



# Sharing Our Pathways

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A newsletter of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative  
Alaska Federation of Natives ♦ University of Alaska ♦ National Science Foundation ♦ Annenberg Rural Challenge

## Rural Education Looks to a Bright Future in the New Millennium

### A Report on the Alaska Rural Education Leadership Retreat

On January 25–27, over 60 leaders in rural education from across the state gathered in Wasilla for an Alaska Rural Education Leadership Retreat sponsored by the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative in cooperation with the Alaska Department of Education and the Alaska Federation of Natives. Along with Commissioner Shirley Holloway, AFN President Julie Kitka and UA President Mark Hamilton, a group of superintendents, Elders, Native educators and others actively involved in rural education initiatives associated with the Alaska RSI, spent three days reviewing current issues impacting schools in rural Alaska.

Given the many new state mandates, school reform initiatives and ongoing challenges that rural school districts are grappling with as we enter the final year of this millennium, it seemed an opportune time to step back and reflect on where we are and where we want to go with rural education. The focus of the retreat was to take a look at how education programs and services can best be positioned to address the long-term needs of rural communities in this time of

limited resources. We were particularly interested in examining ways in which the Alaska Department of Education, the University of Alaska, rural communities and school districts can work more closely together in the provision of basic education services, as well as in staff development, curriculum enhancement, collaborative research and technical assistance. Reports and discussions focused on the following current programs and initiatives:

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## Sharing Our Pathways

is a publication of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, funded by the National Science Foundation Division of Educational Systemic Reform in agreement with the Alaska Federation of Natives and the University of Alaska. We welcome your comments and suggestions and encourage you to submit them to:

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- ✗ Alaska Quality Schools Initiative/ Legislative Mandates—Shirley Holloway
- ✗ Alaska Native Student Learning Action Plan—Bernice Tetpon
- ✗ Alaska Federation of Natives Education Initiatives—Frank Hill
- ✗ Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative/ Alaska Rural Challenge—Frank Hill/Oscar Kawagley
- ✗ Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools—Ray Barnhardt
- ✗ Alaska Onward to Excellence—Bob Blum/Jim Kushman, NWREL
- ✗ Rural School Access to Telecommunications—Martin Cary, GCI
- ✗ Rural Educator Preparation Partnership—John Weise
- ✗ Native Administrators for Rural Alaska—John Monahan
- ✗ Consortium for Alaska Native Higher Education—Edna MacLean
- ✗ UA Rural Education Initiatives—Mark Hamilton/Nanne Myers
- ✗ Citizens for the Educational Advancement of Alaska's Children—Ed Gonion
- ✗ Survey of Alaska High School Students—Carole Seyfrit

Following status reports on the various initiatives, the participants turned their attention to developing draft "action plans" around three focal areas. Following is a summary of the recommendations put forward for follow-up actions in each of the focal areas:

### Develop an Alaska Rural Education Action Plan for the Next Millennium

This group addressed issues raised in the earlier discussions and developed a preliminary outline of where we would like to be with rural education in Alaska by the year 2020, and some of the steps that will need to be

taken to get us there. Recommendations of this group included:

1. Encourage all educational organizations in the state to adopt and implement the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools.
2. Develop a clear definition of "local control" and identify the bureaucratic roadblocks that need to be eliminated and the support systems that need to be in place to achieve it.
3. Develop a clearinghouse to network and synergize all the reform initiatives impacting rural Alaska.
4. Encourage interagency cooperation in addressing the unique needs of rural Alaska.
5. Foster partnerships with colleges to insure the quality of the high school diploma and what it means.
6. Engage Elders, families, parents, homes and communities as critical components in the educational future of rural Alaska.
7. Stabilize the work force with a viable economic base in rural Alaska, with support from private business, corporations, government, etc.
8. Keep the villages alive by keeping the schools open through multiple forms of educational delivery, regardless of size.
9. Develop a strong, well-articulated vision and definition of community, education, schooling and local control as they relate to rural community health and well-being.
10. Insure equity and adequacy in the future of education for rural Alaska, so as to provide equal lifetime opportunities for all Alaskan children and communities.
11. Build on the successes of what we are doing well and continue those efforts.

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12. Continue ongoing review and revision of the content standards to insure they address the needs of all students and communities in Alaska.

### **Develop a Rural Teacher Preparation Action Plan for HEA, Title II Funds**

This group addressed issues associated with the preparation of teachers for schools in rural Alaska and developed a preliminary outline of components for a cooperative proposal for funding a comprehensive statewide rural teacher preparation initiative for rural Alaska. Recommendations of this group included:

1. Designate the regional Native Educators Associations as key players in shaping and governing rural teacher education initiatives, including those of the DOE and the university.
2. Take all steps necessary to increase the number of Alaska Native teachers and administrators in rural schools, including increased support for the Rural Educator Preparation Partnership and Native Administrators for Rural Alaska.
3. Establish school district career ladders to provide incentives and support for aides and associate teachers who are aspiring to be licensed teachers.
4. Provide an option for school districts to employ teacher interns at a partial salary to serve as classroom teachers during their internship year under the supervision of a nearby mentor teacher.
5. Provide incentives for school districts to implement cultural orientation programs (including an extended camp experience) for new teachers as part of their annual inservice plan submitted to DOE.

6. Make available a “cross-cultural specialist” endorsement for teachers, built around the criteria outlined in the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools.
7. Allocate .5% of the annual appropriation for education to be made available for research, evaluation and data tracking regarding issues critical to education in Alaska.
8. Develop and disseminate a set of “Guidelines for Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers” aimed at the preparation of teachers qualified to implement the Alaska Cultural Standards.
9. Implement “Future Teacher Clubs” in all schools in Alaska.

### **Develop an Agenda for a Statewide Conference on Rural Education in 2000**

This group reviewed the current status of school and curricular reform initiatives in rural Alaska and mapped out the parameters for a statewide conference on rural education in 2000 that showcases the most promising curriculum models/materials and teaching/schooling practices leading us into the new millennium. Recommendations of this group included:

1. **Purposes of conference:** review status of school and current reform initiatives in rural Alaska, showcasing promising models based on school curriculum reform; provide participants with strategies to apply/adapt practices in their schools; and develop support network to continue work on conference tasks.
2. **Who participates:** representative team from regions, communities, districts/schools—all stakeholders, including parents (PTA, IEA Comm), students (FTA), policy makers (AASB, leg-

islature, tribal councils, IRA), practitioners (teachers/associate teachers, aides), Elders/young Elders, Native Educator Associations, higher education (teacher educators, REPP, NARA), administrators (ACSA) and media.

3. **Substance:** extend learning beyond classroom walls; partnership theme—open access to education; assessment—practices for success; consolidation/closure; technology & distance education; transition beyond high school; adapting curriculum to cultural and physical regions—place; healthy community and family; barriers to achievement; role models; and student, parent and community involvement in school change.
4. **When and where:** January–March 2000, early spring, possibly in place of BMEEC & NEC, or regionally in 1999 and Anchorage in 2000.
5. **Outcomes:** edit and broadcast one-hour video; document and distribute “proceedings”; send participants back with DVD for immediate use with students; and incorporate teacher/student produced products for dissemination.

The recommendations outlined above are preliminary ideas for developing more detailed action plans in each of the three focal areas listed. We wish to express appreciation to all the participants in the Alaska Rural Education Leadership Retreat for contributing their valuable time and insights to this effort. We invite everyone with an interest in these issues to offer additional ideas and suggestions for how the action plans can be further strengthened so that we can move into the next millennium with a bright future for education in rural Alaska. ✨



## AISES CORNER

American Indian Science  
& Engineering Society

by Claudette Bradley-Kawagley

In November of '98, the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative sponsored science fairs in Kotzebue, Fairbanks and Old Harbor. A fourth science fair was held February 17, 1999 in St. Paul Island. Each science fair establishes the values of the Elders in that region as the measuring device for determining if a project is acceptable. Each fair employs Elders as judges to determine the value of projects to the cultural ways of the Native people in that region. Likewise, each fair begins and ends with a blessing offered by an Elder and everyone participates in Native dancing and singing. It is not surprising that these fairs are becoming known as "Native Science Fairs".

Each fair has two sets of judges. The teacher/scientist judges review projects looking at the research design and scientific method. The Elders judge projects looking at their value to village life and the regional culture. After awarding first, second and third place prizes, the judges come together to select two grand prize winning projects.

The students of the grand prize winning projects will travel to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to enter their projects in the AISES National Science Fair, March 5-6, 1999. The AISES National Fair has 400 or more science projects done by American Indian and Alaska Native students (5th-12th grade) from the lower forty-eight states and Alaska.

The Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative is sending the following grand prize winners to AISES National Science Fair:

### Kelsey Peterson

Kelsey is a fifth-grader in Kodiak. She wanted to know "How Did the Skin Parkas Stay Waterproof?" She



*Feona Sawden from Port Graham helps students prepare urritaq at last summer's Academy of Elders/AISES Science Camp on Afognak Island outside of Kodiak. Camps help prepare students for regional science fairs.*

tested three types of stitches with water. The regular cotton stitches leak and are not waterproof. Gut-skin stitches had less leakage. Ryegrass stitches did not leak. The wet grass expanded and did not allow any water to leak. Traditional skin parkas are stitched with rye grass.



*Dietrich Nikolai with his project "Marten Sets" at the Interior AISES Science Fair.*

### Tasha Price and Jonyssa Ignatin

Tasha and Jonyssa are sixth graders in Old Harbor. They are proud of the village of Old Harbor and the Alutiiq culture. Their science project explores pumice stone and how their ancestors used it.

### Dietrich Nikolai

Dietrich is an eighth grader in Nikolai, which has a population of 90 people. Nikolai is the first village dog mushers encounter after passing through the "burn" on the trail of the Iditarod. Dietrich wanted to learn which set—poleset or cubbie—is more effective for subsistence trapping for marten. Marten fur hats are desirable to keep warm in extreme cold weather. Dietrich interviewed local trappers and set his own traps for his science project.

### Kristopher John

Kristopher is in eighth grade in Fort Yukon. After exploring the behavior of tornadoes he discovered river eddies swirled with

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# The Cry of the Loon: Mysterious, Mournful, Remembering Place

by Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley

**W**aqaa, greetings to each and everyone of you. Some of you may well be asking yourselves, why have I chosen the *tunutellek* as my subject for this occasion? The Yupiaq name means “that which is packing something.” Indeed, the loon is carrying a heavy burden.

Wherever the loon exists, there are Native people, and you will have many loon stories that are mystical and magical in their content. Among them is the story of the blind boy who is made to see by the loon diving into

the water with the boy on its back. This is repeated three times. In each dive and emergence, the boy could see a little clearer, and on its third emergence, the boy could see clearly. The loon helped the boy to see, like-

(AISES, *continued*)

similar behavior. Kristopher interviewed Elders and learned: there are more fish in the eddies than elsewhere in the river and Native fisherman place their nets in eddies to catch the most fish. He experimented with placing a log in the river to make a good eddy and a bad eddy. He learned the water flows out of good eddies, allowing fish to continue swimming up the river.

**Puyuk Joule and Thomas Tirrell**

Puyuk and Thomas, who are sixth graders in Kotzebue, entitled their project “*Kinakina Atquin*”, which means “What’s your name?” They wanted to know if the Iñupiaq cultural names were being lost and forgotten. Puyuk and Thomas wrote a questionnaire seeking knowledge of the respondents family tree. They each interviewed four friends, four family members, four Elders, and four relatives. Puyuk and Thomas expected 16 out of 32 respondents would know their Iñupiaq cultural names, but in-

stead the found 30 out of 32 respondents knew their Iñupiaq names both in the present and past generations.

**Heather Outwater**

Heather is 15 years old and lives in Noorvik. She’s president of the student council and captain of the cheerleading squad. Her project tested plants and inorganic materials to preserve and restore the river and stream banks. The Kobuk river has been eroding the banks causing some people in Noorvik to lose their homes into the river. This project will be shown to the Noorvik City Council and the Elders’ Committee. Heather hopes they will consider bioengineering techniques such as the ones used in her project to stop the river and stream bank erosion.

The Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative extends its congratulations to these bright young scientists and is very proud to send them to the AISES National Science Fair in Albuquerque, March 5–6, 1999. ✨

wise, it can help us to understand ourselves and see our connection to Mother Earth today.

Listen to the call of the loon. Its call is God-given through nature. It is its own language and understood by others of its kind and other creatures. Only we, with our ability to think and rationalize, do not understand because we listen only with the mind, not with mind and heart well sprinkled with intuition. To some it is eery, as if some bad thing is about to happen. Maybe an *alangguk*, an apparition or ghost of some kind is about to appear. It conjures up many thoughts that are not based on “what is” but on “what if.” This is the fear that most of us face as a Native people, especially when thinking about changing education. “What if” the educators, legislators and powers that be do not believe and think that this could be done. But regardless, we must take those steps necessary to change education so that it takes into consideration, in fact, makes an educational system based on our own tribal worldviews. When thought of in that context, then it includes our Native languages, ways of generating knowledge, research, ways of making things and ways for using them respectfully. Our Alaska Native languages come from the land, are derived from the land. It is the language of the land that makes our Native people live in harmony with Nature. According to the Muskogee Cree, Bear Heart, harmony is a tolerance, a forgiving, a blending. This is what our Native languages allow us to do. Our Native words come from the creatures and things of Mother Earth naming themselves, defining themselves through action words—that’s

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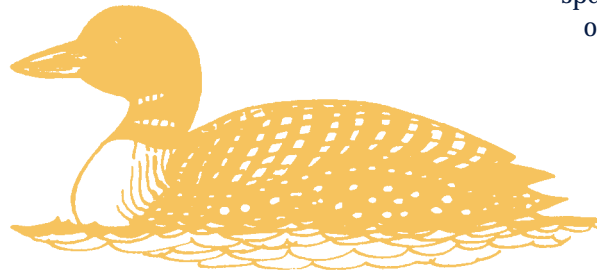
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reality! Nature is our teacher. Information and rationality are a small segment of knowing and learning. In the use of our Native languages, we come to live life intimately because we are enmeshed in it rather than looking at it from a distance through a microscope or telescope. It then behooves that we relearn our languages and learn to live close to nature to regain our health as a Native people. When we have that vision and goal, and work toward it, then we will have harmony; we will have tolerance; we will forgive; and we will again blend into our world. We will be using our five senses and intuition to learn about our place. The loon never lost its spiritual vision. It has a love for life, its environment and its creator. Its education was from Mother Earth for the heart, for it to become creative and to know how to live in its community, its habitat.

The loon still gets messages from its unconscious on new thoughts or solutions to problems. We, as human beings, have cluttered up our conscious minds with information and rational thinking, so that our world of dreams is no longer sought through meditation, vision questing, fasting and looking deep into the silence within us for direction. Not only have we become socio-politico-economic dependents, but we depend on outside sources to take care of our problems whether it's individual, family or community. You see, the loon looks into its inner ecology knowing that no one else can do that for it. It knows that it is incumbent upon itself. In order for us to receive guidance and direction for our lives, we must relearn what the loon does naturally. We must look into ourselves where power and strength lie and tap into it to begin to address our own problems.

Another strength of the loon, is

that it teaches and nurtures its young to live as a loon. It does not require that someone else do the educating. The loon develops the loon worldview of its young closely connected to others and its place. As it migrates from place to place, it remembers and appreciates the diversity and beauty of Nature. It nurtures its offspring to become independent yet knowing its dependence on the abundance of Nature to succor its needs. It teaches its young to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." This is true love; this is unconditional love that



we need in this world. A love for self, a love for others and a love for place giving one a sense of responsibility to take care of oneself, to care for others and the environment that one lives in. The loon's cry is remembering a place that was harmonious, full of beauty and diversity that Nature so loves. This is heart talk! This is science—knowing place.

Very much like our Native people, the loon's life is not all roses and peace. The loon has a few problems, such as taking off. It is very much like the Wright brothers in their early experiments. The little homemade engine revs up, but has just enough power for it to barely to get off the ground. Just as the under-powered plane, the loon frantically flaps its wings and seemingly runs across the water's surface. Once in a while, the loon will crash onto the tundra. But, it crawls back into the lake somehow and tries again. We, as a Native people,

are testing our wings and power! If we find that some of our ideas do not work, we need to go back and try again, maybe with a different approach and tools. We must not be overly ambitious by overplaying our knowledge and abilities, but recognize our limitations as human beings. We must do that which we know we can succeed at first, then progress to more difficult tasks. And, if we fail, we must NEVER GIVE UP!

The sad fact about this precious bird is that it is losing ground in its efforts to survive. Our Canadian friends look upon it with great respect, so much so, that it is on their one- and two-dollar coins. They are called the "loonie" and "twoonie". It is a known fact that the loon's numbers are growing smaller at a fast rate in Canada. There is a problem that is so ominous and insidious that it is overwhelming the loon. It

is not of its own making. It is human-made pollution consisting of chemical, biological, nuclear and noise which is destroying its habitat. It is we, humans, who are destroying its habitat and, unfortunately, as we destroy its habitat we are destroying ourselves in the process. The loon may well ask, "What was the question that makes technology the answer in the first place? Who asked it and when?" Technology is inherently good and is the product of human rationality. But, unfortunately, it has laid aside morality and ethics. Take for example, the computer. Many think it's the answer for all our needs. It is speedy and answers questions with facts the human has fed into it. I say use it sparingly as a tool. It encourages individualism often to the point of isolationism. The excessive user wants to be alone with a stupid machine. If you feed it garbage, you get garbage in return. It takes away clear thinking, problem-solving skills

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and above all, removes common sense.

Modern technology wants to take and take, to make things without giving back. It wants to cut into Mother Earth to remove its natural resources. It wants to make people want more of its products. In so doing, indigenous people, creatures, plants and landforms are sometimes no barrier to the Eurocentric concepts of progress and development. They are merely removed as detritus and, in the process, destroy a people and their place. The loon's mournful cry is in recognition of this needless destruction that is taking place by bigger and better technological machines of devastation.

The mournful cry of the loon is much aware of its dwindling food sources, the inability of some of its eggs to hatch and its members succumbing to poisons and new diseases. It recognizes that to not have children, to not have family, to not have a community, is to be scattered, to be falling apart. Many of our Native families are falling apart. I recognize that there are healthy Native families in the villages. I would say that these healthy families are surrounded by and witness to a holocaust of pain and misery. Our villages are, in essence, communities in name only. They are often not working together for the common good as in the old days. The unhealthy and dysfunctional families have youngsters seven, eight or nine years old who are raising and taking care of their younger siblings. Why should I worry about these young children acting as parents? Because these youngsters are missing an important aspect of their young lives—that of being a child! A child to be loved by parents, to be nurtured and taken care of by parents, to play as a child, to talk as a child, to imagine as a child. Oh, the yearning of the child just to be a child! Many children miss this growing up phase.

As if this was not enough, we al-

low video games, movies and television to become the babysitters while we go out and party, play bingo, gamble and do things that make us sicker. While the children are viewing and doing these things, they are seeing killing, cheating, lying, men beating women and children, all kinds of sex, adult language and all other undesirable aspects of life. The mournful cry of the loon is reminding us of the time when there were secrets from children, things that were not to be known by them until they were considered ready. Today, there are no secrets in the modern media. Go out on the playground, a school party, or anywhere youngsters are gathered. Listen to their language! You will hear a lot of foul language. The language that the youngsters use is an indicator of how bad the situation has become. There is no respect for the parents, teachers, elders and most certainly of other young people. We see children having children, children killing children, children killing elders, children committing suicide, children dropping out of school, children without hope—sad children. What a sad state for us to be in! These states of affairs contribute to the loss of childhood. We must gain control of what the children learn, see and do. We do this by regaining control of our own lives. We control this by turning off the television during dinner time so that heart talk can take place. Heart talk is kind, gentle talk that makes one want to be polite to everyone and everything around them. This talk allows members to know each other, what their likes and dislikes are, to know of problems they are having with friends, siblings and school. It allows the family to find out what they would like to see change in the home and why. This is where a family that loves and talks together becomes stronger because they know each other, love and care for one another. This is family.

The loon does not blame anyone

even though its environment is rife with problems and pollution is beyond its control. Its mournful call reminds us that we, as humans, must do our part to regenerate and reciprocate to Nature. We, the Native people, must quit blaming others for our problems. When we blame others, we are saying that someone else should take care of the problem and deal with our feelings about the situation. We don't like what has been happening in the schools, so we blame the state, district and teachers. We are saying to them "take care of the problem" and also "take care of my hurt and confused feelings about my own education. Please, heal me." Why should we continue to do this? Why should we continue to say how confused and mixed up we are by the new civilization that has come to our villages? So now we have frame houses that are poorly insulated, built on stilts and expensive to maintain. But we are "educated" because we no longer live in sod houses. We have snowmobiles instead of dog teams that can often save our lives. We have flush toilets with Lysol cleaners that empty into an unhealthy lagoon, thereby making it unnecessary for us to go outdoors in all kinds of weather, where Nature can take care of natural wastes in a natural way. But, we are educated. We have antibiotics and hormone-laced hamburgers instead of smoked dry fish which is more healthful. We use toilet paper which kills trees instead of sphagnum moss which prevents rash and spread of germs. Boy, are we educated! So well educated to think our Native languages and cultures are no longer useful. This is what the loon is mourning. Why have you, the Native people, given up so easily? Giving up has been a very costly venture to us as a Native people. But, we are educated. ✨

*(to be continued in the next issue of  
Sharing Our Pathways)*

# Southeast Region

## Southeast Partnerships

by Andy Hope

**W**oosh een yei gidane. Partner. Since the program started in late 1995, many individuals, institutions and organizations have participated in our various initiatives. The following listing constitutes the Southeast Alaska Native/Rural Education Consortium:

### Southeast Regional Elders Council

Arnold Booth, Metlakatla (chair)  
Charles Natkong, Hydaburg  
Lydia George, Angoon  
Gil Truitt, Sitka  
Isabella Brady, Sitka  
Marie Olson, Juneau  
Joe Hotch, Klukwan  
Jim Walton, Haines Junction

### Higher Education Institutions

University of Alaska Southeast  
Sheldon Jackson College  
University of Alaska (Sea Grant)

### Publication Consultants

Tom Thornton  
Sue Kraft  
Peter Metcalfe

### State and Federal Agencies

National Park Service-Glacier Bay National Park  
USDA Forest Service  
Alaska Department of Education (Peggy Cowan, Science Specialist)

### Tribes

Sitka Tribe of Alaska  
Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska  
Angoon Community Association  
Hydaburg Cooperative Association (Haida Nation)

### Radio Stations

KCAW-FM, Sitka

### Other

Conference of Tlingit Tribes and Clans  
Tlingit Language Consortium  
Southeast Alaska Native Language Consortium ✨

### School Districts (with year district joined the AKRSI/ARC listed in parentheses)

Chatham School District (1996)  
Sitka School District (1996)  
Hoonah City Schools (1997)  
Juneau School District (1998)

### Education Organizations

Discovery Foundation  
Southeast Alaska Native Educators Association  
Alaska Science Consortium  
Sitka Native Education Program  
Southeast Alaska Guidance Association  
Dog Point Fish Camp  
Sealaska Heritage Foundation  
Writers Block  
Alaska Staff Development Network  
The Axe Handle Academy (Nora & Richard Dauenhauer)  
Alaska Native History Textbook Project (Dennis Demmert and Mike Gaffney)

## Elders In the Classroom

by Roby Littlefield

### Elders do not Preserve Culture, They Live It

All students can benefit from inter-generational contacts. In Alaska Native cultures, grandparents were held in high regard as they contributed to the community by passing on knowledge and skills. Children learned by listening to and watching Elders and often didn't realize they were in training. Bringing grandparents in to share personal knowledge when studying subjects like nutrition, customs, plants, biology and history can benefit the entire class.

To begin, first look to your class members. Send home a note or survey expressing your desire to include parents, grandparents and Elders in your lessons. Get referrals for possible

speakers from organizations that work with Natives and/or the elderly.

The way to ask Native American Elders for help is different from West-  
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ern customs. Initial and subsequent contact should be subtle. Visit with them, allowing time for the conversation to wander. Allow for extended pauses, giving them time to think and decide. If their hearing is poor, sit on the side of their better ear and make sure your lips can be seen. Direct eye contact should be limited. Standing or sitting at an angle can increase an Elders comfort level. Keep your questions basic and specific.

Begin the request by telling a little about your class and how the Elder could help. If you are not sure if the Elder is interested, hint strongly that you would like to have their help and ask if she/he knows of someone who might be willing to participate. Custom teaches that it is rude to give someone a frank “no” to a request for help, so you need to recognize that a noncommittal response might mean “no”, or it might mean that the request is being considered. If at some point the Elder changes the subject more than once while you are explaining your request, you should be aware that she/he might be trying to say “no”. Don’t force a response; if it is clearly not a “yes” let it go, or suggest they can contact you after they’ve thought about it.

It is important to ask before a meeting for permission to make audio or video recordings. Don’t show up with the equipment because you may force consent and cause bad feelings. Permission to listen to or tape a story or lecture does not give you any right to re-broadcast or write the story with you as author.

## Elders Concerns & Expectations

- How can I find the room? (transportation, personal guide)
- Will I be respected and appreciated by the students?
- Will I be able to hear the

students questions? (background and noise level)

- Can I speak within the attention span and understanding of the age I am speaking to?

If an Elder has agreed to participate in a classroom activity, provide them with optional dates and the logistics. It would be helpful to explain the routine, consequences for students misbehavior, and possible options if problems come up during the lesson. It is your responsibility to ensure discipline is maintained. Be aware, however, that Elders generally do not support strict discipline in a public setting. Discuss how to make a smooth transition to help the Elder leave the class. Agree on some visual signals and ground rules.

When the Elder arrives introduce her/him so the Elder sees your respect for them. The teacher should be alert for visual cues from the Elder during the visit as well as be prepared to give unspoken signals back. The teacher should stay in the room.

Give the Elder a chance to use traditional discipline. Be prepared to move a child to sit by an adult who can role model how to listen respectfully. If you have problems with students degrading or ignoring an Elder, have a teacher’s aide or adult Native quietly intervene.

Most traditional stories are like a round, crocheted pot holder. The storyteller goes round and round the subject until it all comes together and finally comes to the lesson or point. Be patient, allow the Elders to share their culture in their own way. Your students are learning how to listen. Students should refrain from interrupting to ask questions. There will be a proper time to ask questions.

As a thank you, Elders usually appreciate student and teacher letters, pictures and story booklets which are treasured and shown to friends and relatives. This may also encourage other Elders to participate in classroom projects.

Sometimes you will find a resource person who will be available for a wide variety of subjects and projects. If you use an Elder more than once, the school should provide some type of stipend in appreciation of the energy and knowledge the Elder is contributing. Be careful not to burn out your Elders. Whenever you make a request be sure the Elder understands she is not obligated.

Keep your lessons flexible in case the Elder can’t come at the last minute. Once an Elder has agreed on a time to come into your classroom, avoid changing or postponing the visit. ✨

From *The Tlingit Moon and Tide Resource Book* (K–4), editor Dolly Garza. To be published by Alaska Sea Grant early 1999.

### AKRSI/AMC/ASC

#### **Institute on Integrating Science, Math, and Cultural Standards in Rural Schools**

**University of Alaska Fairbanks  
June 14–27, 1999**

*(with one-week fall implementation)*

The Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI), the Alaska Math Consortium (AMC) and the Alaska Science Consortium (ASC) are sponsoring a two-week summer institute focused on addressing math, science and cultural standards in rural classrooms. We are especially eager to receive applications from the 20 school districts currently partnering with the AKRSI and will review applications with a goal of selecting at least one team from each region.

For an application packet or more information contact:

Sidney Stephens, ASC/AKRSI  
c/o ANKN  
PO Box 756480  
Fairbanks, AK 99775-6480  
ffss1@uaf.edu

*Institute supported by AKRSI through a grant from the National Science Foundation and by the ASC and the AMC.*

# Iñupiaq Region: Elder Highlight

## Minnie Aliitchak Qapviatchialuk Gray, Ambler, Alaska

By Elmer Jackson

Minnie is one of the most well-known and beloved Elders in the NANA region. She has been actively involved with the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative since the first consortium meetings began. At that time, she was one of the main advisors for the Northwest Arctic Borough School District's Iñupiaq Language and Culture Curriculum Committee. In addition she was active in teaching traditional skin-sewing skills to the young people in the village of Ambler.

Minnie has been a advocate for Iñupiaq language and culture training for as many years as she has lived the culture. She was born in 1924 in Kobuk, Alaska. She was one of three surviving children of the late Robert and Flora Cleveland. She is the widow of the late Friends Church pastor, Arthur Gray. Minnie attended school for six years as a child in the village of Shungnak. After being a pastor with her husband in two villages, she became a bilingual teacher in August, 1973 and retired in 1994.

She helped to produce many books to help teach the Iñupiaq language and culture. One of the early books published by Maniilaq Association was *Timimun Mamirrutit*, which is a book about Iñupiaq medicine. Minnie contributed to this publication because of her knowledge of traditional ways of healing, especially in the use of plants and herbs. She later worked at the National Bilingual Materials Development Center to work on other publications. One of the most extensive books she worked on was titled *Black River Stories*—a book of stories told by her late father, Robert Cleveland. She also written two books titled *Birch bark Basket Making* and *Net Making*. Other contributions included

the *Kobuk River Junior Dictionary*, *How Stories*, *More How Stories*, *Atuugaurat* (translated children's songs) and *Taimmaknaqtat*, a book about traditional Iñupiaq Eskimo beliefs. There are more publications; I have listed a few.

Minnie's beautiful looks, traditional clothing, wonderful friendly smile and graceful stature have been photographed by friends she has made over the years. Her photograph is on the cover jacket of *A Place Beyond* by Nick Jans. He wrote a wonderful story of Minnie and her friend, Sarah Tickett, seining for whitefish. Minnie is known for her hospitality; she has been a hostess to visitors and friends who have graced her home over the years.

Whenever Minnie travels to AKRSI meetings, she shares her knowledge of the Iñupiat Culture, through hands-on demonstrations and songs. At curriculum meetings, she taught how to make snares using salmon skin and gave demonstrations of various traditional tools. She told the mudshark bone story, using actual bones, to Iñupiaq immersion students at Barrow. They enjoyed this story demonstration very much.

Here are some of her own thoughts



about bilingual education. She voiced them in Iñupiaq and they were translated into English:

Iñupiaq should be taught at an early age. I have seen that the younger students are responsive, the more they learn. It is fun to teach these young people. As an Iñupiaq language instructor, I realize that children need motivation to learn. I motivated my students by offering them a variety of ways of learning. They cannot learn by only writing, so I took them out for field trips and taught them about the plants that grow. In the spring, when they got tired of writing, I took them outside and taught them the name of the many different birds that migrate north. This motivated them tremendously.

I had projects for them such as skin sewing and making other crafts like birch bark baskets. I allowed them to play Iñupiaq games when they became restless. Sometimes, I even took them home and taught them how to prepare

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an Iñupiaq dish, such as cranberry or blueberry pudding. Other times I taught them how to make *akutuq*, Eskimo ice cream. I also boiled the head of the mudshark, which have many bones; I told them the individual names of the bones. This is an interesting project and the students think it is fun. For added variety, I sang songs and told them Iñupiaq stories and legends.

Students should learn about life in school. They should learn practical skills such as skin sewing and cooking. Many students need these basic skills. They should know the names of our Native foods and know how to prepare them. It is practical to learn these skills because our environment is going to be the same in spite of the changes in our lifestyles. We still need warm clothing and we will need to gather food. Students should know about the weather because we cannot predict what the coming seasons' weather will be. They should also know their regional geography. They should know their local subsistence areas, their trails and place names of creeks, rivers and other landmarks. They should be able to know where they are and be able to communicate exactly where they are as they travel out in the country for it is a matter of survival.

Last summer, Minnie taught and instructed students at the Ilisagvik Camp, a camp between Ambler and Shungnak. They were taught about camping and fishing, everything about the Iñupiat Illitqusrait, the way of life of the Iñupiat.

Minnie continues to share her knowledge of the Iñupiat culture. Those who have been taught by her have been blessed, her love for her people is immense. Thank you, Minnie, for being a great role model for us all.

Taikuu. ✨

# Athabascan Region

## How to be Practical With Water

by Amy Van Hatten

Thanks to Loddie Jones for her article in the last newsletter. Her story led with how her parents were her first teachers. Her contribution reminds me how my parents also demonstrated how I was to learn by their example, gain respect for and practical uses of whatever resources we receive from the Creator.

Water is an important element for daily life. As a youth growing up in the village, fish camp and winter camp, I had to learn how to gather it in solid and liquid forms. This included chopping or sawing ice blocks from the frozen river, gathering snow crystals closest to the ground and from underneath deep snow banks, drawing gas cans filled from the water hole and hauling water from a river, creek, rain barrels or from a water pump down near the riverbank.

For all practical purposes, certain measures had to be considered in order to preserve different forms of energy, such as physical energy and water energy, especially if a lot of chores had to be done in one day.

Take Mom's role for example. Her first round in using a tub of water was to wash my hair and my brother's hair and then give us a bath. Next, with

the same water, she would wash some of our clothing, mop the cabin floor and then carry the water out to the outhouse to scrub it down with added cleansers. She finished by pouring the recycled water down the toilet hole. Now, how many times did the same water get used?

We glance at learning science so differently from one locality to another and sometimes without viewing it as science base or indigenous knowledge but just a way of life.

With what little I shared here, a sample assessment can be formulated on how to integrate *Alaska Content Standards for Science D2* with *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools for Students D2*. Get out your dog-eared standards booklet and try one of your own. You can do it!

Happy Trails,

Negalt denlebedze ✨

## A Closer Look at the Standards

### Alaska Content Standards for Science D2

... A student who meets the content standard should:

understand that scientific innovations may affect our economy, safety, environment, health and society and that these effects may be long or short term, positive or negative and expected or unexpected.

### Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools for Students D2\*

... Students who meet this cultural standard are able to:

participate in and make constructive contributions to the learning activities associated with a traditional camp environment.

\* For a complete copy of the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Response Schools*, write or call the Alaska Native Knowledge Network. Address, phone and e-mail on inside front cover.

# Yup'ik Region

by Barbara Liu

**Y**/Cup'ik region third year initiative is Indigenous Science Knowledge Base involving family history and cultural atlas. Family history is researching your family tree and cultural atlas involves studying about your place. The two can be done together because as you research your kin, you can identify places of birth that are not on conventional maps. District memorandum of agreement (MOA) representatives attended a workshop last year on how to put this data into a genealogy software program called Reunion. The work depends on teachers who may use this type of lesson in a classroom with students. Students well grounded in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community are able to recount their own genealogy and family history. Yup'ik and Cup'ik kinship terms are also well grounded formally through thousands of years of oral history. Throughout the region similar terms are used with some variation.

The *Yup'ik Eskimo Dictionary* (ANLC, 1984) contains two charts of Yup'ik kinship terms. (see a derivation of the charts on the opposite page.) During the two-day workshop last September, Elsie Mather, originally from Kwigillingok and now living in Bethel, explained the kinship terms.

The Yup'ik book, *Aatama Aanama-Illu Anelgutai: My Mom and Dad's Siblings*, written by Rosalie Lincoln of Toksook Bay, was distributed to participants from Yupiit School District, LKSD, St. Mary's School District and Lower Yukon School District. Rosalie, who works for LKSD as a teacher, attended the training and demonstrated how to use the book with small children and young adults who are learning some of these terms.

Names and kinship terms are passed on within the range of great-grandparents and great-grandchild-

dren. If an individual has a great-great grandchild, he/she has no kinship term to address such offspring. Training participant Mildred Evan's (Akiachak) family tree has a living great-grandparent and a great-great grandchild who confirmed it. Today, as in generations past, naming is important in Y/Cup'ik culture. Older children in the region use these terms comfortably. However, the younger generation speakers, as old as those in their 40s, are using more English terms, losing formal kinship knowledge. Teaching the vocabulary is essential and requires study and practice. Presenting the concepts to children is meaningful and helps in understanding family. Children, especially teenagers, can learn who is too close to date or marry—your cousins could be as close as your own siblings. The old way's of forbidding intimate relationships involved an understanding of

genetics and your family tree.

The terms I outline for the rest of this article were compiled by the Alaska Native Language Center staff. The terms are not limited to this list, dialectal differences apply and it is not a complete list. There are other many postbase or ending to terms that can distinguish position and age.

Try using a similar chart to teach family tree substituting terms with your local preference. Begin your research of family names branching out from yourself to your great-grandparents (*amauq*), to great-grandchildren (*iluperaq*). Your grandfather and grandmother are *apaurluq* and *maurluq* respectively. Your *father*, *aata*, and mother, *aana*.

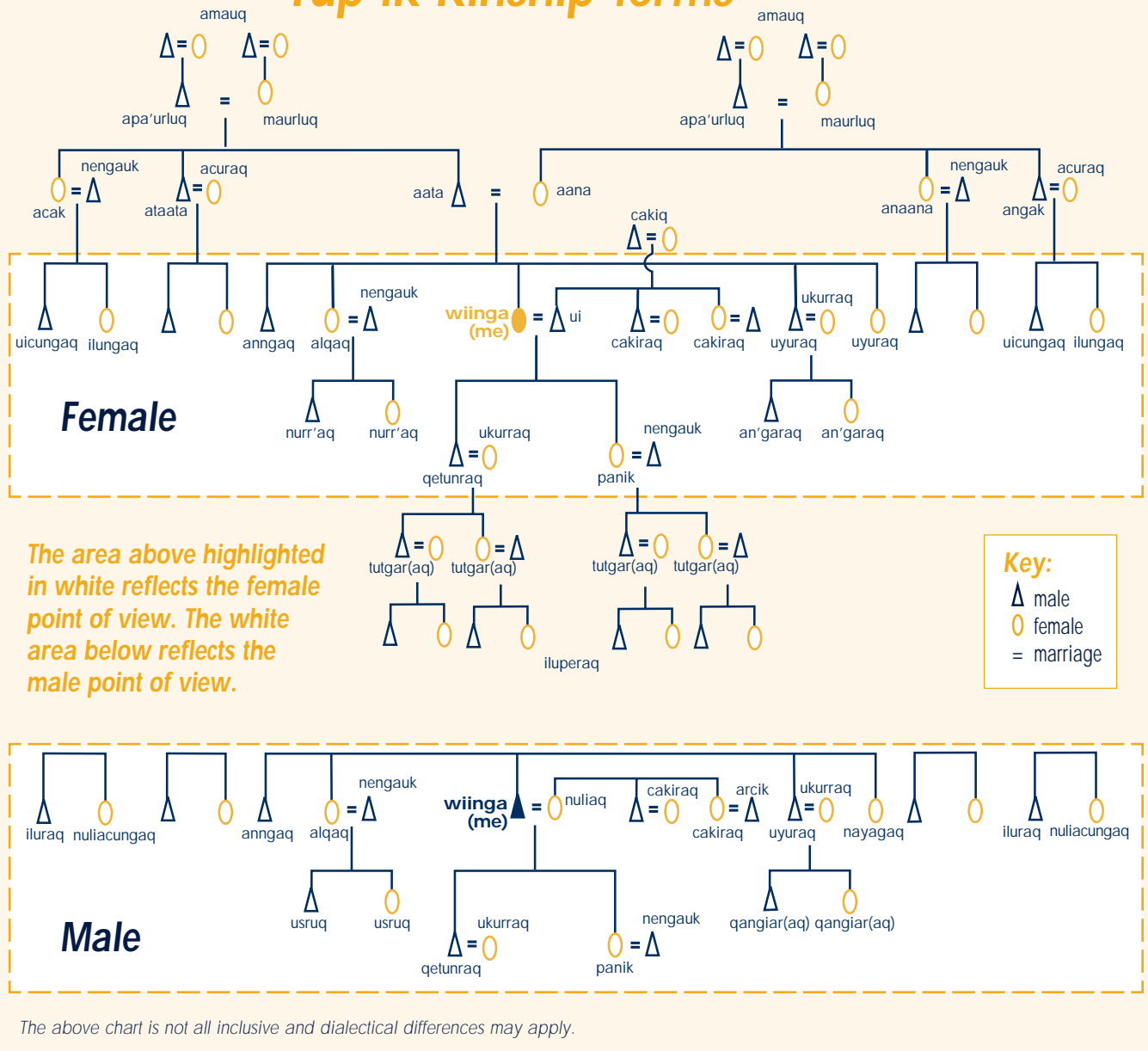
As parents, your son is *qetunraq* and daughter is *panik*. An older sibling is *amaqliq* and with gender, older sister is *alqaq* and older brother is *anngaq*. Your younger siblings, male or female, are your *kinguqliq* or *uyuraq*. *Nayagaq* is also a younger sister term but only addressed by an older brother to a younger sister. These same brother and sister terms can carry on to the children of siblings of the same sex such as sister to sister and brother to brother children. Cousins are children of siblings that are brother to sister or sister to brother. The terms are by gender of both sibling parents and children. *Ilungaq* and *nuliacungaq* are female cousins. *Iluraq* and *Uicungaq* are male cousins.

Aunt and Uncle terms depend on how they are related to your parents. There are four terms to distinguish them: An uncle who is your father's brother is your *ataata*, but an uncle who is your mother's brother is your *angak*. An aunt who is your mother's sister is your *anaana*, and your father's sister is your *acak*.

From an aunt's or uncle's perspective, there are also four terms to address nephews and nieces: As a female (*anaana*) you address your sister's child *nurr'aq*. As a female (*acak*), you

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## Yup'ik Kinship Terms



address your brother's child, *an'garraq*. As a male (*angak*), you address your sister's child, *usruq*. As a male (*ataata*), you address your brother's child, *qangiar*.

Lastly, your grandchild is *tutgaq*. Nephew and niece offspring of *anaana* and *ataata* address a grand nephew/niece as *tutgaq* and they in turn are addressed as grandparents. So, I am a grandmother of two to my sister's children's offspring.

I hope by elaborating on such a topic, it brings to readers an idea of the depth of our system as well as motivate parents and teachers to teach them to our children. I would like to acknowledge Rosalie Lincoln and her father, Phillip Moses of Toksook Bay, for clarifying and proofing some of the terminology.

In closing, 1999 brings a new exciting initiative for the Y/Cup'ik region involving Elder Academy camps.

There are seven school districts involved with this process following the example of other regions who have finished with it. Although previous camps have been held in the summer, they are not limited to this season. Each district will initiate camps inviting Elders and district staff to work together. There are many details and I plan to be in touch with district organizers as soon as MOAs are distributed. *Quyana*. ✨

# Aleut/Alutiiq Region

by Teri Schneider

## A New Partner Working for the AKRSI

From the beginning of this project I have considered myself a partner, working toward similar goals in my own corner of Alaska. Thank goodness for partners! Now, through the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, efforts of individuals can add fuel to the fire of systemic change within our public school system. Together we can accomplish more!

I am a life long resident of Kodiak Island. My family is a reflection of the history of Kodiak Island and the surrounding Alutiiq region. My mother's family, originally from West Virginia, was brought to the island by the United States Coast Guard in 1958. My father was born in the town of Kodiak. His father was born in Kodiak, the son of a Norwegian immigrant and a woman of Russian, Irish and Aleut descent, also born in Kodiak. My father's mother was Aleut, born in the village of Afognak in 1898. My two older brothers and I were brought up knowing that we were the descendants of the Aleut people of the island and were taught our heritage through the stories and actions of my dad and his family. We learned that our ancestors were strong people, surviving because of their adaptability over time, their Aleut ingenuity and their love for the place in which they inhabited. I continue to live among these strong, adaptable, ingenious people—my family of Kodiak Island.

I graduated from Kodiak High School in 1983. After one year at Western Oregon State College, I decided to pursue my teaching degree through the University of Alaska Fairbanks which is a little closer to home. Knowing that I wanted to eventually teach for the Kodiak Island Borough School District (KIBSD), I chose to do my

student teaching in Port Lions, a village just west of town. Not only was Port Lions close to home, it also felt like home. Many of the families living there at the time knew me as a "local kid." The Elders of Port Lions spoke fondly of my grandmother, originally from Afognak, the village that was later relocated to Port Lions.

Soon after my student teaching I married my husband, Eric Schneider, and was hired as a fifth-grade teacher for KIBSD. I taught for three years until the birth of our son in 1991. After almost two years of being home with Patrick, I went back to the classroom. After seven and a half years in the classroom, and an additional child at home (Tatiana, named for my grandmother) I saw an opportunity that I could not pass up. Though it would mean not working directly with a classroom of children, I took a position that was created to support the Native and Rural Education Programs within our district. Just recently this position has been reconstructed to meet the needs of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative. Much of my time is still spent exploring and developing culturally and environmentally relevant learning opportunities for our students in my own district, but I now have additional duties as the Aleut/Alutiiq regional coordinator.

Looking ahead at the remaining

two years of this project, I hope to continue the efforts that have been initiated here on our island; the development of the Academy of Elders and AISES Science Camp, AISES Science Fair and the Native Educators of the Alutiiq Region. A number of partnerships have been created, formally and informally, as we explore other possibilities, as well. Individual Elders have spent countless hours discussing issues and providing the necessary leadership. Board members and staff of the Afognak Native Corporation have been invaluable partners in the development of the camp and in exploring ways to sustain it over time. The Alutiiq Museum, including board members and staff, have provided resources, time and their expertise as projects and curriculum are being developed. The KIBSD Superintendent, Betty Walters, and the Kodiak Island Borough School Board have provided the opportunity to explore the possibilities for those whom they serve.

Extending beyond my own school district, I would like to continue to invite others to become involved in the process of this reform effort. Though funding is limited to the current MOA partners, your participation is always encouraged. If you have projects and opportunities going on in your school and/or community within this region that you would like others to know about, contact me. We no longer have to "work within a vacuum." There are others who believe in and value our local Elders for their knowledge and wisdom, and in the local language and environment as powerful teaching "tools." Let's be partners! ✨



From the Office of the President:

## U of A Wants Top High School Grads to Stay Here for College



by Mark R. Hamilton, President, University of Alaska

**B**eginning this year, the University of Alaska Scholars Program will give the top 10 percent of each high school graduating class a four-year scholarship award to the University of Alaska campus of their choice.



What we're trying to do with this program is reduce the number of Alaska's top high school graduates who leave the state for education and jobs elsewhere. Almost 60 percent of Alaska's graduates who go on to higher education, leave Alaska to attend college in the Lower 48 each fall, and most of them never return.

Alaska is dead last in the United States in attracting our college-bound students to attend college in the state. We aren't even in the game! The national average is that 81.7 percent of college-bound students go to a college in their home state. Here we have only 42 percent. At the University of Alaska, we're determined to do our part to turn the situation around.

The scholars program will help us solve the problem. Recipients of these scholarship awards will also become good ambassadors for the University of Alaska in communities all across the state, so they'll help reverse the trend of declining enrollments. And, because they are most likely to stay in Alaska after graduating, they will help build the state's future.

The scholarship award amount for the graduating classes of 1999 and 2000 will be \$10,800 per recipient, redeemable in the amount of \$1,350 per semester, for a total of eight semesters. To be eligible, students must be in the top 10 percent of their class at an Alaska public high school or other high school accredited by the Northwest Association of School and Colleges.

If you are one of those students who is convinced that the grass is greener on a campus somewhere in the Lower 48, and you qualify for one of the scholarship awards to the University of Alaska, tell us to hold your scholarship for a year. Go down there, at your own expense. When you find, as many of you will, that you left behind the best programs and best education opportunity and value, come back to Alaska and register for the Fall Semester 2000 for your second year. Your scholarship will still be good at the University of Alaska campus of your choice.

I hope to see you on one of our campuses soon.

For more information, visit the web site: <http://www.alaska.edu/ua/scholars/> or e-mail us at [scholars@alaska.edu](mailto:scholars@alaska.edu) or call the toll free number: 1-877-AKSCHOL (257-2465). ✨

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# Village Science: The Year of D2

by Alan Dick

I am not in love with the state science standards. They are a bit obtuse and hard for me, a pragmatic person, to relate to. However, as I was making a fresh attempt to understand them, I reread D2. It rose above the others.

Science Content Standard D2: A student who meets the content standard should understand that scientific innovations may affect our economy, safety, environment, health and society, and that these effects may be short term or long term, positive or negative, and expected or unexpected.

I have asked educators, computer folks and economists the same question, "Y2K . . . speed bump or brick wall? Flea or T-Rex?" The folks that seem to know what is happening admit they really don't know. Neither do I. But I do know opportunity when I see it. This is not a fad. It is a current reality.

No history book can prepare us for this coming year. Public schools, as we now know them, have never seen the change of a century, much less the change of a millennium. In

the history of man, there have never been questions like those posed by the two-digit millennium bug. Will we have school as usual in the year 1999–2000? We deserve a millennium of drudgery if we do. For educators, this can be the year of State Science Standard D2.

Regardless of our personal views on schools and curriculum, this coming year presents itself like a bull moose standing broadside on a sandbar in mid-September: large, obvious, valuable and present tense.

As we turn the corner into the new millennium with exciting and staggering technological changes and challenges, why should we have school as usual?

As we prepare for possible Y2K disruptions in communications and the flow of goods and services, can we not draw upon the experience of the

Elders for insight on how to live without modern conveniences?

As scientists, can we hypothesize what will happen to our electronics and machinery? As social studies teachers, can we not develop multiple lessons on economic and social interrelationships? As math teachers can we not find a multitude of problems on percentages, ratio/proportion and statistics?

We certainly do not want to communicate fear or paranoia, but neither should we promote denial.

Will Y2K be a speed bump or brick wall? I don't know. No one does. Will school year 1999–2000 be school as usual or a tremendous opportunity? That question only you can answer for yourself.

If we are alert enough to seize the moment, we can enter into the year of **State Science Standard D2**. Schools can be relevant, local, current, real, suspenseful and fascinating. For once we have a potential curriculum that no one knows the outcome from the beginning. ✨

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