



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

**FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT**

As I write this, it is the 13th of August, and is 6 months to the day, that Governor Dunleavy closed schools across Alaska. Since then we have gone through a highly fluid period of uncertainty preparing for reopening our schools, the mission and vision of Alaska Gateway has provided us critical guidance. It has focused our efforts on solving issues that are difficult to navigate, in particular student learning. All summer we have been working to address this reality, establishing protocols to not only keep our students and staff safe, but also developing appropriate systems of delivering instruction that will ensure all of our students have a successful learning experience, no matter where they are, or what their family situation is. While there are no sure things in life, and there is always some risk... in this case I believe the odds are well in our favor, and if we are able to successfully do the things that we KNOW works, then we will not only be able to rise to the challenge of this moment for our students, but we will also move further toward what schools have needed to become in the future...more engaging and more flexible, more rigorous and relevant...and much more mobile truly becoming classrooms without walls.

Right now, with just one more week until classes begin across the district in all their various forms, the weight and responsibility of this moment is heavy, as is the trust that the leadership of our communities are placing on all of our school leadership. To accomplish what we need to do, there is a lot to be aware of, with daily changes in what we understand about the virus...there are many aspects that have to be addressed to make it work. What follows is a short summary of what the district has done, and is doing, to focus on safety, and on learning.

**To address student and staff safety** in the immediate future, we are currently finalizing the details of, (for example), exactly how students will social distance while riding the bus to school, and how we will deal with an ill student or staff, and on what we can physically do in our buildings to mitigate the virus, like increasing airflow, and installing air-filtering and UV systems in all classrooms. We are not only providing free masks, installing touchless hand-sanitizers in each classroom, and giving all teachers touchless thermometers, but also designing lunch, recess and PE protocols to ensure adequate time and space. We have been looking at how GAP will work, or sports. We know how very important sport are to our students and their families, but too, that sports participation includes travel and intermingling with other communities during a time when that seems pretty risky. Working out if it is even possible to do it safely is one of our top priorities, and we intend to follow ASAA, as well as our local guidelines. See [www.agsd](http://www.agsd)

The district is establishing a "HAT" (a Health

Advisory Team), that will work with each of our communities to make informed decisions about action steps and our Alert Status...the HAT includes district, community and regional leaders, along with medical experts to help steer our direction and to work out methods of effectively communicating this to all our parents.

**To address learning and instruction**, staff worked through the summer focusing on converting their classes to an LMS...a Learning Management System platform, so that all students, either in and out of the classroom, will be able to work with teachers to continue doing "blended learning", whether student is at home or in-person. To address various family needs we now have three program options for learning: Our preferred and most effective "In-School" Learning program, "HomeLink Classroom", our hybrid program, and "REACH" correspondence home school. The district has published a flier on what those options are, and what families will need to choose what is best them and their child. Learning and teaching this fall will look very different from what was done at the end of last year. We will not repeat the mistakes from last spring, and will ensure that students are held accountable for what they need to learn.

Programs with small populations...for example a welding or greenhouse or cultural class with a small number of students, may be able to continue in school at all levels, as we have a lot of space in which to work and spread out, and according to our medical experts, we can do this in a safe way. This includes our small population of special needs students, who need stability and an environment where they feel safe and comfortable so they can continue their learning.

**To address internet access for all** AGSD families, we are also working to help households get improved internet access, in Tok and in our villages...so that when we do need to shift to a home learning environment temporarily, we can do it quickly. Last spring we spent weeks getting our students connected, and although all of our students had digital devices, not everyone could use them. It took too long to get connectivity up and running, even though we had staff specifically assigned to doing that. This fall, we want all families to have access right from the beginning and throughout the entire school year, so that kids and parents can connect with their teachers, their tutors, or their special service providers no matter where they are. This year, families with eligible high needs children will also receive an annual "Internet Allotment" that they can put toward bringing meaningful broadband into their homes, so that their child does not miss important learning opportunities. We are negotiating for every AGSD family who has AP&T internet access to receive a credit from AP&T with subsidies from AGSD, that will enable affordable broadband into their homes during the school year, for around the price of a regular

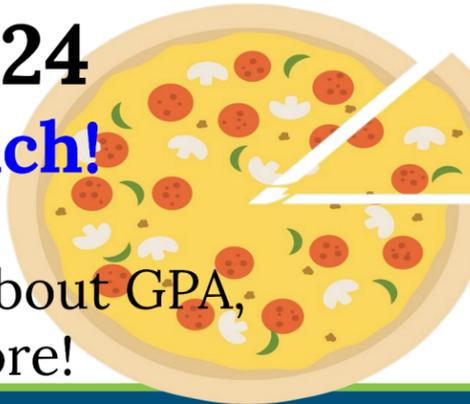
phone. This should make a big difference.

The COVID-19 Pandemic is a global tragedy with nearly 800K deaths worldwide, as of today...5.2M known cases in the US alone since it started. Alaska has been largely insulated from this, due in part to the good work of our own Dr. Zink (Thank you!) All this taken together is a big bite, as we work to be responsive not only to the changing knowledge and information that flood us daily, but also to the very real personal and emotional aspects of this. Some people are frightened, others completely unconcerned. As with most things, I'm sure we will find the truth of it lies somewhere in the middle. We are taking into account those who believe that the pandemic is overblown, and also working to address the very legitimate concerns of those who feel that the response of the district...and of the state and nation, is insufficient. But we will get to where we need to be by respecting others...and by demonstrating it in our actions. While some may not feel such things as wearing masks or regular hand-washing is merited, we will do it in school anyway, because it shows caring for each other, and in the worst case scenario it does no harm. In the best case it may save lives. Surely a small personal inconvenience during a period of uncertainty is worth the life of a friend or neighbor, or colleague. I'm no doctor, and can make no personal arguments on that issue one way or the other...but I can follow the clear guidelines established by our medical professionals with the confidence that they are giving us their best advice. They have nothing to gain by giving out bad information. And I know that I care about our kids and our staff, and our community, and will do everything reasonably possible to ensure that our schools are safe places for people to learn and work in. I also know that it is impossible to keep everyone happy all the time. To that, the district asks for grace and patience with the understanding that we will work to address what we are able and to balance the many opposing perspectives. I do encourage all staff and parents to stay as informed as possible, starting by downloading the AGSD app, (in the iTunes store), and to check our website regularly for updates on the district and state status. Each site's current COVID status is shown on the AGSD homepage, by color. For information on COVID protocols, see [www.agsd](http://www.agsd).

I know that working together is the best way for us to get through this and come out the other side whole, with a healthier and more vibrant community. Teachers working with families and school principals and the district working with community leadership and our regional partners. We have to do this together. That is the only way. It is something that as a community we have done before, and that I know we can do now.

*Respectfully, Scott MacManus, Superintendent*

**CLASS OF 2024  
9th Grade Launch!**



Come Find Out All About GPA, Scholarships and More!

Tok School  
September 1st  
5:30pm - 7:30pm

**PIZZA!  
PRIZES!**

Online Portal Available

All AGSD 9th Graders and their families are encouraged to attend

Alaska Gateway School District • Tok School Gym •

**Gateway READY! PreKindergarten is open for enrollment!**

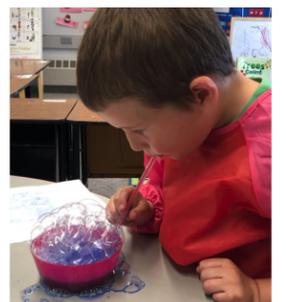
Alaska Gateway School District is pleased to announce that we are offering a Pre-K class for 4-year-old children at Tok School beginning Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2020. The classes will be held 4 days per week, Monday through Thursday, from 8:00 to 11:30am each day. They can ride the bus in the morning, and parents will need to pick up them from school at the end of class(11:30 am) each day. Criteria for PreK enrollment includes:

- Children must have turned 4 by the school cut-off date of September 1, 2020.
- Children must be toilet trained.

To enroll your child, please go to the district web site, [agsd.us](http://agsd.us), and look for "new student enrollment". Copies of immunization records and birth certificates are required.

For more information, contact [pgingue@agsd.us](mailto:pgingue@agsd.us)

Pam Gingue, [pgingue@agsd.us](mailto:pgingue@agsd.us).



## WELCOME NEW STAFF TO TOK SCHOOL



Shane Schoeneberg, originally from North Dakota, has worked in education at the secondary and collegiate levels over the past decade. He has coached a variety of sports at both college and high school level, all across the country and he has a true passion for working and educating today's youth.



Lacy Schoeneberg originally from Washington state, is currently obtaining her second Master's degree and has lived and worked all across the lower 48 on a number of feature films and video productions. Her passion for humanities, language, and storytelling drives her dedication to education.



Jessica Winkler came to Tok from Baton Rouge, and is very excited to be here with her husband and 2 rambunctious children, Elijah (3) and William(1). She graduated from Western Governors University with a degree in special education and elementary education. Jessica enjoys taking photos and being outdoors in her free time. She is excited to get to know each student as well as becoming an active member of the community.

## GATEWAY SUMMER CULTURAL INSTITUTE



AGSD held our annual Summer Cultural Institute at Mari Hoe-Raitto's fish camp on the Yukon River this year. Funded by our RAVE and AChill grants, a group of teachers from across the interior spent the week in an outdoor classroom, learning lessons and skills that will be taken back to their classrooms across the region. Teachers learned how to set fish nets on the river. They prepared fish and learned canning and smoking techniques. The was an opportunity to work with a traditional carpenter learning rustic bush crafts, to attend a digital storytelling workshop, and learn more about Alaska native

cultures by participating in workshops on such things as beading, or preparing traditional meals, and having in-depth discussions with elders on cultural knowledge and traditions. Plant workshops allowed teachers to learn about traditional plants along the river that have medicinal properties. A plant dyeing session resulted in a selection of scarves that showed off the range of hues and colors some local plants can offer. Teachers left with great new ideas for their classrooms and forged new friendships across Alaska. These new relationships will serve them well as they head into an uncertain year of teaching in Alaska schools.

## IS HOMELINK CLASSROOM RIGHT FOR YOUR CHILD? ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS BELOW MAY HELP YOU DECIDE!

### HomeLink is a GOOD Fit For My Child:

- My student is an independent, self-motivated learner
- I feel confident about my student's chance for success in online learning
- Our family can support my student's learning at home
- My student is excited about learning at their own pace
- My student has regular access to the internet
- My student is comfortable using computers and reading online
- My student can follow a schedule
- My student asks for help when needed
- An adult will be home to enforce schedules and assist my student when needed

### HomeLink is NOT a Good Fit For My Child

- My student is not an independent or self-motivated learner
- Online learning is a last resort for my student
- My student won't have regular or consistent internet access
- I want something easier or faster than in-person learning for my student
- My student does not usually ask for help on their own
- My student does not like to spend time on the computer
- My student struggles to follow a schedule
- My student tends to procrastinate
- We will have difficulty having an adult at home to enforce schedules and to assist my student when needed