in addition to positive peer leadership. We firmly believe student growth in our character traits should be rewarded in addition to praise for academic performance.

Mrs. Alice is in charge of our Extensions Period in addition to classroom aide. As an established member of the community, she has been a wonderful asset with incorporating native culture into our daily schedule. During her extensions period, Mrs. Alice works with Art and Technology. The children have made dream catchers, paintings and pot holders so far this year. They are very excited about the upcoming art projects this year. Mrs. Alice has been working with the students on typing course during Technology class. As the year progresses, the children will hopefully learn the basics of word processing, spreadsheets and basic graphic designs. Mr. David Williams is our Yup'ik teacher and the students are doing great while learning the native language. They are currently working on a project using local plants.

We just finished MAP testing and are settling into our routine for the remainder of the year. It has been a wonderful ride so far and we have learned so much while also teaching. I look forward to having a great year in Ekwok while focusing on student growth.





Koliganek School

Michael Lee, Principal

Start of a New Year

We have had a great start to our year in Koliganek. We opened the school year with an assembly to introduce the new staff: Michael Lee as principal, Dalton Hawkins as HS Science and Math, and Richard Coppin as HS Social Studies and Language Arts. On August 24th we had an open house for parents to meet the teachers and to allow completion of paperwork required for sports and computer use. Overall we had a great start to the year and are excited for all of the wonderful things to come.

New School Progress

There are still a few unresolved issues from the new school construction. The maintenance department has been working with the builders to ensure everything will work as designed. The old bleachers have been removed and new bleachers will be installed during the week of September 19th. This will greatly increase the number of people that can comfortably attend events in the school due to the larger seating capacity of the bleachers. Other minor issues have already been resolved and the remaining issues will be resolved during the week of the 19th. None of these prevented the school from opening and operating at the start of the year, but we want to ensure that we are getting all of the items required from the builders. We would like to thank Rick Dallmann for his continued hard work on ensuring efficient use of resources.

Fall Assessments

Map testing went extremely smooth in Koliganek. We finished all testing prior to the deadline. The teachers did a great job preparing students and administering the test. The data from these assessments are being used as one measurement to ensure students receive the best reading and math interventions for their individual strength and weaknesses.

Extra-Curricular Activities

We have had a very good start with our cross country team. The team this year is very young and is composed of all middle school students. We have taken 1st place for Middle School Boys and Girls Cross Country races at Manokotak and our home meet in Koliganek. The team is excited to represent our school and village and will be attending meets at Chief Ivan Blunka School and Dillingham.

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We have had 2 pep assemblies for our runners. We also recognized the positive behavior ticket winners for the month of August. Student that are caught following class expectations or assisting others are given Behavior Reward Tickets. The positive tickets are placed on the bulletin board in the cafeteria. Once monthly we take them and down and draw our winners from each grade / class level. The winners receive a coupon for a free slushy and popcorn at our next afterschool event.

At each pep assembly we also have a spirit contest between the elementary and MS/HS. The current team acts as the judge for the spirit competition. The elementary have dominated so far and won the Husky Mascot for the classrooms at both assemblies. The High School / Middle School has shown true spirit, but the elementary has significantly higher volume.

In Our Classrooms

The MS/HS students have been adjusting to the increased level of rigor and pace of the Plato classes. Most have been very receptive to the new format and all are doing well. The new schedule has allowed us to work on Academic Endurance and students' ability to maintain focus for longer periods of time. Most students enjoy being able to do their work on a computer after the lesson has been discussed. The MS/HS has prepared for the first Exploration Week and students are very excited for the opportunity to participate in different types of classes. We will be having a Culinary Arts: Spice it up class that students and parents have been eagerly discussing. We will also be developing a newsletter and yearbook as part of the Exploration Weeks activities.

The elementary has been working hard to ensure the reading and math groups are operating well for each group. All classified staff in the elementary are also participating in the math and reading groups. We look forward to Cindy Paxton coming to help provide support for all of our staff in Reading Mastery. The elementary have also developed activities for Exploration week to be completed in the afternoon. They will be doing local plant identification and berry picking.

Overall it has been a very busy start to the year, but everyone is very excited about what we have done so far and what we have planned for the future. We will be holding a School Improvement Meeting and an Art Committee Meeting in the next few weeks.



Manokotak 'Nunaniq' School

Deb Forkner, Principal

Manokotak Nunaniq School kicked off the new school year with an all school photo with everyone wearing our new Lynx Pride shirts.

Striving to create a safe, positive, culturally rich environment focused on success and life-long learning continues to be the mission of Manokotak Nunaniq School staff this year as we welcome three new teachers to our team.

They are:

Rachel Moylan, MS/HS Language Arts
Raymond Moylan, MS/HS Social Studies
Jasmin Montgomery, 5th/6th grade

The focus on positive behavior and having clear, consistent expectations school wide continues with our S.M.A.R.T. Lynx program. This focus helped to decrease office referrals by 49% last year.

Culturally, school staff continues emphasizing and using student Yup'ik names. Kindergarten through 4th grade created self-portraits with Ms. Grace during Yup'ik class and proudly labeled them with their Yup'ik names. The portraits will be displayed in the school throughout the school year.

Middle and high school students were excited for the first Exploration Week. Manokotak students had their choice of spoon carving, maqivik building, wilderness survival, crocheting, introduction to reporting, driver's education, and basic cooking. Two students attended ground school in Naknek during the week.

Manokotak was pleased to host the first cross-country meet of the year on September 2. 21 total runners competed from five different villages.



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‘Chief’ Ivan Blunka School

Robin Jones, Principal

We are off to a great start at Chief Ivan Blunka School! We are framing our school year with the vision of “Together, we create a safe and culturally sensitive environment that encourages everyone to embrace challenges, celebrate perseverance, and discover a passion for learning.” We are also celebrating a Yup’ik value each month, with the August and September value being: “Have respect for our land and its resources.” Our goal continues to be to use our vision and monthly Yup’ik value to drive our instruction while also enhancing our student engagement, school climate, and connectedness (Board Goals 1, 3, & 5 / District Goals 1-6).



We started school on Monday, August 22, 2016 with a Welcome Back Assembly to share our vision, generate excitement about the school year, introduce the staff, and honor individuals. We currently have 128 students enrolled in our K-12 program. We were so proud to present Justin Gumlickpuk with Southwest Region School District’s Instructional Aide of the Year award. On Thursday, we hosted our annual Welcome Back to School BBQ and had an amazing turnout! Attendees enjoyed good food, great company, and lots of door prizes. We were also able to showcase our two beautiful new murals of a moose and fireweed patch (Board Goals 1 & 3 / District Goals 2, 4, & 6).

We are anticipating an exciting first exploration week, where we will be offering Kuspuk Making, Computer Programming, Furniture Making, Baking Essentials, Beginning Drawing, Oar Making, & Subsistence Fishing. To be able to offer these intensive weeks of study is such an amazing opportunity for the students. We look forward to the remaining exploration weeks and to the rest of the school year! (Board Goals 1, 4, & 5 / District Goals 1-6).



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Togiak School
Sam Gosuk, Principal

School is back and people are excited about the fall with the surprising amount of berries that have grown despite lack of snow. We as a school have several teachers that are new to the community and activities were made to introduce some of the culture to the teacher. Both new and old teachers got off to a good start.

One event that we did was to have an Open House for the community to introduce the teachers including new teachers and also give awards to classified who served in SWRS for 5 to 35 years. There was a potluck for them and we want to do this every year at the start of the year. Also during this time, recognition was given to the Togiak School students for mastering 5,923 words and finishing first in the State of Alaska. Vocabulary.com recognized Shayla Schwoch, Brian Mason, and Amanda Smith who are current teachers for empowering their students to learn words independently for the 2015-16 school year. Encouragement to parents were given to continue to support their students.

Another way we did introduce the new teachers to the community was to take teachers to surrounding bays and upriver subsistence activities. A couple were taken to Kulukak Bay for clam digging. They were given half the clams that were picked and they shared them with their fellow new teachers. Other new teachers were taken upriver to experience silver salmon fishing. A fish or two were caught and then cooked over the fire and eaten. All the teachers who experienced our surrounding area enjoyed what it was like away from village and shared their experience through Facebook and other media.

Experiencing the community culture and subsistence activities allow teachers to use what the students know as a base to teach new concepts. As we continue on to the year as a school, our hope is to gain relationships with the community by understanding the culture and bringing it to the school and using it as something that grabs the attention of students as they are taught skills they will need to know in the future to survive our modern world.





Twin Hills School

Nate Preston, Principal/Teacher

We are looking forward to an exciting new school year. This year we will be focusing on four main goals. We will be doing our first exploration week at Togiak, the staff is getting acquainted and we are looking forward to participating in activities that Twin Hills has not had the numbers to do recently.

After looking at the district goals and talking with the CSC, the school has four main goals to work on this year. The first goal is to improve attendance; the second is to focus on reading at all grade levels and have at the minimum, all second graders on grade level by the end of the school year. Our third goal is to successfully learn and implement the new High School Program. Our fourth is to have no bullying in school. We will continuously focus and work on these goals throughout the school year.

On September 12, the entire high school and middle school will be attending exploration week activities in Togiak. The students and chaperones will boat over to Togiak in the morning and return by boat Friday afternoon. The students are looking forward to all the exploration week activities available at Togiak. The next exploration week in November will be held in Twin Hills.

Twin Hills School currently has 29 students enrolled. Four students are in High school. The students are interested in having a middle school basketball and an NYO team for middle and high school. I believe this is the first time in a while that Twin Hills has had the number of students to have teams for the sports. The students are really looking forward to participating in these activities.

With all the teaching staff being brand new and all staff in different positions, everyone is getting to know each other and adjusting to their new duties. The staff is excited about their new responsibilities with having a high school and the opportunities that result from that. The staff is happy with the new classroom that was just got completed on Septembers 12. It really helps to have the extra room considering we have eleven more students than last year and doing a complete high school program.