

MEMORANDUM

TO: NWABSD Board of Education
Members

DATE: September 2026

NUMBER:

FR: Office of the Superintendent

SUBJECT: Iñupiaq Program Report

Year 1: The Iñupiatun Ilisaqta 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.

- FY 27- Inupiaq Pilot Immersion Pre-K classes in three schools (Buckland, Noatak, Selawik), Inupiaq instructor PD curriculum development, implementation, assessments, and evaluations.
- Completed Iñupiaq Instructors Language course offering during academic year and summer (2-week course) June 2026. Instruction indicated as noted below.
- Planned FY 27 continued language course offering after school, 4 days per week implemented.
- Iñupiaq Instructors – Kotzebue training and meeting week of in-service, Sept 8 –PD language training and classroom integration.

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

- FY 27 – implement Physical Science Course pilots Pilot three schools (Buckland, Noatak, Selawik), Science instructor PD, curriculum development, implementation, assessments and evaluations. Course includes student workbook, teacher guide, PowerPoint for lessons, relevant Iñupiaq literature, Iñupiaq words and phrases (written and recorded for pronunciation).
- Compilation of assessment student and instructor data; surveys of stakeholders.
- Review of lessons and curriculum by knowledge bearers for cultural connections and relevance.
- Utilization of data and feedback throughout the year for Physical Science Course refinement. Weekly TEAMS meetings for pilot teachers and Iñupiaq instructors from the 3 pilot schools with Crystal Redgrave. Outside Evaluation, Karen McCain, also attends.
- FY 27 – development of Biology course completion following previous foundation and framework established for Physical Science Course. (Pilot FY 28) Scheduled TEAMS and onsite meetings to be held and specific dates confirmed.

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 Iñupiaq speakers.
- Physical Science Course focuses on cultural activities, seasons, language and seasonal applications

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 Iitqusiat.

- Focus on stakeholder involvement at all levels of the project through surveys, stakeholder review, and knowledge bearer review. This leads to course refinement throughout FY 27.
- Knowledge bearer review meetings (3 per academic year). Discussion and Scheduling on-going.

Highlights Year 1: TIIP

- Iñupiaq Programs
 - NWABSD Career Opportunity postings for Director of Iñupiaq Programs and Bilingual/Bicultural Coordinator. Coordinator hired as of September 2026, Wanda Nauyaq Baltazar.
- 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
 - Meetings – FY 2y to be scheduled 3 times per school year to review and refine
- Iñupiaq Instructors
 - Weekly afternoon meeting (Tuesday-Friday, 2:30-3:30) via ZOOM to accommodate Iñupiaq language instruction
 - Mainly focused on Iñupiaq language instruction.
 - Additional activities, as needed:
 - 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
 - Coordination of Pre-K pilot scope & sequence, activities, lessons, language (spoken & written), and benchmarks
 - Modeled integration of Iñupiaq language, seasonal activities for classroom implementation
- Pre-K Immersion Pilot
 - Pre-K scope & sequence, timeline, activities, language integration, and benchmark development on-going. Immersion pre-k pilots: Winona Ballot and Nellie Cleveland. Development of timeline and curriculum to continue FY 27
 - 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
 - Stakeholder input and review
- 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 (Buckland, Noatak, Selawik)
 - FY 27 – 3 Physical Science instructors continued refinement of 40 lessons/labs
 - Tie ins with language, seasonal activities, place-based
 - Pilot implementation Fall 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
- FY 27 Development of Biology Course – following similar framework of Physical Science Course
- Continued activities
 - FY 27
 - Pilot Pre-K Immersion Pilot (Noatak, JNES)
 - Pilot Physical Science Class (Buckland, Noatak, Selawik)
 - Integration of Iñupiaq Studies into Biology coursework
 - Continued Iñupiaq Instructor language course and integration of language into student delivery
 - Survey for stakeholder feedback
 - Continuation of Knowledge Bearer feedback and meetings
 - Continuation of Language Immersion studies for Iñupiaq instructors
- Future activities
 - FY 28
 - Continue Pre-K Immersion Pilot
 - Biology Pilot
 - Continuous refinement of coursework
 - All others as above