

## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** NWABSD Board of Education  
Members

**DATE:** September 30, 2025

**NUMBER:**

**FR:** Office of the Superintendent

**SUBJECT:** Superintendent's Report

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### **K-12 Attendance**

#### **8/18/25 - 9/19/25**

Ambler School	80.92%
Buckland School	91.62%
Deering School	92.99%
Kiana School	80.57%
Kisimgiugtuq School	78.15%
Kobuk School	83.17%
June Nelson Elementary	88.12%
Kotzebue Middle/High School	81.04%
Napaaqtugmiut School	83.57%
Aqqaluk High/Noorvik Elementary	88.03%
Davis-Ramoth School	87.17%
Shungnak School	93.90%
NWABSD Home School	100.00%
District	83.53%

A shout-out to Buckland, Deering, and Shungnak for maintaining an attendance rate above 90%.

### **Enrollment**

Pre-K -12 grade enrollment is 1907, and K-12<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment is 1786.

### **Iñupiaq Program**

We welcome Paulette Schuerch as the director for the Iñupiaq program. She will continue working on the development of the Iñupiaq-based science curriculum, strengthening partnerships to expand cultural events and activities, and supporting the immersion program by helping our Iñupiaq Ilitsautrit become fluent language speakers.

### **Childcare Working Group Update**

Discussion with the Child Care Working Group continues. We visited the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade pod at the Kotzebue Middle School. They are interested in using the facilities as a start-up to their program. Next steps are to find a design team to evaluate the changes needed to meet the qualifications for a childcare center.

## **Safe and Civil Schools Report by Susan Isaacs**

Attached is the report from Susan Isaacs on her two week visit in September, along with an example of one school's Hallway expectations for MS and HS students.

## **NWALT**

NWALT met on August 5 to review the Draft NWALT Strategy Plan. This plan was reviewed by our administration and the board at the August meeting. I sent it back to NWALT for the facilitators to complete the draft on how each organization is contributing to the strategic plan goals.

NWALT set up a visit with Begich. On August 12, a team from NWABSD met with Senator Begich. Joe gave us a tour of the Alaska Technical Center (Thank you, Joe). We sat and talked about the current challenges we are facing with Impact Aid. I followed up with a letter and brought to his attention the additional challenge we face with the cost of student meals and reimbursement from the USDA. See attached.

## **Coalition for Education Equity (CEE)**

The Coalition of Education Equity, Executive Director, Caroline Storm, wrote a response to the Commissioner's press release on student test scores. It is attached.

## **ACSA Recruitment and Retention**

The Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA) asked me to participate in their recruitment and retention efforts. The link to the article is <https://staging-fe83-aerrc.wpcomstaging.com/terri-walker/>

Attached is my travel request.

Quyaanna,

Terri Walker, Superintendent



**Project: NWABSD- Board Report**  
**Date: September 2-12, 2025**

**SCS Consultant: Susan J. Isaacs M.S.**

By request of the superintendent, a consultation/professional development visit was made to 5 schools during the weeks of September 2-5 and September 8-12. The campuses visited were: Shungnak, Kobuk, Noatak, JNES and KMHS.

The purpose of the site visits was to observe the implementation of the school-wide behavior support plan. Specifically:

- **Foundations-** school wide systems and behavior expectations in common areas (e.g., hallway transitions, cafeteria, playground, arrival/dismissal)
- **CHAMPS-** classroom management practices and teacher-student interactions within instruction.
- **To Assess-** consistency, fidelity, and effectiveness of these systems in promoting a safe, respectful and productive learning environment.

## **Foundations**

**Expectations and Routines:** All five schools had routines and procedures for the schools' common areas. Three of the schools have a detailed staff handbook, which describes desired student behavior and adult behavior in each of the common areas. They also detail procedures for common policies such as: phones, hats/hoods, food and drink accessibility, etc. The remaining two campuses have new principals who have had minimal training in both Foundations and CHAMPS. Consultation was done with both principals to bring them up to speed during the site visit. (See attached example of common area procedures from Buckland.

This was created earlier and serves as a model for other schools).

**Supervision:** Staff were present during transitions and recess, though levels of active engagement varied. In most cases, students behaved appropriately, but lapses in direct monitoring allowed some horse play and tardiness behavior.

**Reinforcement:** Positive feedback was observed but not consistently across all common areas. Opportunities exist to strengthen recognition in hallways and during lunch. During the visit, one campus developed a point system for secondary students to help with tardiness, school-wide and in-class behavior.

## **CHAMPS**

- Most classrooms had CHAMPS expectations posted. Elementary teachers frequently refer to the expectations as activity structures change and during transitions. Consistency is not as strong across secondary classrooms. Some teachers rely on the CHAMPS expectations (see attached photo) to define desired behavior while others generally only refer to the voice level part of CHAMPS. This is an area in which we will want improvement.
- Most teachers spent time at the beginning of the school year teaching explicit classroom routines and procedures. Teachers should note upcoming breaks in the calendar to re-teach classroom expectations at those breaks.

## **Recommendations and Next Steps**

### **Foundations:**

- Mine data from each of the school's relative to
  - Attendance
  - Tardiness
  - Office Disciplinary Referrals
  - Suspensions
- Increase active supervision, particularly in secondary settings.
- Provide consistent positive feedback to students doing the "right things."
- Reteach schoolwide expectations when student behavior warrants.

### **CHAMPS:**

- Continue teaching and reinforcing CHAMPS across all grade levels.
- Increase positive feedback for students meeting teacher expectations.
- Strive for a 3:1 ratio of positive interactions (less time and intensity to misbehavior and more to responsible behavior).

Susan J. Isaacs M.S.  
Safe and Civil Schools Associate

# Buckland School Hallway for Middle and High School Expectations



## Goal of the Common Area:

The goal for the hallway is for students to take care of needs (bathroom, water), prepare for next class (visit locker for materials), and to have conversation time with peers with appropriate voice level and respectful/responsible interactions.

## Expectations for student behavior in the common area.

- Ready for your next class
  - Go to locker
  - Use restroom
  - Get water
  - Conversations off to the side
- Voice level 1 or 2
- Walk on the right side of the hallway in the direction of travel.
- Keep hands, feet, and other objects to yourself.
- Always use a pass if not with class.
- No running or jumping in the hallway.
- Follow all staff directions.

## Teaching Responsibilities

- Initial Teaching-Staff Site Inservice Day in August. This training will involve modeling the expectations of both teacher and student behavior.
- Initial Teaching -Students- We will have an assembly with Principal, then subsequent training and modeling within classrooms.
- Reteaching- Staff- As observation data indicate teachers need to be reminded and after each break lasting a week or more.
- Reteaching -Students- As observation data indicate students need to be reminded and after each break lasting a week or more.

- Newcomers- Youth Leaders will meet with new students to help understand expectations.
- Students who enroll after the beginning of the year- As observation data indicate teachers need to be reminded and after each break lasting a week or more.

## **Expectations for Adult Behavior (Supervision Responsibilities)**

### **Final two minutes of class:**

- Teachers should have timers set to ensure timely dismissal of students,
- Students tidy up, pack up, and the last 30 seconds teacher will move to the door to dismiss students.
- Teachers interacts with students as they leave by making statements such as, “See you tomorrow.” “Hope you have a great day.”
- Teacher stands in the doorway so as to observe both classroom and hallway.

### **During Passing Time**

- Teachers are to actively monitor and engage with students with statements like, “Good Morning. How are you? So glad to see you.”
- Teacher should also actively address misbehaviors with one-liners (see correcting misbehaviors).
- Teachers use timers to give 1 minute warning to students.
- Teachers close and lock doors when 5 minutes are up.

## **Encouragement Procedures**

- Teachers, Aides, Cooks, and all employees should greet students in the mornings and when they see students in the halls.
  - Smiles
  - Fist-bump
  - High-fives

## **Correction Procedures**

- Walk and talk
- Slow your roll
- Feet on the floor
- Keep it Clean
- Don't be Tardy to the Party
- Kind is Fine



# NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Ambler · Buckland · Deering · Kiana · Kivalina · Kobuk · Kotzebue · Noatak · Noorvik · Selawik · Shungnak  
PO Box 51 · Kotzebue, Alaska 99752 · Phone (907) 442-1800

September 2, 2025

RE: Appreciation for Visit and Discussion of USDA Program

Dear Congressman Begich,

On behalf of the Northwest Arctic Borough School District Board of Education, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude for your recent visit. It was truly a pleasure to welcome you and to have the opportunity to share some of the important work taking place in our community.

Your presence served as a strong reminder of the positive impact that engaged leadership can have. We sincerely appreciate the time you took to listen to our concerns and insights, and to learn about the challenges and opportunities we face.

During our conversation, Impact Aide emerged as a focal point of discussion. The original intent of the Federal Impact Aid Program was to compensate school districts that lose local revenue because of untaxable land, ensuring all students have access to a quality education. The way lands were conveyed—or not conveyed—under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act should not affect eligibility, as long as the lands are not taxed. For the Northwest Arctic Borough School District, which serves primarily low-income students and operates without local property taxes, Impact Aid has historically been a critical source of funding. We need all students to qualify for impact aid because they all live on non-taxable lands.

We would like to take the opportunity to inform you of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program for schools' breakfast and lunch programs. The reimbursement is based on the Anchorage Consumer Price Index (CPI). This creates a significant funding gap, as every school in Alaska is reimbursed at the same rate despite rural communities paying far higher food costs than urban areas. Even within Alaska, the geographical price differential is substantial—rural districts often pay nearly three times more for the same goods due to shipping and access challenges.

Our district is a Title I district, providing a 100% free lunch program to all students. As a result, we currently cover an additional \$1.2 million annually from our general fund revenues above and beyond what USDA reimburses.

In 2023, we met with USDA staff to raise this concern and emphasized the need for accurate cost data to reflect the reality of rural Alaska. USDA staff acknowledged the issue and committed to surveying to reassess reimbursement rates based on actual costs.

We strongly urge USDA to complete this survey without delay and to use its findings to adjust reimbursement rates in a way that recognizes the true cost of providing meals in rural Alaska. Without such adjustments, districts like ours will continue to divert millions from the general operating fund revenues—resources that should be directed toward educational programs and student success.

**MISSION:** To provide a learning environment that inspires and challenges students and employees to excel  
**VISION:** To graduate all students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for a successful future

We would greatly appreciate your assistance in urging the USDA to complete the survey as soon as possible. Your support is invaluable to us, and we are hopeful that, working together, we can achieve meaningful progress for the people we serve.

Thank you once again for your dedication and for taking the time to visit with us. Please know that you are always welcome here, and we appreciate your commitment to our shared goals.

Sincerely,

*Terri Walker*

Terri Walker  
Superintendent, Northwest Arctic Borough School District  
(907) 442-1802





**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**September 11, 2025**

**Contact:**

Caroline Storm, Coalition for Education Equity of Alaska

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## **Alaska assessment results show urgent need to fund additional resources for public education classrooms**

**Anchorage, AK** – On September 5<sup>th</sup>, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development publicly released the 2024-2025 AK Star System of Academic Readiness assessment results. At the same time the DEED Commissioner issued a press release that was disparaging of school districts, despite the disruption of COVID and the State’s continued unstable and flat funding of public education.

In the assessment Summary it states that “DEED remains committed to supporting instruction, providing resources that advance student learning and achievement, and upholding accountability for the investment Alaska has made in public education”. DEED is responsible for supporting districts in need. Accountability for student achievement *ultimately* lies with the State of Alaska.

It is disappointing that the Commissioner issued a press release disparaging the efforts of Alaska school districts. School district leaders have spent years trying to balance budgets as state funding has not kept pace with inflation. Cutting teachers, aides, support staff and administrative positions is not going to lead to improved outcomes no matter how many times the Commissioner talks about “policy” and “innovation”. One simply can’t innovate out of having a prepared and skilled teacher in front of students, nor innovate out of exorbitant costs for heat and power in school facilities. Instead of starving school districts and then complaining about test results, DEED should be promoting adequate education funding so that all Alaskan children have the opportunity to achieve to their full potential.

What the recent data shows is that when districts have dedicated resources for reading interventions, proficiency increases. When DEED dedicates resources to instructional support, proficiency increases. With additional funding, we can see the same improvements for all grades.

With the small increase to the BSA that we saw this year (only a \$20 increase from the previous year) districts are investing in expanding science based reading curricula, hiring teachers, and providing additional services to struggling students. Money does matter when we are talking about outcomes, and CEE will continue to address the funding shortfalls when it comes to providing adequate resources for Alaska’s students.

**About the Coalition for Education Equity of Alaska:**

The Coalition for Education Equity of Alaska advocates for fair and adequate funding for public education

statewide, with a focus on ensuring that rural, remote, and underserved communities receive the support they need to thrive.