

MEMORANDUM

TO: NWABSD Board of Education
Members

DATE: November 25 2025

NUMBER:

FR: Office of the Superintendent

SUBJECT: Iñupiaq Program Report

Year 1: The Iñupiatun Iļisaqta Project (TIIP)

The NW Arctic Borough School District (NWABSD) aims to preserve Inupiaq culture and language, focusing on educational innovation for Alaska Native students. The project is designed around four main goals.

Goal 1: To increase NWABSD's Students' knowledge, skills and extent of the Inupiaq language and promote

Inupiaq fluency in reading, speech and writing.

- Define Inupiaq Pilot Immersion Pre-K classes in two schools, Inupiaq instructor PD curriculum development, implementation, assessments, and evaluations.

Goal 2: To increase Inupiaq language and cultural activities within High School Physical Science and Biology courses.

- Define HS Physical Science and Biology Courses Pilot three schools, Science instructor PD, curriculum development, implementation, assessments and evaluations.

Goal 3: To increase the exposure of the NWABSD Pilot Schools Iñupiaq language and cultural activities.

- Focus on increasing cultural activities within the schools and to include the expertise and language of Inupiaq speakers.

Goal 4: To provide opportunities for stakeholders to be actively involved in the development of the NWABSD curriculum and cultural activities by utilizing the local community in writing, developing, and incorporating Iļitqusiat.

- Focus on stakeholder involvement at all levels of the project.

Highlights Year 1: TIIP

- Creation of Iñupiaq Programs
 - Hiring of Director of Iñupiaq Programs – Paulette Schuerch
- Implementation of Knowledge Bearers Advisory Group
 - Discussed organization, cultural implications, activities, liaison for local input
 - Offered guidelines for monthly and seasonal activities, strategies, and vocabulary
- Iñupiaq Instructors
 - Weekly Monday morning meetings
 - Developed Lesson Design, practiced instructional strategies, developed Iñupiaq instructional phrases and vocabulary for pre-K through grade 12
 - Developed seasonal cultural activities, Iñupiaq vocabulary (both dialects); shared with Science curriculum teachers (refining of Physical Science course with cultural presentation, activities, and language
 - Reviewed previously developed student benchmarks for Iñupiaq language

- Began coordination of Pre-K pilot scope & sequence, activities, lessons, language (spoken & written), and benchmarks
 - EDC Winona Ballot
 - Coordination of Language Immersion studies for Iñupiaq instructors
 - Summer Language Immersion Class – 3 weeks May/June
 - Exploring and learning Iñupiaq language for instructors
 - 13 Instructors attended
- Pre-K Immersion Pilot
 - Pre-K scope & sequence, timeline, activities, language integration, and benchmark development to be completed by August 2026- Summer work of Winona Ballot and Nellie Cleveland.
 - Pre-K pilot to begin FY 27 – Ambler, JNES
 - Monthly logs, check-ins with Director and Outside/Independent evaluator
 - Student Benchmarking twice per year
 - Continuous feedback and refinement
- Science Curriculum
 - MOA with Crystal Redgrave for Iñupiaq cultural integration into Science Courses
 - Refinement of Physical Science Course for FY 27 Pilot in 3 schools (KMHS, Buckland, Selawik)
 - FY 26 – 4 science instructors refined 40 lessons/labs
 - Tie ins with language, seasonal activities, place-based
 - Completion by August 2026
 - Physical Science pilot to begin FY 27 (3 schools) – Buckland, KMHS, Noatak
 - Monthly logs, check-ins with Directors and Outside/Independent evaluator
 - Assessments and student data collection quarterly
 - Continuous feedback and refinement
- Future activities
 - FY 27
 - Pilot Pre-K Immersion Pilot (Ambler, KMHS)
 - Pilot Physical Science Class (KMHS, Buckland, Selawik)
 - Integration of Iñupiaq Studies into Biology coursework
 - Continued Monday morning Iñupiaq Instructor meetings
 - Survey for stakeholder feedback
 - Continuation of Knowledge Bearer feedback and meetings
 - Continuation of Language Immersion studies for Iñupiaq instructors
 - FY 28
 - Continue Pre-K Immersion Pilot
 - Biology Pilot
 - Continuous refinement of coursework
 - All others as above