



# NORTON SOUND EDUCATION SUMMIT

Our Education, Our Cultures, Our Time



# Table of Contents

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<b>SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE SUMMIT.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>NEXT STEPS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>SUMMIT IN DETAIL.....</b>	<b>9</b>
General Sessions Summary.....	9
Opening General Session / Friday, October 9.....	9
Morning General Session / Saturday, October 10.....	11
Luncheon General Session / Saturday, October 10.....	11
Closing General Session / Sunday, October 11.....	13
<b>SUMMIT YOUTH GATHERING SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>EDUCATION INITIATIVES &amp; TRACK SUMMARIES.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Cultural Relevancy.....	15
Early Childhood & Elementary Education.....	16
Postsecondary Preparation & Transitioning Success.....	18
Growing Our Own Teachers.....	19
<b>SUMMIT REPORT APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>21</b>
Appendix A: Norton Sound Education Working Group Members.....	22
Appendix B: Cultural Relevancy Track - Session Notes.....	23
Appendix C: Early Childhood & Elementary Education Track - Session Notes.....	28
Appendix D: Postsecondary Preparation & Transitioning Success Track - Session Notes.....	30
Appendix E: Growing Our Own Teachers Track - Session Notes.....	35



Mrs. Sandi Keller's first grade class from Nome Elementary School sings *Aarigaa* to welcome participants to the summit.

# SUMMARY

With the goal of improving educational opportunities and outcomes for students from early Head Start through postsecondary levels in the Norton Sound region, a number of entities came together to form the Norton Sound Education Work Group (NSEWG). The Work Group organized a regional education summit in Nome on October 9-10-11, 2015, to engage diverse representatives in dialogue with the theme of: Our Education, Our Cultures, Our Time. This was an important regional opportunity to express visions for the future with solutions that will (1) yield improvements in the cultural relevancy of education and schools, (2) boost growing our own teachers, (3) support early childhood education, and (4) increase graduation rates at the high school, college and vocational levels.

A common message shared during the summit from keynotes and workshop discussions was that the region is rooted upon indigenous cultures (Inupiaq, Central Yup'ik and St. Lawrence Island Yupik) which need to be validated, strengthened and incorporated in our educational systems to be reflective of and effective with the communities and people. The participants also voiced that collaborative and multicultural approaches to education initiatives are key to holistic student and school performance. We must sincerely involve community members and local-regional organizations to work together with schools, teachers and programs. This is a foundation to ensure we are respectfully grounded in our approaches with culturally relevant methods that authentically reach our students and communities with high expectations and appropriate standards.

The summit recognized that advancing the regional educational system is bigger than just changing a single component or element. For example, it is essential to train and hire local people for leading and teaching in our regional schools and organizations, but that is one important component in larger systemic changes to best serve students and communities. The changes for improvements can be very exciting and equally challenging—it will take our leadership to cooperate together with community support for implementing the summit recommendations and NSEWG initiatives.

Overall, the summit was tremendously well received, which helped to connect the region and engaged people and entities so that they will cooperate in the work ahead. The summit facilitated valuable starting points and conversations that informed the region, schools, NSEWG and its subcommittees to take into account many community-level perspectives. Summit participants recognized that we will need to work through both small and large challenges, but the educational benefits and outcomes will be extremely positive for today's students and generations to come.

Membership in the NSEWG is open, and to join or ask for more information, contact:

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Summit and work group information is also available online at [nsewc.com](http://nsewc.com).

# 2015 Norton Sound Education Summit

OUR EDUCATION, OUR CULTURES, OUR TIME

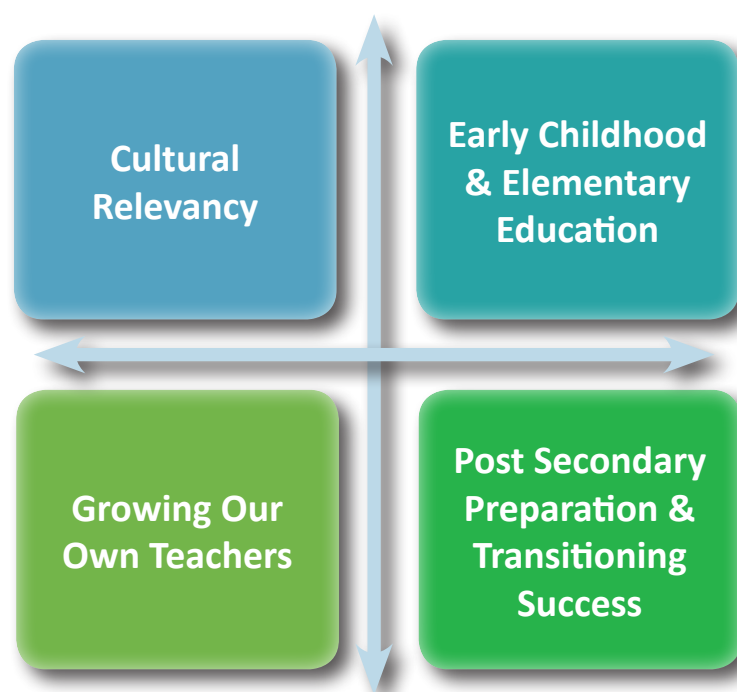
## INTRODUCTION

With the goal of improving educational opportunities and outcomes for students from early Head Start through postsecondary levels in the Norton Sound region, a number of entities came together to form the Norton Sound Education Work Group (NSEWG). The Work Group organized a regional education summit in Nome on October 9-10-11, 2015, to engage diverse representatives in dialogue with the theme of: Our Education, Our Cultures, Our Time.

The NSEWG was formed in April of 2014 by entities which make up the region's educational framework, and began meeting informally to address common goals and challenges. The NSEWG has grown to encompass many representatives that recognize widespread collaboration is needed for effective changes and improvements. The summit was an outcome of the NSEWG collaboration and envisioned to engage the region in improving our efforts for continued success. Four educational focus areas were identified as initiatives to advance outcomes and presented for feedback during the summit:

1. Cultural Relevancy
2. Growing Our Own Teachers
3. Early Childhood and Elementary Education
4. Post Secondary Preparation and Transitioning Success

Over three days, the summit gathered 271 registered participants including youth/students, parents/com-



The NSEWG has focused on four educational initiatives.

munity members, teachers, principals, superintendents, tribal and city council members, school and organization board members, and local/regional/state level leadership. This diversity of perspectives from across the region and state informed a series of discussions that shared ideas and formed strategies to improve our regional education systems and programs. These summit conversations led to positively influencing systemic school changes, integrating regional cultures and indigenous values in education,

Partner organizations in the NSEWG & Summit included the following (as of October 2015):

- Bering Straits Native Corporation & Foundation

- Bering Strait School District (BSSD)

- Kawerak, Inc.

- Nome Eskimo Community

- Nome Public Schools

- Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center (NACTEC)

- Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC)

- Norton Sound Health Corporation

- Sitnasuak Native Corporation & Foundation

- University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) – Northwest Campus



Kawerak President Melanie Bahnke addresses the summit on a vision for the future.

and enhancing community-parent-student-school relationships for the success of our children.

This was an important regional opportunity to express visions for the future with solutions that will:

1. Yield improvements in the cultural relevancy of education and schools

2. Boost growing our own teachers
3. Support early childhood education
4. Increase graduation rates at the high school, college and vocational levels

# THE SUMMIT

The 2015 Norton Sound Education Summit convened at the Nome Elementary School over three days on October 9-10-11, 2015, with the theme of Our Education, Our Cultures, Our Time. The summit represented a call to action for progressing and evolving regional educational initiatives that could inspire all people to advance Pre-K-12-University educational systems with buy-in from teachers, parents and students. The summit was designed to gather community-level input, build support for regional initiatives, and support collaborative action for improvements.

The theme guided the philosophy and implementation of the summit—it is our education, and the region has the solutions to educational challenges when given the time, space and opportunity to make our voices heard and collected. Involvement of the region’s organizations during the summit was foundational to both the planning and implementation. The NSEWG purposefully designed invitations, presentations and discussions during the summit with a focus on local communities and regional leadership to voice visions, challenges and solutions. The summit was also designed so that the region could engage and gain support from schools, universities, state government and statewide organizations—but these entities were encouraged to support (versus steer) community-level needs and be informed by the region to work inclusively in partnership.

The summit supported the amazing synergy among partner organizations that grew from the creation of the NSEWG. The NSEWG was formed to work toward common goals in education and presented a forum to “join forces”—reinforce regional partnerships and nurture diverse collaborations. The summit planning process helped to build trust and teamwork among entities that carried forward into the summit gathering. These NSEWG meetings (over the course of a year) enhanced working relationships which accumulated into the summit to promote working in the right direction and focusing on the larger educational and community issues.

The agreements or ground rules observed during the summit (developed by First Alaskans Institute) were very effective in creating safe forums for deep conversations that could advance our schools, students and communities. One could see and hear the expression

of the region’s cultural values during the summit that was foundational for engaging in meaningful dialogue—such as respect for others, knowledge of language, sharing culture and traditions, and love for children. This was emphasized during the opening panel presentation by Elder Agggunaat Esther Bourdon when she presented all in Inupiaq. This expression of culture resonated throughout the summit, deepened participant interactions and accentuated keynote addresses and track presentations. Participants appreciated the summit as an open and safe meeting environment for discussing challenges, issues and solutions relating to culture, identity, education, school and community.



Holly Nordlum of Naniq Designs worked with the NSEWG to design the education summit logo.

A common message shared during the summit from keynotes and workshop discussions was that the region is rooted upon indigenous cultures (Inupiaq, Central Yup’ik and St. Lawrence Island Yupik) which need to be validated, strengthened and incorporated in our educational systems to be reflective of and effective with the communities and people. The participants also voiced that collaborative and multicultural approaches to education initiatives are key to holistic student and school performance. We must sincerely involve community members and local/regional organizations to work together with schools, teachers and programs. This is a foundation to ensure we are respectfully grounded in our approaches with culturally relevant methods that authentically reach our students and communities with

high expectations and appropriate standards.

The summit also addressed the importance of integrating indigenous languages and traditions in K-12 and postsecondary instruction with students, teachers and communities. When we lift up our Bering Strait indigenous cultures and communities, we lift up our regional students and people that can effectively promote mutual-respect and confidence for life-long success. For example, during the keynote by Mary Huntington, she shared hands-on group activities in Inupiaq that can be practiced in our schools. These included singing the Hokey Pokey as a fun way to learn Inupiaq; demonstrating with the Koyuk teachers and students to speak the National Pledge of Allegiance in Inupiaq as a regular way to open the school day; and teaching the summit the Going to College Eskimo Dance to tie traditions to postsecondary efforts.

During the summit, a number of statistics and research data were shared that demonstrated often shocking regional educational needs and social conditions. These statistics are generally long-standing that show a crisis needing change—part of the call to action in the organization of the summit. Participants agreed it is important to share these statistics, but with ways to use them to support effective change. In the future, it is also important to invite experts to help broadly understand why we need changes and facilitate collaborations at the community level.

The summit also recognized that advancing the regional educational system is bigger than just changing a single component or element. For example, it is essential to train and hire local people for leading and teaching in our regional schools and organizations, but that is only one important component in larger systemic changes to best serve students and communities. Participants recognized that staff, teachers and administrators need to work within a system of requirements—and these requirements and systems need to be reviewed and improved to best meet the needs of students in the region. These changes and improvements can be very exciting and equally chal-

lenging—it will take our leadership to cooperate together with community support for implementing the summit's recommendations and NSEWG initiatives.

The summit highlighted the importance of preparing our students for successful futures and healthy lives that support overall community wellness. From early childhood to secondary levels, children must learn both who they are and who they are meant to become—this self- and cultural-identity sets a lifelong basis for wellness and postsecondary achievement. Strong self-identity linking indigenous culture can

ensure very successful preparation and transitions for our students to realize postsecondary opportunities, inclusive of being prepared for training-college and for healthy adult lives in the region. In the long-term, this will have many ripple effects from one student grounded in their identity who

completes a degree or training program, and returns to the region to work and live. This ripple continues from the center of positively impacting the individual to flowing outwardly among our families, our organizations, our communities and our state.

Overall, the summit was tremendously well received by participants and the region. The turnout of participants was well above the number planned and there was exceptional attention to speakers with many dialogues. One could “feel the buzz in the room.” It was great to see and hear the engagement of many summit participants in significant educational conversations, particularly those which foresaw the full fusion of our regional cultures in our schools.

The summit proved to be an effective regional gathering that promoted partnerships with communities, parents and schools, so that our education can continue to grow into something done with you (not to you). The success of the summit has also attracted the interest of other regions as well as statewide agencies such as the University of Alaska system, Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network, and the Lieutenant Governor Byron Mallot. The work of the summit will continue with the meaningful recommendations and partnerships both created and strengthened during the event.

***We must sincerely involve community members and local/regional organizations to work together with schools, teachers and programs.***

## THE NEXT STEPS INVOLVE YOU!

# NEXT STEPS

The summit was a great first step that helped to connect the region and engaged people and entities to cooperate in the work ahead. The summit facilitated valuable starting points and conversations that informed the region, schools, NSEWG and its subcommittees to take into account many community-level perspectives. Summit participants recognized that we will need to work through both small and large challenges, but the educational benefits and outcomes will be extremely positive for today's students and generations to come.

The next steps from the education summit will be supported by the NSEWG. The summit provided direction and recommendations to the four subcommittees, and they will continue advancing each of the four initiatives: (1) cultural relevancy, (2) early childhood and elementary education, (3) postsecondary preparation and transitioning success, and (4) growing our own teachers.

Each sub-committee will review and refine the many ideas shared during the summit for action. These actions will be shared for involvement of community, regional, statewide and federal-national entities. Each sub-committee will be developing action plans to address challenges and advance solutions. This is a great opportunity for involvement and to continue the work of the summit.

The summit has strongly identified the importance of our people, schools and entities working together to provide our own educational solutions and pathways

within the region. Advancing the educational systems and programs in the region will have one of the largest impacts in our lifetime for generations of students. At the same time, participants in the summit recognized that this can be one of the biggest challenges to address. Such challenges include the following that were discussed during the summit:

- Respectfully addressing the assimilation history of schooling with Alaska Natives.
- Transforming educational institutions and curricula within Bering Strait communities to holistically integrate indigenous languages, cultures and self-determination.
- Developing high expectations of students with culturally appropriate standards.
- Developing our own teachers and educational professionals to work in our schools and region.
- Preparing teachers and administrators coming into the region to honor and understand the diverse cultures in our communities to support students for success.
- Working within school budgets and community funding limits as well as regulatory and/or accreditation frameworks.

Regional leadership, summit speakers and participants all acknowledged that such systemic changes will require partnerships with courage, responsiveness and teamwork.



To ensure the broad sharing of information, the summit report, sub-committee actions and plans, and summit information will be shared with all the participants via e-mail copies, posted online at [nsewc.com](http://nsewc.com), and hard copies will be forwarded to tribes, cities, schools and regional organizations. Each are encouraged to work within their communities,

schools and entities to move forward with recommendations.

Work group membership is open, and to join or ask for more information for involvement, please contact: Luisa Machuca, VP Education Employment & Training at Kawerak, Inc. / PO Box 948 / Nome, AK 99762 / Phone: (907) 443-5231 / E-mail: [eet.vp@kawerak.org](mailto:eet.vp@kawerak.org)



The Nome Elementary School Commons were filled to capacity throughout the summit. Here, participants listen to State of Alaska Education Commissioner Mike Hanley during a general session.

Work group membership in the NSEWG is open. To join or for more information, contact:

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# SUMMIT IN DETAIL

## General Sessions Summary

There were four (4) general sessions during the 2015 summit: (1) opening session on Friday, October 9th from 6:00 – 10:00 pm; (2) morning keynote on cultural lifeways and indigenous education on Saturday, October 10th from 8:00 to 9:30 am; (3) luncheon keynotes from statewide representatives on Saturday, October 10th from 12 noon to 2 pm; and (4) closing session on Sunday, October 11th from 8:00 to 10:30 am. The following provides a summary of each general session.

### OPENING GENERAL SESSION/Friday, October 9th

The opening general session opened on Friday evening at 6 pm with a networking dinner reception highlighting local Norton Sound halibut which was sponsored by NSEDC, Kawerak, Sitnasuak Native Corporation and Bering Strait Native Corporation. Pastor Charley Brower blessed the summit, and the Nome 1st Graders sang Aarigaa (It is Good) as a welcome song in Inupiaq. This provided an informal opportunity for participants to sit and eat with one another while hearing from opening speakers and keynote addresses.

### SUMMIT OPENING REMARKS

Welcome addresses delivered by Janis Ivanoff, President and CEO of NSEDC, and Nome NSEDC board member Don Stiles both emphasized the long-standing commitment of NSEDC and our regional organizations to improve our education systems for our youth and region.

The welcome address by Melanie Bahnke, President of Kawerak, emphasized the vision and future of our regional education system—what it could potentially be and how it could strongly reflect our indigenous people and languages with both cultural and academic success. President Bahnke shared, *“I once had a dream we would design a school system where we wouldn’t have to choose between western education and our culture; our education would be based on our culture.”*

## WORK GROUP OVERVIEW & INITIATIVES

Representatives from the NSEWG introduced the purpose of the summit and overview of the four education initiatives. Tyler Rhodes, Chief Operating Officer for NSEDC, gave the history and introduction of the work group that began with the NSEDC board questioning the low completion rate of college graduates from their scholarship program, despite the amount of resources available to fund students. This led to regional outreach with regional, tribal and educational entities to work together to make recommendations and strategies for improvements.

Representatives from the NSEWG subcommittees introduced and presented overviews for the four initiatives. Dr. Qasuglana Barb Amarok provided an overview of the cultural relevancy initiative with the overall premise that *“Indigenous knowledge is of value to all, and in order for the deep knowledge of the Bering Strait communities to seamlessly flow from home through school, the expertise of educators must be applied within the context of the local community. When the identities of the students are represented, they become prepared for self-determination and local, state, and global leadership.”*

Marie Tozier, Registration Coordinator with Northwest Campus, provided an overview of the early childhood and elementary education initiative that recognizes the inter-relationships of four key areas: Parents & Families; Child Skills, Education & Development; Connections between Home, Community & School-Teachers; and Maintaining Cultural Identity & Community.

Kacey Miller, Student Services Manager with Northwest Campus, provided an overview of the postsecondary preparation and transitioning success initiative that relates to preparing our regional high school students for postsecondary education and careers; focusing on the goal of increasing the number of students prepared, successfully transitioned, and supported in a career or educational training program after high school.

Luisa Machuca, Vice-President of Education, Employ-



Teacher Anajalutak Annie Conger discusses her heritage and her pathway to becoming a teacher.

ment and Training with Kawerak, provided an overview of the growing our own teachers initiative that is committed to building an effective, relevant and responsive educational system by developing educators from within our region. Employing and supporting locally grown educators is recognized as key to improving the quality of our schools and empowering our communities.

### CULTURE & EDUCATION PANEL

A culture and education panel consisting of Elder Aggunaat Esther Bourdon (Inupiaq/Kingikmiut), Teacher Tattauq Josie Bourdon (Inupiaq/Kingikmiut), Teacher Anajalutak Annie Conger (Inupiaq/Qawairaqmiut), and Teacher Phyllis Walluk (St. Lawrence Island Yupik/Sivuqaghmi) presented as long-time and successful educators in the region. Elder Aggunaat shared her speech all in Inupiaq which was translated by her daughter. She opened the panel with sharing her schooling experience in Wales which was in a very small building with outhouses. This was compared with today's modern schools and facilities which make it easier for our youth to learn. There has been significant community, schooling and cultural changes in one lifetime in the region.

Teacher Tattauq shared her pathway of becoming a teacher from the community of Nome where she grew up with subsistence activities and speaking Inupiaq with her parents. She also shared that it is important to work with our Elders to teach our culture and language to students in school—this effectively bridges and connects students to learning and identity.

Teacher Anajalutak shared her pathway of becoming a teacher from the village of Brevig Mission where she grew up with a strong subsistence way of life and speaking Inupiaq. She recognized that leaving the village to attend college was a challenge that took peer support and acknowledged that a few years away from home provided long-term impacts to career and community.

Teacher Aveluuyaq Phyllis Walluk shared her pathway of becoming a teacher in early childhood education to working with high school students. Phyllis was born in Gambell and lived in Nome since 1970 with Yupik as her first language. She acknowledged the impact a Native teacher can have with students to learn our culture, language and values—it is very important and enjoyable to share and teach with all age groups.

### KEYNOTE BY MARY HUNTINGTON

Mary Huntington provided a keynote on Homegrown Teachers. She grew up in Shishmaref and has successfully become an Inupiaq teacher and principal with the Bering Strait School District. She intentionally took college courses at home in Shishmaref through UAF-Northwest Campus and is an example of successfully using our regional distance delivery system. She shared how she was able to overcome challenges by pushing through the hard parts in life and school to attain her degree and certifications. She encouraged all in the region to be truly supportive of students by being careful not to encourage them (intentionally or unintentionally) to quit school to serve short-term needs in the community or family. All students will face hard parts that need to be pushed through to successfully complete a degree and begin a teaching career. She said, *“Once you get past them, you almost*

# SUMMIT IN DETAIL

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*forget about them even though they were so tough getting through them.”*

Mary also shared how one can successfully learn and integrate Inupiaq language, song and dance into our schools which grounds students and makes learning relevant. She stressed the importance of building relationships with all the people around you, and making a connection to build trust and accomplish more together even when time is short. Mary also called her first language “Shishmaref English” as opposed to “school English,” demonstrating how regional students need to translate the English used in school by teachers to their natural speech for thorough learning. Better understanding of this translation process can have a big impact on the success of our students.

## MORNING GENERAL SESSION/Saturday, October 10th

The second day of the summit started with keynote addresses on cultural lifeways and Indigenous education.

### KEYNOTE BY ANNAI SYLVESTER AYEK

Annai Sylvester Ayek (Inupiaq/Ugiuvangmiut) opened with the message that our cultures are vital to our education, schools and people. Today, we need to recognize past education and social policies that pushed assimilation; this continues to impact our students through alcoholism in our communities.

When teaching traditional ways and values, schools and teachers need to include the community. Historically, our people taught children to live successfully in our environment and communities. Our schools can learn from our hunters, gatherers and Elders. Annai personally has seen the educational and social changes since he was growing up, and he was taught traditional ways in Inupiaq. Today, we need our schools to help teach our Indigenous languages. Annai recognized that western ways need to be taught, but our regional education also needs to incorporate our traditions, cultures and languages. He encouraged all to keep up the good work in our schools with our students and communities.

### KEYNOTE BY DR. QASUGLANA BARB AMAROK

Dr. Qasuġlana Barb Amarok (Inupiaq/Sitnasuagmiut) opened her keynote noting that the summit is a way to help lead positive systemic change. Our schools need to reflect communities and people so that all students will benefit and become stronger and healthier. We can work together improving educational outcomes for both culture and academics. Place-based education is important in that it is holistic and involves our community members.

When examining educational statistics, one must recognize that Alaska Natives have experienced significant social changes because education was implemented with a policy and goal of assimilation—attempting to change life ways. It is important to understand the history of formal education for Alaska Natives; to know our past enables everyone to better operate in the present and improve the future. As we move forward, we need to update our educational systems to support students in becoming who they are meant to be, through multiculturalism.

A key concept and philosophy is that Indigenous knowledge is valuable to all—representing the cultures of our communities is key to connecting students to our schools and supporting future success. Our children need to learn about our community leaders—historically and in the present. By promoting cultural identity, we build student confidence as a foundation in educational experiences that support success. Educators and community members can start by looking at how we have arrived in our current situations, by creating new definitions of academics and leadership, and by incorporating ways that support students holistically.

## Luncheon General Session/Saturday, October 10th

A luncheon general session was held on the second day of the summit that provided time for statewide perspectives to be shared. The luncheon was sponsored by NSEDC, Kawerak, Norton Sound Health Corporation, Sitnasuak Native Corporation, Bering Straits Native Corporation and Alaska Commercial Company.

### KEYNOTE BY COMMISSIONER MIKE HANLEY

State of Alaska Education and Early Development Commissioner Mike Hanley opened the luncheon and affirmed he was here to listen and learn from the region. As commissioner, he works for the overall success of our students as Alaskan citizens. This includes helping to support educational approaches where students can achieve success in their lives with knowledge, abilities and skills to work and raise a family where they choose to live. Our schools are important for raising-up strong Alaskans and communities with people ready to fulfill our jobs in our communities—to raise our own.

An important question to reflect upon in our schools is: What are the standards for high expectations of our children? When considering our cultures, Alaska's cultural standards are recognized in the US as model education standards and speak to school environments that embrace indigenous cultures. We must support how students successfully fit into our community and environment—this is important to our schools and preparing our citizens to productively live in Alaska. The State recognizes that a test does not reflect our children; rather it is a snapshot and a portion of their skills and knowledge. The State has worked on new education standards which are currently in early implementation to be a tool in gauging our schools' and students' performance. Alaska has high quality early childhood programs, but unfortunately there is limited access that needs to be broadened particularly in rural Alaska.

As we move forward, we need to continue conversations on school funding, particularly with pressures on the state budget that includes class and overall school sizes. As Commissioner, he recognized that the state budget cannot be balanced on the backs of rural and Native Alaska. He shared that, *"The current system is under duress, and our greatest challenge Alaska faces is meeting the needs of our students with the current budget cuts across the state."* Partnerships, such as the Norton Sound Education Work Group, are needed for our schools and successful education systems. "Schools can't stand alone; students need the connections of community, family and partnerships," he said.



First Alaskans Institute CEO Liz Medicine-Crow tells participants, "Don't just teach us about our cultures, use our cultures to teach us."

### KEYNOTE BY LIZ MEDICINE-CROW

Liz Medicine-Crow (Tlingit/Haida), CEO of First Alaskans Institute, opened that it is great to hear our stories of our people and our own educators—"Each of you have said things that will be treasured." She shared statements that included the following: dream that our schools emphasize culture where children successfully learn our languages and lands; take the time to build knowledge of ourselves by taking the time to know each other in schools and communities; and our people know our students best and how to put things into action.

She encouraged educators to use our cultures to teach our children, sharing the principle "don't just teach us about our cultures, use our cultures to teach us." We can create a new and different education system that advances our students, communities and cultures. We don't live in two worlds, we live in one. We need to look at the significant opportunities with tribal self-governance for educational solutions and options in Alaska. When we improve the educational systems for Native children, it will be improved for all children.

There are many dynamics in the discussions that can bring blessings and ways to lead forward, although the discussion can be tough. The vision for our education is not a small task, and it will be one of the greatest honors and challenges of our time. She recommended that our people continue to be firm in who we are and what we want for our children, what we want our education and schools to be. Overall, educational

# SUMMIT IN DETAIL

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changes will work when they honor our Ancestors and our children at the same time. We need to make the education system ours and make it work.

She shared, *“It’s not easy to have these conversations, but you are asking the questions. You’re not afraid. If we can be real about the challenges, we can be real about the solutions. The interests of our young people are important to us.”* She also recognized that our elected representatives and senators work for me and you—our voices are important, including our solutions. She cautioned about the direction certain legislators were leaning to try to increase the student minimum enrollment and how to do so was a discriminatory act that would mainly impact Alaska Native students and communities—whether by design or consequence, such an impact is unconstitutional. She also recognized that a result of closing schools may also lead to bringing back boarding schools for Native kids, and that has proven to not work for us; we see the results all around us. But she also noted that the only way a boarding school would even be an option would be through a bona-fide self-determination and self-governance process by the community making a decision to go this route—but only in that instance. Otherwise, she clearly stated that driven mandates are inequitable. She applauded the Norton Sound Education Summit for being the first of its kind in the region, which will help to inspire other communities and regions throughout the state.

## KEYNOTE BY DR. LARRY KAPLAN

Dr. Larry Kaplan, director of the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, opened by recognizing that some people in the summit have been his students, and some his teachers. He also dedicated his keynote to the late Marie Saclamana who passed away in April.

Linguistics looks at languages, learning and understanding. The Bering Strait is rich in languages and dialects, and our Elders love our languages. It is good to know another language and value bilingualism—a rich aspect of our lives that leads to success globally with cultural interactions. Bering Strait languages revitalization must recognize the multilingual history of the

region—Inupiaq, Yup’ik and St. Lawrence Island Yupik. Revitalization means many things: songs, teaching, learning, recording, materials development, and other efforts to keep languages for future generations. Communities must define language goals for revitalization. Bering Strait languages have been documented and can be found in libraries and archives. This documentation will help with revitalization and provide resources for teaching.

He also overviewed various language teaching types—in our schools, university-level classes, mentor-apprentice, self-directed study, and community classes. He also overviewed that language commissions can support creating new words, signs, place names, spelling, and advocacy. Other community language activities often include art, dance groups, science, culture camps, videos, and individuals recording speakers.

Local leadership is key to language revitalization in communities. He recognized an important question to ask parents and educators when balancing the time for language instruction in schools: What are the chances a child will not learn Inupiaq, Yup’ik and St. Lawrence Island Yupik? What are the chances a child will not learn English? These are important questions for focusing education efforts in schools and communities.

## Closing General Session/Sunday, October 11th

On the last day of the summit, participants were invited to share their comments, ideas and experiences through an open mic process. The following provides highlights of the closing comments:

- This was a historic gathering for our region to focus on education. I would like to recognize the summit participants that gave up their weekend to care about our youth and education. We have big goals and let’s work together to make them a reality in our lifetime. We have support, commitment and vision from our community members across the region. We have concrete steps to continue our work together to build on this gathering and improve our education system.
- It takes more than funding for educational success; it

takes caring people. Let's continue our support for our students that is customized what success means to individuals.

- I am not a public speaker, but I am standing up because I care and I am excited about our education and the summit.
- Thankful for everyone that made the summit happen, encourage our youth to complete and continue your education. For our vision to come true, we need to work together as a region and send the summit report to all tribes, schools and regional organizations.
- We are a strong people. We have thrived in our Bering Strait environment and continue to survive through historical traumas. We have special needs but a common humanity with spiritual connections to each other and our lands/environment. We need to restore our cultural identity and pride—we fit in this world and our education systems need to teach these things.
- Recognize that this is no longer an option—we need our youth to have our identity validated. We know it affects our communities and grateful to be part of this summit.
- Happy in knowing how I can make a difference with our students. Being a parent, grandparent and teacher is a great privilege with our students' education.
- Seeing our communities come up with solutions is so powerful.
- We have major players at this summit gathering—our tribal council members, school district superintendents, school board members, state commissioner of education, regional organization board members and presidents, teachers, and community members. Let's continue working together and inspiring one another to advance our teaching activities and educational improvements.
- We can attain our goals—let's begin and start at all levels.

***“We need to restore our cultural identity and pride—we fit in this world and our education systems need to teach these things.”***

- It is very important to encourage our students that are taking the next steps after high school with college and training. Dr. Barb Amarok is an example of one of our people that has succeeded at one of the highest levels, but is still just Barb. We honor her accomplishments and working in our community as a role model to others.

### **SUMMIT YOUTH GATHERING SUMMARY**

The NSEWG hosted a youth gathering on the second evening of the summit. Approximately 75 youth from across the region gathered at the Nome Elementary School to share what youth wanted in the future of education. The session was co-facilitated by Kunaq Marjorie Tahbone and NSEDC Education, Employment and Training Director Jesse Blandford.

The evening opened with a pizza dinner and keynote presentation by Evon Peter—Neetsaii Gwich'in and Koyukon Athabaskan from Arctic Village, and currently serving as the Vice-Chancellor for Rural, Community and Native Education at the University of

Alaska Fairbanks.

In discussing what youth would like to get out of their education, the following summarizes the feedback and recommendations:

- Youth want more accountability in schools for students and teachers.
- Youth want more cultural activities and culturally relevant lessons. Including subjects like umiaq building, subsistence hunting, and gun safety.
- Youth want languages—our Bering Strait indigenous languages of Inupiaq, Yup'ik and St. Lawrence Island Yupik, as well as German, Spanish and French.
- Youth would like to learn about our own regional and cultural history in addition to the history of America.
- Youth want the opportunity for college preparation such as dual credit courses.
- Youth want more community involvement in their schools—like to see the UNITY in community.

# 2015 Norton Sound Education Summit

OUR EDUCATION, OUR CULTURES, OUR TIME

## EDUCATION INITIATIVES

During the second day of the summit, there were four concurrent tracks or break-out sessions. The tracks reflected the four educational initiatives as developed by the NSEWG and were supported by subcommittees of the work group. The following highlights and summarizes the discussions, recommendations and actions developed during the summit.

### CULTURAL RELEVANCY

Contact person: Dr. Qasuġlana Barb Amarok / (907) 443-5491 / [bjamarok@alaska.edu](mailto:bjamarok@alaska.edu)

The overall premise of Cultural Relevancy initiative and track was: *Indigenous knowledge is of value to all, and in order for the deep knowledge of the Bering Strait communities to seamlessly flow from home through school, the expertise of educators must be applied within the context of the local community. When the identities of the students are represented, they become prepared for self-determination and local, state, and global leadership.*

The track began (session one) with an opening presentation by subcommittee members Dr. Qasuġlana Barb Amarok, Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle, and Marilyn Koezuna-Irelan on cultural relevancy in the context of education. This included the past history of education with Alaska Natives and current educational-social changes. The second session opened with a presentation on cultural resources and incorporation of cultural relevancy into classrooms with Marilyn Koezuna-Irelan and Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle. They

presented methods for culturally responsive educators to incorporate local ways of knowing and teaching in their work. The following focus statement was shared: the educator uses students' cultural traditions, customs, values, and practices in their teaching.

Session three focused on Language Strategic Planning: Future Bering Strait Region Native Speakers with Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle & Kunaq Marjorie Tahbone. The following focus question was presented to participants and included are the responses: What can we do as Bering Strait Region residents to revitalize our Native Languages? The focus was on what we as our own people (versus organizations) can do and want as language warriors and activists with community engagement. The last session focused on expectations, preparation and evaluation of teachers in the Bering Strait region with Dr. Qasuġlana Barb Amarok.

Overall, some key points and highlights that were made during the track include the following:

- Our Bering Strait indigenous cultures are keys to successful schools and education in the region—culturally relevancy is a foundation for P-K-12 and postsecondary efforts.
- Cultures and languages need to be better represented in our schools including year-round learning programs that reflect all our seasons and take advantage of summer for youth camps.
- Our Bering Strait environment is a rich learning resource that can be incorporated into all teaching subjects and educational content areas—e.g. ma-



# & TRACK SUMMARIES



“Homegrown” teacher and principal Mary Huntington discusses the challenges and successes she has experienced in her journey to become an educator and administrator in the Norton Sound region.

rine to tundra ecosystems with moose, seals, bears, muskox, walrus, whales, fish, birds, plants, etc.

- Our communities and cultural mentors are valuable resources to enrich school content and connect students to learning.
- Language revitalization must be embraced for all dialects and supported to proudly speak at school, at home and within our communities.
- Teaching students the value of their culture makes significant lifelong impacts so they can make excellent decisions about their future.
- Schools must recognize the history of assimilation that still and continues to affect families and students in today—these things can change, but we must ensure our schools act in ways to change and no longer perpetuate the past.
- Teachers in our schools need to learn our communities and our Bering Strait cultures to best work with and educate our students. Our tribes and organizations can support teachers with open minds and positive relationships.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD & ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Contact person: Marie Tozier / (907) 443-8403 / [metozier@alaska.edu](mailto:metozier@alaska.edu)

The Early Childhood and Elementary Education track’s goal was: *To empower parents, families, educators and communities with information, discussion, participation, and examples that shows the importance*

# EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Continued from the previous page

*of valuing cultural identity in learning for children.*

The first session was mainly a dialogue about the importance of cultural identity. The second session was a presentation on the importance of oral language as the foundation of reading and academic success. The beauty of this presentation was the value placed on both English and Inupiaq oral language skills. The group was then led in an Inupiaq song that could be shared with children. The third session was a panel to discuss how we as a community can maintain our identity while affecting school performance.

Overall, some key points and highlights that were made during the track include the following:

- Strong cultural identity equals strong people. Studies show that the health and wellness of a popula-

tion is affected by the amount of local control that population practices over local government, including the school system.

- Participants agreed that our local schools, and especially classrooms, should reflect the student's cultural identity (which is something that each of us can help with today).
- We as a community define success. To do that, we need to be able to question the framework that is currently in place. In other words, are the schools meeting our local expectations for success?
- We need to preserve our cultures by practicing language and ceremony. We need to value the knowledge of our elders and culture bearers.
- Think about what you can do right now to affect change. Think about the many levels of school governance that you can participate in: local, school, curriculum, and policy to state and national. Think about the creation of a non-affiliated, non-political, or not-elected committee to advocate for education.

tion. Think about the creation of a non-affiliated, non-political, or not-elected committee to advocate for education.

• Develop language nests. Learn your language. Marjorie Tahbone and Igluquq Dianne Okleasik taught almost 30 participants the song Naami Kuvlu in ten minutes during one workshop. This is a song to share with youngsters and can be practiced daily to support language development. Because it involves conversation elements, it is useful in teaching beginning language learners.

• Our culture is our life. We have to protect our culture. Who we are will see us through our problems.

• In school, give students time to answer. Be aware of non-verbal communication. Communication is important. Communities need to heal.



Elder Aggunaat Esther Bourdon, sitting, shares the stage with her daughter, Tattauq Josie Bourdon, as they speak to the role culture has played in their education and teaching.

# & TRACK SUMMARIES

- We need a school system that supports who we are. Build bridges between home and school. Remember what our elders have taught us—respect for elders and those less fortunate than us. We can have a respectful dialog about making positive changes.

## POSTSECONDARY PREPARATION & TRANSITIONING SUCCESS

Contact person: Kacey Miller / (907) 443-8416 / [kacey.miller@alaska.edu](mailto:kacey.miller@alaska.edu)

The Postsecondary Preparation and Transitioning Success (PPTS) initiative and track related to (a) preparing our regional students for postsecondary life, education and careers; and (b) focusing primarily on the goal of increasing the number of students prepared, successfully transitioned, and supported in a career or educational training program.

The track and session began with a brief overview and power point presentation regarding the four main objectives within the PPTS initiative. These four objectives were the drive for the PPTS track's summit activities. These objectives are: (1) ensuring our students are "postsecondary ready"; (2) ensuring our students are "career and technical education ready"; (3) providing supportive transitions to postsecondary life; and (4) development of a postsecondary peer mentoring program.

After this overview and a brief icebreaker activity, there was a facilitated regional student panel representing varying perspectives regarding postsecondary education. Personal stories and support tips for current students, teachers, parents and school districts were shared. Some key themes arising were that our students need to know that there are expectations of them; they need to be encouraged and pushed to complete a postsecondary education; they need support and opportunities to build skills for life after high school; and, lastly, that our students need to know of previous success stories and receive ongoing positive encouragement. The panelists also fielded questions from the participants and a special recognition was given to the current regional dual-credit students who were present.

Session II provided a facilitated consensus-building

activity regarding postsecondary preparation. The activity provided an opportunity for small groups to engage in dialogue regarding two similar but very different PPTS objectives: ensuring our students are "postsecondary ready" and ensuring our students are "career and technical education ready." Highlights of the postsecondary ready discussion included helping students with scholarship applications; working with students early in their high school career to identify what they want to pursue in college; exposing students to the college climate and culture; building support from family/school/community; and learning college skills at a younger age. The participants also brainstormed ways to support students to be postsecondary ready. Recommendations included: providing self-exploration and personal assessments to identify interests; helping students learn financial responsibility early on; networking parents/community get-togethers to foster excitement and a college-going culture; continuing to expose youth and families at an early age to college expectations; and helping students understand scholarships and ways to get assistance in financial aid.

In regards to being career and technical education ready, the recommendations of how the region can support individuals were very comprehensive. The participants emphasized the importance of students being exposed at an early age to a broad array of careers and the importance of knowing the qualifications of the careers and how they fit into the local and regional job market. The recommendations to support career and technical education students were to encourage local organizations/businesses to take an interest in the creation of local high school training opportunities. This was discussed in the form of providing more job shadowing programs and bringing more regional experts into the classrooms to give students a glimpse of what the career is like. Other ideas were to foster a mentorship/job training experience in the region, to provide students with regional job and degree program information early in their career search, and to employ regional residents in order to grow our own workforce.

The third session focused on the remaining two PPTS objectives: Postsecondary Support and Mentoring. There was facilitated dialogue on postsecondary

# EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Continued from the previous page

transitions and developing a mentoring program in the region. Participants brainstormed on the focus question: What is a successful transition experience to postsecondary life for our regional students? Common themes from this discussion varied from social, cultural, program and mental support. Some suggestions regarding enriching transition processes were to teach students self-sufficiency and ensure there is a healthy mental state for supporting independence while at training and college. Providing students lifelong skills through programs like NACTEC, RAHI, ANSEP, Upward Bound and JROTC are very necessary and should be supported. In addition, standard transition elements for students must include post high school planning and campus orientation, including funding sources.

In regards to development of a regional mentoring program, attendees discussed characteristics of a successful mentor relationship. Consistency; common, shared life experiences; non-judgmental demeanor/attitudes; ability to relate and counsel (been-there, done-that experience); accessibility; and a structured program with policies, procedures and guidelines that formalize mentoring were all identified commonalities and components to consider. The top recommendation was for the student and mentor to have common ground/understanding that included stability and respect within the relationship.

The track closed with Session IV taking a look at the “big picture” and several statistics regarding postsecondary preparation and transitioning success in the state and Bering Strait region. Visuals including regional postsecondary enrollment numbers, State of Alaska statistics and regional school district comparisons helped attendees examine educational trends that triggered a variety of discussion topics. Further dialogue and additional information was provided by the summit keynotes and attendee Commissioner Mike Hanley, Alaska Department of Education & Early Development. The discussion identified the following overall themes:

- Curriculum must prepare students with the skills they need to be successful in their postsecondary

pursuits and dreams.

- Students in the region must be prepared and knowledgeable of the types of jobs and careers they could get in the region.
- Ultimately, it takes more than just money or scholarships to have our students be successful.

The PPTS track was supported by an ongoing regional working group consisting of representatives from various organizations and interests. The primary focus of the working group is to provide opportunities and resources for our regional students to be prepared for and successful in postsecondary education and life. Based on the clearly identified recommendations and outcomes of the summit, the PPTS work group will be taking steps forward to implement the various support strategies in our region. If you are interested in learning more and would like to be involved in this regional support effort, please join us at the contact listed above.

## GROWING OUR OWN TEACHERS

Contact person: Luisa Machuca / (907) 443-4354 / [eet.vp@kawerak.org](mailto:eet.vp@kawerak.org)

The rationale of the Growing Our Own Teacher track was that the commitment to building an effective, relevant and responsive educational system requires developing educational professionals from within our region and communities. The benefit of having local/regional educators is a foundation for improving the quality of our schools and for increasing the impact of our educational system with our communities.

The first session opened with a panel of teachers who shared their experiences, challenges, and suggestions for supporting locally-grown teachers who are teaching in the region. The second session focused on learning more about what it takes for residents of our region to become teachers. This began with taking a closer look at educational and career challenges that regional people face, and then identifying solutions.

The third session focused on examining the importance of community support for local residents going into the teaching profession. This began with taking a closer look at two areas: personal support, and cultur-

# & TRACK SUMMARIES



Participants in the Growing Our Own Teachers break-out session listen to a panel consisting of, left to right, BSSD Director of Curriculum and Instruction Carolyn Heflin, Nome Elementary School Teacher Tattaug Josie Bourdon, and Koyuk Principal Mary Huntington.

al and community connection.

The last session provided an opportunity for the group to review the track topics, challenges and solutions discussed earlier; and identify highlights from the discussions and set priorities for Growing Our Own Teachers.

### Overall Track Highlights:

- Apprenticeship program for developing local teachers—get paid while trying career or doing student teaching
- Specific scholarships for education students that will be future teachers
- Posters of locally grown teachers—role models
- Housing for teachers
- Mentorship for new teachers
- Alaska Native teacher mentors for locally grown teachers

### Ideas for the Growing Our Own Teachers Sub-Committee:

- Like to see a program like “Growing Our Own Nurses” start up for teachers.
- Place a teacher education faculty position at Northwest Campus-UAF to guide and support the Growing Our Own Teachers initiatives.
- Work with regional organizations’ public relations staff to develop posters that promote teachers and becoming teachers.
- Create a summer cohort-based program with UAF, NACTEC and/or local-regional organizations for high school juniors and seniors to target math, science, and English courses as preparatory for college and teaching careers.

# SUMMIT REPORT APPENDICES

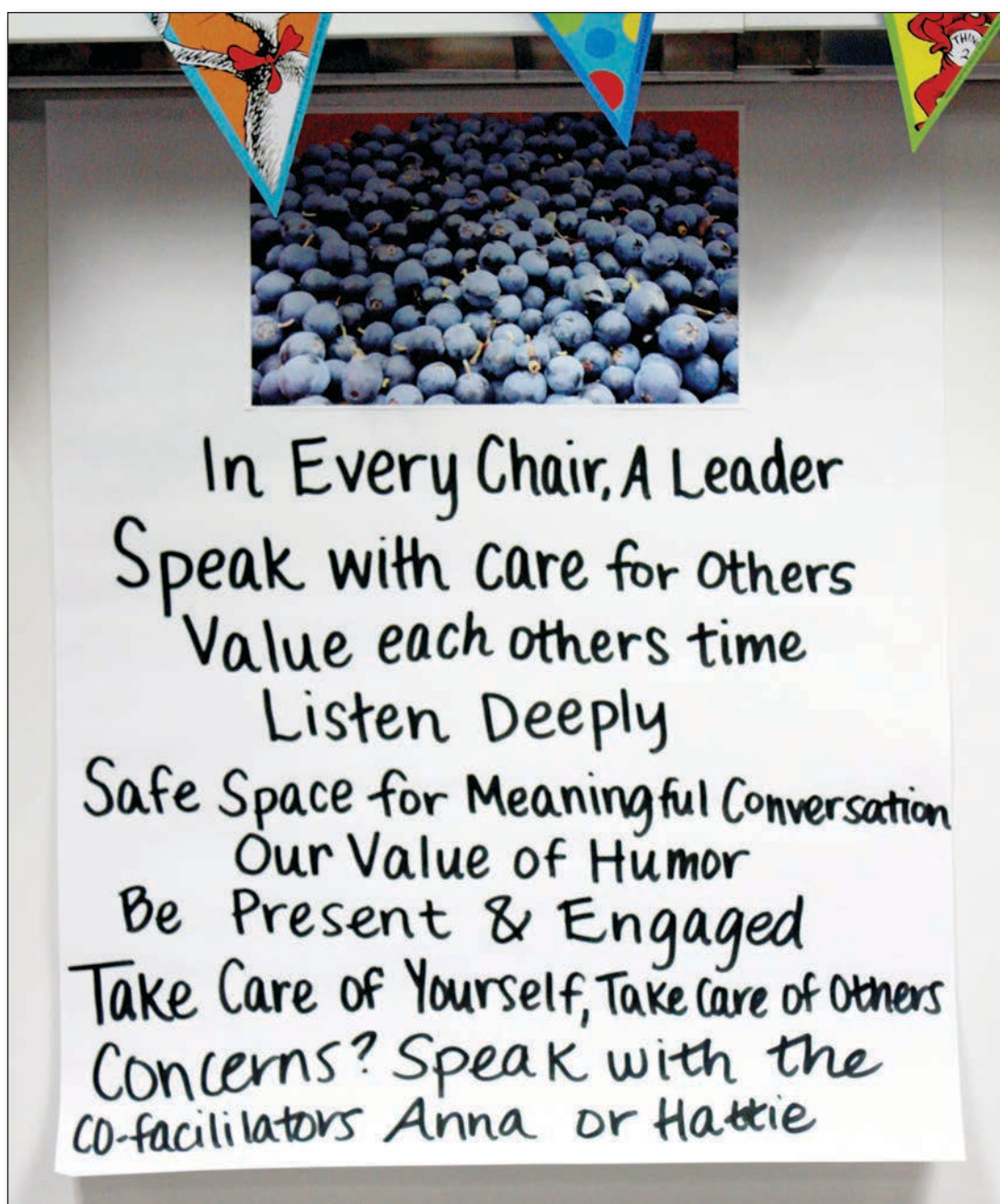
A. Norton Sound Education Work Group Members

B. Cultural Relevancy Track - Session Notes

C. Early Childhood & Elementary Education Track - Session Notes

D. Postsecondary Preparation & Transitioning Success Track - Session Notes

E. Growing Our Own Teachers Track - Session Notes



Discussions at the summit were guided by ground rules that were developed by, and used with permission from, the First Alaskans Institute.

# Appendix A: Norton Sound Education Work Group (NSEWG) Members

## Bering Straits Native Corporation (BSNC) & Foundation (BSF)

- Marilyn Koezuna-Irelan, Project Officer

## Bering Strait School District (BSSD)

- Dr. Bobby Bolen, Superintendent
- Carl White, Specialist Assistant to the Superintendent
- Mary Huntington, Principal of Koyuk Malimiut School
- Carolyn Heflin, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
- John Weemes, Coordinator of Program Support

## Kawerak, Inc.

- Luisa Machuca, Vice-President of Education, Employment & Training
- Christina Agloinga, Vice President of Children & Family Services
- Yaayuk Bernadette Alvanna-Stimpfle, Eskimo Heritage Program Director
- Kunaq Marjorie Tahbone, Cultural Materials Development Specialist
- Kristine McRae, Youth Employment Director/EET
- Brian James, Workforce Development Specialist
- Jessica Farley, Program Director Childcare Services/Uiviilat Play and Learn Center
- Deb Trowbridge, Head Start Director

## National Park Service - Bering Land Bridge National Preserve

- Katie Cullen, Education Technician

## Nome Eskimo Community (NEC)

- Sherri Anderson, Youth Services Specialist

## Nome Public Schools (NPS)

- Shawn Arnold, Superintendent
- Jon Berkeley, Director of Federal Programs and Instruction
- Josie Bourdon, Cultural Arts Teacher - Nome Elementary School

## Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center (NACTEC)

- Doug Walrath, Director

## Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC)

- Tyler Rhodes, Chief Operating Officer
- Jesse Blandford, Education, Employment & Training Director

## Norton Sound Health Corporation (NSHC)

- Tiffany Martinson, Human Resource Director
- Reba Lean, Public Relations Specialist

## Regional Community Members

- Dr. Qasuglana Barb Amarok

## Sitnasuak Native Corporation

- Michael Orr, President
- Cameron Piscoya, Human Resource Generalist
- Chrystie Salesky, Foundation Coordinator

## University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) - Northwest Campus (NWC)

- Bob Metcalf, Director
- Carol Gales, Program Development Manager
- Marie Tozier, Registration Coordinator
- Kacey Miller, Student Services Manager
- Kathy Commack, Regional Student Advisor
- Annie Weyoiuanna, Regional Student Advisor



## Appendix B: Cultural Relevancy Track - Session Notes

The overall premise of Cultural Relevancy initiative and track was: *Indigenous knowledge is of value to all, and in order for the deep knowledge of the Bering Strait communities to seamlessly flow from home through school, the expertise of educators must be applied within the context of the local community. When the identities of the students are represented, they become prepared for self-determination and local, state, and global leadership.*

The track began (session one) with an opening presentation by subcommittee members Dr. Qasuglana Barb Amarok, Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle, and Marilyn Koezuna-Irelan on cultural relevancy in the context of education. This included the past history of education with Alaska Natives and current educational-social changes. This led into a facilitated discussion on two focus questions and the following summarizes participant comments and recommendations.

### 1) What should/can/will be done in the future?

- Summertime – more training → students/teachers-more growth
- Learning style- community – no competition
- Learn by doing
- More organized gatherings by people who have degrees – resources available to teachers – committees and pairing teachers with community members
- Show parents/ guardians how to talk to their kids – stories & language – connection
- Go to each community, talk to individuals about expectation of their kids' education
- Classroom → more culture represented → e.g. seal stomachs. Individual (i.e. member of community or parent) to encourage teachers to show more culture(s), more balance
  - o Drums, dance fans, parkas
  - o Accept identity
  - o Fluent speakers teach language, culture into actual lesson plans
- As an individual, share knowledge
- As a whole we need to question “are we formatted automatically to think in the way of dominant culture?” It’s frustrating
- Step up, take responsibility, teach kids “Our Culture is Important to me.”
  - o Correct teachers, voice our culture
  - o Encourage individuals to talk to schools, teachers, administration

### 2) What can individuals, schools, Tribes and local organizations do in communities to support changes in schooling?

- Week-long camping in nature, local skills, (moose), & take to school
- Students may not have the experience
- Plant seeds of cultural and environmental knowledge (beluga, fish)
- Teach perseverance
- Subsistence skills knowledge & state standards
- ADAPT school schedules
- Follow gathering, hunting, original seasonal schedule
- ↑ Incorporate into school
- Community, family survival 1st priority
- To do project based pre-k language, math, immersion (based on culture)
- Value student knowledge
- Get rid of testing students
- What are we preparing students for
- Integrate content areas (writing, social studies)
- Languages
- Evaluate state requirements
- Curriculum development for EVERY dialect
- TIME for educators to develop lessons
- Expand student time for subsistence
- Start school & local org. communicating
- Having parents/communities have more influence – instead of recommending
- ↑ AEC- should have more power & influence
- Principals have a lot of influence on the schools – they should have more of a cultural relevancy view
- These cultural classes should be local w/ teachers
- New people in communities like to talk a lot of instead of listening & integrating to the community
- Should include locals – They have boards for school
  - o But don't meet in village they serve
- New teachers from Lower 48 right out of college.
  - o Tribal government are legitimate & should have a lot of power in these communities
  - o Harold Napoleon – The way of the Human Being.
  - o Glimpse of what we subject to manifest from one generation to the next. They don't

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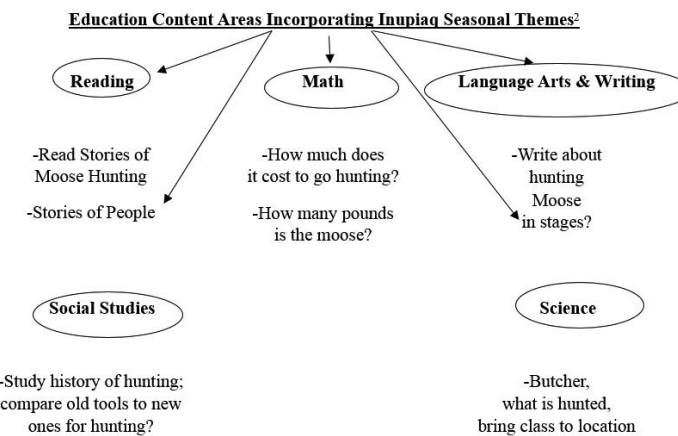
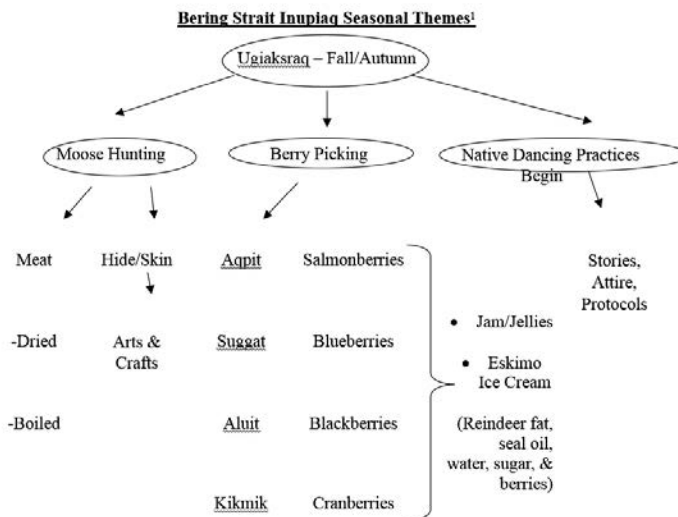
understand.

- Way of life is important – is bilingual language
  - o We need to find a way to integrate it more in our schools like other schools
- Owe it to us to keep our language in schools
- Tribes Johnson O’Malley – funding from Federal BIA → Tribes for Cultural Activities (flow from Kawerak) to help children do better in schools
- Tribal Sovereignty – recognized & could help new teachers & principals need to take ownership of our communities cultural needs
- Losing our language – not learning how to sew. More cultural activities & elevate to our communities
- Emphasize Tribes help us get our culture back. Alter-Native - dance festivals
- Need to teach to count to 5 in schools
  - o Basics
  - o 25% @ Wales few people
- Writing hands on more oral history, since history was oral not in writing
- Learning style is different from previous generations
- Community – 2 way street for respect teachers/ new people need to learn how to respect our culture respect students/ parents/ communities
- Cultural orientation should be done by communities – developed by each community
- Tribal sovereignty have most power over
  - o →& involvement in our school
  - o →treated to play or bigger role
- Persevere indigenous peoples language – example in France
- Instill into child identity of their language
- Est. People of St. Lawrence Island are last to lose language but people of Quinhagak all spoke their language. Communities decided & agreed to not lose their language. President/ Corporation/ Tribe community agreed 1st language Inupiaq or Native Language & English as 2nd

###

The second session opened with a presentation on cultural resources and incorporation of cultural relevancy into classrooms with Marilyn Koezuna-Irelan and Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle. They presented methods for culturally responsive educators to incorporate local ways of knowing and teaching in their work. The focus statement was shared: the educator uses students’ cultural traditions, customs, values, and practices in their

teaching. A model developed by Yaayuk Bernadette Alvanna-Stimpfle was shared as follows:



Model developed by Yaayuk Bernadette Alvanna-Stimpfle with King Island dialect of Inupiaq.

Participants were then led in facilitated discussions with the focus questions and responses summarized below.

What are local/community level resources for cultural responsive schools- what is available now and we can do (teacher perspective)?

- Board member instruct new teacher(s)
- New teacher(s) don’t ever refuse food/drink (x2)
- Visit your students & community
- Attend community events (x2)
- Speak to school secretary
- Visit w/ family, non-crisis, make it a habit
  - o Maybe call 1st
- All one people, all the same, all human

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- Important for teachers to share their culture
- Be okay w/ silence, nonverbal communication
  - Students will be more engaged
- Community to welcome new teachers
- **Taboos to be respected**, respect customs, beliefs
- Schools belong to community, they'll address community issues
  - Parents walk in there (into school), proud, like you own the place
- Teachers, acknowledge everyone, or it's an insult
- Know their teachers culture too, our teachers have culture too

What are local/ community level resources for cultural responsive schools- what is available now and what we can do (community perspective)

- Qakzri<sup>1</sup> (community men's house) built for elder men to mentor young men – prevent suicides in our communities
- Checkpoint in Nome- interested in a way a Qakzri would be. Where our people will learn.
  - Qakzri =university
- Find & emulate → cultural center here in Nome
  - How do we have these in other locations?
- Elders Youth Conference Education Session @ CCS-open RFB here in Nome
- Men might have to leave in certain lesson/taboo
  - (e.g. black bears) spirit of animal will be offended
- Addictions are issues – schools need to act in ways they don't perpetuate. These things are going to change.
- Walk in classroom head held high – ensure your child is taken care of – Ensure your child is learning.

Marilyn then asked the group to list community members who are resources in their communities/villages as cultural mentors.

- Susie Kokeok-Shishmaref
- Pete Sereadlook-Wales
- Maggie Komonaseak -Wales
- Winton Weyapuk Jr.-Wales
- Rita Olanna-Brevig Mission
- Maggie Olson-Golovin

- Gertrude Pete-Stebbins
- Harriet Peneyah -Savoonga
- Parents should list students child's grandparents, they might be interested in volunteering in their grandchildren-to volunteer at the school

###

Session three focused on Language Strategic Planning: Future Bering Strait Region Native Speakers with Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle & Kunaq Marjorie Tahbone. The following focus question was presented to participants and included are the responses.

What can we do as Bering Strait Region residents to revitalize our Native Languages? Focus on our own people (versus organizations), language warriors and activists with community Engagement

- Have community support and involvement
- Identify those community members
- Who are they in the community?
  - Get names, what level of fluency do they have
  - Create spaces for them
- Language warriors/ speakers
- Restrict gambling and negative activities
  - It takes a community to raise a child
- Talk to each other about what we need
- Dialects- teaching and not putting each other down
- Embrace all dialects
  - “Any Inupiaq is better than No Inupiaq”
- Creating a safe space to learn any dialects
- Community needs to talk about how we teach/encourage language on all levels
- Standardizing our language – so we can learn how to read, write, speak, but still valuing our unique dialects
- Do Tribes have missions? Values? They need to be incorporated
- We need to have talking circles, to get on the same step and move together as one
- Learning more about what is already available. The resources that are out there.
  - Including traditional ways
- People use their living rooms – 1st classroom
  - Or meeting place
- Organizations set aside funding, priority language 1st
  - Come together, work toward goal together

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<sup>1</sup>Spelling based on King Island dialect of Inupiaq

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- Classrooms, only speak Native language, no English
  - Less formal, safe, comfortable space
- Parents should be 1st teachers
- Going to organization, asking to make languages a priority
- Head Start should hire someone who speaks the language, a part of their job description
- Adapt/format materials from Inupiaq to Yupik
- Build/construct effort from Yupik/Inupiaq
- Ask for voting reform
  - Change from English to Yupik/Inupiaq
- Support projects to incorporate more language
  - Get youth involved
  - Bingo words/pictures
  - Books, videos → interactive materials
- Ask non-profit organizations to be involved
- Pull-tabs → \$\$\$
- ANTHC → source of funding to communities
- Community to fundraise
- Alaska Humanities Forum
- Tax break, companies can donate to organization program, up to \$300,000, it counts as education tax credits
- This summit is inspiring & uplifting to others to use more in daily life
- Gathering with others with similar languages good feeling
- Rural providers conference, maybe every other year, so they can have language summits as well
- Figuring out a way to engage our community as a whole – in school Eskimo word for doors. I.E. (in/out)
- Have a gathering place to have all dance groups get together once a month
  - Qakzri
    - Follow traditions- keeping them alive
- Language summit – invite elders to teach – have interpreters – recording
  - Learners comfortable with not knowing so they can learn – immersion corner plan ahead of time
- Engage. Inspire communities
  - Different ways to incorporate
  - Inviting teachers to introduce culture
  - Cooking and having them speak in Inupiaq
    - Explaining processes
  - Pull into schools, summits
    - Food, dance, language, traditions

- Honor All Dialects at Gatherings!
  - Pictures/dialogue of different dialects
  - Engaging the community as a whole to keep all languages alive – thriving
- Get everyone in the community involved (non-Native/different heritages too)
- Invite key language people – to help us get these language summits started
  - New Zealand/Hawaii how can we learn from successful cultures revitalizing their languages

# # #

The last session focused on Expectations, preparation & evaluation of teachers in the Bering Strait region with Dr. Qasuglana Barb Amarak. The following focus questions were presented to participants for engaging in dialogue with responses summarized.

What knowledge do our children need to learn in our schools?

- Native languages
- Culture values
- Reading, writing, math
- How to work cooperatively together
- Study habits
- Learn that their village dialect is okay and people outside talk differently
  - Learn to value their culture and their culture is valid, it is essential to their well-being
- Learn who they are
- Be observant
- Learn about the world, science, social studies, start w/ their own community
- Learn more about the world, other cultures
- Learn how to deal w/ all types of stress in positive ways
- Learn how to judge/get info from the internet
- Learn different career paths and the training they'll need
- Let youth know how much potential they have
  - Encourage them
- How to make traditional clothes, hunting equipment
- Life skills – balancing money, paying rent
  - Budget your money
- Practice Inupiaq values
- Learn how to ask for help
- Learn how to work independently
- Learn to argue effectively

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- o Be effective
- o Prove your point
- Learn not to be addicted to alcohol and drugs
  - o Why not too, what the consequences are
- Learn to live a healthy lifestyle
- Learn positive coping mechanisms
- How to be safe in dangerous situations
- Abstinence

What do teachers need to learn before and during their teaching in the region?

- Get to learn the community, events, school events (i.e. dance festivals)
- Greet parents – get to know them
- Respect people & students
- Learn the values of each home & community
- Reading body language – ask elders or parents on understanding non-verbal communication including facial expressions
- Observe & ask questions
- Traditional ways of learning – learning styles (visual, audio, hand on, etc.)
- Be patient and ask again – they’re processing
- Encourage and not discourage
- Smile goes a long way
- Understand there may be something going on at home and that’s why they’re acting up
- Cultural shock- western society to a small isolated village
- Get to know the culture(s) – get to know they students instead of hearsay
- Weather – 24 hour daylight or darkness
- Suicide prevention
- Resources that are available to them
- Be flexible – test scores and poor influx of teachers – “how can I use a way the kids can understand?”
- Don’t have to be a friend @ the beginning
  - o Can be stern & let them know the rules
    - Get to know the child
- Already have my respect. Happy to earn your respect
- Be at their level. Sit among the class. Let them have a voice – go into country or story telling
  - o Preventative activities they would like to hear/learn
  - o Let the students have ownership
- Praise and ownership
- Understand health issues – (i.e. chronic respi-

ratory)

- Follow through (if you have brainstorm follow through – will earn trust
- Learn the geography

What should children be prepared to do when they graduate to be ready for life in our region, state, and globally?

- Leave home with a foundation of knowing who they are as indigenous people
- Make good decisions
- Have self-discipline
- Know where resources are, support
- Mentally prepared, no doubts
- Provide for self & families – cultural subsistence
- Practice time management
- How to budget money, not the money they don’t have
- Registered to vote
- Understand tribal, municipal, state, fed government
  - o Be able to participate ↑
- Have self-awareness
- Have coping skills
- Self-advocate \*
- Be able to overcome stressful situations
- Build positive and healthy relationships
- Have resources for self-sufficiency
- Support community
- Communication skills
- Don’t be shy\*
- Be able to problem-solve
- Be responsible for own actions
- Know who you are & be proud
- Know language
- Know how to fill out applications, resume, make telephone call, ask
- Have a multi-cultural perspective
- Be able to set relationship goals
- Be able to plan life
- Be able to say no & vice versa
- Be able to pick battles & be able to fight chosen battles
- RESPECT others
- Be able to get along w/ others
- Be open-minded
- Be able to read well-enough to obtain goals

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This track was facilitated by Hattie Keller and Anna Ashenfelter from Kawerak.

Contact person for involvement with the subcommittee is: Dr. Qasuġlana Barb Amarok / (907) 443-5491 / [bjamarok@alaska.edu](mailto:bjamarok@alaska.edu)

###

Subcommittee members include the following (as of October 2015):

**Kawerak, Inc.**

- Yaayuk Bernadette Alvanna-Stimpfle, Eskimo Heritage Program Director
- Kunaq Marjorie Tahbone

**Bering Straits Native Corporation (BSNC) & Foundation (BSF)**

- Marilyn Koezuna-Irelan, Project Officer

**University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) – Northwest Campus (NWC)**

- Marie Tozier, Registration Coordinator

**Bering Strait School District (BSSD)**

- John Weemes, Coordinator of Program Support

**Regional Community Members**

- Dr. Qasuġlana Barb Amarok
- Nancy Mendenhall
- Elsie Sampson
- Niaomi Brunette

## Appendix C: Early Childhood & Elementary Education Track - Session Notes

The Early Childhood and Elementary Education (ECE) track goal was: *To empower parents, families, educators and communities with information, discussion, participation, and examples to show the importance of valuing cultural identity in learning for children.*

We could not have done the summit ECE track and presentations without the help of those who participated in our discussions and panels. Thank you to Annai Sylvester Ayek, Lisa Ellanna, Panganga Pungowiyi, Jon Berkeley, Kunaq Marjorie Tahbone, Igluġuq Dianne Okleasik, Mary Jane Litchard, and Tom and BeeJay Gray.

The premise behind the sub-committee and work leading up to the summit was inspired from a quote by Lucy Apatiki during a keynote address at the 2015 Kawerak Wellness Forum. She had stated, “I want to bring back the honor and dignity of the Indigenous peoples of Alaska.” The ECE subcommittee took this to heart while developing questions and speakers for our role in the 2015 Education Summit.

This quote speaks to the heart of many issues involving the state of education in rural Alaska today. Early childhood education affects the life-long learning of our students. Realizing the importance of this foundational experience, the subcommittee expanded on this quote by having conversations during the track which asked important questions. Questions such as: How are our early learners doing in school? Are they succeeding? What factors can we look at to see if they are doing well? What can parents do to help

our youngest learners? Do parents have the resources they need? How do we begin to improve early childhood and elementary education?

During the summit, the ECE track had good discussions and participation during the sessions. The first session was mainly a dialogue about the importance of cultural identity. The second session was a presentation on the importance of oral language as the foundation of reading and academic success. The beauty of this presentation was the value placed on both English and Inupiaq oral language skills. The group was then led in an Inupiaq song that could be shared with children. The third session was a panel to discuss how we as a community can maintain our identity while affecting school performance.

Parents expressed their desire to be a part of the schools and to have the schools reflect their children’s identity and culture. This was not always an easy subject to discuss. We had a mixture of parents, teachers, community members, and school officials in our audience. Parents and community members felt comfortable expressing their concerns with the school system. In the end, everyone came together to address what changes could be made.

The ECE track developed the following objectives and recommendations:

1. Reading skills for academic success. Kenne-  
wick’s Ready! For Kindergarten program. Oral

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language skills which support early reading skills in Inupiaq and English. Region-wide Reading Campaign. Early reading books which include local themes and pictures.

2. Transitioning from Home to School. The idea of Early Childhood Fairs in villages throughout the region to share resources with parents. Provide skills to parents which support early learning.

3. Maintaining identity throughout education. This must be addressed at the local, regional, state, and national levels. How can parents be more involved? How can they assert local control? Language nests. Include local indigenous languages—nursery rhymes, stories, etc.

4. Making connections within the community. How can we assist the school in reaching out? How can we help them to make the classroom one that reflects the student’s community and culture? How do we support the school? How do we set expectations for the school and for our students? How do we support Elders in the classroom?

Overall, some key points and highlights that were made during the track include the following:

- Strong cultural identity equals strong people. Studies show that the health and wellness of a population is affected by the amount of local control that population practices over local government, including the school system.
- Participants agreed that our local schools, and especially classrooms should reflect the student’s cultural identity (which is something that each of us can help with today).
- We as a community define success. To do that, we need to be able to question the framework that is currently in place. In other words, are the schools meeting our local expectations for success?
- We need to preserve our cultures by practicing language and ceremony. We need to value the knowledge of our Elders and culture bearers.
- Think about what you can do right now to affect change. Think about the many levels of school governance that you can participate in: local, school, curriculum, and policy to state and national. Think about the creation of a non-affiliated, non-political, or not-elected committee to advocate for education.
- Develop language nests. Learn your language.

Kunaq Marjorie Tahbone and Igluguq Dianne Okleasik taught almost 30 participants the song Naami Kuvlu in ten minutes during one workshop. This is a song to share with youngsters and can be practiced daily to support language development. Because it involves conversation elements, it is useful in teaching beginning language learners.

- Our culture is our life. We have to protect our culture. Who we are will see us through our problems.
- In school, give students time to answer. Be aware of non-verbal communication. Communication is important. Communities need to heal.
- We need a school system that supports who we are. Build bridges between home and school. Remember what our elders have taught us—respect for Elders and those less fortunate than us. We can have a respectful dialog about making positive changes.

###

This track was facilitated by Roy Agloinga from the Rasmuson Foundation and Marie Tozier from UAF/ Northwest Campus.

Contact person for involvement with the subcommittee is: Marie Tozier / (907) 443-8403 / [metozier@alaska.edu](mailto:metozier@alaska.edu)

###

Subcommittee members include the following (as of October 2015):

**Kawerak, Inc.**

- Christina Agloinga, Vice-President of Children & Family Services
- Jessica Farley, Program Director Child Care Services/Uiviilat Play and Learn Center
- Deb Trowbridge

**Nome Public Schools (NPS)**

- Jon Berkeley, Director of Federal Programs and Instruction

**University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) – Northwest Campus (NWC)**

- Marie Tozier, Registration Coordinator

**Regional Community Members**

- Dr. Qasuglana Barb Amarok

## Appendix D: Postsecondary Preparation and Transitioning Success Track - Session Notes

The Postsecondary Preparation and Transitioning Success (PPTS) initiative and track related to preparing our regional high school students for postsecondary education and careers; focusing on the goal of increasing the number of students prepared, successfully transitioned, and supported in a career or educational training program after high school.

The track began with a Regional Student Panel with Amber Otton as a university graduate, Caleb Weaver as a university graduate that completed with start-stops, Annie Weyiouanna as both a vocational training and university experienced student, Amanda Paniptchuk as a current college student, and Steffen Cox as a technical education/military graduate. The panel provided discussions on student's varying perspectives regarding postsecondary preparation for university/college, technical education and overcoming challenges.

Highlights from the panel included the following:

- It helped to get scholarships from several organizations, did not want to have parents feel a financial burden by going to college. The care packages, notes of encouragement, people letting one know they were proud of them, were all encouraging to know that people and organizations believed in them and that they supported them.
- Encouraged youth while still in high school to get involved in organizations where there are other youth with similar postsecondary goals, such as Future Teachers and AFN Youth and Elders. Helps create a peer group that also wants to get their education, love learning and find learning as well as school, fun.
- Personally made choice to drop out of high school and later get a GED. Went back to get a GED and then later to college because wanted to earn money and got sick of always being poor and eating top ramen. Also went back because always had been told and knew that parents had expectations. It is important to hear that parents and others expect them to do great things and expect them to go to college, even if they don't do it right away—it will be in their mind and eventually they will believe in themselves and do it.
- From the village and was always asked what

was going to do. Everyone said go to college, go to college. Once graduated from high school, personally felt not prepared to leave for college, but felt it was expected and did a semester in Fairbanks at UAF, then did a semester at home in the village and took classes through NWC. Afterwards, decided to go to Job Corp for vocational training and that was a great fit and what was needed at the time—small group, everyone knew each other and it was more like a small community and felt more comfortable there. Did RAHI, Upward Bound and NACTEC and they are good programs to teach life skills too.

- Shopped around for schools that had aviation, knew wanted to fly. Was an average student in high school but had a goal and stuck to it.
- Had to learn how to balance subsistence life style, with family and many responsibilities. The support of my spouse, who when felt like giving up encouraged to keep going. Received scholarships from the region which helped. It has taken a while doing part-time sometimes a class at a time but after almost 10 years only 4 classes away from attaining a degree.

The panel closed with recommendations and changes that would help students succeed. The panel provided the following:

- Youth need to hear that people and those that are close to them believe in them—that they have real value and real potential. It makes all the difference. In high school only some of the youth were pushed and encouraged. It was a small percentage of the students that were pushed, and the ones who do not have support from home need to be pushed and encouraged even more so. They need to know there are expectations of them. Need mentors to high school students, need mentors when kids are young. Support and encouragement are essential.
- Take advantage of NACTEC/RAHI/Upward Bound, sports teams and any activity that builds leadership and lets students be exposed to other places where they can learn skills... technical, academic or life skills.

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- Need to have some training and exposure to doing homework, especially now that so much is online. If take classes via distance delivery at home need to know how to get into programs to do homework, download assignments and have that technological expertise. Important to know how to record lectures or have ways to get the information needed in classes. It is hard to do classes online and distance—can be distracted easily and then have to deal with slower Internet and technological type challenges.
- Need more success stories, more support from the community, more role models and positive atmosphere.
- Encouraged taking advantage of dual (high school and college) credit classes while in high school when one has the encouragement and additional support. Works to be successful in the future.
- Try to reach out early and include cultural knowledge in the curriculum. Ilisagvik tribal college is an example that provides integration of culture, support and foundational type classes.

###

The next track session focused on Secondary Preparation of regional students. This provided an opportunity for dialogue on the topic of preparing and supporting our students for training, college and military after high school. The following focus questions were answered by the group as follows:

**1. What does it mean to be college ready in the Norton Sound Region?**

- Having a plan in place
- College scholarship applications
- Support from high school
- Knowing what is good for me
- Informed about college climate and culture
- Finding out what you really want
- Knowing requirements for not only degree but a career
- Support from family/school/community
- Being flexible and having a sound basis in core subjects
- What is expected socially – changes from high school to college
- What supports are available at my college

- Study habits, discipline, learning how to “learn” at the college level
- Starting to learn these college skills young
- Not being prepared in the classroom, learning how to write

**2. How can the region support individuals to be postsecondary ready?**

- Support visits/tours of colleges so you know what to expect, including visits to rural student services (RSS) so can get in their program and involved early
- Self-exploration/assess own talents and interests to help focus high schoolers realize what they want to do
- Helping students figure out scholarships and responsibility with money
- Help with applications and having enough funding
- Develop confidence from a young age
- Every child has an opportunity to engage in classroom challenges
- Take opportunities to talk to students about making choices
- Honest talk about future consequences
- Guidance counselors are imperative -- good counselors help to prepare soft skills like being on time, prepared, address homesickness, and diverse environments.
- An actual curriculum/class which guides them to their interests
- Help see your own dreams from an early age
- Parents/community get together to foster excitement
- Have all subjects incorporate futures/jobs in their classes
- Inform on opportunities
- Self-advocate, seek support, foster confidence
- College ready should start earlier in elementary school
- Well-being at an early age
- Experience exposure to a degree track
- Rigorous programs that provide success in high school
- High expectations
- Career course, budgeting class, personal fi-

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nances

- Employ a transition specialist
- Helping students direct their path based on interest
- Start talking at an early age, don't wait until high school
- Have students experience success through challenging tasks
- Building confidence through high expectations and overcoming challenges
- Engage early through class competition in subjects
- Scholarships, assistance in gaining financial aid
- Essay writing for applications/scholarships
- More push for writing – both technical and academic skills
- Having a central resource for all students in our region
- Consistent with all students
- Opportunity to fundraise for graduates
- Service learning opportunities
- Building community between students and experts in their field
- Increasing student involvement

### 3. What does it mean to be career & tech ready in the Norton Sound Region?

- Know qualifications and expectations for the career
- Previous experience or exposure
- Internships
- Job market, what is there for me?
- Career course
- More chances for students in local hire and overcoming barriers

### 4. How can the region support individuals to be career & tech ready?

- Support from outside sources and reaching students earlier
- Junior high student involvement
- More chances for students to explore careers and technical skills
- More opportunity for job shadowing/internships/ mentorships that helps bring in the ex-

perts and glimpse of what is available

- Looking at students various skills
- Drop out tracking and contact
- Students realizing not just one path to success
- Creating stepping stones
- Drug and alcohol prevention
- Developing life skills
- More guidance for foundation of success
- Support group/leaders/ volunteers
- Community involvement
- Creating a stable environment in order to join the work force
- Community makes shift from college to voc/tech
- Remove perception that voc/trade isn't as good
- Expose students to skilled professionals in their field
- Foster the drive through mentorships and work experience
- Lots of jobs no workers
- Part of school week spent with mentor
- NWC classes on welding, small engines, electrician, etc.
- More NACTEC
- University direct courses to address the job market trends and have the local organizations support that initiative
- Local dorm where students can stay when they come in
- Replicate program like the Alaska Technical Center (ATC) so we can keep residents
- Employers be willing to offer mentorships, but students need to have the responsibility to show up
- Regional job availabilities degree/certificate programs
- Shops in communities, expose students to mentorships, align students with community members, mentors who are working career already
- Hands on skills
- Go out into community/work experience gain credit for their experience
- Work/school work together
- Students try out jobs, job prep course and work experience
- Resume building

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- Organizations/businesses take an interest/role in the creation of training for jobs
- NSHC is largest corp. high turnover
- Growing our own law enforcement/foster employing Regional Residents
- Foster apprenticeship programs

###

The next track session focused on Postsecondary Support and Mentoring. There was facilitated dialogue on student postsecondary transitions and developing mentoring support with our regional students. The following focus questions were answered by the group as follows:

**1. What is a successful transition experience to postsecondary life for our regional students?**

- Returning back to the community/village to assist to better the community
- Good role models to younger individuals
- **Self-sufficient, taking care of family and ourselves**
- **Basic needs being met (subsistence lifestyle)**
- **Healthy mental state**
- Participating and seeking opportunities right for them
- Working through challenges or obstacles in your choice of program
- All careers have value no matter what you choose
- Not returning to original community but being able to contribute in a larger sense
- Natural leadership roles
- Full fish rack, sustaining/providers
- Sharing their experiences with others
- Current CEO/President of Kawerak Inc. is a great role model
- Productive member of society
- **NACTEC/RAHI/ANSEP/ Upward Bound/ JROTC (lifelong skills)**
- **Being independent/ responsible**
- Given the freedom to explore who they are
- Scholarships/ financial aid
- **Post high school planning/campus orientation**

**• Funding Sponsorship**

- Career portfolios
- Well prepared academically

**2. How can the region support individuals to transition successfully to postsecondary life?**

- Help individuals identify what they want
- Different types of support, financial and emotional (motivational)
- **Exposure to prepare for postsecondary, NACTEC and campus visits**
- Being realistic, having meaningful conversations of how to be successful after training
- Increase low income housing for young adults
- How to break poverty cycles
- Reaching students to provide alternative experiences
- Continue career fairs and communication follow-up with organization, schools etc. keep the movement going
- **Start earlier awareness and research into careers**
- Create support for 18 year olds
- Students need to feel valued
- Know their identity

**3. What characteristics make a successful mentor?**

- **Consistency**
- Ingrained willingness to help others
- Compassion
- Empathetic
- Role model
- Willingness to share your time
- Food sharing builds bonds
- **Common shared life experiences**
- **Non-judgmental demeanor/attitudes**
- Willing to learn just as much as willing to teach
- Internal healthy demeanor
- Strong in traditional values and role model in traditional way of life
- Able to connect with mentee
- Mentor to mentor support
- **Structure formalization**
- Mutual agreements acknowledgment of rela-

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tionship

- Someone to be available
- What are traditional or historical methods?

These do work still

- Long lasting continuous
- Numerous mentors for various needs
- Familiar with our region
- Respect
- Good listener
- **Non-judgmental**
- Failure isn't an option
- **Been there done that (experience)**
- Tough love
- Knows how to ask good questions, getting people to think
- Dedicated
- Honesty, even when it hurts
- Encourager
- Resourceful
- Willing, nurture relationship
- Chosen not assigned
- **Availability**
- **Policies and procedures, guidelines**

#### 4. What factors make a successful mentoring program for postsecondary (college students and training/tech students) from Our Region?

- Buy-in/outcomes
- Have a student survey
- Individual mentoring, like coaching, etc.
- Expectations
- Constant dialogue-interview stage
- Environment dependent
- Options
- Helpful vs. supportive
- **Common ground**
- Building relationships
- Provide opportunities
- Keep in contact
- Community exposure
- **Having stability**
- Respect on both sides

###

The track closed with looking at the big picture of postsecondary preparation and transitioning success considerations. This including the presentation of regional statistics and group examination of educational trends. The following data was shared:

- Number of graduates at Nome Public Schools & Bering Strait School District including the dropout rates over the last 3-years
- Postsecondary plans as seniors over the last 3-years
- Enrollment – how many students have enrolled in postsecondary schools & training programs
- Number of students enrolled in dual credit courses over the past 3 years
- Scholarship total funding amounts/investments and total number of students supported: a) college and b) vocational training
- Number of students that complete (statewide data): a) college or b) training-technical schools

**After the presentation of the data, there was a group discussion on: what does that data/statistics mean or say to you about the region? The following summarizes the discussion:**

- o We are making progress but have a ways to go
- o Objectively meeting the needs to all students regarding their next step after high school
- o Address local curriculum and what the students want and need
- o It takes more than just money or scholarships to have our students be successful
- o Definition of success
- o Room for industrial growth, especially in the maritime industry in the region
- o Having student in the region prepared for the types of job they could get in the region
- o Technical schooling specific to job, experts in their field

###

The PPTS track was supported by an ongoing regional working group consisting of representatives from various organizations and interests. The primary focus of the working group is to provide opportunities and resources for our regional students to be prepared for and successful in postsecondary education and life. Based on the clearly identified recommendations and

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outcomes of the Summit, the PPTS work group will be taking steps forward to implement the various support strategies in our region. If you are interested in learning more and would like to be involved in this regional support effort, please join us at the contact listed below.

This track was facilitated by Gabrielle Russell from UAF/Rural Student Services and Jesse Blandford from NSEDC.

Contact person for involvement with the subcommittee is: Kacey Miller / (907) 443-8416 / [kacey.miller@alaska.edu](mailto:kacey.miller@alaska.edu)

###

Subcommittee members include the following (as of October 2015):

**Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC)**

- Tyler Rhodes, Chief Operating Officer
- Jesse Blandford, Education, Employment & Training Director

**Kawerak, Inc.**

- Luisa Machuca, Vice-President of Education, Employment & Training
- Kristine McRae, Youth Employment Director
- Brian James, Workforce Development Specialist

**Norton Sound Health Corporation (NSHC)**

- Tiffany Martinson, Human Resource Director
- Reba Lean, Public Relations Specialist
- Belinda Mattingley

**Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center (NACTEC)**

- Doug Walrath, Director

**University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) - Northwest Campus (NWC)**

- Kacey Miller, Student Services Manager
- Kathy Commack, Regional Student Advisor
- Annie Weyiouanna, Regional Student Advisor

## Appendix E: Growing Our Own Teachers Track - Session Notes

The rationale of the Growing Our Own Teacher track was that the commitment to building an effective, relevant and responsive education system requires developing education professionals from within our region and communities. The benefit of having local, regional educators is a foundation for improving the quality of our schools and for increasing the impact of our educational system with our communities.

The first session opened with an introduction to the topic of Growing Our Own Teachers. The track began with a panel of teachers Josie Bourdon, Mary Huntington, & Carolyn Heflin. They shared their experiences, challenges, and suggestions for supporting teachers from our region who are teaching in the region. The following question was presented to the participants and discussions are summarized below.

What aspects of growing our own teachers are important to address?

- Identify opportunities available so we can best network and utilize our resources
- Learning about how we can help with home-grown teachers
- School board to help with initiative

- Community/teacher partnerships
- Ways to get kids more interested in teaching careers
- Vision with developing the movement to grow our own teachers
- Looking at roadblocks – be ready to address
- Get more hands-on training – para professional focus
- Networking and how we can be more supportive

###

The second session focused on learning more about what it takes for residents of our region to become teachers. This began with taking a closer look at two elements identified as challenges for the Growing Our Own Teachers effort: 1) Education and 2) Career. First, a panel presented information related to the topic. Panelists were Kathy Commack, UAF Northwest Campus regional advisor; Bob Metcalf, UAF Northwest Campus director; and Carolyn Heflin, BSSD director of curriculum and instruction.

The group first identified aspects of education and

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career-related challenges faced by regional residents who want to become teachers then brainstormed solutions. The following summarizes the discussions:

### 1. What education challenges are faced by people in the region who want to become teachers?

- Internet access in the villages
- Awareness about resources
- Lack of access to updated technology
- Leaving home/support system
- Students not choosing education as a career
- College format is challenging
- Students feeling overwhelmed
- College students switching out of teaching and into other degree paths
- Balancing life: childcare/school/family
- Lack of Alaska-grown mentors
- Need to celebrate successes
- Connection/contact information to successes featured on posters
- End goal not in sight—have to take core classes prior to and being engaged in the teaching degree program
  - Not academically prepared for college

### 2. What are solutions to education challenges faced by local people who want to become teachers?

- Restructuring the university learning experience (classes/work experience)
- Work while doing student teaching and receiving a paycheck.
- Create an apprenticeship program
- College dorm in Nome for NWC
- Create central access to local teachers willing to be mentors for aspiring teachers.
- Early Childhood Education classes as dual-credit courses for high school students,
  - High schoolers earn Child Development Associate certification.

### 3. What challenges do locally grown teachers face in the region?

- Males not seeing education/teaching as a career choice

- Pay not great but cost of living high
- Housing challenge when returning to region
- May not be recognized as credible expert in the community
- Position availability
- Teacher preparation is not adequate
  - Inadequate preparation for classroom management

### 4. What are solutions to challenges locally grown teachers face in the region?

- Providing mental health services to support teachers
- Mentorship for new teachers
- Alaska Native mentors
- Community member mentor
- Apprenticeship program
- Allow regional people to teach in their home communities with support systems
  - AKCIS – “I don’t know what I want to do”

###

The third session examined the importance of personal, cultural and community support for local residents going into the teaching profession. A panel made up of Koyuk principal Mary Huntington and BSSD School Board member Muffy Iya introduced the topic. The group identified challenges in the areas of personal support and cultural and community connection faced by locally-grown teachers working in the region, then brainstormed solutions. The following summarizes the discussions:

### 1. What challenges in personal support and cultural-community connection face locally-grown teachers working in the region?

- Professors with little rural experience and challenges of adequately preparing teachers for working in rural Alaska
- Students frustrated because they often build relationships with teachers who then often leave after 1 year – particularly in village schools (could substitute: Students find it difficult to bond with teachers as role models due to high turnover rate.)
- School versus Community
- Parents don’t know about resources to support students
- Air of judgmentalism about new teachers

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- Cultural pressure on Native teachers from community: they are expected to be cultural experts even though they might not be dancers, language speakers, etc.

- Veteran teachers feeling territorial with new teachers

## **2. What are the solutions to the challenges in personal support and cultural-community connection that face locally-grown teachers working in the region?**

- Start the “college” conversation early ‘I know I can’
- Parent mentorships – encourage kids to go to college
- ANSEP-type model for university to expand into
- RAHI & nurse-type cohort be an in-region summer intensive for teaching careers
- Aggressively recruiting and supporting teacher aides who would like to become teachers
- Travel funds so that regional residents who become teachers but are not placed in their home village school their first year can travel periodically to their home village.
- Money for college students – dedicated for developing regional teachers
- More teacher housing
- Corporations & Cities set aside land for teacher housing development

###

The last session provided an opportunity for the group to review the track topics, challenges and solutions discussed earlier; and identify highlights from the discussions and set priorities for growing our own teachers. The following summarizes the discussions.

### **Overall Track HIGHLIGHTS:**

- **Apprenticeship program – get paid while doing student teaching**
- **Specific scholarship for education students that will be future teachers**
- **Posters of locally grown teachers – role models**
- **Housing for teachers**
- **Mentorship for new teachers**
- **Alaska Native teacher mentors for locally grown teachers**

### **Ideas to share with the Growing Our Own Teachers Sub-Committee:**

- **Like to see a program like ‘Growing our own Nurses’ start up for teachers.**
- **Place a teacher education faculty position at Northwest Campus-UAF to guide and support the Growing Our Own Teachers initiatives.**
- **Work with regional organization’s public relations staff to develop posters that promote teachers and becoming teachers.**
- **Create a summer cohort-based program with UAF, NACTEC and/or local-regional organizations for high school juniors and seniors to target math, science, and English courses as preparatory for college and teaching careers.**

###

This track was facilitated by Anahma Shannon and Luisa Machuca from Kawerak.

Contact person for involvement with the subcommittee is: Luisa Machuca / (907) 443-4354 / [eet.vp@kawerak.org](mailto:eet.vp@kawerak.org)

###

Subcommittee members include the following (as of October 2015):

#### **Kawerak, Inc.**

- Luisa Machuca, Vice-President of Education, Employment & Training

#### **Bering Strait School District**

- Carl White, Special Assistant to the Superintendent
- Carolyn Heflin, Director of Curriculum & Instruction
- John Weemes, Coordinator of Program Support
- Mary Huntington, Principal of Koyuk Malim-iut School

#### **Nome Public Schools**

- Shawn Arnold, Superintendent
- Josie Bourdon, Cultural Arts Teacher – Nome Elementary School

#### **University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) - Northwest Campus (NWC)**

- Bob Metcalf, Director
- Carol Gales, Program Development Manager
- Kathy Commack, Regional Student Advisor

# 2015 Norton Sound Education Summit

## *Our Education, Our Cultures, Our Time*



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