

December 2023

Yukon Koyukuk School District Staff Connections

Happy Holidays! On behalf of the Yukon Koyukuk School Board, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



As I watch winter blanket our communities with crisp white snow and think about the students at our schools finishing up their projects, papers, and assignments, I reflect on the hard work and dedication as they wrap up their accomplishments. I am fortunate to work with the students, families, and staff of the Yukon Koyukuk School District.

You may have seen YKSD's recent request for community feedback regarding new logos for our schools. I hope that each of you will provide details about what your school logo means to you and your students and your community. It will only take a few minutes to share your ideas. You can find the link at the District's website.

Important upcoming dates:

End of the Semester/Report Cards: Friday, December 15th. Early dismissal for students.

Winter Holiday Break: Monday, December 18th thru Tuesday, January 2nd - No School for Students Teacher

Inservice: Wednesday, January 3rd – No School for Students

Back to School: Thursday, January 4th!

The holiday season is a time for us to rejoice in our successes, be thankful, and share our good fortune and kindness with others in our communities. I hope that you and your families enjoy this time together and share in your traditions and each other's company. As I continue to travel in the New Year, I will look forward to hearing about their adventures and their goals for the spring.

From all of us at the Yukon Koyukuk School District, we wish you a warm, joyous, and heartfelt holiday.

Sincerely,

Kerry Boyd, Superintendent



From the desk of Superintendent Boyd

I hope you are enjoying the newsletter created by all our schools. The students are truly a gift to all of us and we do our best to highlight the accomplishments they achieve throughout the year. We are all here to support the students of YKSD and truly appreciate your thoughtful comments, participation in the schools and your work with your children every day.

YKSD Regional School Board Election Results and Tanana City School District Transfer

The YKSD Regional School Board and the Tanana City School District Election took place last month. Please join me in congratulating our newest school board members, Peter Anderson from Minto, Maurice McGinty from Nulato, and Jeanette Williams from Huslia!

Congratulations to the YKSD School Board & Tanana City School District Board Members!

YKSD Regional School Board

Ruth Folger, Minto, Board Chair
Marie Dayton, Koyukuk, Vice Chair
Anne Titus, Ruby, Secretary
Leona Starr, Huslia, Treasurer
Pete Anderson, Minto, Member
Jeanette Williams, Huslia, Member
Maurice McGinty, Nulato, Member

Tanana City School Board

Liisia Edwardsen, Tanana, Board Chair
Theresa Marks, Tanana, Secretary/Treasurer
Cynthia Johnson, Tanana, Member
Phyllis Erhart, Tanana, Member
Theresa Marks, Tanana, Member

A big Thank You to our outgoing board members, **Dian Gurtler, Manley and Fred Bifelt, Huslia**. They have both served as advocates of students on the YKSD School Board for over 20 years each. Their dedication and support will carry on for years to come.

Tanana City School District will be officially joining YKSD next school year. It has been a long process, including passing legislation to make this happen. Maudrey J. Sommer School will be included as an additional school with the Yukon Koyukuk School District effective July 2024.

As the request of YKSD to the Alaska Division of Elections, a question was placed on the ballot to add two additional school board seats for Yukon Koyukuk School District. As a result, the communities voted to expand the school board from a seven-member school board to a nine-member school board. The additional seats are expected to be added in time for the October 2024 School Board Elections. The Alaska Boundary Commission will work with the Alaska Department of Education and the District to determine where the two seats will be added.

Several brand-new vans were ordered for the students to help offset travel expenses when they arrive in Fairbanks for student activities. The 12 passenger vans will be dedicated to the schools for transporting students.

Kerry Boyd, Superintendent

Speaking of dedicated to schools, the district just ordered a brand-new car equipped with all the devices for drivers' education for our students. The goal is to have our own driver's education program for when students travel into town. The students have been very successful earning the driver's permit, but now we are taking it to the next level to help them earn their actual driver's license! More to come!

School Construction Projects

The Rampart School Construction project will begin spring of 2024. The district received a grant for just under 10 million dollars to renovate the school.

Minto School Construction project is well underway with the expected completion date of October 2024.

The District Career Technical Education Building is on target to be completed by October of 2024. Once completed, the district will have a brand-new facility with a 26-bed dorm for short stays. The building is located in Fairbanks near the Home Depot.



Starlink Reimbursement

On behalf of the YKSD Regional School Board, I am pleased that YKSD is providing reimbursement for Starlink for all YKSD families who have students enrolled in school. The reimbursement will pay for the Starlink terminal up to \$650.00. If you are interested in this program, please contact the principal at your school for more information.

2024/2025 School Calendar

If you haven't had a chance already to provide input into next year's school calendar, there is still time to do so. Please be sure to review the proposed calendar, look at the holidays, the subsistence days and the first and last day of school. Your input is important. For more information about the calendar, you can contact the school or the district office.



Board Recognition

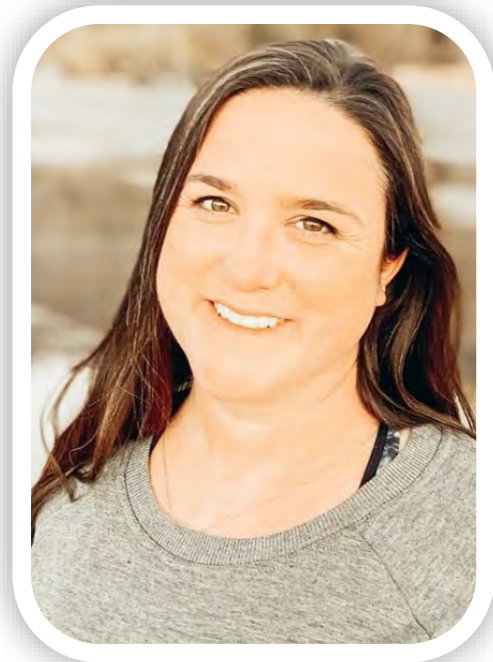
Carla Saunders, Executive Secretary

Staff Winners



Victoria Deacon

Reading Interventionist
Andrew K. Demoski School
Nulato



Erin Maycroft

Advisory & Special Education Teacher
Raven Homeschool
Wasilla

Staff Nominations

Lizzie Alexie: *Cook, Kaltag School*

Kylee Beatus: *Preschool Teacher & Custodian, Johnny Oldman School, Hughes*

Rebecca Linus: *Cook, Allakaket School*

Dana Romano: *Teacher, Minto School*

Steve Swatling: *Teacher, Jimmy Huntington School, Huslia*

Casey Weter: *Principal, Jimmy Huntington School, Huslia*

Board Recognition

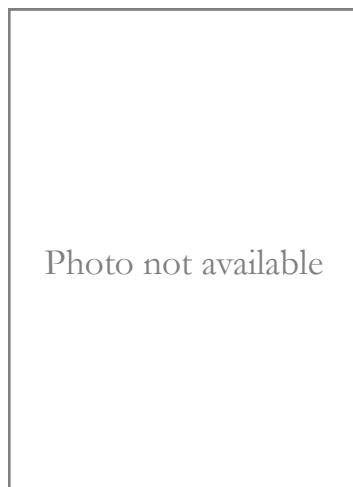
Carla Saunders, Executive Secretary

Student Winners



Clayton Bergman

Grade 6
Johnny Oldman School
Hughes



Robert Denny

Grade 11
Raven Homeschool
Fairbanks

Student Nominations

Alyzeh Bell: Grade 10, Raven Homeschool, Anchorage

Azmariah Barnes: Grade 4, Raven Homeschool, Wasilla

Cassidy Ebenal: Grade 2, Raven Homeschool, Delta

Kadence Gresham Grade 11, Raven Homeschool, Wasilla

Abygail Jackson: Grade 4, Raven Homeschool, Eagle River

Tristan Linus: Grade 8, Allakaket School

Bode Patsy: Grade 6, Andrew K. Demoski School, Nulato

Kayla Roberts: Grade 5, Minto School

Kennah Sam: Grade 7, Jimmy Huntington School, Huslia

Jonah Semaken: Grade 6, Kaltag School

Kezia Verebasaga: Grade 11, Raven Homeschool, Juneau

Teaching and Learning Department

Patty White,
Assistant Superintendent

As we reflect on the first semester, we are so proud of everything our students have accomplished! Our students have made gains across all content areas, read millions of words, explored multiple Career and Technical Education (CTE) topics, and began traveling to play basketball. We are excited to see the great things our students will continue to do in the new year.

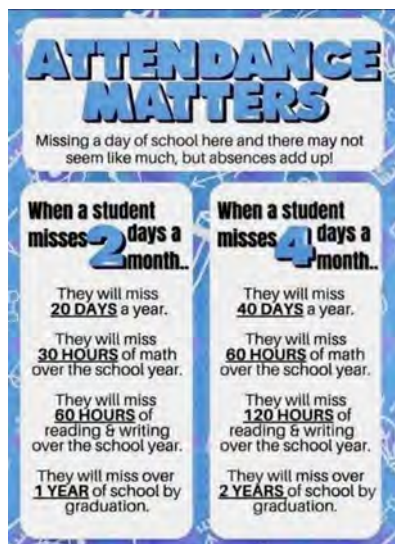
Our Math Specialists, Chuck Backe, and Simon Huff, through the Math and Computer Science for Students (MACSS) Grant, have traveled to all of our sites to help support our teachers and students with math instruction, math centers and hands-on cultural math activities. They will schedule a second round of visits to each site for the Spring semester. There is also a weekly math challenge sent out to students and students video their response and submit the video to Simon. Weekly winners receive a small gift certificate to the local store. Encourage your child to participate! Our Computer Science Specialist, Jakobe Boyd, is supporting computer science activities districtwide such as Lego robotics, Hour of Code and student and parent computer science educational webinars.

Benchmark Testing

In January, students will be taking the mid-year Benchmark testing which is DIBELS for K-5 Reading and MAPs for K-12 Math and grades 3-12 Reading. Each school will schedule the testing in early to mid-January. Please check the schedule at your school and make sure your children attend on testing days and do their best on the test by ensuring they get a good night's sleep.

Report Cards

Parent/Teacher Conferences were held at all sites at the beginning of November and quarter 1 report cards were given to parents at that time. All sites had good participation. Second quarter report cards will be mailed home after Christmas break. The third quarter report cards will be reviewed with parents at the Parent/Teacher conferences on March 25 and quarter 4 report cards will be mailed home after the last day of school. If you have any questions about report cards, please see your school principal or teachers.



Attendance is Important!

All schools are focusing on improving student attendance. Some suggestions are to schedule doctor's appointments on Fridays or over breaks, if possible, to minimize days out of school.



State & Federal Programs

Kristi Burns,
Assistant Director

Renaissance Current Rankings for Word Count

Minto 1st place
Johnny Oldman 2nd place
Andrew K. Demoski 3rd place
Allakaket 4th place

The school that is in 1st place by the end of the year will be receiving the traveling trophy.

Pre-K Program

We now have 20 pre-k students enrolled into the YKSD preschool program. The Core Knowledge Language Arts pre-k curriculum is being piloted in the program at this time. The students are enjoying singing the songs and reading the nursery rhymes along with learning about themselves and animals. Each family received a Parent Engagement Activity Kit (PEAK).



Literacy

I hope that everyone had fun at their STREAM Night last semester! Here are some pictures to enjoy!



We have also sent Family Literacy Engagement Kits (FLEKs) to all families. Please have a Happy Holiday and enjoy your time with your families!

Maintenance Department

Ben McFarlane,
Coordinator

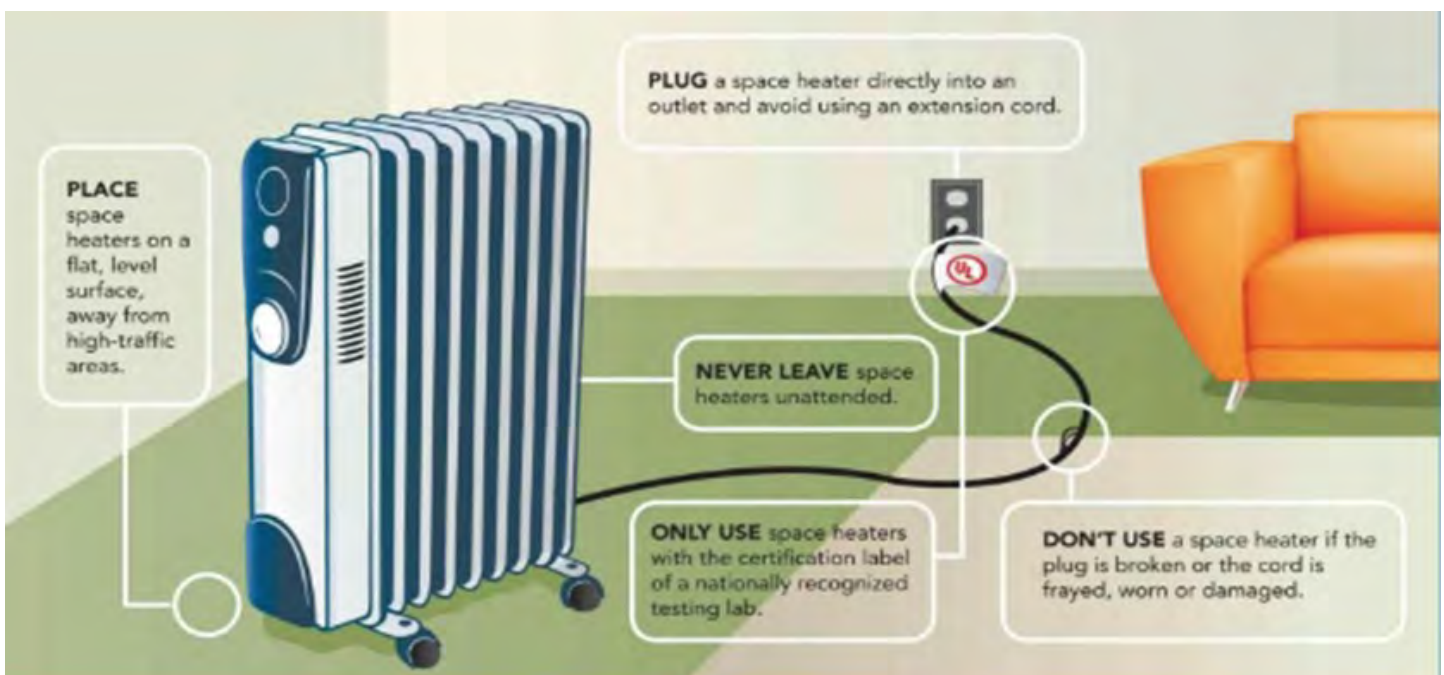
Heating Safety Tips

It may not come as a surprise that heating equipment is the leading cause of residential fires in Alaska. While I am certain everyone is anxious for warmer weather, I am afraid we are going to have to keep the heaters on for a while longer. If you use a wood stove in your home, check out the following safety tips from the Rural Fire Association of River Walls Wisconsin.

- ◆ Don't place the stove in an area of high traffic.
- ◆ Keep anything that can catch fire at least 36" from the stove.
- ◆ Don't dry clothing over the stove- clothes that can fall and ignite.
- ◆ Install your stove in accordance with local regulations and those suggested by the manufacturer.
- ◆ Ensure proper ventilation in the house.
- ◆ Avoid placing ashes near combustible materials before you are certain all burning embers are out.
- ◆ Inspect and clean the stove, chimney connector, and chimney at least once a year.
- ◆ Check twice monthly for creosote buildup in your chimney connector and chimney.
- ◆ Never use or store flammable liquids, especially gasoline, in the vicinity of the stove.
- ◆ Burn only seasoned wood. Green wood burns inefficiently and causes a buildup of creosote.
- ◆ Be aware of the dangers of CO poisoning, which can occur due to incomplete combustion in your wood stove, furnace, or appliances. CO detectors are available in stores.



Electric heaters account for a surprisingly large share of home heating fires. According to the National Fire Protection Association, between 2011 and 2015 portable and stationary space heaters were responsible for 43% of home heating fires and 85% of home heating fire deaths. If you use space heaters, make sure to check out the following graphic for safety tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International.



It's Time for a Federal Withholding Check-up!

Kathy Steckel,
Human Resources Specialist

At the beginning of each year it's always a good idea to perform a Federal Withholding Tax checkup to make sure you're having the right amount of tax deducted from your paychecks. Luckily the IRS has provided an app to walk you through the process. Go to www.irs.gov/WV4app and click the 'Use the Tax Withholding Estimator' button.

Even though the process is fairly easy, you will need to gather the following documents together before you begin:

- ◆ Your most recent paystubs for yourself, and if your married, for your spouse.
- ◆ Information of other sources of income you may have.
- ◆ Your most recent income tax return.

It's also a good idea to double check your Federal Withholding Tax deduction anytime you've had a major life change such as buying a home, marriage or new baby.

Best wishes for a safe and happy Holiday season!



Special Education & Support Services

Derek Coryell,
Assistant Director

This year one of our department's primary goals is to improve our support for students transitioning out of school into further education or the workforce. We are beginning by working closely with the Alaska Department of Education. Training will be provided to all our Special Education Case Managers from the State Special Education Team's Director Mentor.

Beyond these training sessions, we will be working to increase our partnerships with both the Tanana Chiefs Transition Support Programs and the State of Alaska Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. The goal is to increase knowledge of all opportunities available to our students, continually increasing partnerships and as our ultimate goal, helping our students thrive once they leave YKSD!



Counselor's Corner

Kela Gillihan, Counselor

The counseling department has been busy this quarter with traveling to sites and providing classroom lessons and activities. Students have been learning about recognizing emotions, decision making, and conflict resolution. This year we have a large senior class, with 25 seniors within the river schools. We have been working with our seniors to plan for their next steps after graduation. One helpful tool we offer every year to our juniors and seniors is the ACT and ACT WorkKeys test. The next testing window for the ACT is February 10th-25th. The postmark deadline for this testing window is January 5th and January 19th for late registration. If students are interested in the ACT or ACT WorkKeys test, please reach out to your counselor for more information. There are also many scholarships and new guidelines for the FAFSA, that the counselors will be working on with the seniors. It has been a great first semester of school and the counselors are wishing everyone a wonderful winter break.

THE FAFSA® PROCESS

We provide more than \$120 billion in grants, loans, and work-study funds each year to help pay for college or career school. To apply for this aid, you must complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)* form. Also, state governments and many colleges and career schools use your FAFSA information to award you their aid.

DID YOU KNOW?

Some schools won't consider you for merit scholarships (scholarships based on academic achievement or other talents or skills) until you've submitted a FAFSA, so complete one even if you think you won't qualify for federal aid.

RELAX!

The FAFSA is designed to be simple to fill out. Tips throughout the application help you understand the questions. Most people finish filling out the FAFSA in less than half an hour!

PREPARING FOR THE FAFSA®

GATHER THIS INFORMATION

The FAFSA asks questions about you and your finances, so have the information below handy.

- Social Security number
- Alien registration number
- Federal tax information or tax returns
- Records of untaxed income
- Cash, savings, and checking account balances
- Investments other than the home in which you live

DON'T HAVE ALL YOUR INFO READY YET?

That's okay you can start the FAFSA, save it, and come back later to finish it. (To find out whether you need to report info about your parents, visit StudentAid.gov/help/dependency.)

AASB's Youth Leadership Institute 2023 ~ Nov. 9-12

This year four student council members went to Anchorage to represent YKSD and their individual schools at the Association of Alaska School Board's Youth Leadership Institute. The goal of this event is to bring young people from across Alaska together to hone their leadership skills and inspire them to create positive change in their districts and community. The members who attended were Genevieve Johnson and Ariyah Woods from Rampart and Dymond Sam and Holly Tritt from Hughes. Our student council members are also gearing up for the AASG Spring Conference in Barrow, AK from April 18-21.



Technology News

Brad Kennon, Director

As we usher in the new year, we're thrilled to announce an exciting change that will elevate our virtual communication experience. Starting January 1st, we will be transitioning from BlueJeans to Zoom for all our video conferencing needs.

For those already familiar with Zoom, you'll be pleased to know that all video conferencing units are now Zoom-ready. However, for those who might need a little extra guidance, we are planning training sessions for all staff members starting in January.

Why the change? Switching to Zoom has always been on our roadmap. Thanks to grant funding and network upgrades over the summer, we are ready to fully deploy Zoom. By making this switch, we are aligning ourselves with a platform that is widely adopted by education.

If you have any questions or concerns during this transition, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Technology Department. We are here to support you every step of the way.

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season and looking forward to a fantastic year of successful collaboration on Zoom!



Denaakkenaage' Hunek, Denakenaga' Khunek: Native Language News

Holly Wofford,
Native Language Teacher

Language Classes

Denaakk'e Classes: Language classes this quarter consist of four Upper, five Central – KR, three Central – YR, & four Lower dialect classes. We have a combination of both Early Elementary, Upper Elementary, and a few Secondary classes. The Secondary classes that joined this year have been doing great. It's been nice having a variety of age groups and grade levels in Native Language this year. I'm hoping to see more secondary classes join in the future!

Classwork Update: After finishing **Units 9 – Łeek Eent'aanee'** (Do You Have a Dog?) and **Unit 10 – Saanh Ggaagge Hodee'** (Where Is the Summer Bird?). We moved into the beginning of the workbook and have completed **Unit 1 – Nedaats'e Ne'ooze'** (What's Your Name?) & had recently started **Unit 2 – Do'eent'aa'** (How Are You?). To end the semester, we've been practicing Denaakk'e Christmas Songs with Tristan Madros the new YKSD Cultural teacher who has been signing on during our class times.

Shoutout: Onsite Native Language co-teachers have been doing an amazing job this semester! Their engagement with the students and investment in the Language not only sets an example for the students, it means a lot to the people in the communities, and to me.

Cultural Activities

Holly Wofford,
Native Language Teacher

Tristan Madros – YKSD Cultural teacher has been teaching a secondary class onsite in Nulato, AK, and doing vocabulary lessons with the K-2nd graders during their PE. I was able to visit Tristan's classroom this semester December 4-6th. This quarter his secondary elective class has been working on various beading projects such as slippers, earrings, etc. They are doing a beautiful job on their projects.

Tristan has also started doing site visits to work on projects or singing with our other school sites. His first site visit was in Kaltag (December 8 – 15th, 2023). He also has plans to visit Huslia (January), Ruby (March), & Koyukuk (May).



Tristan Madros singing with the Community of Kaltag during his KAL Site Visit.



Elders, parents, and students were all there singing and dancing.

Wednesday Story Hour

We are currently watching the series (**Make Prayers to the Raven**). The series takes a look at the lives and belief systems of Athabascan families from interior Alaska. Villages from our district are highlighted in the show and it does an excellent job showcasing how the Athabascan people have adapted to modern times. While still maintaining their traditional belief systems and cultural practices.

Audiences are given an intimate look at the close relationship our Alaska peoples have had with the land and animals for generations.

Make Prayers to the Raven TV series, is based off the book *Make Prayers to the Raven* which was published in 1983. Catherine Attla, who was videoed in one of the episodes played a major role in the documentation of our Kk'edonts'ednee Stories & Traditional Beliefs in her books *As My Grandfather Told It*, and guided the author who wrote *Make Prayers to the Raven*.

Students are encouraged to draw as they're listening during Story Hour & to verbally share their thoughts when Story Hour has ended.

Native Language Department Events

Holly Wofford,
Native Language Teacher

To celebrate the holidays and important dates the Native Language Department held a district wide Indigenous Peoples' Day Sticker Contest in November and a Christmas Card Contest to celebrate the holidays. Both contests had excellent turn outs and students did a beautiful job on all of their designs below are the results of both contests.



YKSD

STICKER CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCEMENT

Congratulations to all the winners of the YKSD sticker contest!!

Denaakk'e Contest Winners

- Darian Woods - Rampart 11th Grade
- Genevieve Johnson - Rampart 8th Grade
- MacKenzie Rustad - Hughes 6th Grade
- Tassie Nickoli - Kaltag 6th Grade
- Bode Patsy - Nulato 5th Grade
- Demi Reed - Tanana 4th Grade
- Elijah Marks - Tanana 2nd Grade
- Jeylyn Healy - Nulato 1st Grade
- Mary Nickoli - Nulato 1st Grade

Benhti Contest Winners

- Traeton Titus - Minto 6th Grade
- Jennifer Alexander - Minto 6th Grade
- Traeton Titus - Minto 6th Grade
- Emery Kanayurak - Minto 2nd Grade
- Cadence Alexander - Minto 1st Grade

YKSD would like to thank everyone who participated in the sticker contest to help celebrate and acknowledge **INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY!**

Indigenous Peoples' Day Sticker Contest Results

Native Language Department Events

Holly Wofford,
Native Language Teacher

We ended the semester with the Annual Virtual Holiday Program and the student & staff appreciation. Students in Native Language lessons practiced the last two weeks with Tristan Madros and myself and they did an excellent job performing on December 15th! Kerry Boyd and a few of our board members were in attendance, and it was a successful program. I wanted to send thanks out to everyone that helped with the program preparation, holiday skit, getting students signed on, Native Language co-teachers for participating, etc. It was a good thing to see everyone working together....Hoozoonh!!

Fun Fact: This event has been happening for the last 17 years!





Congratulations

TO THE 2023 CHRISTMAS CARD CONTEST WINNERS!!

6 - 12th Grade Winner:



Emily Crosby (KAL: 10th Grade)

K - 5th Grade Winner:



Alice Simon (AET: 5th Grade)

YKSD would like to thank everyone who participated in the 2023 Christmas Card Contest. We had a lot of great submissions....
Enaa baasee'/maasee'/basi'!

Christmas Card Contest Results

ESTEEM Grant

Andrea Nield, State & Federal
Programs Assistant Director

This is a parent choice grant meaning parents have choice in their child's learning opportunities. We are currently in the process of bidding out services in the area of

1. Cultural/Native Language
2. College and Career Readiness
3. Extended Learning Opportunities
4. Resilience

For all course offerings please visit <https://esteem.yksd.com/>. Parents will need to sign up their student for each course. Below are the activities provided by esteem.

On behalf of our grant management team, we would like to thank our service providers for the continued support of our schools and traveling out to our sites to teach our students. Our activities are mainly after school or during elective periods.

Dancing with the Spirit

DWS continues to be a wonderful activity loved by the students, staff, and families. We value their continued partnership. This semester DWS made it to the following schools

- ♦ Kalag the week of November 13-18.
- ♦ Ruby: November 27-December 2
- ♦ Hughes: December 4-9
- ♦ Rampart: December 11-15

For a weeklong music camp with 2 staff teaching singing, guitar, fiddle, ukulele, culture, and language with the help of elders. A student concert and community dance will be held at the week's end.



Ruby



Kalag



Hughes

***ESTEEM Grant** continued*

Andrea Nield, State & Federal Programs Assistant Director

College Prep Hoops

Coach Chad Dyson made his way to all sites this fall along with Stephen Nye. They spent a week in each village holding daily camps for students. They also participated in the students' gym classes. The program Provides an empowering camp experience customized to your community's needs such as Health & Wellness, Respect for Self & Others, and The basketball Advantage. Below are the dates they were at villages. They will visit Minto next semester.



Hughes

- * Week of Oct. 2- Hughes
- * Week of Oct. 9- Kaltag
- * Week of Oct. 16- Huslia
- * Week of Oct. 23- Nulato
- * Week of Nov. 6- Ruby
- * Week of Nov. 27- Koyukuk
- * Week of Dec. 4- Tanana



Kaltag



Huslia



Nulato



Allakaket

Nick Hanson, Eskimo Ninja is Returning!

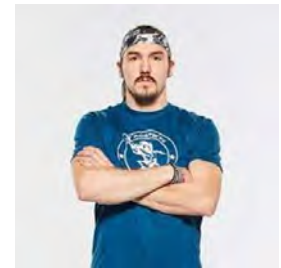
This spring we are happy to announce that Nick Hanson, Eskimo Ninja will be traveling to our sites. Parents please sign up for the [ESTEEM course](#) if you'd like to see him come to your sites.

Ruby, Huslia, Tanana - **January 22, 23 and 24**

Minto, Rampart - **February 6, 7**

Allakaket, Hughes - **March 19, 20**

Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk - **April 1, 2, 3**



ESTEEM Grant continued

Andrea Nield, State & Federal
Programs Assistant Director

Healthy Lifestyles Camp with Challenge Life and Wellness Prevention Fair.

Thank you to TCC Tribal Government & Client Services for your partnership. Thank you to Huslia, Nulato, Allakaket, Hughes, Minto, Manley, and Tanana for organizing and sending students. A total of 61 participants made their way into Fairbanks. This was a great way to bring our students together to interact with their peers. Travel funding for this opportunity was brought to you by the ESTEEM Parent Choice Grant. To sign up for courses or suggest future events you'd like to see funded, parents please sign your student up for courses. All ESTEEM activities are initiated by parents request and input. <https://esteem.yksd.com/>



ESTEEM Grant continued

Andrea Nield, State & Federal
Programs Assistant Director

Fish Jarring Class

Big thank you to CTE teacher Wylie Scalise and Huslia for organizing the Fish Jarring Class in Huslia this semester. The fish was donated by TCC, the instructors were Andrea Nield, Linda Wholecheese and Audrey Bifelt. The middle and high school students processed and jarred over 200 jars of fish. There were stations for each part of the process from Filleting, cleaning, steaming, cleaning backbones, seasoning, and filling. Thank you to all the students for their participation and the staff for stepping in.



Gathering of Nations

Next semester we are pleased to offer the Gathering of Nations trip. This program is part of the Cultural and Native Language and CTE portion of the ESTEEM grant. Cultural Growth/Awareness - Attend the largest Pow Wow in the country! College & Career Readiness – Explore post graduation options. While there students will part take in cultural exchange at Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute and tour New Mexico State. The application is due February 1, 2024. Below are the selection requirements reviewed by a committee.

- Grades 9-12th
- YKSD River School Students
- Students with a 2.0 GPA or higher
- Students w/ Good Attendance, 90% or higher
- Teacher recommendation
- Essay

Once selected participants must part take in Native Language Classes during lunch or after school to prepare for cultural exchange. For questions please contact Andrea Nield, anield@yksd.com or Holly Wofford, hwofford@yksd.com

Students pictured with President of Fort Lewis College after their performance at the Multicultural Day celebration and exchange with the Native student ambassadors.



ESTEEM Grant

Andrea Nield, State & Federal
Programs Assistant Director

Plight Club

This is an after school activity for students in grades 3-12. The exact times will be posted at your local school. Parents and family members are encouraged to attend. Phlight Club is a Youth-centered resilience-building program that brings together youth and adults from the community to learn important social, emotional, and resiliency skills. Teaches youth how to add caring, connected adults in their lives (Anchors) to create a Web of Support. Youth identify their strengths and work with adults and peers to solve problems while keeping each other safe, focused, respected, and involved. Stephanie Damery from Brightways is the lead trainer and below are the spring dates and locations for Phlight Club. Parents please sign up for [ESTEEM course](#)



- ◆ Minto & Rampart Feb 5-9
- ◆ Fairbanks Feb 10 & 11
- ◆ Tanana & Ruby Feb 12-15
- ◆ Allakaket Mar 20-22
- ◆ Hughes Mar 25-28
- ◆ Huslia Mar 25-28
- ◆ Kaltag & Koyukuk Apr 22-26
- ◆ Nulato Apr 29-May 1



Skiku

Skiing Across Alaska Our goal is to get Alaska skiing. We call our statewide program Skiku, a name that combines the Iñupaiq word for ice—siku—with ski. volunteer coaches from the broader ski community will be traveling to our sites for a week at a time. Volunteering to foster the health, recreation, and competitive sports benefits of cross-country skiing. Parents, please sign up for this activity on the [ESTEEM website](#)



High School Basketball

Andrea Nield, State & Federal
Programs Assistant Director

High School basketball season began November 29, 2023.

We're currently seeking coaches for Allakaket boys, Nulato boys, Huslia girls, Huslia boys

- *Students do need a current physical to participate
- * For your full schedule please see your local principal.
- *Students need to have a GPA of 2.0 or better to participate as well as 90% attendance in school and at practice.

Here are some tournaments in the interior that have been scheduled. This is not the full schedule of tournaments.

January 3	Minto @ Delta
January 4-6	Northway Tournament
January 18-20	Tri Valley Tournament
January 25-27	Nulato YKSD Shootout
February 1-3	NIT
February 8-10	Tok Tournament
February 16-17	Minto Tournament
February 23-24	Huslia Tournament
February 29-March 2	Minto @ Galena
March 7-9	Regionals at UAF Patty Center hosted by Ft. Yukon
March 13-16	IA State Tournament in ANC

YKSD Basketball Jamboree

Andrea Nield, State & Federal
Programs Assistant Director

This year's YKSD Basketball Jamboree will be hosted by Nulato: January 25-27, 2024. This event follows ASAA rules and air travel is sponsored by YKSD. All other field trip planning is done by individual site and the number of students who can travel are based on the number of seats on the aircraft.

Criteria to participate below is checked by the individual school principal.

- Minimum 2.0GPA at semester
- All 9-12 registered in [PlanetHS](#)
- Have 5 practices prior to event.
- Have a current co-op with a team.



Thank You Stephen Nye Media

Andrea Nield, State & Federal
Programs Assistant Director

Thank you to Stephen Nye Media for taking school pictures this semester, he was able to visit all our sites. Individual packets of the student portraits were mailed to the school where families can pick them up from the front office. If you have not received yours, please contact your local school. While on site Stephen was able to do Senior portraits and family pictures for those who attended.

CTE - Career Explorers

Jeff Walters,
CTE Itinerant Career Counselor

The Career Explorers component of YKSD's CTE program continues to move forward. This program, serving grades 6-12, aligns with YKSD's goal to have students explore career opportunities and have a career plan and portfolio by the time of graduation.

One component of the Career Explorers program is for a career counselor to visit each YKSD community at least once this year. To this aim, Jeff Walters has visited five sites (Kaltag, Nulato, Rampart, Hughes, and Huslia) in fall semester and plans to visit the remaining five sites (Ruby, Allakaket, Tanana, Minto, and Koyukuk) in spring. During these visits, Jeff conveys information to students about current YKSD CTE activities, post-graduation opportunities, and related AKCIS (Alaska Career Information System) lessons. He also assists students with resume and cover letter preparations.

A second component of Career Explorers involves monthly delivery of AKCIS lessons to all middle school and high school students via distance delivery. This is carried out by Melissa Good, a counselor who graduated from high school in Galena.

Also LifeSkills lessons are being provided to students. Through this course students will learn the essential skills, personal qualities and values that enable students to thrive in the workplace. Furthermore, this course will help prepare students to be successful members of society. Students will learn basic skills such as: self-discovery, family basics, finances, career planning, computer skills, time management, etiquette and much more through learning opportunities in the classroom and the community. In addition, students will develop practical living skills such as being healthy, cooking, and cleaning. Students will be introduced to skills to successfully manage their personal finances. As students will need skills to successfully navigate the world of work, students will be introduced to communication skills, scheduling, conflict resolution, dressing for success, and appropriate use of technology.

In addition to these site visits and lessons—and in conjunction with the University of Alaska Fairbanks—Career Explorers planned two “Camps” this year, one in Nulato in November and one in Tanana in April. These week-long camps provide select 11th and 12th graders with an opportunity to explore career options in more detail, as well as prepare professional resumes and cover letters and practice job interview skills. Students who participate may earn one UAF credit as well as a stipend from Tanana Chiefs Conference. Unfortunately, weather was not our friend as we attempted to travel to Nulato November 13-17. Four students from other villages (two from Rampart, one from Hughes, and one from Allakaket) plus instructors and chaperones made two attempts in two days to travel to Nulato but, because of dense ground fog, could only make it as far as Galena before turning around and heading back to Fairbanks. AUGH! In the end, everyone defaulted to Plan B and the camp was held in Fairbanks. Fate continued to conspire against us as we tried to link the class to Nulato but were unable to make the link work. In the end, only the four above-mentioned students were able to participate—but they did GREAT work with their UAF instructors and all successfully completed the college-level class.

The spring semester Career Explorers camp is planned for Tanana April 15-19. Juniors and seniors, including those from Nulato who were unable to participate in November, may apply. In addition, Jeff is planning to revisit Nulato in early April with the hope of working one-on-one with graduating seniors to help finalize post-graduation plans and preparations.

Career Explorers is also planning an in-depth, individualized capstone program in Fairbanks for select graduating seniors April 29-May 3.

Career Explorers is excited for the work we're doing to help students explore CTE options in YKSD as well as post-graduation opportunities!



CTE - Career Explorers continued

Jeff Walters,
CTE Itinerant Career Counselor

Fall Career Explorers



Allakaket School

John Brady, Principal



We held a fall carnival the last week of October and everyone had a great time. We had about 10-12 activities for everyone to participate in. We raised about \$1,000 for our Student Activity Fund.



We've had a couple of game nights to raise funds for our Student Activity Fund with really good attendance and lots of fun for all.



STREAM Night activities: Five or six stations were set up for students and families to participate in. Afterwards, we served a spaghetti dinner.

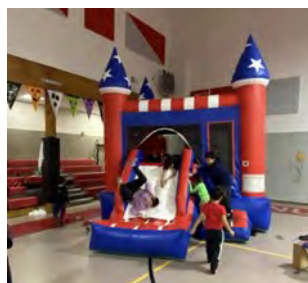


Lots of snow here got everyone in the mood for a good Thanksgiving Feast that was attended by 40-50 community members.

Andrew K. Demoski School

James Ortiz, Principal

It's a great day to be a Nulato Wolf! There have been so many things going on this second quarter. On October 23-27, Chad Dyson with Challenge Life came out to share drills, skills, and teach lessons on basketball with the students. The students love Chad and everyone had a fun time. On October 28, we had a Fall Carnival with the students and community. It was a huge hit with games, food, bounce house, and a cake walk.



Representatives from the University of Alaska at Fairbanks were here on October 23-25. Many of our high school students had a chance to talk with them about attending the school in the future. All of our seniors had a chance to talk with them about preparing for college next year. The Career and Technical crew came out for welding with our kids on November 6-9. Many of our students had a chance to participate in the program. One student in particular, Vegaas Kruger, was able to weld his own personal trailer for his four-wheeler. Students were able to manufacture rocket stoves and another four-wheeler trailer for school use.



On November 21, the school held a turkey luncheon for the community. It was a huge hit with both students and members of the community. Four turkeys and sides were made possible by Victoria Deacon, Katie Jo McGee, Katie Ortiz, and Ladean Ambrose.



Basketball is set to begin on Wednesday, November the 29. We plan on having a drone presentation for Duane Sipary's class and community on Dec 4 and 5. Albert Sokaitis will be here December 4-7 for basketball, a Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, December 9, and a Christmas Program on December 14. School will let out early on December 15 for Christmas break.

Johnny Oldman School

Andrew Bellamy, Teacher

Where has the time gone? Over the past two months, the students at Johnny Oldman School have decorated and held the annual Halloween Carnival, celebrated attendance milestones with ice cream, enjoyed STREAM night and movie night, had fun in all the fresh snow, and gave thanks at our community Thanksgiving meal. We're keeping it short and sweet this quarter but want to wish everyone Happy Holidays! We'll see you in 2024; in the meantime, enjoy the pictures of all our activities!



Kaltag School

Vicki Infrerra,
Principal /Teacher

On November 27 we had exciting times as Dancing with the Spirit came to Kaltag for 4 days, teaching 10 songs to all students K-12. A big Thank You to our Dancing with the Spirit musicians, Ryan, and Rosemary, for coming out and spending time with our students and teaching them how to play ukulele, fiddle, and guitar. We finished up with a community presentation, singing Christmas and Native Language songs. Everyone enjoyed the desert Bar and dance!



Trapper Ryan Bandy (CTE) (Arctic Circle Educators) was here and taught the students how to skin Martin and trap animals! Students were hands on engaged for days while learning ethics, safety, economics, traps, bait, lures, and how to market your furs once a animal is caught and skinned. Students participated actual Martin skinning! I think they were most engaged when they built their own Martin Box to keep and had a trap to keep! Jonah Semaken, grade 6, was happy to assist Ryan, Jonah likes to trap for fun and money,



Respect for Veterans! Ms. Poirier's K-3 class, wrote letters and cards to soldiers at Fort Wainwright, Fairbanks for Veterans Day. Soldiers were overjoyed to get the cards. They sent a photo back holding the class picture!

Our Christmas tree is up, thanks to the high school students!



Christmas Spirit Abounds with talented Paraprofessional's making Bulletin Boards Merry and Bright. Thank you, Shanna Cook, Hazel Olsen, Laura Saunders.

Thanksgiving was celebrated with a community and school potluck with almost 60 people were in attendance, three turkeys and so much food! So much to be thankful for! Meals were taken to Elders. Too.



A 21 pound Turkey was raffled and Fred Alexie Senior won it!

Stream Night was a Huge Success with 55 parents and family members in attendance. Thank you to Cristopher Carlson, YKSD Reading Specialist, teachers and students for setting up tables and helping everyone enjoy STEM Science Engineering Technology, mathematics games and interesting, thought-provoking activity. Thank you to Patty White for coming out to help Host Steam Night. We had a community dinner and each family received a large Connections Package filled with reading books, games and puzzles.

Native American Heritage Month was celebrated the importance of native students' cultural heritage and way of life.





Maudrey J. Sommer School

Jason Roslansky, Principal

As we approach the joyous holiday season, the Maudrey J. Sommer School wanted to take a moment to reflect on the exciting activities that have taken place recently. It has been a season filled with learning, exploration, and festive cheer.

One of the highlights of the past weeks was our Wilderness Survival Training and First Aid workshop led by the talented Abigail Duffield, the owner of Heart & Soul CPR. Our 5-12th grade students had the opportunity to acquire essential life skills in a hands-on and engaging environment. Abigail's expertise added a valuable dimension to our curriculum, leaving our students well-prepared for any outdoor emergency.

Another memorable event was the three-day healthcare career exploration minicamp conducted by Ian McCarthy and Spencer Toft from the UAA Alaska Center for Rural Health and Health Workforce. Our students had the unique opportunity to delve into the world of healthcare, with the highlight being the fascinating experience of dissecting a pig's heart. This immersive activity provided valuable insights into the medical field and sparked curiosity among our students.



Looking ahead, we have some exciting events lined up for the week at-hand. Jakobe Boyd, a Computer Science Facilitator from the YKSD District Office, will be joining us on December 12th to engage K-8th grade students in various computer science activities. This promises to be an enriching and fun-filled day of learning for our students, fostering their interest in the ever-evolving world of technology.

Additionally, we are thrilled to announce that Randy Bandy with Arctic Circle Educators will be offering a trapping course for Middle and High School students during the week of December 11th, 2023. This hands-on experience will provide students with insights into the traditional practices of trapping, connecting them with the rich cultural heritage of our region.

As we embrace the holiday spirit, we want to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May this festive season bring joy, warmth, and moments of togetherness with your loved ones.





Minto School

Minto School Staff

Accelerated Reading

Current Word Count for Minto: 3,655,080

We had 100% participation in the first quarter... We are not quite there for the second quarter.

Individuals who changed point clubs

Seeley (250 points)
 Emmett (50 points)
 Christopher (50 points)
 Barbara (100 points)
 Judie (25 points)

Top three-word counts

Seeley 533,185 Words read.
 Savannah 474,561 Words read.
 Easton 352,101 Words read.

Class	Books Read	Words Read
Mrs. Washburn	9	2032
Mrs. Heather	486	137,621
Mrs. Rose	351	459,449
Mr. Dube	153	1,481,554
Ms. Romano	56	754,792

Congratulations to Ms. Heather's class for having 100% participation in both quarters!



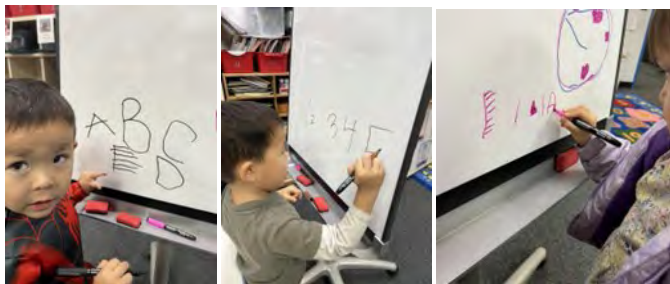
After school reading with Mrs. Washburn and Ms. Heather is going great!

Minto School continued

Minto School Staff

Preschool

I believe that a picture is worth a thousand words...



We are learning nursery rhymes. We are learning our numbers and letters and sounds and how to write them. We love to listen to and read books. We think we want to be a construction worker or a butterfly ballerina. We are living in the good old days when life is simple and love is abundant.

3rd-5th grades



We started off Quarter 2 with a Minecraft/Pizza Party celebration for the entire class reaching their AR reading goals! It was so good! Then we had our Halloween party followed by Trick or Treating. We also got our Battle of the Books teams situated and our books arrived. We have been reading chapter books each week to improve our reading abilities and bump up our personal, class, and school word count. We have been working hard to learn our math facts and are really getting them down! We learned about Thanksgiving and enjoyed our long break! We enjoyed some great snowball fights coming back from lunch with all the snow we have received. We are looking forward to Christmas and our long winter break.



Minto School continued

Minto School Staff

Middle School

Quarter 2 has been going along well. One day we spent a class period on the frozen lake. I was surprised to see how confident these guys were at walking on a frozen lake. They had no fear.

We had Halloween celebrations and a Day of the Dead celebration. For our Day of the Dead celebration we offered skull face painting and I had the students who wanted to participate write letters to their deceased loved ones. After all the students had their letters written, they folded them up and put them into the "ofrenda" and one lucky student (Justin) was picked to light it on fire (outside).

For science class, we had been studying the different systems of the body. We had a collection of preserved giant insects just laying around and multiple students had voiced how they wanted to dissect them. So, we did. Perfect timing. The kids had fun. Some were completely grossed out.



ART (Middle School) I cannot brag enough about these guys! Their art is gorgeous: Birch Trees



High School

In commemoration of Spooky Season, we studied several works by Edgar Allan Poe. We then wrote scary stories using a "medias res" (AKA starting in the middle of things) story opening. The object was to get students to illicit vivid sensory experiences instead of the usual "and then, and then" narrative style. Next, we created SCP files in order to practice writing in a clinical, scientific tone about an imaginative fictional topic. The SCP Foundation is a collaborative online writing project that takes the shape of a fictional secret organization, much like Men in Black or the X Files. The SCP Foundation secures, contains, and protects society from dangerous, unexplained things, then wipes the memories of the parties involved so they can continue their safe, mundane lives. Taking the point of view of a scientist writing a report about outrageous fictional characters helps students understand the power of point of view and tone in writing. Here's the vocabulary involved done on paint chips from Home Depot, as well as our standing in Vocabulary Bowl. Minto is #1.



Rampart School

Charles Burns, Principal

Rampart is doing very well. This fall and early winter has been a busy time. The students and staff have been working diligently to learn and grow.

Bryan Beus has made multiple trips out to work with the students on their reading skills. He is one of our district's Reading Interventionists. When not visiting in person, he works with our students regularly via Zoom.

Kela Gillihan, our excellent itinerant counselor, has made multiple visits to provide support to our students and staff. She works regularly with our secondary students to make sure they are making progress towards their eventual graduation.

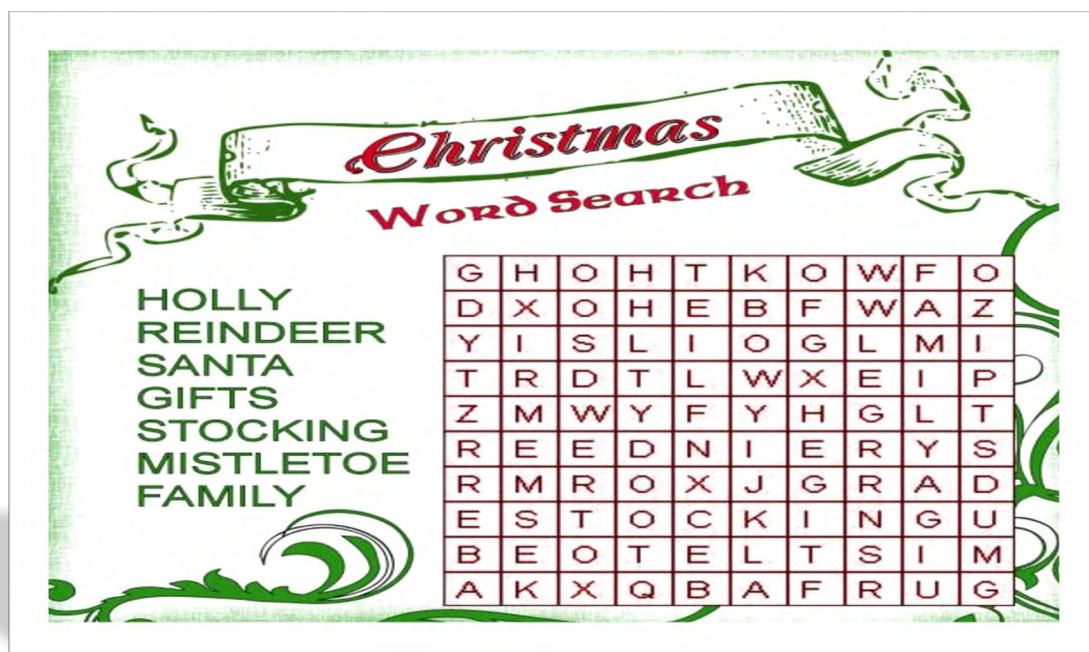
Wednesday, October 18th, we held our fall stream night. Stream nights to promote literature are great community events and include a community dinner in addition to the family activities.

On November 27th-29th Anthony Cavan, one of our district's excellent CTE instructors visited the school and worked with the students on woodworking. Anthony teaches not only practical skills but also focuses on safety and math skills.

Saturday, December 9th, Rampart held Saturday school to make up for missed class time earlier in the year.

Thursday, December 14th, Dancing with the Spirit put on a community performance at the school. A community dinner was held before. Everyone had a great time and enjoyed the community gathering.

Attendance is up from last Fall's rate of 88% to the current rate of 96%.





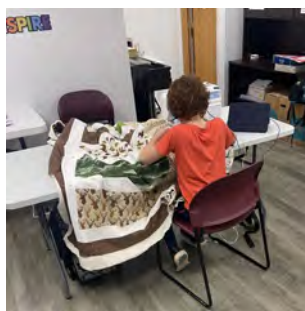
Raven Homeschool

Kim Bergey,
Raven Homeschool Director

Anchorage

The second quarter of this school year has been as busy as the first! Workshops, field trips, activities and meetings with families have kept us on our toes. Spanish Club, FLL, Mad Science Club, Quilting Club, Writing Club, and Dungeons & Dragons Club all meet weekly in our office. Our first ever Yearbook Club meets once a month as they prepare to create an amazing showcase of our activities and students. We celebrated Halloween with an amazing party that included carnival games, a pumpkin carving contest and a costume fashion show! Along with the Eagle River office, we created hundreds of placemats to be donated to Bean's Cafe for their Thanksgiving feast. We will wrap up the holiday season with a holiday party at Bear Tooth Theater so families can enjoy a pizza buffet and watch a movie with staff members.

We want to especially recognize our FLL team, The Mighty Ravens, who competed against other teams in the Anchorage area on December 2nd and walked away with a first-place trophy! They also earned a trophy for the best robot design. Our team worked hard together for several months to create their project and their hard work paid off. They're heading to the state competition in January to represent Raven!



Delta Junction

October and November have been very busy. We visited the Ft. Greely Fire Station for Fire Prevention Month. We had two other Field Trips: one to Delta Meat and Sausage, and a tour of UAF for our High School students. We held our Turkey in Disguise contest where turkeys were able to evade being eaten at Thanksgiving. At our Grateful Craft, students made placemats to add decoration to their homes for Thanksgiving. Our Scholastic Book Fair went over very well.



Raven Homeschool continued

Eagle River



We've been having a lot of fun in the Eagle River office! We started off this quarter with Halloween fun which included a trip to see *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* at the Performing Arts Center. Our families enjoyed a Halloween party complete with a pumpkin carving contest, costume contest, a raffle, and goodie bags for all. There were some cool workshops at the Campbell Creek Science Center: little ones learned about salmon while older kids learned outdoor survival skills. Pizza Man in Eagle River hosted a pizza workshop where kids got to make, bake, and eat their own pizzas. It was so popular, we had to book a second event to accommodate everyone! In honor of Thanksgiving, our Culinary Cook Off took on the theme of appetizers. We had such a variety of yummy items to choose from, and families got a few new ideas for their next holiday get-together. Finally, to help others enjoy Thanksgiving just a little more, our families came together to create beautiful placemats to be used at Bean's Cafe's Thanksgiving feast. We look forward to the fun we have in store for our families in the next quarter!



Fairbanks

The second quarter with Raven was much busier than the first. Our office hosted a Halloween party for the families with games and food for the kids. The Yearbook club, run by Shyler, had a photo booth set up for spooky family photos. We had a local artist come in and do painting sessions with the families. They created a pumpkin painting, painted pumpkins, and painted ornaments. November was full of many fun activities. Celeste has been running craft nights with many different craft options to choose from. Joe and Jennifer organized a field trip with families to the civil air patrol here in Fairbanks. Sally took a group to Raven Pottery Studio and created some beautiful pieces. We had Dan from Toyo host a class with us, teaching students about their heating systems and the mechanics. Coming up for the holidays, we will have a holiday party with food, games, prizes, a photo booth to create ornaments with your picture, and a bazaar for families and anyone in the office wanting to join!



Raven Homeschool continued

Juneau

Our second quarter of the year has continued to fly by with many fun activities and events. Science Fridays have been a big hit this year with alternating science experiments and origami models. Our Lego League team, “The One and Only 49ers,” practiced hard and prepared faithfully for the tournament, finishing in the top four so they get to go to the state competition. Pokémon Club, Chess Club, Math Club, and Lego Club all have a good amount of kids who enjoy sharing their interests with each other, and other regularly occurring events like Marvelous Mondays, Girls’ Gathering, Lunch Bunch, Poetry Teatime, and Adventures in Bookland continue to be quite popular. Some big events of the quarter included a visit from Ryan to meet with high school students, a police station field trip, big Halloween costume/craft party, fire station field trip, and the stocking stuffer gift exchange. Our Battle of the Books teams have gotten a good start to practicing together, and our doors are very festively decorated for this year’s contest, so it has been a wonderful few months this fall/winter.



Wasilla

The Wasilla Raven office has continued to be busy with workshops, activities, and field trips for students and parents to participate in. Our book club has been reading books having to do with animals. The students arrive excited to share what they thought of the current month’s book and their discussions have gotten increasingly more detailed. The chess club is a determined group, learning strategy, that meets once a month. The D&D club is a student favorite—playing out their scenarios. The bowling club is nice for families— the youngest to the oldest can participate. The Culinary Cook Off allows students to share their culinary skills. So far, they have showcased cookies, soup, chili, and pie. Students of all ages learn about famous artists and their work, as well as various art techniques when they come to the ARTiculate workshops taught by our fabulous family liaison, Daphne. She also facilitates the wildly popular Crafternoon workshops. The “Disguise Tom Turkey” contest went over well, and families can now enter the “Gingerbread House” contest. Our teachers have been working hard ensuring that progress reports are getting done, processing reimbursement requests, staying in contact with families, and getting any curriculum or service orders turned into the administrative assistants. The administrative assistants have been busy positively communicating with families in person, on the phone, and through their weekly communications. We, as a team, work hard at retaining and recruiting families for Raven and YKSD.



Santa Claus

Z H S V C E J W O R K S H O P N I G H T
 U G T A H S B D N A U G H T Y X D Q R E
 H M P H I O O R E A T R C O H O H O H M
 C A A G M N O E L V E S R O O F T O P O
 O G I I N Y T C G C T O Y M A K E R L C
 O I M E E R S N N O R T H P O L E E O U
 K C R L Y R P A I S I E C N E S S H D P
 I B N S M E D R R C A V I X E N R S U I
 E A W X C H U P K I H N Q N M Z E A R D
 S G N I K C O T S I L O T K D H T D Y R
 R U N R E D S U I T K S L A U E T I L A
 F A T H E R C H R I S T M A S A E P L E
 R E O B I M I L K I N D N E S S L R O B
 J R V X E B R R X T E P H P T X S R J W

beard
 Blitzen
 boots
 cherry nose
 chimney
 coal
 Comet
 cookies

Cupid
 Dancer
 Dasher
 Donner
 elves
 hat
 Ho ho ho
 jolly

kindness
 letters
 list
 magic bag
 milk
 Mrs. Claus
 naughty
 nice

night
 North Pole
 Prancer
 presents
 red suit
 reindeer
 rooftop
 Rudolph

Santa
 sleigh
 stockings
 toymaker
 Vixen
 workshop

