

To the parents and community of the Yupiit School District,

The state recently released last year’s PEAK test scores ([linked here](https://education.alaska.gov/assessment-results/District/DistrictResults?DistrictYear=2018-2019&IsScience=False&DistrictId=54)) indicating our need to close a performance gap in Reading, Math and Science. The District has been tracking this issue carefully for several years and has succeeded in taking close the proficiency gap even further. The time is now. We have two areas of focus this year: closing the gap while improving outcomes for all students and providing equitable resources while balancing the budget.  The good news is that our budget for the SY 2019-20 has been approved by both our school board and the state department.

We also recognize that we have significant work to do in closing the achievement gap in literacy and mathematics. These are the concrete steps we are taking to address the general proficiency gap:

* We have purchased a new Reading curriculum that aligns with Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies content.
* We have hired additional literacy and math coaches to focus on supporting teachers in areas of greatest need.
* We have moved to a model of instructional support by hiring vice principals in Akiak and Tuluksak. Akiachak has a school counselor that will assist with instruction and assessment.
* We have hired an ELA teacher in Akiachak to allow students learning Yupiit and English to stay in core content classes and access the entire curriculum while also improving their language skills.
* We have made incentives available to teaching staff in an effort to retain staff for the benefit of stability for our students.
* The budget has been entirely revamped in order to ensure equitable resources across the district. It has led to some difficult choices, but it has also helped us see what equity looks like financially, academically, and socially.

Our communities have high expectations for our schools, and we share those expectations.  Our schools cannot do this work alone. We need every member of the community to not only hold us accountable but to also tell our staff that we believe they are capable of helping every student succeed. The growing recognition across our community of the need to ensure that all students, at a minimum, are proficient in literacy and mathematics provides energy for our work.  By working together, we can ensure that every student fulfills their greatest potential. We encourage the public to help us with this goal.

As Parents you can help us reach our goals by;

* Assuring your children are in school every day.
* Insisting that all children read every night. Reading takes practice.
* Attend school meetings and events showing your children you care about their education.
* Support your classroom teachers with words of affirmation and kind gestures.

With gratitude,

Cassandra Bennett, Superintendent