

**To: Kuspuk School District School Board**  
**From: Emily Vanderpool, Director of Curriculum and Instruction/District Test Coordinator**  
**Re: Board Meeting Report**  
**Meeting Date: 11 September 2018**

### **August New Hire In-service**

This year we held our New-Hire in-service on August 14<sup>th</sup>, the day preceding the district-wide in-service. Our new teachers were introduced to KSD's mission 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 cultural panel was also held with members of the community Okalena Morgan, Carl and Angie Morgan, Megan Leary, Harvey Hoffman, and Edith Morgan to provide information and answer questions regarding topics that are unique to living and teaching on the Kuskokwim river.

### **August District-Wide In-service**

During the past 13 years this is the first time I can remember seeing more new faces than returning teachers at an August in-service! Despite having so many new people, school teams jumped right in and began working together to plan for the school year. During a whole group session each school chose a goal focus, based on their choice of one of the KSD Strategic Board Goals. Schools chose topics such as Increasing parent and community involvement, Integrating Alaska Native Culture, and Stopping Bullying. I was impressed at the level of focus and professionalism through the 3 days.

Many of the sessions were intended to introduce new teachers to our current curriculum, as well as to introduce all teachers to our new math and science curriculum. The district's adoption of the Big Ideas Math program for K-12 Mathematics meant a full day of professional development on implementing the curriculum in our schools. Our current elementary

science curriculum changed over to the new Science Dimensions

program (as planned by the Science Committee) so that also required a full day's training. Thanks to some of our own teacher experts, we were able to have refresher sessions on previously adopted curriculum, GoMath, Journeys, and Prentice Hall Literature—a big thank you to Cindy Long, Jodi Darling, Okalena Morgan, for taking the time to plan and present at in-service. The energy and commitment of staff



Cindy Long & Donald Eldridge present on their goal of increasing communication with parents and community.



JOGES Staff works on their anti-bullying goal poster.

were clearly evident as they engaged with presenters and collaborated with each other. While staff acknowledged the challenges of the year ahead, their commitment to KSD children remains constant.

Thank you, board members, for joining the new hires for lunch during your Tuesday meeting. Overall, the in-service days progressed smoothly thanks to the support of so many people. The evaluations were overall very positive. Constructive suggestions and ideas for additional professional development will be carefully considered for the October in-service.

### **New Social Emotional Learning Curriculum**

This summer we were lucky to receive a grant for the Council on Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. This grant paid for approximately \$40,000 worth of new curriculum for our K-8 students. Every school received a set of Second Step Curriculum for the following topics: Social & Emotional Learning, Child Protection Unit, and Bullying Prevention. Our new counselors will be helping to implement the curriculum, as well as classroom teachers. Online training modules are available to our teachers, and we will also be spending more time on social emotional learning during October in-service.

### **6-12 Mathematics Curriculum Implementation – Year 1**

#### Big Ideas Implementation

With the adoption of Big Ideas Math, the district's secondary classrooms now have curriculum that is fully aligned to the more rigorous Common Core State Standards. 6-12 math teachers received a full in-service day of professional development on Big Ideas from Holly Crowson, a school specialist from Cengage Learning. It offers a range of tools, assessments and resources; nevertheless, there will be much exploring and adaptation on the part of teachers as they guide students toward achieving the more challenging standards.

As mentioned at the board meeting in May, we will be doing a lot of follow up as a math committee to ensure the successful implementation of the program. We held a follow up webinar on September 6<sup>th</sup>, to help teachers get more comfortable with the tech components of the program, and to answer questions after they had been using it for a couple weeks. We have also set up a math mentors program, so that all new teachers have someone to go to if they have questions regarding the curriculum, or teaching math in general.

The transition to Big Ideas Math may require shifts in both teachers' instructional practice and students' learning process. We should anticipate an implementation timeline of two years due to the many inter-related components teachers must learn and use with fidelity. The program has built-in intervention materials; diagnostic and formative assessment coupled with the use of targeted intervention strategies will help teachers identify and address learning gaps.

## Curriculum Adoption Cycle ~ K-6 Math Adoption

The members of this year's K-6 math curriculum adoption committee will be looking to select updated math curriculum that meets the needs of our students, and is aligned with the district adopted Common Core State Standards. The committee is currently looking for a board member to join our team and be a part of the adoption process. We will hold our first meeting via Zoom meeting after moose season, in late September. School board members will be kept up-to-date monthly as the committee completes each task on our list.

## State Assessment Results

The results from both PEAKS and WIDA testing during last school year arrived in the district over the summer. The Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools (PEAKS) was given for the second time in April 2018 to all 3<sup>rd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade students. It tested students on English Language Arts and Math aligned with the Common Core State Standards. The WIDA Access for ELL's 2.0 was administered in February and March to all of our ELL students. Student scores will be mailed directly to parents and made available to Principals and schools.

## Site Visits & Virtual Reality

I have begun visiting schools, and plan to make it to every classroom during the first quarter. I highly value my time working with students and teachers to see how I can support high quality instruction throughout the district. So far, I have spent time in Kalskag at JOGES, ZLES, and GMSHS, in Chuathbaluk in both classes at CVSS, and in Aniak at both schools. This week I hope to travel further upriver to Stony River, and Crooked Creek and Sleetmute next week if all goes as planned.

The students have been very excited about the new Virtual Reality Google Expedition Kits, that were purchased using CIP funds at the end of the year. So far I've guided students on expeditions of Mt. Everest, Canyonlands National Park, and most recently to study sharks in the Bahamas. It is a great hands-on learning experience, and very engaging for our students!



Student's in Mr. Spencer's Class trying out the virtual reality kit for the first time.



Corrin Morgan of AMNES, looking at white tipped sharks swimming above her.



At CVSS, Ms. Sakar leads her class in Yuraq before getting started for the day.