

Work Session

Tuesday, February 25, 2025 5:30 PM

NES Library, 1057 E 5th Ave, Nome, Alaska 99762

A. **Call to Order**

B. **Items for Discussion**

1. ANSEP Acceleration Academy Update

C. **Upcoming Events:**

- Tuesday, March 11, Regular Meeting, 5:30 pm, NES Library/Zoom
- Tuesday, March 25, Work Session, 5:30 pm, NES Library
- Thursday, March 27, Special Meeting, 5:30 pm, District Office Conference Room
- Tuesday, April 8, Regular Meeting, 5:30 pm, NES Library/Zoom
- Tuesday, April 14, Joint School Board and City Council Budget Work Session, 5:30 pm, City Hall
- Tuesday, April 22, Work Session, 5:30 pm, NES Library

D. **Adjournment**

- Is this a separate school? NPS would then have *five* schools for a student population of less than 700?

The Alaska Native Engineering Program (ANSEP) is not a separate school but rather a comprehensive, year-round program designed to provide in-depth STEM education and academic acceleration for students. Unlike a short-term exploratory rotation, ANSEP offers a structured and sustained curriculum that supports students throughout the academic year.

- I think this is a big question that needs more time for all shareholders to weigh in. I would recommend not pushing for a Fall 25 start, but rather make this a public discussion so that ALL students, parents, staff and other stakeholders get to weigh in. Small informal meetings have taken place, but I don't think there's been much advertising to the public/school about this possibility. Why not get more input?

Public Engagement & Stakeholder Input:

The ANSEP Acceleration Academy has undergone extensive public discussion and stakeholder engagement. A petition was conducted last spring to assess the community's interest and need for the program, and the results showed overwhelming support from Nome residents. Additionally, this initiative has been presented at multiple school board meetings, working sessions, and administrative discussions, all of which were open to the public and widely communicated.

We want to ensure that all stakeholders have accurate information regarding the steps taken to bring the ANSEP Acceleration Academy to Nome and to clarify any misconceptions about the process.

Given the extensive efforts already made, the ANSEP Acceleration Academy is not being rushed into implementation. The necessary due diligence has been completed, and the program's structure ensures that it aligns with Nome Public Schools' mission while addressing a clear community need. If further clarification or additional documentation is required, we are more than happy to provide it.

We appreciate the continued dialogue and look forward to moving forward in the best interest of Nome's students.

- It was apparent that our systems were not utilized in that we did not see needs

surveys or requests for meetings with staff or admin - by the time these happened, a parent group had already decided what it wanted and began the testing and fundraising process without school input. Then this was brought to the board for consideration - a lot of steps were skipped that our campus typically incorporates when making changes to our systems or processes. We've worked really hard to avoid changes without process as has been the history.

Transparency & Proper Channels:

All necessary channels have been followed in accordance with Nome Public Schools' standard procedures. Records of attendance at school board meetings, working sessions, and administrative discussions are available through NPS administration. These meetings were public, and this initiative has been on the agenda multiple times, with specific tasks and action items assigned and completed through proper governance since the end of the 23/24 school year.

Communication & Process Compliance:

The expectation that a parent advocacy group must repeatedly inform school staff of board communications is misplaced. It is the professional responsibility of school staff and administration to review official communications disseminated by the school board. The information has been transparently shared since September, and all steps have been taken in alignment with standard procedures. An informational flyer was sent to ACSA and Principal Leeper emailed it to 8th grade parents on 10/1/24. The same flyer was sent on 10/2/24 to Principal Smith with information about testing and QR code about ANSEP. The offer was made to print it out as well, but was declined. On 10/16 the counselor was reached out on how to best communicate testing availability to students and parents and that offer was declined as well.

Advocacy & Parental Rights:

Parents have the right to advocate for their children's education and initiate discussions about potential programs without requiring prior approval. The ANSEP initiative followed an action plan developed through ongoing dialogue with the school board and administration. At each stage, stakeholders have had the opportunity to provide input, ensuring a collaborative and well-informed process.

- During the presentation at the HS staff meeting, teachers had a difficult time getting the chance to speak and the meeting ran 20 minutes into PLC time, which showed a lack of understanding of what we do here and why. Then a comment was made that parents would send their children to Edgecumbe if they didn't have an opportunity like

this as if we are not good enough.

Regardless of this opportunity, decisions are being made about going to NBHS, Edgecombe or homeschooling. With the addition of ANSEP Acceleration Academy, some parents will choose to enroll in NBHS/ANSEP versus sending them to Edgecumbe or homeschooling. It is not a matter of not being good enough, it is about opportunities that parents want to pursue for their children and the type of education they want them to receive.

- What are the financial obligations? How would this impact the work day of the guidance counselor? Administration?

ANSEP will provide all necessary staffing, including the coordinator, counselor, and teachers, ensuring that the program is fully managed without adding extra workload for Beltz staff. While collaboration and communication between ANSEP and Beltz staff will be essential—particularly for scheduling and logistical coordination—the program is structured to integrate smoothly with the existing school environment.

Nome Public Schools and the ANSEP Acceleration Academy have highly capable and experienced administrators who will work collaboratively to coordinate schedules, meal arrangements, and student participation. Balancing time between Beltz and the ANSEP Acceleration Academy will be a structured and well-planned effort, ensuring minimal disruption to students' academic experiences.

This is not an unprecedented challenge; scheduling adjustments are a routine part of school operations and are refined each year to optimize efficiency and smooth transitions. With strong leadership in place, this will be seamlessly incorporated into the broader school-year planning process, ensuring a well-organized and supportive learning environment for both students and staff.

Any concerns regarding funding and potential budget impacts should be clarified—ANSEP is entirely funded through outside resources and will not take money from Nome Public Schools' budget. This program does not affect the staffing of Beltz employees in any way. These are hard facts, and it is important that no misinformation spreads regarding job security. No current positions are at risk due to ANSEP.

- Did the group that organized this know about the SIP or program growth plans of the school when they decided to grow this program? Do they know about our teams or goals or systems?

This has been part of the discussion.

- How will this impact staffing amidst the possibility of major budget cuts?

As these students will be dual-enrolled, it may even help with staffing since more students may enroll versus choosing other school options.

- We already have staff teaching advanced high school classes... what happens to those teachers if their students move to ANSEP acceleration academy? Some advanced classes are already small, which doesn't always benefit students.

There is room in the program to pull in those teachers to teach some of the dual credit classes, from my understanding, and we can discuss this further with ANSEP at the work session to get more clarification. I have been informed that the teacher must have a graduate degree in their focus of study to be eligible to teach dual-enrollment.

- Is the goal to have students be able to access college classes or is it to start ANSEP in Nome? I ask because we have had a variety of students taking dual credit classes and before Kawerak ended their college navigators/project remote, these classes were paid for by that grant funding for native students which allowed Beltz to be able to help out non-native students to be able to provide these classes for those who wanted them. Sitnasuak used to fund a HS College & Career person at the school and between bringing that position back and paying for classes we can provide all the dual credit opportunities that kids in Nome have asked for over the last 5-7 years.

The goal is to have educational opportunities for every level of student, including those that would like to take college classes while in high school. With this program, the average student is earning about 62 college credits. There has not been an opportunity like that for our high school students here.

- Is ANSEP an all in or all out program or is it students can take some classes if they want and other classes at Beltz. For example, can a student opt to take Writing 111X and maybe an Alaska History dual credit but they want to take HS Physics and Algebra 2.

Our understanding is the student can take as little or as many classes with ANSEP as they'd like while still taking HS classes as well. We can clarify that with ANSEP at the

work session on 2/25.

- I understand the concept that someone has to test into ANSEP but I am equally having a hard time understanding the idea that a freshmen in High School is capable of being successful at collegiate level classes. It's not a diss, it's about being taught the foundational skills to a level where they can and should be successful. This is why I am a huge proponent of Jr's & Sr's having more access to dual credit and ANSEP may be that vehicle, but freshmen and sophomore Math, Science, and English classes are still teaching skills needed to access upper level coursework and collegiate work
 - I second this statement. If freshmen are getting college credit, I can't help but question the integrity of the classes.

The classes are taught through UAA, which is an accredited college so there is not a reason to doubt the integrity of the class. Along with taking these classes, they will be taught fundamental skills like studying, different learning styles, and time management, just like they would in a high school class. There are students of all levels at the high school.

- This seems to be moving along with or without teacher input and fundraising is happening without administrative approval. The school as a collective has not said yes to this and some prefer further exploration for an FY26 start. Some feel as though this is a separate school in the way that it has been organized thus far - which would mean 5 schools in a district that serves less than 700 students. If the Board approves this without NBMHS buy in, what does this mean? We spend a significant amount of money on the district's top 10% of students compared to what we spend on the majority of students within, say, the CTE vocational realm. Some staff worry about further fueling inequities that already exist, the preservation of positions, and how other dual credit opportunities will be impacted. The school has been in conversation about possible AP courses and wonder how that plan might be impacted as a result.

Please see comments above about separate schools finances, and preservation of positions.

By having a program that NPS doesn't have to fund, it opens up funding to go to other opportunities, such as vocational school. We know that the majority of our students will need some sort of vocational training.

I do not have an answer right now about AP classes or other dual-credit opportunities but I will find out for you at the work session.

- Please be mindful of the technology aspect. Will they have their own devices & internet? Will it all be in compliance? Will they be expecting the district to set up computers & carts for the classes? Has anyone brought the technology department into the loop on this? Tech budget has been slashed last year and this year, I'm not sure where the district would be getting extra devices and carts from.

These are valid concerns, and we appreciate the attention to ensuring that all technological aspects are properly addressed.

Technology Provided by ANSEP:

ANSEP will provide the necessary technology for students, including devices and internet access as needed. This will not require additional funding or resources from the Nome Public Schools technology budget.

Compliance & Integration:

Compliance requirements can be discussed and worked out collaboratively between the superintendent, Nome Public Schools administration, and ANSEP leadership. The goal is to configure the best method to ensure that all technological infrastructure aligns with district policies while maintaining efficiency.

District Technology Support:

While ANSEP will supply the technology, any required integration with existing school systems can be discussed with the technology department to ensure a smooth transition. If further discussions or planning meetings are needed, we are open to working together to find the best approach.

These are great points that deserve thoughtful planning, and we are committed to working collaboratively to resolve them in the most effective and efficient way possible.

- I feel this caught the staff a bit off guard. We had just heard that we are looking at losing 6 staff members at Beltz due to funding. A week or 2 later we learned that ANSEP is coming in. Is the district looking at ANSEP as a way to fill cut positions? Timing of presentation to Beltz staff was spot on for raising uncertainty and alarm with staff. We want our students to have all the opportunities that they can get to better themselves. However, if the district drops CTE classes, and adds dual credit classes, that is great for those that want to go the college route. What about our students that

want to be successful without college? How will that district be preparing them for their success in the future? I want dual credit classes, I want kids to be able to get a jump start on their future by the time they graduate. I want that for ALL the students, not just the college bound students. I understand that ANSEP is a different thing, but how much of the school budget will it take? What are the expectations of the district, the high school, and the teaching staff that are retained??

Please see above comments about staffing, CTE, and finances.

- I realize this might be repetitive of some other comments, but my understanding is this will benefit about 10 students. And it's been mentioned that we DO have advanced and college level classes offered. ANSEP seems to be doubling up on something we already have? And yes, we could have more of that. It seems to me that 30-40% of our students are interested in joining the workforce right after high school- going into the trades or VocEd. I feel putting more staffing and resources into CTE rather than opening a school that benefits a couple kids is the way to go. (Basically what a bunch of people ahead of me already said)

This program is not limited to only ten students—it is open to all students who qualify by testing in or by taking the preparatory course. There are multiple entry points for students to participate, making it an accessible and valuable opportunity for many. ANSEP is not a waste of funding; rather, it is an investment in the future of our youth, providing educational enrichment that will have long-term benefits. Again, this program does not draw from Nome Public Schools' budget. If additional data or information is needed, it can be provided upon request. Please ensure that all discussions around this program are based on accurate data and facts from our funders. All information can be provided, per your need.

AA (Nome) - FY26						Student Count: 10			
Position	Rate	Eclass	#	Sub-Total	Leave Rate	Sub-Total	Benefit Rate		Total
TOTAL LABOR & BENEFITS									\$282,668
TOTAL TRAVEL									\$4,500
TOTAL SERVICES									\$64,280
TOTAL COMMODITIES									\$48,510
TOTAL TUITION/FEES									\$64,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES / YEAR 1									\$463,958
START UP COSTS									
Modular classroom (pending site location)									\$150,000 - \$200,000
REVENUE SUMMARY (as of 2/24/25)									
Norton Sound Health Corporation: Modular classroom (one-time funding)									\$100,000
Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (ANSEP Grant)									\$75,000
ANSEP									\$100,000
Bering Straits Native Corporation									\$100,000
Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation									\$25,000
Norton Sound Health Corporation: program support (5 years at \$25,000/year)									\$25,000
Rasmuson Foundation (ANSEP Grant)									\$75,000
Proposals PENDING with local partners (ANSEP will cover this amount if it's not raised)									\$63,958
									\$463,958