

## Yukon-Koyukuk School District

# YKSD Staff Connections

3rd Quarter

March 2007

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### Special points of interest:

- Hospitality Job Shadow March 25-28
- IPT testing deadline March 30
- SBA & HSGQE April 3-5
- Welding & Construction Academies April 15-25
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey April 16-20
- STAR Testing April 30 –May 12

## Superintendent News by Chris Simon

Hello to all students, parents and staff of Yukon Koyukuk. I hope you are all doing well and enjoying the colder-than-usual Spring. On the bright side, the lakes and rivers should freeze solid in time for the Spring carnivals. This season is always exciting.

I would like to congratulate all the students who participated in the Battle of the Books across the District and at the state level. I believe Manley Hot Springs Jr. High should be given a pat on the back for their fourth place finish at state. In addition, the Huslia High School girls should be recognized for participating in the Battle of the Books and a basketball tournament at the same time. There is nothing more rewarding to educators than to have scholar-athletes leading the way. The parents of these students should also be acknowledged.

At this time, there is one major maintenance project planned for the summer: Phase I of the district-wide sprinkler system and fire alarm installation. Since this is a large scale project involving several million dollars it will be divided into two phases.

The much anticipated spring test dates are quickly ap-

proaching and I ask the parents to please help the staff prepare. Students should have breakfast daily and be on time for school along with following the school rules. Parents please stop by the school and ask how your son or daughter is doing in school in academics and behavior. The students and teachers will appreciate such a visit.

At this time, the District is working on next year's budget, and like a lot of districts in Alaska, it means stretching the dollar to meet a number of needs. The good news is the Governor plans to cover the increases of the retirement system. A vast majority of the districts across the state show a declining trend in enrollment, including YKSD. However, the buildings do not get any cheaper to maintain and providing the utilities is still a costly endeavor. Most of the vacancies at the District Office will not be filled as a cost saving measure.

The mission of Yukon Koyukuk is to "...provide our students with the skills and knowledge necessary to become contributing members of their families, communities and society." To this end, YK is offering several district-wide opportunities this spring in addition

to the site specific ones. High school students may apply to attend a two-week welding training session in Nulato or the carpentry training in Minto. In addition, Administration is planning a week-long session to assist students with transitioning from high school to young adulthood in Fairbanks. A majority of jobs today include the use of a computer as a requirement, to meet this necessity the District is offering laptops for a \$200 deposit.

I would like to thank Todd Poage for serving this district for thirteen years; first as the Principal of Minto School for eight years then as the Assistant-Superintendent for five years. His task of managing the day-to-day operations of the schools and much of the District Office is huge. Just keeping track of all the schools in a district of this geographical size is difficult at times. I wish my friend and colleague the best of luck as the Superintendent of a neighboring district.

The Board of Education continues to meet in the villages and the District Office every six to eight weeks. I am certain they appreciate the public comments at the meetings so please plan on attending a meeting or two this year.

## Assistant Superintendent News by Todd Poage

Greetings! The last and final quarter is upon us, the weather is suppose to be warming, the days are definitely longer and thoughts of summer vacations are beginning to appear. Then reality hits and we all realize that it is almost time for the high-stakes SBA and HSGQE examinations. (April 3rd, 4th and 5th) Practice and preparation are the names of the game. Below are a couple items of interest.

**AYP Bonuses** - As a reward for meeting all AYP requirements (from the above mentioned SBA and HSGQE exams of 2006), \$25,000 was distributed to the listed sites and calculated based on the number of students enrolled within each school. So here is the good news for the following six schools that made AYP:

HUS \$1776  
KAL \$4918  
KYU \$2332  
MLY \$1503  
MNT \$5328  
NUL \$9153

These funds were placed in each school's student travel account.

**E-rate** - The E-rate RFP was posted and four bids were submitted from vendors. Proposals were reviewed and scored by a committee. The vendors that submitted proposals include: AT&T Alascom, DRS Technologies, GCI and TelAlaska. At this time, GCI was selected as the vendor to provide Internet services for the next three years. The bandwidth for connections at the sites will be doubled, from 512 to 1024, so that video conferencing classes and equipment

will operate more efficiently with less delay time. This will also leave more bandwidth remaining for students using the Internet while the video conferencing equipment is operating.

Todd will be leaving YKSD at the end of the school year to take the job of Superintendent for the Alaska Gateway School District in Tok



## State & Federal Programs News by Kerry Boyd

### Grants

We recently applied for the K-12 Tobacco Prevention Grant through the State of Alaska Department of Health last month. The grant is a three and a half year project funded up to \$75,000 per year. We also applied for the Alaska Native Education Program grant (ANE) through the U.S. Department of Education. This is a three year project funded up to \$200,000 per year. We should receive notification about the grants no later than July 2007.

Unfortunately, we did not receive the Governor's grant nor did we receive the 21<sup>st</sup> Century grant we applied for several months ago. At this time, we do not have the names of the successful organizations who were awarded the 21<sup>st</sup> Century grant, but the Governor's Grant was awarded to: Anchorage School District, Burchell Alternative High School, City of Wasilla/Mat-Su Youth Court, Big Brother/Big Sisters of Fairbanks, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Alaska, and

North Star Youth Court.

Daniel Seitz and Elecia Frank have met the highly qualified eligibility requirements for paraprofessionals and Pete Daley has become highly qualified in Math. Geoff Johnson and Chad Sorenson have expanded their qualifications and are highly qualified in at least three content teaching areas.

### YRB Survey

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey will be administered to 8 of the 9 river schools April 9-13. The survey is intended to provide a better understanding of the health risk behaviors for students in grades 7-12. The YRBS asks students to self-report on their behaviors in six major areas of health that directly lead to morbidity and mortality in adult populations within our country. The information from the YRBS will identify and highlight the differences and similarities in risk behaviors among high school students in Yukon-Koyukuk School District and the US and results will

be used for future grants.

### Academies

The welding academy is now completely full with over 10 students enrolled, and the construction academy in Minto still has a few seats left. Both academies run April 15<sup>th</sup>- April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Construction students in Minto will build a large shed and the Welding students in Nulato will weld hooks to hang things with and they will also weld items for the community members.

### Hospitality Job Shadow

The Hospitality Alliance recently announced that it has separate grant money to use for a job shadow for approximately 12 YKSD students. The job shadow will take place in Anchorage, March 25-28 and there are four students signed up to attend.



# Office of Instruction News by Carol Doyle

## State Battle of the Books Competition

The Office of Instruction is pleased to announce that Manley's seventh and eighth grade team took fourth place in the state final round after having the highest score after the first round of battles coached by Melanie Redington. Neither Huslia or Juneau Raven Correspondence district high school champions placed in the finals of the state competition. Minto's third-fourth grade team came in third after the first round of state battles, but did not place in the finals. Congratulations to Manley's Battle of the Books team and congratulations to every one who worked so hard reading their books and battling other teams across the district and state!

Although Kindergarten, first, and second grade Battle of the Books teams do not go to state, the district winners, coached by Terrie Aschenbrenner. All the primary teams did an excellent job! Prizes and certificates have been sent out to each participating student at the district level.

## Science Curriculum

The written Science curriculum with its standards and checklists, content vocabulary, philosophy and curriculum guidelines are being copied to present to the Board Curriculum Committee at its next meeting early in March. Some recommendations for textbooks and materials have come into the district office so far. Carol Doyle requests that schools, their staff and CSC's please send in their summary sheets recommending their preferred texts. She would like a final recommendation to go to the Board at the March Board meeting. The next Board meeting will probably not be until May.

## District Writing Assessment

A big "thank you" to the team that scored the writing assessments from the village schools. They did a

marvelous job and completed their task quickly and effectively. Carol Doyle was proud of the way they worked diligently for the better part of two days. Any discrepancies in scores were read by a third teacher and then read again by a group of 3-4 teachers re-reading the papers, discussing the trait qualities, and then making a final determination. Those that served on the committee were: Bob Hawkins, Minto; Monica Garza, Minto; Christina Semaken, Kaltag; Gertie Esmailka, Huslia; Kristen Roecker, Huslia; Meta Bottjen, Nulato; Judy Madros, Nulato; Joan Jones, Hughes; Nancy Mason, Allakaket; and Anne Titus, Ruby. Some teachers took their site papers back to their school. The rest will be mailed back this week. These assessments have been recorded and the actual writing assessment papers will be placed in the students' portfolios kept at each school. Sample papers with student names removed were copied and will be distributed to teachers for teaching purposes.

## Writing Institute

The district is involved in a grant partnership with UAF, Alaska Writing Consortium, and Fairbanks North Star Borough School District that provides writing professional development for teachers this summer and during the October in-service. There will be an opportunity for 10 teachers from this district to attend the institute at no cost to the teacher. The tentative institute dates are July 30<sup>th</sup> through August 8<sup>th</sup>. Carol Doyle is part of the organizational committee, and at this point in time, the committee has no applications from leaders to perform the writing institute classes. If you know of any teacher leaders who could do a writing class for teachers over several days, please let Carol Doyle know. The committee would appreciate your help.

## Advanced Placement

The district has 3 high school students taking pre-advanced placement courses in Math and Language Arts via the internet paid through the Appeal grant. There is more opportunity next year for more students to be involved. Students are taking these classes from [www.apex.com](http://www.apex.com). You can go on the website and see if any of these pre-AP classes would benefit your more advanced students. Registration for your students must take place before the fall semester begins. Also, Manley and Allakaket have after school enrichment programs for students paid for through this grant. Manley has a Spanish program and Allakaket has a "Visual Mathematics" program. There is one more year on the grant which includes an opportunity for teachers to get more advanced placement training this summer.

## Big Brothers/Big Sisters

Recently several sites received mentoring supplies and materials for "Bigs and Littles" and their school through the mentoring grant. A budget revision may be forthcoming to provide more materials to schools who still have purchase orders in Carol Doyle's office that have not been processed to date. Cyndi Nation will begin traveling to sites again as she is now okay to travel. She should be traveling to Nulato, Minto, Manley, and Hughes and others later in the year.

## Spring Break

With 3 different spring breaks in the calendar, please check your email from time to time while you are out. This part of the year is always busy with pertinent communication from this office concerning instruction and curriculum/professional development topics. Have a well-deserved break!



## Native Language News by Susan Paskvan

What d'ya know?

Here are some interesting anecdotes from the *Denaakk'e* video-conference course - *Denaakk'e* names are very strong. People were given names that were names of relatives, characteristics that are valued, or were pet names.

My *Denaakk'e* name is *K'etsoo*, which means 'Someone's grandmother'.

My great-grandmother, *Ts'oghootl'een'* used to call me this because my English name, Sue, sounded like the root word, *-tsoo* 'grandmother'.

Visitors to my house the last two weeks commented that my house is just like a grandmother's house. Yikes! When I was five my dream was to grow up to be a big fat grandma with a lot of grandkids on my lap. I've got a long ways to go! Aunt Catherine Attla's, *Denaakk'e*

name is *Nodoydee'onh*, which means 'one who has found another song' which also alludes to knowledge of our culture. It suits her perfectly because she has so much knowledge of old traditional ways and stories and she shares it with others who want to learn.

Before contact with explorers and missionaries, everyone had *Denaakk'e* names. After contact, people were given names based upon place names, biblical names, translations of *Denaakk'e* names. For example, on the Koyukuk River here are the origin of some family surnames - Oldman from Old Man River; Koyukuk from Koyukuk River; Bergman, from the old town of Bergman (information from Alice Ambrose). Many people have names from characters in the bible - James, Paul, Peter, Joseph etc. What does this have to do with

education? Students who receive instruction that is tied to their culture are able to apply it to their lives, have stronger self-identify, and greater self-esteem. Students who are conflicted about their identity have higher disciplinary problems and lower test scores. If you are interested in students doing an oral research project, please contact me about research questions. If you get a chance, look at the *Denaakk'e* Workbook on Family History.

*Nedaats'e koon*. 'That's all for now'. If you tried the recipe "Stuffing for the Birds" let me know.



## Business Office News by Edith Hildebrand

### Forwarding Addresses

Please remember to provide Payroll with your current mailing address if you move. This year, we got back a handful of W-2s. If you are missing yours, then this is most likely what happened. Also, if you leave the district, it is your responsibility to submit a change of address. Your cooperation is appreciated.

### "Safeguard your student activity funds"

We know how hard it could be to do fundraising in the villages and we want to make sure your students funds are safeguarded. When your school accepts checks from the community members or staff, please make sure the checks or Money orders are paid to the order of "your school name" or

YKSD, not "cash". Also, do not leave this section blank. When mailing your funds to the district office, please make sure the money orders or checks are filled out. If they get lost in the mail with "cash" or are left blank, there really is no way for your school to recover those funds. Your cooperation is appreciated. HAPPY SPRING!

### Photos taken during January Board Meeting in Koyukuk



Chair, Shirley Kruger takes a little break during the meeting.



Fred Bifelt & Jack Wright follow along with the agenda.



Elder Eliza Jones participates in the meeting. Doug Patsy in the background.



Community members provide a wonderful potluck following the YKSD Board meeting.





## Art News by Angela Kartes

### 2007 YKSD Art Show

Art show from Tuesday, April 17<sup>th</sup> through Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. Open house will be the 19<sup>th</sup> from 5-7pm. All teachers from Raven and each river school please begin to collect art work from each student. This year there will be a limit of 2 pieces from each student. No limit per school. All teachers who have participated in satellite art classes

should have a great selection. Art pieces can be made at school or at home and with any medium including photography. You will soon be sent a complete informational flier including instructions on how to submit work. Again, the show will be posted on Artsonia.com. Last year's show is still up so if you would like to see last years entries you can. Teachers, this is a great

opportunity to show off what your students can do!!! To make this easy, designate one person per school to collect work and ship it to the district office.

We have lots of entries for the 2007 Jr. Duck Stamp Contest. Results will not be known until the end of May so please be patient. Thanks to all teachers who mailed in entries.



Angela Kartes and Cheryl Brady working on their Silk Painting masterpieces.



Kimberly Turnbow and Raven student striking a pose during a silk painting class held at the District Office.

## Library News

As many of you may already know, Kathy Hilde, our Library Assistant has moved down to Alabama to retire with her husband. She has done an incredible job over the last 2 years turning the District Office library into to a clean, organized and family friendly space. We will all miss her!

We have hired a temporary Library Clerk through the end of the

school year. Her name is Cheryl Swaggert. She will be working part-time on Mondays and Fridays from 8:00-4:30 and on Wednesdays 12:30-4:30.

A special thank you to Tami Rump for filling in since Kathy left in February.



### REMINDER TO TEACHERS:

It is Teacher Negotiations time and your involvement is encouraged. You can contact either Hollie Koyukuk or Geoff Johnson if you're interested in getting involved.



## Technology News by Shawn Coyle

### Spring Update

1. Administrative PowerSchool/PG implementation support has taken a lot of work, but I believe we have most everyone ready for our next reporting period. I will be scheduling Principals, Admin Assists and Techs to work out final configurations, reports, and updates, for PS/ PG.
2. PowerGrade- We need to verify that all teachers are taking daily attendance and inputting their daily assignments so their information can be checked for accuracy before the report card posts. I will contact each principal teacher and discuss their schools status.
3. PowerSchool- We have been working with sites preparing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Progress Reports and will be looking to back load the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter grades for report card continuity before the end of the year.
4. Video Conference - Video conferencing equipment is expensive and slow to replace, please ensure it is in a safe place and all equipment is secure. Please make sure that your sites video conferencing equipment is plugged in and ready for video conferencing. It takes a lot of valuable conference time to troubleshoot a faulty connection at the start of a conference. Thanks!
5. Power Tech Thurs- Tech How to Thursday will demonstrate how to setup and manage file directories and backing up your files.



## Allakaket News by Jesse Bartlett

Travis Cole stayed in Allakaket the week of February 19-23, working with the students for an hour every day to prepare them for a trip to the Festival of Native Arts in Fairbanks held the first weekend of March. The students have done an exceptional job of practicing old songs and dances, as well as learning new ones. A select few will be traveling to represent Allakaket at the festival, but they all have worked very hard. Good luck to them and all performers.

Five Junior High students in Allakaket are working to get ready

for a trip to Juneau's Dzantik'l Heeni Middle school. They are taking part in the Rose Urban Rural Exchange program and will be traveling in late April with their teacher, Jesse Bartlett. In addition, 5 students and a teacher from DZ Middle School will be coming to Allakaket to experience village life for one week. They are focusing on five factors during this activity: Education, Governance, Food, Economics, and Health Care/Transportation. The students are excited to travel and learn about a new place while teaching

about their own homes.

Seniors Rex Simon and Trevor Williams will be traveling to Anchorage to participate in a Hospitality Job Shadow from March 25-28. They are members of the Hospitality class offered to YKSD schools by TVC. Along with earning high school credit, they are earning college credit and have the opportunity to complete a paid internship during the summer as part of the program. Rex and Trevor will get to see first-hand what a career in the hospitality industry is all about.



Allakaket students gather around Travis Cole (with drum) and practice in preparation for the Festival of Native Arts



Junior High students from Allakaket. Five of the students will be traveling to Juneau in April.

## Manley News by Heidi Wright

The 2007 Serum Run has just passed through Manley. The 30 person group stayed in the school and we used the opportunity as a fund-raiser for the students. The temperatures were very cold but they elected to stay over an additional day. The students had time to interview several of the people

in the group. There was a nurse who had just returned from a 15 month tour in Iraq, a retired engineer from Switzerland, medical personnel from Anchorage, and many more. One student job shadowed the vets and had a chance to help treat some dogs. They are on their way today to Tanana. This

was a very rich experience for our students and for the people in the Serum Run as they were able to learn about the students and people in Manley. Joee and Pam Redington came down and gave a slide show about the ascent of Denali with Joee Sr. and Susan Butcher.



2007 Serum Run group in Manley



Potluck held for Serum Run group



Joee & Pam Redington with trophy



## Minto News by Monica Garza

On February 13, Minto School hosted a Family Math Night. Students, family members, and parents played Math Jeopardy, practiced measurement, constructed geometric figures, played multiplication bingo, created patterns, and enjoyed math jokes. It was great fun! Embrace the Math!

On Jan 31 through Feb 2 Minto School celebrated Athabaskan Culture Week.



Claudia Thompson concentrating on glove sewing during cultural week.

Students canned moose meat, made fry bread and prepared fish ice cream. All students made mittens using either denim, rabbit, or



Josephine Riley teaching glove sewing



Aaron Smith working on glove sewing during cultural week.

beaver fur. In addition students practiced tying snow shoes and had an introduction to fiddling. Elders Susie Charle, Linda Charlie, Sarah Silas, Jenny Baker, Berkman Silas, Josephine Riley, Elsie Titus, Pauline Simmons, Patsy Alexander and other community members participated.

It was a great experience for all.



Elsie Titus teaching glove sewing during cultural week



## Nulato News



I would like to commend one of my co-workers for professional duty and strive for excellence. I work with phenomenal group of people from educated peers down to the wonderful support staff. I believe everyone on our site, and it sounds like throughout our district, are all doing our best for the students every single day and some days are easier than others. Philosophically, this looks different in

everyone's classroom and educating styles in Nulato, but we are all working for the self-efficacy of these students. I commend everyone for "A JOB WELL DONE!" More importantly at this time I would like to give kudos to someone I work with directly. Recently, one of our AKD high school aides, George McGinty, substituted and took on a pre-algebra math class and was caught! George was caught "black-penned (instead of

red-handed)" teaching and engaged class like he had been doing it for years. Being a substitute is intimidating enough and substituting can be perilous; despite the odds this previous carpenter was triumphant. I am not amazed! I am in awe of the talent this man brings supporting and educating students and WE have him in the Yukon-Koyukuk School District, at Andrew K. Demoski! (submitted by a Nulato staff member)



Karen Eddy's class performs for the community songs and dance



Army National Guard Sgt. Jordan Niemuth gets students moving in his session on **Exercise and the Mind**.



Laura Barnett introduces Miss Nika'ghun, Nicole Gregory to students.



Students listened attentively and asked questions during the 'Shotgun Sessions' in the gymnasium.



Students enjoyed 'Elder Stories' after lunch each day. Presenter, State Trooper Santora is also intrigued by Paulina Stickman's stories.



Art Nash, Tanana Chiefs Conference, spoke with students in one breakout session on caring for parents and grandparents.



Justin Patsy and Tribal Administrator Peter Demoski talk to students about **Living Well** through subsistence



Apache Chief Barnard visiting Nulato in January. His group brought gifts for the children of Nulato



Shelby, Megan, and Courtney of Nulato explore the presents brought by Chief Barnard



## Photos to Share



District Office group photo



Picture with Gov. Palin at the Mat-Su Inaugural Ball. Ashley Kelly, Governor Sarah Palin, and Andrea Berg



Tom Stoltz from Huslia, enjoys the Special Education Conference while celebrating the Colts victory in the Superbowl!



## International Pen Pal Opportunity

Kathy Vander Zwaag, Delta Raven Office, is offering an opportunity for students to write pen pals in Guyana, South America. Her daughter, Carrie Vander Zwaag and son-in-law, Thomas Brand, are serving for a year with World Teach. Students are Amer-Indian but speak English since Guyana used to be a British colony.

If your students would like to have a pen pal, they can write letters that will be given to a student in Guyana. On the back side of the envelope, list gender and age or grade level that each would like for a pen pal. There are students in grades 1 – 10 at

the school. A 1.0 ounce letter will need an 84 cent stamp. Any questions? Email Kathy at [delta@yksd.com](mailto:delta@yksd.com)  
Mail the letters to:

Carrie Vander Zwaag  
Orealla Village  
Corentyne River  
Region 6  
Guyana  
South America.



## New Raven Teacher

Terri Thurston has been hired to work out of our RCS Anchorage office. She graduated from Eastern Washington University with a BA in Education and has just completed a Master's Degree in reading from Grand Canyon University.

Her "career" started out differently than expected. After teaching at Anchorage Christian Schools for a year,

she became a stay-at-home mom and home schooled her 5 children for 7 years. Afterward, she taught at other private schools before opening her own private school which flourished for 4 years. Her last few years have been filled with tutoring and teaching small classes, as well as home schooling her youngest two in high school. So, through everything, she has taught at

every level in just about every subject.

She is most excited to be with Raven! She has great respect for home schooling families. She knows the challenges, the frustrations, and the rewards of that lifestyle. She is excited to be able to partner with parents and students, to help them when they have need, and to celebrate their victories.



"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates.

The great teacher inspires."

Quote by William Arthur Ward