

March 1, 2021

**Memorandum of Understanding Between:  
EXCEL Alaska, Inc. (dba Alaska EXCEL) and Kuspuk School District**

**Purpose:**

This document will serve as the consortium agreement between the parties and sets forth the responsibilities of each party related to the *Federal Alaska Native Education Program (ANE)* Kuspuk School District (KSD) and Alaska EXCEL. The project hereafter will be referred to as the *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project*.

**Background:**

Alaska EXCEL provides rural/remote Alaska Native Jr. High and High school students with supplementary academic support, transitional life skills and career exploration opportunities, which promote high school completion and transitional success. Through applied project-based learning, each student increases their knowledge in a wide variety of areas including academic (language arts, math and science), leadership, character, life skills, postsecondary and career search, and urban familiarization. Alaska EXCEL students graduate from high school and transition into adulthood with a viable Personal Learning & Career Plan (PLCP), Occupation Endorsement Certificates (OEC), national career readiness certificates, and college credits applicable to a specific Program of Study (PoS). Since March 2020, Alaska EXCEL has not been able to provide opportunities on their campus due to Covid 19. EXCEL has been working tirelessly developing online courses to be delivered remotely to students throughout the villages in the Calista Region. While the online courses will not replace face-to-face sessions, they are designed supplement academic learning and career exploration in the event of school closures and travel restrictions due to Covid-19. EXCEL will still maintain its important and significant in-person courses/sessions, as well as the online courses when travel is allowed.

Partners signing this MOU support fidelity and implementation of the *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* over the next three years because of their belief in the efficacy of the program for increasing student success in core subjects, raising high school graduation rates, and increasing post-secondary access and success. We agree to the partner responsibilities described in this document.

**I. Responsibilities for Alaska EXCEL**

- A. Provide adequate funding for full implementation of the *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* including:
  - 1) *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* project-management personnel;
  - 2) *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* support staff;
  - 3) *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* instructional staff;
  - 4) Electronic tablets (including data) for students enrolled in online classes
  - 5) Travel, lodging, classroom supplies and other expenses for up to 200 student participants/year;
- B. Ensure compliance with all federal, state, and local procurement rules and regulations and grant reporting requirements.

- C. Provide fiscal responsibility for the project including oversight of all contracts with specified partners and vendors;
- D. Provide appropriate academic instruction and guidance to KSD secondary school students to ensure they meet district and state requirements for high school completion and graduation;
- E. Provide a multitude of online career exploration courses, as well as hands-on academic and career and technical education opportunities open to 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade KSD students;
- F. Ensure KSD students who enroll with *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project*, graduate from high school with a strong and viable Personal Learning & Career Plan, including employment skills known to relate to adult success;
- G. Guide KSD students in developing valuable leadership skills, such as communication, problem solving, teamwork, motivation, and coping skills;
- H. Connect KSD students to various post-secondary training opportunities, including the universities, vocational schools, apprenticeships, and work internships;
- I. Provide KSD students with opportunities to earn college credit, occupational endorsements and industry recognized certificates, while still attending high school;
- J. Provide opportunities for KSD students to earn specific industry-recognized certificates and/or college credit leading to a respective occupational endorsement or degreed program;
- K. Communicate regularly with KSD and provide routine, ongoing opportunities for feedback and continuous improvement;
- L. Provide fiscal responsibility for the project including oversight of all contracts with specified partners and vendors;
- M. Collaborate with Alaska Native organizations and partners within the KSD region in the development of locally appropriate cultural activities, curriculum, instruction, and assessments;
- N. Ensure compliance with all federal, state, and local procurement rules and regulations and grant program-reporting requirements;
- O. Collect and provide KSD student data to an independent evaluator and researcher.

## II. Responsibilities of Kuspuk School District

- A. Provide high school credit and transcripts for academic and career and technical education coursework provided by *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* and understands and agrees that *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* sessions are considered an in-school related trip (not an extra-curricular activity);
- B. KSD students attending *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* sessions will not be considered absent, and will be allowed to make up missed homework as in any other school trip;
- C. Ensure KSD students are academically and socially prepared to attend the *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* by meeting the session admission requirements;
- D. Provide KSD student access to *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* staff;
- E. Provide KSD student data to the Project Director for use during *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* sessions and at the request of the project evaluator for reporting and evaluation purposes;
- F. Ensure school level access to *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* personnel and provide feedback related to individual student participation as needed;
- G. Promote the *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* in local communities and encourage and allow students to participate in all *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* opportunities;
- H. Implement school-level *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* activities with rigor and fidelity;

- I. Provide a dedicated district point-person to be a liaison for *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project*.
- J. Provide a dedicated district travel coordinator so set up flights for all students traveling to/from *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project Sessions*.
- K. Consistently send an adequate number of students (based on district enrollment) to all session throughout the course of the year in order to meet grant goals. EXCEL Directors will meet with individual districts to discuss and determine what the “adequate” number of students is for each respective district.
- L. Allow KSD students the ability to connect the project devices to the district internet on a regular basis to ensure completion of the *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* online courses.
- M. Allow *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* personnel to present project successes and any challenges to the KSD School Board on bi-yearly basis.
- N. Provide transportation to/from *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* sessions for KSD students attending *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* sessions.

### Agreement

The said authorizing official agrees to the above on behalf of their organization under the following conditions:

- If an award notice is received, the KSD School Board or Board of Directors will have an opportunity to ratify this agreement, or a mutually updated version of this agreement.
- Each year, this agreement will be updated and revised to incorporate any changes in policies and regulations in force in the project partner organizations.
- The *EXCEL/Calista Connections Project* involves numerous partners and therefore will inherently encounter unpredicted challenges. The signatures below indicate the commitment of the partners, yet do not preclude changes from being made or from a partner terminating the agreement as the team learns more about how best to collaboratively meet the needs of our students and communities or from any unforeseen funding reductions.

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Harvey Hoffman, Chairman  
Kuspuk School District

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James Anderson, Superintendent  
Kuspuk School District



/ 3/2/21

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Carol Wilson, Executive Director  
EXCEL Alaska, Inc.