

# REPORT TO THE SWRS BOARD OF EDUCATION

Educating our future...



## Superintendent's Office

David J. Piazza, Superintendent

### In this Issue:

#### UPCOMING INSERVICES

This month all of the secretaries and CSC members will have trainings in Dillingham.

#### STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Fall student activities are in beginning with students running cross-country and beginning volleyball and wrestling. A group of student leaders are also attending the AASG Fall Leadership and AFN Youth and Elders Conferences in Anchorage this month.

#### Board of Education

Kay Andrews, President  
Marie Paul, Vice-President  
Ferdinand Sharp, Sec./Treas.  
Wassillie Wonhola, Member  
Wassillie Gust, Member  
Helen Gregorio Member  
Steven Gosuk, Jr., Member

## Staffing

The District finalized the selection of a candidate to fill the certificated teacher vacancy in Clarks Point. Ryan Wells, originally from Sherwood, Oregon (around the Portland area), will be teaching the students in Kindergarten through 4th grade. Ryan arrived in Clarks Point on Saturday, October 8th, and was in the classroom on Monday morning. While the Clarks Point students are participating in the Alaska Federation of Natives Conference events in Anchorage, Ryan will be traveling to New Stuyahok for the week in order to gain experience utilizing the District's curricular materials. This will include hands-on training utilizing the Reading Mastery procedures and resources. A special thank you to the staff at New Stuyahok is in order.

Classified staffing vacancies that were created to meet the additional needs of the schools have been filled. These include extra support for the grouping of students in Reading Mastery and Saxon Math, as well as, additional support for meeting special education needs at the sites.

# REPORT TO THE SOUTHWEST REGION SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

## Inservice

**With August's Certified Staff and September's Classified Staff inservices completed, the District has moved forward on the continuation of its staff development plans.**

Teachers in Kindergarten through 5th grade have begun to participate in a weekly class focusing on the implementation of the Reading Mastery curricular materials. Teacher from each site attend the workshop via the District's video

conferencing system, as well as, participate in out-of-class discussions utilizing the Moodle content management system's discussion forums.

Planning is underway to provide staff development for the School Secretaries on November 8th and 9th at the District Office. A Community School Committee member workshop will be held on November 10th in Dillingham as well.



# Superintendent Travel

This month travel included attendance at the ASAA fall conference in early October.

The Alaska Association of School Administrators (AASA) held their fall meeting/conference in Anchorage in early October. Superintendent Piazza participated in the Pre-Conference visit to the Mat-Su School District. This visit provided an opportunity for about 15 superintendents from across the state to see several types of programs and schools that provide choice to the students who live in the Palmer and Wasilla areas.

The main portion of the AASA meeting focused on building a single or limited focused agenda that all members could work towards as the upcoming legislative session gets closer. The priority to request adequate and multiple-year forward funding was selected as the primary focus to ensure that students have the resources

necessary to meet the educational needs of the schools.

Presentations were made by the Special Education Service Agency, the Alaska School Activities Association, the Mt. Edgecumbe Advisory Board, the National Governing Board, and the Professional Teaching Practices

Commission. The University of Alaska's Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Associate Vice President of the University of Alaska's Workforce Development office, and the Director of the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project provided information on how each of the organizations

connect to and extend K-12 public education systems. John Sedor spoke about Negotiations: A Statewide Perspective, and Carl Rose, the Executive Director for the Alaska Association of School Boards, discussed the "Unfolding Dynamics with the 27th Legislature."

Marc Johnson, the 2011 American Association of School Administrators National Superintendent of the Year provided two different keynote speeches. His focus for "Leading the Learning" discussed the

techniques that the Sanger Unified School District in California used to improve student achievement. Keys to success include the development of Professional Learning Communities, utilizing common formative assessment data, creating systematic interventions and having a commitment to continuous improvement. His message in his

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presentation “All Kids Can, If We Do ...” continued his message by discussing the need to implement Response to Intervention strategies to ensure that all students have multiple learning opportunities at their appropriate level.

The Executive Director for the American Association of School Administrators, Daniel Domenech, presented on the “95/5 Dilemma”. He describes the dilemma as the fact that the 5% of schools that are said to be failing according to the criteria defined by the No Child Left Behind Act are defining the remaining 95% of schools. While he agrees that there remains a crisis in American education, he was quick to point out the positive aspects that are evident in Public Education. He provided statistics from the Census Bureau documenting the decreasing National dropout rate since 1972, as well as the increases in high school completion rates. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as the “National Report Card”, documents increases in both math and reading scores for 4th and 8th graders. Positive public opinion of the local public educational system as rated by parents is at record highs of 78% according to the latest Phi Delta Kappa/ Gallup Poll. Dr. Domenech also discussed international comparisons that often make the news. While comparisons between American and Shanghai, Finland, or Singapore are made, each comparison is not a fair representation of the facts. While American trends are produced

from nation wide data, results for Shanghai only document a portion of China’s national picture. These world cities and countries also have higher educational spending and more time for professional development than the United States, His message asks us to focus on improving our schools, but at the same time to be proud of what accomplishments have been made over time.

## Southwest Region Schools School Board Goals

- The Board would like to establish a long-term vision for the district through a strategic plan or similar process.
- The Board would like to establish a long-term vision for the district through a strategic plan or similar process.
- The Board will focus on better communication with communities, parents, the district as a whole and themselves.
- The Board hopes to level the playing field and assure that all sites receive the same academic focus.
- The Board will focus on academic growth for ALL students.





## Instruction & Information Systems

Steve Noonkesser, Director

**September flew by as schools settled into a more normal pace. Staff making site visits continue to report positive events in our schools.**

The weekly staff development opportunities being provided by Lida Storch, Kirsten Tesch, Meridy Mabry, Pam Johnson and Deb Endicott, have begun and there is a nearly 100% participation in the sessions. Staff is focusing on implementation of the new Reading Mastery curriculum materials and working collaboratively to solve issues as they arise.

Staff at sites conducted the District-wide Writing Assessment and all student writing samples have now been scored and returned to teachers to help them in planning instruction. A collection of exemplary student writing samples is being put together and will be distributed to teachers.

Middle and High School staff are participating in a variety of Alaska Staff Development Network (ASDN) provided webinars including; Creating a Digital-Rich Classroom, Behavioral Response to Intervention, Implement for Impact: Strategies for Success, The Moral Imperative Realized and Leading Quality Elementary Literacy. These webinars are all led by nationally recognized experts in the field of education and should be beneficial for staff.

### Site Visits

Steve visited Manokotak again and was able to participate in a Yup'ik lesson with primary students, a math lesson in the 5th grade and observe high school teachers in several classes. Our students are engaged and appear to be enjoying the opportunities to learn new things.

# Instructional Support Team



Shannon Clouse  
Media Specialist



Deb Endicott  
Instructional Support  
Specialist



Corey Evans  
Computer-Aided  
Instruction Specialist



Les Parks  
Technology Coordinator

# REPORT TO THE SOUTHWEST REGION SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION



Corey visited Manokotak and was able to assist staff in troubleshooting video-conferencing issues and updated the site online library catalog.

Shannon spent the day in Clarks Point and organized and pulled off duplicate titles of books off their shelves in the library. The library has been organized by reading level starting with picture books and moving up to the 8th grade reading level, it will remain this way as it seems the most functional way for students and teachers to find out what books to read at their level (without having a reliable card catalog). Their library will need to be expanded and Shannon will have to make another trip out to get all the new books out on

the shelves. She was able to get some of the new series out but unfortunately even with duplicate titles removed there was not room for all the books.

Shannon also spent two days in Togiak organizing their library and updating Alexandria (patron cards & MARC records). The majority of the books that were ordered in the spring were out and on the shelves but their "records" needed to be updated, and duplicate titles deleted. She uploaded 357 new MARC records into the system and got all the books ready for student use. During her time in Togiak, Shannon also talked to students in 2nd grade to High School that qualified for Migrant Literacy Services and signed them up for magazines of their choice to be sent to their homes.

Deb visited Togiak where she assisted staff in cleaning out a storage room and found many boxes of unused curriculum materials and other resources that are now back in circulation. She also observed Reading Mastery lessons in several classrooms.

## Battle of the Books

A schedule has been set for District Battle of the Books as well as State Battle of the Books. The times set for these battles will be when I am out on maternity leave and we have yet to determine who will take charge of Battle of the Books in my absence.

**District Battle of the Books** (Team winners need to be in to State Coordinator 2 weeks prior to State battles)

- February 6th- High School
- February 7th 6-8 Teams
- February 8th 5-6 Teams
- February 9th 3/4 Teams

**State Battle of the Books** (Audio-Conference)

February 27th High School  
February 28th 6-8 Teams  
February 29th 5-6 Teams  
March 1st 3/4 Teams



## Imagination Library

This month Shannon will be heading to Anchorage for Imagination Library training with Margie Nelson. They will be participating in a two-day training hosted by Best Beginnings. This training will focus on the Book Order System and Database as well as how to recruit volunteers and keep them. Margie will share with others in attendance “Our Big Success.” We currently have 19 children enrolled in the Koliganek Imagination Library and have graduated 6. Togiak has applied to start an Imagination Library in their community.

## Technology Recycling

At the end of September the technology department team loaded 11 pallets of obsolete technology equipment and

delivered the materials to the city dock to be loaded on the barge. The equipment was shipped at no cost out of the district through the Apple in Education Recycling program. The removal of this much obsolete technology equipment is significant because aside from being environmentally responsible it keeps several hazardous materials out of our local landfill. Some of the most common contaminants being mercury and lead.

## Ongoing Tech Support

The technology department has been engaged at other times during the month with maintaining and supporting district online resources and equipment troubleshooting and repair.



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## State & Federal Programs

Jon Clouse, Director

As always, the beginning of the year is a busy time with many state and federal reports due and last year's grants closing out.

### Site Visits

Jon traveled to New Stuyahok, Koliganek, Clarks Point, and Togiak for a number of reasons including, administering the parapro assessment, attending CSC meetings, gathering information for highly qualified requirements, and simply watching our educators and instructional leaders in action. At present, 14 parapro assessments have been administered within the last 30 days; one assessment at New Stuyahok, seven assessments in Koliganek, and six assessments in Togiak. The purpose of these assessments has been to help community members meet the requirements of highly qualified in order to apply for vacant instructional aide positions and to assist employees meet highly qualified requirements.

He was also able to attend the Clarks Point CSC meeting on October 3rd. During this meeting, a grant synopsis was presented outlining the budget and purpose of the state/federal programs that I manage. I appreciate the opportunity for transparency provided by the CSC members at Clarks Point.

Another function for the travel is work with staff on meeting the requirements of being highly qualified. This work involves the creation of plans to assist staff in becoming highly qualified with periodic checks on the progress. Included in the packet is additional information on the number of courses being taught by highly qualified teachers.



### NCLB: Alaska STEPP

Since the last board meeting, the district AK STEPP team (district improvement team) has met a number of times. These meetings have included a review of last year's AK STEPP plan, discussion about the changes in the AK STEPP system, and beginning the "assessment, plan, monitor" procedure. The team has successfully assessed the data analysis domain, which has ten indicators. The team will begin creating plans for those indicators assessed at "no implementation" or "limited implementation." The newest AK STEPP plan is included in the packet.



### Student Information & Support Specialist: Nate Preston

There are a number of projects occurring including recruiting students for the migrant education program, working through the process of the boarding home program, and beginning of the student count period. The student count period occurs from October 3rd, through October 28th. Average student



enrollment during count period determines our foundation formula amount. If a student is enrolled for all 20 school days of the count period they count as 1.0 student for count period and if they were enrolled for 10 days they count as 0.5 students. As of October 10, 2011 we have 634 students enrolled in the district. Attendance is only used for count if we have to prove the student was enrolled and attending one of our schools.

As a district we currently have eleven students in the boarding home program, down one from the beginning of the year. Each of our high schools is providing education to boarding home students. As part of the boarding home program, we develop a budget based upon the number of students at the beginning of the year that is submitted to the state. This is the budget that the state reviews when we submit our reimbursement requests.

We have six migrant recruiters who have started recruiting students to the Migrant Education Program. The recruiters will be recruiting until the cut off date of Nov 15 or until they have contacted everyone who could possibly be eligible. We have completed contacting and recruiting all current students at New Stuyahok, Clarks Point, and Ekwok. We are still recruiting at Togiak, Twin Hills, Koliganek and Manokotak.



### **District Test Coordinator: Steve Ito**

Attended the annual Alternate Assessment Qualified Mentor Training and completed EED training requirements for renewal of Alternate Assessment Qualified Mentor Trainer status.

The Alternate Assessment exists for students with significant cognitive disabilities to have access to, participate in, and make progress in general education curricula. The Alternate Assessment is based on Alaska standards but measured against alternate achievement standards.

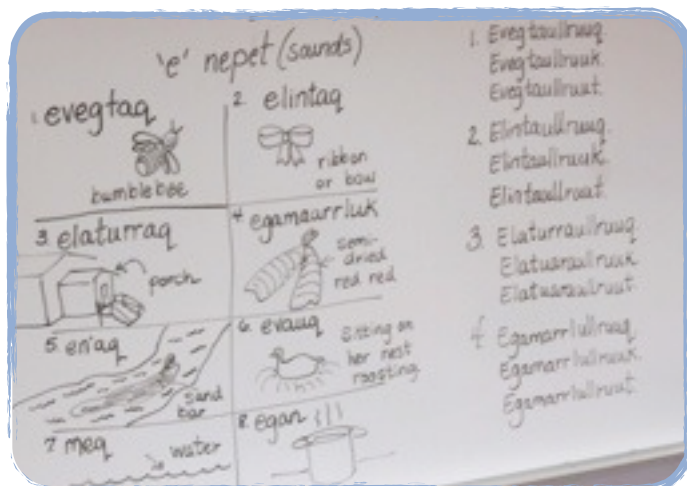
Completed Training in the new World-class Instructional Design and Assessment

(WIDA) Protocol for Limited English Proficient students. This protocol replaces the Idea Proficiency Testing protocol and will implemented statewide this spring. The World-class Instructional Design and Assessment materials assesses students abilities in all four language domains (Listening, Speaking, Writing, and Reading), and evaluates Social and Instructional English as well as academic language corresponding to the subject areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

The Alaska Developmental Profiles for Kindergarten students were completed district-wide. 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.

The Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exam Retakes for grades 11-12 and Adult were completed. The HSGQE is a proficiency based criterion referenced test developed specifically for Alaska. The purpose of the assessment is to provide information about what students know and are able to do in reading, writing, and mathematics. The test includes multiple choice and constructed response items.

Successful completion of the HSGQE along with adequate earned academic credit will enable a student to graduate with a diploma from high school.





## Yup'ik Studies

Esther Ilutsik, Director

**Manokotak “Nunaniq’ School’ Yup’ik Studies programs are the focus of this month’s report.**

### YCC 101 Introduction to Yupiaq

The YCC 101 Introduction to Yupiaq under the instructor of Larry Bartman, certified Native teacher is progressing at a normal pace. Students arrived into the classroom just before the bell at 9:00 am which followed with a school wide Pledge of Allegiance. The students then in proper Yup’ik form introduced themselves to me in Yup’ik and English. This followed with a demonstration of vernacular exercises that help to strengthen parts of their muscles in mouth and back throat that is not normally used in the English language. The students used their laptops as the lesson using the pacing guide followed with the instructor Larry utilizing technology and screen to project and re-emphasize points orally. The wall behind me hung projects that the students are working on. This project was researching, photographing local edible, medicinal plants and berries. They are presented in both Yupiaq and English. The completed project will become available for teachers to use and to use during the annual new teacher orientation.

### Cultural Arts

The Cultural Arts Studies takes students from the 4th grade to high school level working with Elders in Residence and Louise Gloko, Instructional Aide. Those elders in residence include the following Anuska Neketa – Beading, Nellie Paul – Sewing and gaspeq making, Moses John – Carving, Henry Alakayak, Sr. – Net Mending and Anuska Nanalook who comes on Tues/Thurs -Crocheting & Knitting. Students come in and decide on a project, keep an on-going journal of the

activity and work with and are engaged in the presence of the Elders. The completed projects are sold with the money being used to purchase more resources.

### Kindergarten

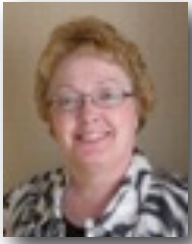
Kindergarten Session with Rhona Shavings, certified Native teacher, integrates Yup’ik into her regular classroom schedule. She incorporated Yup’ik calendar time when she does her regular English calendar time. In the late afternoon on a daily basis she has Yup’ik culture that includes dancing, beading, and patterns. She also does a short lesson on Yup’ik language with a focus on body parts and basic kinship.

### Grades 1–3

1st/2nd & 2nd/ 3rd Grade Students are under the direction of Nancy Sharp, certified Native teacher, where she has a special area in her classroom that is set up for Yup’ik instruction. She begins with calendar time and weather and followed by seasonal activities all in Yup’ik with some English translation.

### Alaska Cultural Standards Meeting September 22–23, 2011

The State Board of Education adopted sections of the Alaska Culturally Responsive Schools and I have had the privilege of serving on a working committee (sponsored by the education department) since last spring to help make those standards become useful to the districts statewide. We just concluded our third meeting and second reading of the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools – the Cultural Standards for Educators. This instrument will help the districts in addressing the Alaska Culturally Responsive Schools as adopted.



## Special Education

Robin Gray, Director

The Special Education Director's Training was this month and Robin Gray spent a week in Anchorage with other directors, meeting the State of Alaska Special Education Staff from Juneau, networking with SESA and SERRC (special education agencies), and working in the Special Education Handbook. There are 16 new Special Education Directors in the State of Alaska and they all were involved in the training.

### Special Education Mentor Visit

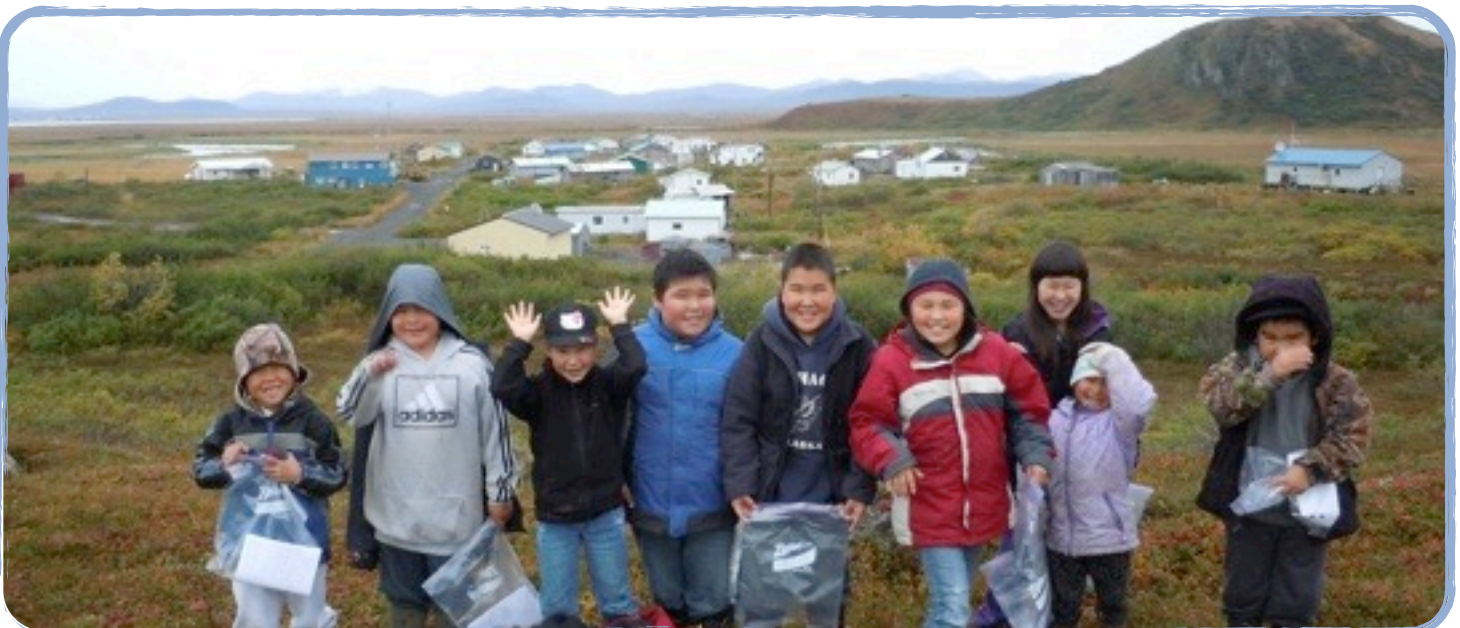
Heather Wheeler, the State Special Education Mentor, came to Dillingham the week of October 10th to work with Robin Gray. Ms. Wheeler goes to all the district offices to assist new directors' in their learning process. This mentor program is supposed to be for the first two years of a new director's professional development in that position.

### Child Find

Child Find for the district is wrapping up during October. SWRSD will do a second Child Find in March of 2012. This will help with the beginning of the next school year. A high number of children three to five years old are being referred for developmental concerns and by doing a second Child Find this year, the beginning of next year will not have so many children that will need to get screened at one time.

### 504 Services

Robin Gray will be coordinating the district's 504 services for SWRSD. 504s are a federal mandate to provide services for students that fit the criteria of a disability, but are not eligible for special education. Training principals and district office staff will occur at the next Leadership meeting. School staff will be given training to ensure that those eligible are given the opportunity for support.





# REPORT TO THE SOUTHWEST REGION SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION



## Business Office

Lee Ann Andrew, Director

### Audit

The 2011 audit is done and all negative balances have been cleared and the district has committed the participating share necessary for the Koliganek Replacement Grant when it gets awarded. At the end of FY11 the district has an unreserved fund balance of \$669,039.

### Lincoln Financial

The district has an agreement with Lincoln Financial group for our 403(b) and 457 retirement plans. Our broker would like to start offering web informational sessions for the staff beginning in November. Notices will go out in October's payroll of the date and time of the first session. The retirement plans are available to all staff.

### JOM Funds

The sites are still working on getting the resolutions from their village councils and the budgets from the CSC's for the JOM funding that is pass through funding from BBNA. The district has not received the notice for the FY12 funding however there is still carry over funding from previous years that are available for most sites.

### Transportation

The district has been working with the bus contractors' to ensure that our buses are in compliance with the federal transportation regulations. The mechanic that services all our buses planned visits in mid- October, The state inspectors should be scheduling their next visit towards the end of October or the beginning of November.

### Alaska Public Entity Insurance

In late August the district received a dividend check for \$35,277 due to the low claims that Alaska Public Entity Insurance(APEI) had over the past year. The district moved to APEI in FY10 when they offered a premium over \$41,000 lower than our previous insurer. The district has not seen a difference in service and has saved over \$100,000 over the three years. For FY13 the district will go out to bid again. APEI provides student accident insurance and no pre-registration is required. If there is an accident the form is filled out at the time of the accident.

### ALASBO Conference

December 5-7 is the Alaska Association for School Business Officials. This conference is planned by current business officials and is a good opportunity for all business office staff to get training and network with others doing their same type of work.





## Aleknagik School

Audra Finkenbinder, Principal



Aleknagik School was privileged to have numerous visitors during the month that presented important topics that will help keep the students well and safe.

The Public Health Nurse earned the attention of all the students with her hand washing presentation. The students were amazed with the UV hand lotion that simulated bacteria when used in conjunction with a black light. Learning the areas of their hands that should be washed better, the students returned to the sink and scrubbed until they felt confident they were free of bacteria. Gina Carpenter will be returning to Aleknagik at the beginning of November to hold a Wellness Fair that will include vision and hearing screenings, weight and height checks, in addition to numerous other topics and health activities.

October 9th – 15th was Fire Prevention Week. The school welcomed Braden Tinker, the Fire Chief, and Cody and Patrick, two fire fighters, who presented Fire Safety guidelines to all of the students. In addition to teaching the students how to exit their homes during a fire, the

students also got to test out the sirens and water hose on the new fire truck. The students had a great time and look forward to the firefighters returning in the spring.

Aleknagik School has kicked off a Student of the Month Program this year. The students are selected based on having a positive attitude, being helpful toward others, and having good grades. The Students of the Month for September are Katrena Finkenbinder, Lodi Active, Reagan Finkenbinder, and Selena Andrews.

The school year is flying by thus far and more activities are in store for the students and community as October quickly comes to an end; Parent/Teacher

Conferences, Red Ribbon Week, and a Halloween Carnival are a few of the upcoming events.

There were a number of community members and students who attended AFN this year – I hope everyone had a wonderful time and I'd like to welcome you all back!



# REPORT TO THE SOUTHWEST REGION SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION



## Clarks Point School

Nate Crabtree, Principal

### General Information

Clarks Point would like to take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Ryan Wells to the community. Mr. Wells will be the teacher in the K-4 classroom. He brings to the school valuable experience not only at home but also abroad.

Clarks Point School had a community potluck at the end of September. There were 39 people in attendance. One of the veteran staff members commented that this was the largest turnout for a school function that she can remember. Way to go parents and community! The students and school will continue to need this kind of support to accomplish all that is desired.

### Academics

The school year seems to be moving along at a blistering pace. Here is some of the recent material that the seventh and eighth grade students have been working on:

- Math: Solving Equations Containing Integers
- Science: Chemical/Physical Changes, Properties of Waves
- Language: Composing well-constructed paragraphs

Here is some of the recent material that the lower elementary has been working on:

- Math: Multiplication and Addition Sentences
- Science: Parts of a Plant
- Language: Writing a friendly letter

The students are to be commended on the effort that they are putting forth. Learning new things is extremely

rewarding but can also be frustrating at times. We are all learning the rewards of perseverance.

### Art

The students have proven themselves very dedicated artisans. So far this year they have explored topics such as positive and negative images, creating a color wheel exclusively from primary colors and creating three-dimensional perspective by use of shading, overlapping and vanishing point. One student came to school and said, "My dad told me to challenge myself in art." Way to go parents! Keep supporting your students in their endeavors at school.



### Technology

Students continue to progress with technology at a staggering rate. Several of the students have completed the keyboarding program, All the Right Type, and are now working on Word Processing Skills. Several of the students even designed flyers for the community potluck. These flyers were placed at various locations throughout the village.

### Upcoming Happenings

The entire student body will be attending the Alaska Federation of Natives conference and festivities in Anchorage. It should be a culturally invigorating time for all. Upon returning, we will be holding parent-teacher conferences on the afternoon/evening of October 26, 2011. Finally, from 6:00-8:30 on the evening of October 27, Clarks Point School will be holding a Fall Festival with games and activities for the community. Reading is Fundamental will be held in conjunction with this event.





## William ‘Sonny’ Nelson School

Jeff Goodrich, Lead Teacher

Students at William “Sonny” Nelson School have been working very diligently this quarter. Reading Mastery is going very well and students are engaged in the lessons. The direct instruction is helping our struggling readers to increase their fluency and comprehension. This is having a positive impact in Social Studies and Science as well. We have weekly “Reader Buddies” where students from the upper class pair with the younger students and they read together. It has been fun to have the older students mentor the younger ones and the older students enjoy the confidence boost of proving that they are good readers.

Our students continue to work on their math utilizing district curriculum. They also receive additional practice of math facts to help them become more proficient. We play math games and use manipulatives

to help the students visualize the concepts being learned.

Six Traits writing is emphasized for all of our writing assignments. The students feel empowered as they evaluate where they are and then edit their work so that they can earn a higher score. As the students become better writers, they are enjoying sharing their thoughts on paper.

We have been started “Science Fridays”. On Friday afternoons, 1st -7th grades meet and conduct a fun science experiment. From the photo, you can see that the students have found that ice cream, in all of its varieties, is great!



# REPORT TO THE SOUTHWEST REGION SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION



## Koliganek School

Cody McCanna, Principal

### A New School

If you watch the news or read the newspaper you have heard that building a new school in Koliganek is part of the Kasayulie v. State settlement agreement. At this point the decree on the settlement agreement states that the State will include in the Governor's proposed capital appropriations budget bill for FY2013 a school replacement for Koliganek. Ronda McBride from KTUU has contacted the school a few times to get our reaction to the settlement and a history of our school building. In the end, we all hope our children will be seated in a building that is more conducive to learning in the near future.

### Professional Growth & Teamwork

Teachers at Koliganek School have been working to improve the learning environment for students by utilizing various cooperative learning strategies. Teachers are choosing a different Kagan cooperative learning strategy each week to implement in their classrooms. Teachers spend time working together to discuss the strategies and discuss ways to improve student learning in their PLC time every other Friday as well. There is also a collaborative meeting with the paraprofessionals and the teachers every other Friday to give them the opportunity to sit down and discuss the progress and implementation of the new Reading Mastery program. Paraprofessionals are doing an outstanding job of implementing the new Reading Mastery program!

### After School Programs

Koliganek School is starting an after school program on October 13, 2011. Alaska Learning Labs has hired Lindsey Rau to run their program after school for ten students who qualify for their program. Any student will be able to attend the after school program and receive extra



assistance in specific areas that relate to their classwork and the Alaska State Standards. The District has Education City and Study Island available for students to receive additional instruction and review on the standards that are assessed on the SBAs. The school is currently creating an incentive program for students who take advantage of the program and complete various aspects of their work.

### Planning for Next Year

As we think about next year, and the quality of education we are offering to students in grades K-5, staffing comes to mind. Currently, we have a K-2 classroom and a 3-5 classroom for students. However, after a month of implementing the new Reading Mastery program and Saxon math it is evident that we need to look at how we are staffing our elementary. Optimally, we would have a K-1, 2-3, and a 4-5 classroom for students so that all academic areas, including science and social studies, could be taught daily as well.

### End of Quarter

The end of the first quarter was October 12, 2011. Teachers took the report cards and made home visits again this year to share the academic progress of students with their parents and guardians. Moreover, students who have specific academic or behavioral concerns will meet with teachers and staff on October 20 and 21 in the afternoon to create a plan and set goals for those students who need to make changes.

# REPORT TO THE SOUTHWEST REGION SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION



## **‘Chief’ Ivan Blunka School**

**Brett Scott, Principal**

We are in the home stretch and days are winding down as we reach the end of the 1st quarter of school and our students, staff, and community are proud of the efforts being made to make this a great school year at Chief Ivan Blunka School.

Our school is bustling with student activities, our student council is getting more actively involved in the school and community. Our journalism students are publishing a weekly and monthly newsletter. Battle of the Books has begun as well.

New Stuyahok also has a very involved community. Fundraising is in full swing as parents and students join together to raise money to support school activities. We have had dances, movies, cakewalks, game nights, and sporting contests. Parent involvement at Chief Ivan Blunka School is a given.

### **Wrestling & Volleyball**

We currently have 75 students involved in sports. Wrestling has 40 student/athletes out and Volleyball has nearly that many out with 35 girls participating this season. Practices are two hours a night as the wrestling and volleyball teams trade off early and late practices. The season begins for both sports on Oct. 14th, as the wrestling team will travel to Dillingham for the Wolverine Classic and the volleyball team will host our in district rivals the Koliganek Huskies.

### **School Improvement**

A lot of changes have taken place at Chief Ivan Blunka School since start of the school year. We are now using research-based SRA materials with 100% of our elementary and middle school students. We are closely monitoring students with progress monitoring every



three weeks. Interventions are being provided to students that are lagging behind.

Part of the change has been to better utilize, the resource we have in our paraprofessional staff. We now have paraprofessionals involved in direct instruction with students under the supervision of a certified staff member. Our talented paraprofessional staff is able to provide instruction thus lowering class sizes and allowing for more personalized instruction and 1-on-1 interactions.

### **Student Council**

Our student council is working hard to raise funds to go to the Student Government Conference in Anchorage this year. These student leaders will return with ideas and confidence in their ability to make a difference. Student Council wants to start the RSVP, or Raising Student Voice and Participation, program at New Stuyahok. Council members are leading discussion groups of students to get input about making improvements to Chief Ivan Blunka School. The RSVP program has student involvement in community affairs as well. One focus of the student council is to reach out to at risk students and help these students feel more involved and a part of the school. We are fortunate to have such a terrific group of young leaders in our school.





## Togiak School

### Jason Mabry, Principal

September has been an exciting month at Togiak School. I am so impressed by our staff and their willingness to commit so much time beyond their normal workday to provide quality instruction for our students. Reading Mastery is going well as instructors and students become more accustomed to the procedures. Teachers are finding that they are able to cover more material each day and are becoming more effective in meeting student needs. Our students are doing a great job and we want to find opportunities to reward them and enjoy their success.

### Reading Mastery

In addition to our Reading Mastery Program, our reading specialist, Merridy Mabry, is pulling students to participate in targeted reading intervention. Students are placed in leveled groups and the reading teacher uses DRA assessment results to target specific needs for every student. Approximately 68 students are currently served in this program. We are already seeing strong growth from our students and increasing confidence in their reading abilities. Our focus is on achieving individual growth for each and every student.

### Student Behavior/Cultural Values

Our RTC classroom has benefitted greatly by having an Elder present each day to talk with students who are working through the decision-making process. One of our goals this year is to integrate the Bristol Bay Cultural Values into our program and use them as a way to help students make decisions that promote their success.

We are also in the process of developing a cultural skills/expertise list. We hope to identify individuals in our school that have an area of cultural expertise that they feel comfortable teaching and sharing in the classroom. This



information will be made available to staff so that they know whom to contact when they integrate Yup'ik culture into their instruction and need an expert to assist them. We plan to expand this into a community-wide list as well. This is one of our initial steps as we look to once again have Yup'ik language and cultural opportunities available to students at all grade levels in our school.

### Sports

Cross-country season is over and wrestling and volleyball have begun! Our cross-country team was very young this year with almost fifteen middle school students running in addition to seven high school students. Drew Carlos placed 12th at Regional and 65th at the State Cross-Country Meet. Coach Tozzo is organizing a running club for students that want to stay in shape and be better prepared for next season. The volleyball team has five high school players so far but the coaches have invited the middle school to practice as well. Eight middle school students are consistently attending practice. Togiak currently has thirteen wrestlers with two eighth graders in attendance. Our student leaders are working hard this year to promote school spirit and support their classmates. In an effort to raise money, they are preparing to open the student store. We are very excited to get the store in operation again and proud of our student leaders for taking the initiative to get this started.



## Twin Hills School

Meghan Redmond, Lead Teacher

It is hard to believe it is October already. We have been staying busy at Twin Hills School with staff travels, school pictures, Learning Lab, and new students, among many other things that ensure our days are never boring!

Learning Lab started this month in Twin Hills for 11 students. It is being held 3 days per week after school for one and a half hours per day. The students participating are already excited to start earning their attendance and participation points in order to go shopping for prizes! This program is a great way to help our struggling students.

In the first week of October, we increased our student count by two up to eighteen students. We have students in every grade K-7. It is a big adjustment when we have new students in our school. We were able to adjust our Reading Mastery groups to accommodate our new students, and well as some students who were ready to move on to the next reading level already!

In the middle of September, we had a day of school on a Saturday to take advantage of good weather and head outside for berry picking and a plant scavenger hunt. All staff, instructional aides, and students spent the morning learning about the tundra biome that we live in. The students learned where on the planet the tundra biome is located, what makes the tundra biome different from other biomes, and vocabulary related to the tundra. Then the staff and instructional aides worked together to teach the students the English names and Yup'ik names of plants and berries they would see when we headed outside and how to identify them. After lunch, we hiked out of the village in search of crowberries, lingonberries, bearberries, labrador tea, and lichen.

Our family involvement activity for September was an Akutaq Festival. At the end of September, many people from the village came to the school to participate. We had a total of six entries into the contest. After about 30 minutes of deliberation, a winner was chosen. While the judges tasted and contemplated, the K-7th grade students entertained the crowd with Yup'ik dancing. As with any family involvement activity, all in attendance shared a delicious potluck dinner. In October, we have a Halloween Party planned for Halloween day, which will also integrate Learning Lab Family Night and a RIF distribution as well.

We are also very proud to have our very own Martha Foster chosen as the SWRSD Classified Instructional Aide of the Year. Congratulations Martha!

