

MEMORANDUM

TO: NWABSD Board of Education
Members

DATE: September 29, 2026

FR: Office of the Superintendent

SUBJECT: Curriculum and Instruction

Aeriale N. Johnson, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, reports on the following:

Assessment

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) has publicly released the Alaska System of Academic Readiness (AK STAR) and Alaska Science Assessment results from the 2025-2026 school year. AK STAR is administered to students in grades 3–9 for ELA and mathematics, while the Alaska Science Assessment is administered in grades 5, 8, and 10. The district has until October 2 to disseminate student results to families. A report to the Board will be presented during the work session.

Beginning-of-the-year universal screening using NWEA MAP and mCLASS is underway. Teachers will use this data to inform their instruction, including identifying students' needs, forming small groups, and selecting interventions.

Curriculum

In partnership with the Property Services Department, the C&I Department has distributed curricular materials across the district. We continue to respond to teacher and administrator requests as needs arise.

Forming a curriculum committee to assess curricular impact and needs is next on the C&I Department's agenda. This committee will also evaluate the K-12 Social Studies curriculum.

Instruction

The C&I Department has been supporting instruction through site visits, including observing students as they learn; meeting with teachers, administrators and community members; and teaching demonstration lessons. Working alongside teachers has built trust and opened honest conversations about the district's problems of practice and our learning communities. This communication informs district-led professional development.

Extra duty contracts for MTSS tutors have been issued at each site per student enrollment. Tutoring began on September 14. Each tutor must work with students a minimum of five hours per week through May 2027.

Professional Development

Professional development is the engine that drives teacher excellence and student achievement. The C&I Department is committed to building sustainable systems of professional development to include districtwide inservices, districtwide and site-based professional learning communities (PLCs), and classroom-embedded support.

The C&I Department hosted a four-day inservice the week of September 7. Certified and classified staff were provided with mandatory trainings and engaged in professional development on adopted curricular materials, assessments, and tools with publisher's staff developers; implementing instructional strategies with Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant staff developers; and supporting student

behavior with Susan Isaacs. This professional development was planned in alignment with the Board's Strategic Plan, administrator and teachers' expressed needs, and C&I staff's site visit observations.

All classified and certified PD participants were sent a survey at the end of the week. There were 107 respondents. The key data points were:

- 95% said that, thus far, this year's professional development is contributing to a culture of professional growth
- 91% said that the balance between professional learning, planning/preparation time, and site-based time was appropriate
- 88% said that they gained strategies they could use with students the following week
- 81% said that the inservice provided strategies for increasing student engagement
- 67% said that they would have preferred the training before students arrived

Respondents also contributed extended responses indicating a desire to increase the differentiation of professional development — especially for paraprofessionals and veteran teachers — and the amount of time they have during the sessions to apply their learning to lesson planning.

In response to the survey results, the C&I Department will continue to refine its offerings. Future facilitators have been asked to focus on ensuring that teachers have key takeaways that can be immediately applied and giving teachers time to make plans. A keynote and choice workshop have been added to the October 5 inservice that explicitly address engagement with Ellin Oliver Keene, the author of *Engaging Children: Igniting a Drive for Deeper Learning*. In addition, the twice-a-month district-led PLCs throughout the year will include sessions specifically geared toward paraprofessionals. On October 5 and on every fifth Monday PLC, classified and certified staff will also have an hour of choice workshop sessions.

This year's PLCs, which are held on early release Mondays, are highly structured for maximum impact as follows:

<i>First Monday</i>	<i>Second Monday</i>	<i>Third Monday</i>	<i>Fourth Monday</i>	<i>Fifth Monday</i>
Principal-Facilitated Site PLCs	District-Facilitated Content Area PLCs: Iñupiaq Iļisautri <i>Wanda Baltazar</i> PK-12 Instructional Paraprofessionals Science of Reading - Foundational Principles & Supports for Students and Teachers <i>Beverly Hardesty</i> Pre-K stand alone Creative Curriculum <i>Tracy Bell</i> K-5, including Multigrade Pre-K ClearMath <i>Stephanie Tsuya</i> Secondary Social Studies <i>Lori Lundgaard-Hall</i> Sixth Grade stand alone & Secondary ELA <i>Lorena German</i> Secondary Math/Science <i>Pat McDonald</i>	Principal-Facilitated Site PLCs	District-Facilitated Literacy Across the Curriculum PLCs: Iñupiaq Iļisautri <i>Wanda Baltazar</i> PK-12 Instructional Paraprofessionals Science of Reading - Foundational Principles & Supports for Students and Teachers <i>Beverly Hardesty</i> PK-2 <i>Lea Steiner</i> 3-6 <i>Tiffany Neal</i> 7-12 ELA <i>Sara Gretina</i>	District-Facilitated Choice Workshops

			7-12 Science, Math, Social Studies <i>Karen Grose</i>	
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