

To: Kuspuk School District School Board
From: Emily Vanderpool, Director of Curriculum and Instruction/District Test Coordinator
Re: Board Meeting Report
Meeting Date: 8 September 2020

August New Hire In-service

This year New-Hire in-service was held virtually using Zoom on Tuesday, August 11th, the day preceding the district-wide in-service. Our new teachers were introduced to each department of the district, got to hear about our policies, procedures, and educational practices. District administration and business office staff all participated in presenting information that would most help our new teachers settle into their classrooms and new homes along the Kuskokwim. A virtual cultural panel was also held with members of the community Okalena Morgan, Angie Morgan, Allen Simeon, Clara Morgan, Harvey Hoffman, and Edith Morgan to provide information and answer questions regarding topics that are unique to living and teaching on the Kuskokwim river. Despite being completely online for their first introduction to the district, the new teachers were engaged, enthusiastic and we had a productive day. The new hires included- For Stony River; K-7 Dr. Beau Abernathy, and long-term sub Pat McDonald, For Crooked Creek; Principal, Steven Reese, Secondary Maurice Bailey, For Chuathbaluk; Secondary Tom Hoban For Aniak; ELA Harrison Kane, SS Claudia Goodwin (transfer from CVSS), Math Shane Fillhart For D.O.; Technology Director Elric Heckathorn, Student Services Director Todd Boynton (transfer from AJSHS), Literacy Instructional Coach Lesi Anderson, For Kalskag; ELA Joseph Sigurdson, Voc Ed Josh Pittsenbarger, Special Education Dale Ebcas.

August District-Wide In-service

This is my 17th year with the Kuspuk School District, and I can safely say this start of school was unlike any other I have been a part of. With that said, I believe our all district in-service was successful considering the parameters we had to work within due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We started planning for this year's August in-service in March. After receiving feedback from teachers at both the August and October in-services, and collecting data during the School Improvement process we knew we wanted to focus on a few areas: building resilience in both our staff and students, Teacher Clarity in planning appropriate lessons for all students based on grade level standards and skills, and best practices in writing and reading instruction for K-12 classrooms. We devoted an entire day to COVID-related presentations regarding health & safety practices, medical concerns, cleaning protocols, and future plans for technology devices. We were lucky to have renowned presenters Ricky Robertson and Nicole Law present to staff during in-service, and already



New Superintendent, James Anderson, speaks to the entire KSD staff during August in-service.

have follow-up sessions scheduled this fall. Another highlight was a writing presentation from Alaskan Author, Dan Walker who we are also planning follow up sessions with this fall. Early Literacy Specialist, Carol Thompson offered sessions for both certified and classified staff A big shout out to KSD staff & teachers that presented to their peers (Jodi Darling, Angela Hayden, Madeline Aguillard, Todd Boynton, Elric Heckathorn, Lesi Anderson and Severin Gardner). I was very pleased to hear positive feedback from our presenters who all commented that our staff was engaged and hardworking despite the challenges of virtual learning. To me that shows their commitment for making school work for our students during this challenging time.

Curriculum Adoption 2020-2021

This year I will be assembling a Secondary English Language Arts Committee to research, pilot and adopt new English Language Arts materials for grades 6-12. We are also due for new Social Studies materials the committee will look at getting that adoption at least started if not completed during the year as well. Committee applications have been sent out to all teachers, and are coming back already. I will have chosen the team by mid-September, and our first informal meeting will occur on September 22nd via Zoom.

K-12 Mathematics Curriculum Implementation

Big Ideas Implementation Year 2 & 3

With the adoption of Big Ideas Math for K-12, all district classrooms now have had curriculum that is fully aligned to the more rigorous Common Core State Standards for at least 1 year. In the spring, when schools were closed down the K-12 Math Committee met weekly for over a month to develop in house curriculum maps. These maps are now available electronically for all teachers to help them plan and prepare for teaching math throughout the year. K-12 math teachers received an opportunity for professional development related to using the online resources on student devices during the August in-service from a school specialist from Cengage Learning. The program offers a range of tools, assessments and resources. There will be much exploring and adaptation on the part of teachers as they navigate how to make the program best work in a socially distanced classroom utilizing more technology for assignments and assessments.

State & District Assessments

Just a reminder that all state assessments were canceled during the 2019-20 school year so we currently have no new data to refer to. The District will continue using the STAR 360 assessments for Reading, Math, and Early Literacy skills. So far this fall the state has canceled the Alaska Developmental Profile (for Kindergarten). Here are the current projected testing dates for both district & State testing:

August 31 - STAR testing window is open for all K-12 students

September 14-18 - ED School Climate Survey for 5-12 students

October 19 - STAR testing benchmark window is open for all K-12 students

November 16- 20 - Naglieri Nonverbal ability test for 2nd grade students

December 7th - STAR testing benchmark window is open for all K-12 students
February 1 - WIDA Access for ELL's test window opens
March 1 - STAR testing benchmark window is open for all K-12 students
March 29 - PEAKS State testing for ELA, Math, & Science open
May 3 - Final STAR testing benchmark window open for all K-12 students
May 10-14 - ED School Climate Survey for 5-12 students

School Improvement Planning

As we have no new State testing data the School Improvement program will simply rollover using 2018-2019 data. There is a new program manager at the state level, and they have sent out a request that all schools receiving grant funding re-do their needs assessments and grant budget to reflect any new needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I met with principals last week to begin working on these requests. By the end of the month we will resubmit all school improvement grant documents to receive funding for the 2020-2021 school year. All 2019-2020 unspent funds will carryover and be added to this year's grant. Just a reminder that the 5 schools receiving School Improvement Grant funds are: Johnnie John Sr. School, Aniak Jr. Sr. High, George Morgan Sr. high, Zackar Levi Elementary, and Joseph & Olinga Gregory Elementary.

Alaska Comprehensive Literacy Grant

The first step of the grant was to hire a Literacy Instructional Specialist. We were happy to hire Lesi Anderson, who officially started on August 12th (but unofficially has been working since early July). Lesi brings a wide range of knowledge and experience from working with schools around the world. She has already proven to be a very valuable asset to our team. Lesi is in the process of getting a Pre-K 4 program going for our youngest students who cannot be in the school building due to the pandemic. Parents of 4 years olds will be getting contacted soon regarding this program. Lesi will also begin planning for family literacy events, visiting each site, helping to determine what needs we have for both materials and training and helping provide resources to our teachers. A special thank you to Lesi for all her work on the August in-service in training our staff on classroom cleaning protocols. Also, a side note is that all unspent grant funds from the 2019-2020 school year will be carried over and added to our 2020-2021 budget.

Site Visits

The pandemic has definitely put a damper on getting out to sites this year. We are hoping to begin visiting all schools as early as this week depending on the status in each village. I am anxious to meet all the new teachers in person, and observe in classrooms to see what supports are needed to improve instruction in each school. I look forward to working together with the District Leadership Team & the Kuspuk School Board in making district-wide improvements to increase achievement for all KSD students!