

EDUCATING ALL OUR STUDENTS TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL AS RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS

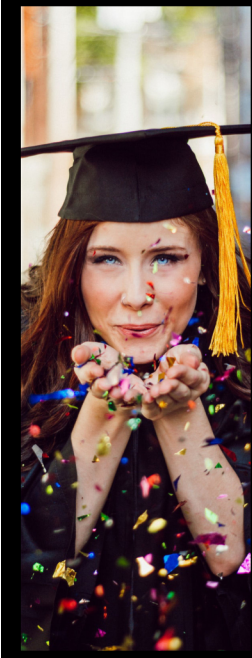
FROM OUR SUPERINTENDENT

Christmas is a celebration deeply etched into the fabric of American culture and identity. It is filled with the traditional symbols of faith and love that help to bind us together as a nation and community. We here in the North enjoy our own special versions of these traditions that are unlike anywhere else and that bring us closer together. Along with the lights adorning trees, houses, and streets, it makes me think of watching the aurora dance across a clear winter sky, drinking hot chocolate, and using the mug to keep our hands warm. We have our community potlatches and dinners, making sure that no one goes home hungry or without a plate of food for tomorrow. We are heartened by the words of our pastors and elders. We smile at children singing and at sincere speeches that may run a little long, and we clap loudly for the effort of a performance well done. Christmas is a time to focus on the importance of our families, a time to nourish old friendships and start new ones. It is a time to reflect on the past and plan for the future.



For students, the chaotic weeks leading up to Christmas can sometimes be stressful, both in the classroom and at home. Students can become more fidgety, giggly, testy, and tired. They may be distracted by all of the excitement of home activities. They may also be reacting to increased stress at school, as regular schedules are disrupted by assemblies, plays, and special events, and we all know how changes in routine can throw off children's behavior. For some of our staff too, the holidays may be a time that is lonely, as some are far from their families and may not be able to go home to visit. They are just beginning to really know their colleagues and neighbors. This is a perfect time for all of us to reach out and make sure that everyone in our schools – students and staff – are included and engaged in our traditions. Let them know how very much the vital work they do for our kids every day of the year is appreciated, and that they are an essential part of the fabric of our communities.

The mission statement of Alaska Gateway School District is to “educate all students to reach their full potential as responsible citizens.” Schools cannot do this alone – students become responsible citizens in our communities by engaging in exactly these kinds of traditional activities, be it attending church on Christmas Eve or helping to prepare a feast for the whole community. This time of year is a firm reminder of why we do this important work for our kids, which is so critical in making our northern communities great places for all of us to learn, work, and live. I would like to give sincere thanks to all of the students, parents, staff, and community members who each, in their own way, make our schools wonderful places to be. Merry Christmas, everyone!



AGSD

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GATEWAY AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Gateway After-School Program (GAP) will finish for the semester today Thursday, December 20th. The program will start back up district wide on Tuesday, January 8th. On the first day back in Tok, students will do some group activities and choose their personalized playlists for the coming 6-week rotation. The individualized sessions offered by the GAP program encourage students to Engage, Discover and Achieve. Also, if students need academic support and/or to finish work, homework help/tutoring/academic enrichment sessions are offered each day of the GAP schedule at all school sites.

From all the staff at the GAP program we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please call Pam Gingue, 907-505-0010, or email, pgingue@agsd.us if you have any questions about the GAP program.

ALASKA GATEWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT

WISHES YOUR FAMILY

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

We sincerely hope your family has a safe and prosperous holiday. We look forward to seeing you back at school on Monday, January 7, 2019!

Mentasta Lake Katie John School resumes on Thursday, January 3, 2019.

PHLIGHT CLUB

Phlight Club Academy is a two-day, student leadership program hosted by Alaska Gateway School District in partnership with Brightways Learning’s Kaleidoscope Connect services. The Phlight Club Academy was hosted this year by Mentasta Lake Katie John School. The district is grateful for the hospitality offered by Principal Craig Roach and his staff.

At this Phlight Club event, students learned tools and strategies for “what they need to succeed” in school and life. They focused on the importance of a personal web of support and how to gain the hard and soft skills necessary to turn dreams into realities (for themselves and others.) As the two-day event wrapped up, students had the opportunity to think about life after school and how they will access career and post-secondary opportunities.

Thirty-seven students from across the district attended the event along with staff from all schools. Students and staff built relationships with team games and challenges. There was also time to unwind and have fun, as a dance was hosted in the evening. Ashlee Copper, Career and Technical Education Counselor, acknowledged the experience had been valuable for participants. “The exercises in the Phlight club empowered students with the skills to plan their pathways to success.” Copper added, "I enjoyed having the opportunity to support our students to build foundations for individual support."

The Phlight Club will be offered annually to AGSD students in 9th through 12th grade through our Gateway After School Program grant.



STUDENT VOICE

It is with great pleasure we announce that Tyler Berg, an 11th grade student at Tok School, has won first prize in the Alaska Professional Hunter's Association annual 2018 Youth Essay Contest. It is reprinted here, with permission:

It was August 2nd in the Wrangell mountains, a cold rainy day full of hard work, bitter disappointment, and great success. It was the day I killed my first Dall sheep. It was legal in two aspects: he was eight and double broomed. That was the day I decided I wanted to become an Alaskan hunting guide specializing in Dall sheep hunts because I love feeling that connection to the outdoors and the animals who live in it.

I have been hunting and fishing all my life. I was taught by my parents and grandparents. My family lives off of wild game meat all year. We eat duck in the spring and fall, bear in the summer, and moose, caribou, Dall sheep, and salmon in the fall and winter, so conserving the land is very important to me. I am careful not to leave any trash and hunt responsibly so the animals will be here for years to come. My interest in being a guide is partly to help others experience what it is like to live off the land and to harvest your own meat.

I've been able to help others by doing what I love. I've shared meat by proxy hunting for three people in Tok that can't hunt for themselves. I plan to help disabled people experience hunting by donating one hunt a year to disabled veterans. Being a hunting guide takes lots of knowledge about the terrain and animals you are hunting. For example, hunting moose in early season, higher in the mountains, vs. later season in the rut when they are down lower. I've gained this knowledge by observing animal behavior my whole life. You also need to be an assistant guide for three seasons, have 125 days of field experience, be at least 21, have hunted in Alaska for five years, be qualified in first aid, and be recommended by eight big game hunters in writing. I plan on being an assistant guide for a guide camp next fall. I have passed the knowledge test for my pilots' license and am working on getting flight hours. I will definitely be qualified to become a guide by the time I'm 21. My goal of being an Alaskan hunting guide is very achievable with the plans I have laid out.

I believe I can make a big difference in the quality of guided hunts in Alaska. My favorite animal is Dall sheep, and I want to see them hunted properly using the right management tools. I love the thrill of being in the mountains and spotting a legal ram, stalking it, and eventually making the kill. I have been successfully guiding resident friends for over five years, because I know where to find the animals and how to stalk them. Feeling their excitement on a successful hunt that I helped with has helped me realize that I want to be a part of this for the rest of my life.

By Tyler Berg



PRESCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES

Alaska Gateway School District Awarded State Preschool Grant

AGSD recently received word that we are a recipient of a state preschool grant. Currently, AGSD partners with TCC Head Start in the communities of Northway (a center-based program for ages 3-5), Tetlin, and Tanacross (home-based programs for children ages 0-5 and their families). With the state award, AGSD will supplement those programs with transition activities for children entering kindergarten next fall. In addition, AGSD has funding for staff and supply support for those communities. Dot Lake and Eagle will have center classes for children ages 3-5. Transition activities will also be provided to children in those communities who will be entering kindergarten in the fall. REACH will be able to provide preschool services to their students ages 3-5.

Gateway READY Grant Objectives

Objective 1: Implement the *Gateway READY!* program for families and students in Pre-K that will show measured improvements on age level targets.

Objective 2: Provide early intervention and support for students who lack the identified skills and competencies using appropriate assessment measures.

Three Components of the Grant:

Site Based Program

- All sites except REACH: 4 days per week, 3 hrs. per day
- Tok: 4 year olds as of September 1st, 2018
- Outlying sites: 3 and 4 year olds as of September 1st, 2018

Transition Program

- Will happen in the spring and will target students entering Kindergarten in the fall of 2019.
- Aide will be hired to accompany these students for 4-6 weeks into the regular kindergarten classroom.

Gateway READY! Parent Classes - These activities will be hosted by Jane Teague, Pam Gingue, and Carrie Beeman in the evenings.

We look forward to being able to provide preschool and transition services as well as family engagement activities to the children and families of the Alaska Gateway School District.