





Chapter Twelve Education





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CHAPTER 12: EDUCATION

The North Slope Borough's first Mayor, Eben Hopson, Sr. delivered a powerful speech on the Iñupiaq education, aired on television from (then) Barrow On December 19, 1975, three years after the formation of the North Slope Borough. The speech was given at a time when the Barrow Education Association, the local

National Education Association (NEA) teacher union affiliate, had begun its annual contract negotiations. The following are excerpts of the speech given by the visionary North Slope Borough leader that provides the foundation of education on the North Slope.

“ We Iñupiaq are a nation of people occupying the circumpolar Arctic from Siberia through Alaska and Canada to Greenland. We share common values, language, culture and economic systems. Our culture has enabled us to survive and flourish for thousands of years in the Arctic where no other man or culture could. Among our entire international Iñupiat community, we of the North Slope are the only Iñupiaq who have achieved true self-government with the formation of the North Slope Borough. We have the greatest opportunity to direct our own destiny as we have for the past millennia.

Possibly the greatest significance of home rule is that it enables us to regain control of the education of our children. For thousands of years, our traditional method of socializing our youth was the responsibility of the family and community. From the first, visitors to the Arctic have universally commented on the warm disposition of our children. Corporal punishment was absolutely unknown. Boys and girls began their education with their parents and, by the time they reached their teenage years, they had mastered the skills necessary to survive on the land here. From that time forward, the youth – with his family and within his community – devoted his attention to his intellectual and social growth.

Eighty-seven years ago, when we were persuaded to send our children to western educational institutions, we began to lose control over the education of our youth. Many of our people believed that formal educational systems would help us acquire the scientific knowledge of the western world. However, it was more than technological knowledge that the educators wished to impart. The educational policy was to attempt to assimilate us into the American mainstream at the expense of our culture. The schools were committed to teaching us to forget our language and Iñupiat heritage. There are many of you parents who, like me, were physically punished if we spoke one Iñupiat word. Many of us can still recall the sting of the wooden ruler across the palms of our hands and the shame of being forced to stand in the corner of the room, face to the wall, for half an hour if we were caught uttering one word of our native language. This outrageous treatment and the exiling of our youth to school in foreign environments were to remain the common practices of the educational systems.

For eighty-seven years, the BIA tried to destroy our culture through the education of our children. Those who would destroy our culture did not succeed. However, it was not without cost. Many of





our people have suffered. We all know the social ills we endure today. Recently, I heard a member of the school personnel say that many of our Iñupiaq children have poor self-concepts. Is it any wonder, when the school systems fail to provide the Iñupiat student with experiences which would build positive self-concepts when the Iñupiat language and culture are almost totally excluded?

Today, we have control over our educational system. We must now begin to assess whether or not our school system is truly becoming an Iñupiat school system, reflecting Iñupiat educational philosophies, or, are we in fact only theoretically exercising "political control" over an educational system that continues to transmit white urban culture? Political control over our schools must include "professional control" as well, if our academic institutions are to become an Iñupiat school system able to transmit our Iñupiat traditional values and ideals. My children and yours spend many hours in school each day, 180 days each year for 12 years. Today, the socialization process of our youth includes the formal instruction received in our school system. It is precisely because of this that our school system must reduce the difference between the language and culture of the home and that of the school.

We must now achieve "professional control" by examining the teacher and content of instruction. We must have teachers who will reflect and transmit our ideals and values. We must have Iñupiat-centered orientation in all areas of instruction. I do not want my children to learn that we were "discovered" by Columbus or Vitus Bering. I do not want to hear that we were barbaric or "uncivilized." I do not want our children to feel inferior because their language and culture are different from those of their teacher. I do not want to see school planning surveys which list hunting, fishing, whaling or trapping as a "social" or "recreational" activity.

We must develop a teacher recruitment and training program to satisfy our needs.

- 1. Foremost, we must encourage and train our own Iñupiaq to become teachers.*
- 2. Recruit responsive teachers who are willing to learn both the Iñupiat language and our cultural values.*
- 3. Train teachers and offer financial incentives to those who become proficient in our language and culture, in addition to Iñupiat history and ideologies.*
- 4. Evaluate current teachers to insure Iñupiat educational philosophies are being implemented.*

It is important to remember the lessons of the past. In addition, we must search and master the new changes if we are to continue to dominate the Arctic. We have demonstrated we can survive the trespasses which have been perpetuated upon us. We have been successful in establishing our own home rule government. We have been able to achieve self-government. We must strive to insure that our Borough, our city governments and our school systems reflect our Iñupiat ideals. We are Iñupiaq. 🐾🐾

Eben Hopson, Sr., Mayor, North Slope Borough²⁷²

²⁷² Eben Hopson: An American Story. 1975. *Mayor's Address on Education*. www.ebenhopson.com/archives/Education.html.





NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

The North Slope Borough School District provides education for students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. The school district is governed by a seven member Board of Education with four seats for Utqiagvik, one seat for Point Lay and Point Hope, one seat for Wainwright and Atkasuk, and one seat for Kaktovik, Nuiqsut, and Anaktuvuk Pass.²⁷³

The NSBSD focuses on learning rooted in the value, history and language of the Iñupiat as envisioned by Eben Hopson, Sr. The school district seeks for its students to become critical and creative thinkers able to adapt in a changing environment and world while envisioning, planning, and taking control of their destiny. Students should become active and contributing members of their communities.²⁷⁴

There are eleven schools within the North Slope School District. There is one school in each of the seven communities and four in Utqiagvik, the regional service center of the North Slope Borough.²⁷⁵ The village, school, and current enrollment are listed in Table 34.²⁷⁶

North Slope Borough School District Administrative Office
www.alamy.com/stock-photo/north-slope-borough.html



²⁷³ Holt, Felicia. Program Assistant. North Slope Borough School District. Personal communication.

²⁷⁴ North Slope Borough School District. 2017. *2015-20 Strategic Plan Summary, 2017-2018 School Year*. www.nsbds.org/cms/lib/AK01001879/Centricity/Domain/4/2017_18_StrategicPlanSummary.pdf.

²⁷⁵ North Slope Borough. 2015. *North Slope Borough 2015 Economic Profile and Census Report Volume XI*. Prepared by Circumpolar Research Associates Shepro, C., Maas, C. and D. Gallaway and edited by Jason Bergerson for the North Slope Borough. www.north-slope.org/your-government/nsb-2015-economic-profile-census-report.

²⁷⁶ State of Alaska. Department of Education and Early Development. 2017. *State Report Card to the Public*. https://education.alaska.gov/ReportCardToThePublic/Report_2016-2017/36.





Table 34: North Slope Schools and Enrollments

Community	School	Total Enrollment Pre-K through 12 th grade
Anaktuvuk Pass	Nunamiut School	110
Atqasuk	Meade River School	85
Kaktovik	Harold Kaveolook School	62
Nuiqsut	Nuiqsut Trapper School	153
Point Lay	Kali School	102
Point Hope	Tikigaq School	247
Utqiaġvik	Ipalook Elementary School	674
	Hopson Middle School	257
	Barrow High School	232
	Kiita Learning Community	56
Wainwright	Alak School	167
Total		2,145

Student Enrollment and Graduation

The school district’s enrollment for the 2016 - 2017 school year (SY) was 2,145 students.²⁷⁷ Between the 1999 – 2000 and 2014 – 2015 school years, enrollments have not changed significantly. There have been similar decreases in the number of students at nearly all grade levels. The decreases were in elementary (13.4 percent), middle (13.7 percent), and high (13 percent) school enrollment. However, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten enrollments have risen Slope-wide by 38 percent and 49 percent, respectively, over the same time period. Even with these gains of enrollment of the youngest students, pre-kindergarten class sizes rose only slightly in Point Lay (Kali School) and Atqasuk (Meade River School). An additional noteworthy change is the decrease in Iñupiat students in high

school (-32 percent) and middle school (-22 percent) while there is an increase in elementary school Iñupiat student enrollment (+35 percent). Overall, there are more elementary-age children today than in 2003 (NSB Census year). However, there are fewer middle and high school students.²⁷⁸

Elementary School Children
Photo courtesy of NSB



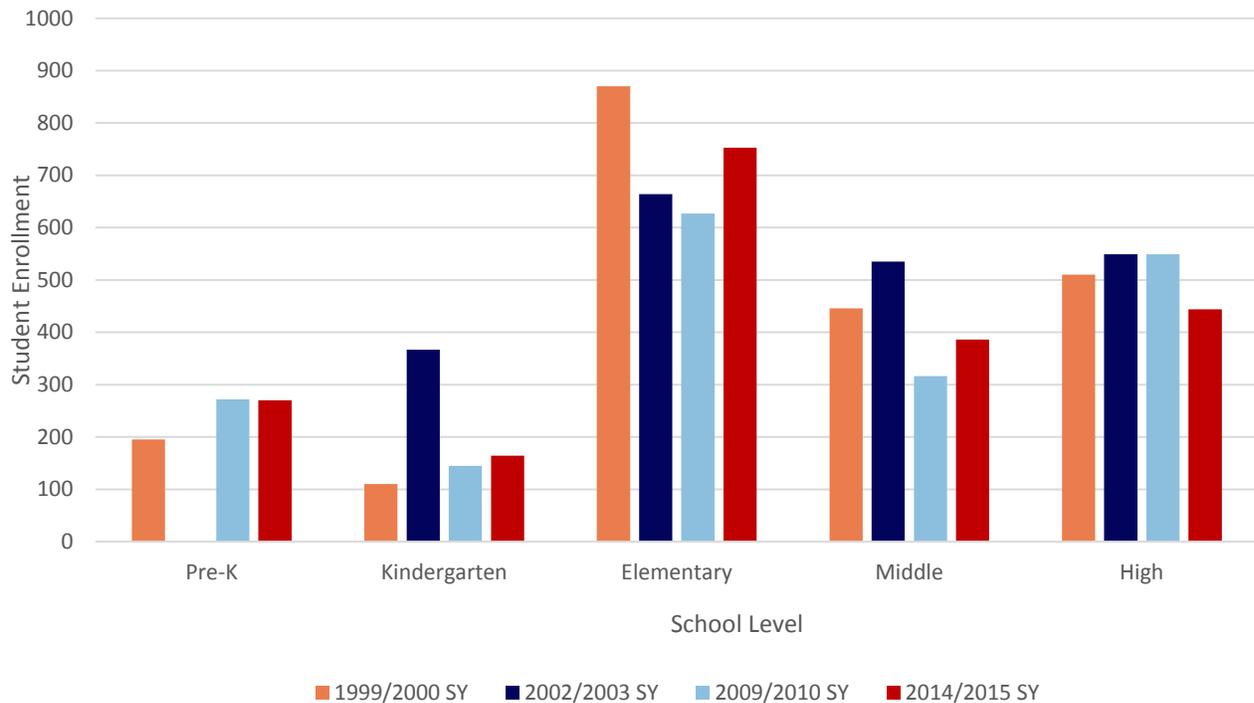
²⁷⁷ State of Alaska. Department of Education and Early Development. 2017. *State Report Card to the Public*. <https://education.alaska.gov/ReportCardToThePublic/Report2016-2017/36>.

²⁷⁸ North Slope Borough. 2015. *North Slope Borough 2015 Economic Profile and Census Report Volume XI*. Prepared by Circumpolar Research Associates Shepro, C., Maas, C. and D. Gallaway and edited by Jason Bergerson for the North Slope Borough. www.north-slope.org/your-government/nsb-2015-economic-profile-census-report.





Figure 16: NSB School Enrollment Trends 1999 – 2015



Based on fiscal data from the 2013 - 2014 SY, the average education expenditures per student in the NSBSD was \$39,418; the average student expenditure for the State of Alaska for the same year was \$18,466.²⁷⁹ While the NSBSD spends more per student than the state, the NSBSD graduation rate is much lower, at 48.2 percent and 71.1 percent, respectively.²⁸⁰ The 2015 NSB Census reported an even lower graduation rate; the proportion of high school graduates climbed from 19.5 percent for the 2002/2003 SY to 24.1 percent for the 2014/2015 SY.²⁸¹

Iñupiaq Learning Framework

The NSBSD offers an Iñupiaq Language Program that is intended to foster fluency in Iñupiaq. This is a pull-out program where students are offered Iñupiaq language instruction with an Iñupiaq language teacher separate from the general education teacher. Instruction is based on the Accelerated Second Language Acquisition (ASLA) methodology and supported with a customized computer based language-learning tool called the Visual Iñupiaq Language Assessment or VIVA.²⁸² The NSBSD Iñupiaq Education Department uses the Iñupiaq values, culture, history, language, and worldview as an instructional foundation.²⁸³

²⁷⁹ National Center for Education Statistics. 2016. *State Education Data Profiles*. <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/stateprofiles/sresult.asp?mode=short&s1=02>.

²⁸⁰ State of Alaska. Department of Education and Early Development. 2014. *State Report Card to the Public*. <https://education.alaska.gov/ReportCardToThePublic/Report/2013-2014/36>.

²⁸¹ North Slope Borough. 2015. *North Slope Borough 2015 Economic Profile and Census Report Volume XI*. Prepared by Circumpolar Research Associates Shepro, C., Maas, C. and D. Gallaway and edited by Jason Bergerson for the North Slope Borough. www.north-slope.org/your-government/nsb-2015-economic-profile-census-report.

²⁸² North Slope Borough School District. n.d. *Iñupiaq Education Department*. www.nsbbsd.org/domain/44.

²⁸³ Ibid





Iļisaġvik College
<https://squid-cphoto.com/>



In addition to the language program, the Iļupiaġ Learning Framework (ILF) provides the foundation for Iļupiaġ-based academic curricula and assessment.²⁸⁴ To further involve students in the culture and history of the North Slope, in 2016 the NSBSD Board of Education updated student graduation requirements to include North Slope Government, North Slope History, and Alaska Studies classes.²⁸⁵

Iļisaġvik College

The North Slope Borough is also home to Iļisaġvik College, Alaska’s only Tribal college. The founders of the North Slope Borough were acutely aware of the importance of education to their dreams of sustained self-determination and local control for their people, looking towards the development of a post-secondary educational system that would allow residents to further their educational goals while remaining close to the culture and lifestyle that sustained them.

In 1986, the North Slope Borough created the North Slope Higher Education Center, a cooperative effort between the North Slope Borough and the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The North Slope Higher Education Center’s Board and the North Slope Borough Assembly changed the institution’s name to Arctic Sivunmun Iļisaġvik College in 1991 to reflect its transformation into a community college. Arctic Sivunmun Iļisaġvik College merged with the NSB Mayor’s Workforce Development Program in 1993, adding facilities and resources to support the growing number of vocational education opportunities available at the college. In 1995, the North Slope Borough established by ordinance the Iļisaġvik College Corporation, an independent, public, non-profit corporation with full power for governance of the college vested in the Board of Trustees. Iļisaġvik achieved accreditation from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities in 2003 and is authorized by the Alaska Commission on

²⁸⁴ North Slope Borough School District. n.d. *Iļupiaġ Education Department*. www.nsbds.org/domain/44.

²⁸⁵ North Slope Borough School District. 2018. *High School Graduation Requirements*. www.nsbds.org//cms/lib/AK01001879/Centricity/Domain/50/2018grad%20requirementsBP6146.1.pdf.





Postsecondary Education to operate in the state of Alaska. In 2005, it also became the first and today remains the only federally recognized tribal college in Alaska.

Iḷisaġvik College provides quality post-secondary academic, vocational, and technical education. Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credits or non-credit are offered for workforce development courses. The college is governed by an eleven member Board of Trustees that is comprised of one representative from each North Slope community, one at-large member, one NSBSD member, and one member as designated by ASRC.

Iḷisaġvik College serves all the North Slope Borough villages through online classes and in-person classes in Utqiagvik. The college also has a statewide presence; in 2017, Iḷisaġvik reached 40 communities within Alaska through remote learning instruction. During the 2017-2018 school year, Iḷisaġvik made 91 trips to North

Slope communities, ensuring every village on the Slope is served and instated the first four-year degree program, a Bachelors in Business Administration. Iḷisaġvik has 12 full-time faculty members and 20 - 30 part-time employees. College enrollment is provided in Figure 17.

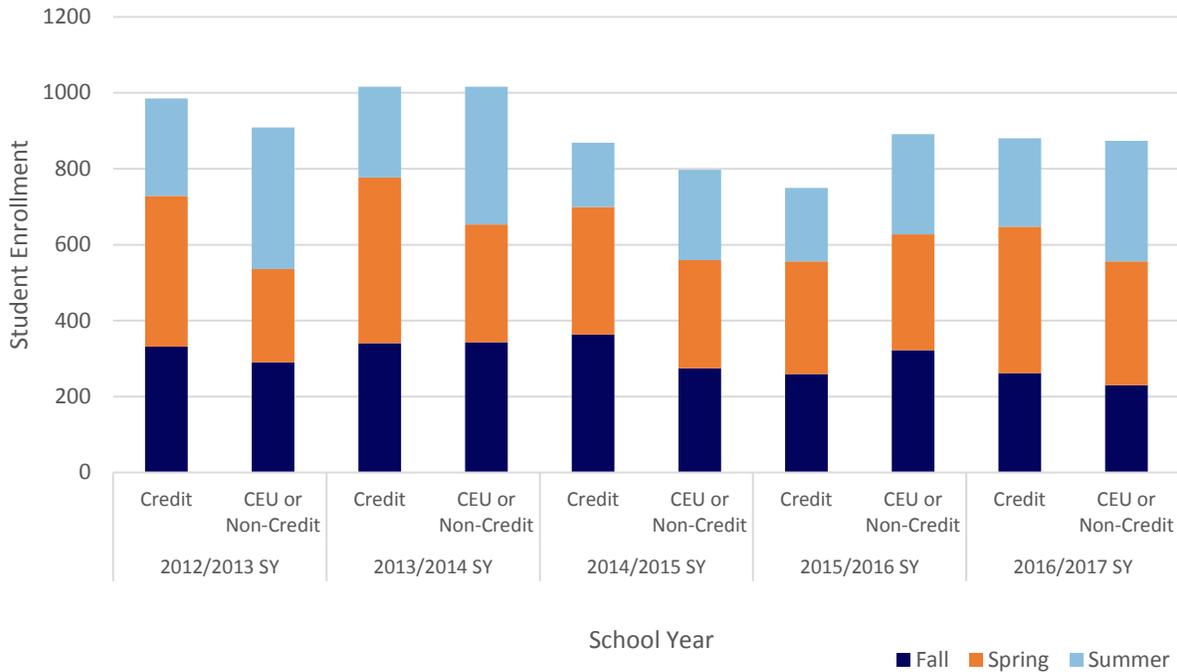
The cost for a full-time student living off-campus for the 2016 - 2017 academic year was estimated at \$6,870, while the full-time student living on-campus is estimated between \$19,000 and \$21,400 annually. Through a pilot program kicked-off during the spring 2018 semester, NSB Mayor Harry K. Brower and Iḷisaġvik College President Dr. Pearl Brower announced a tuition waiver for any North Slope resident wishing to enroll in classes at the college. The waiver is available to any Iḷisaġvik program that requires tuition payments, both academic and vocational. In addition to a tuition waiver for North Slope residents, Iḷisaġvik extended the tuition waiver to all qualified Alaska Native students.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁶ Wilhelm, Justina. Executive Director of Institutional Advancement. Iḷisaġvik College. Personal communication.





Figure 17: Iļisaġvik College Enrollment, 2012 – 2017



FUTURE EDUCATION FACILITIES

Over a decade ago, the Iļisaġvik College Board of Trustees directed college leadership and staff to explore options for a new Iļisaġvik College campus. The current facility was built as the Naval Arctic Research Laboratory, now over 70 years of age and was never meant to house a college campus. The current site is host to numerous environmental and logistical concerns; located three miles outside of town, students may be challenged in connecting with the community. The facility that the college is housed in at NARL is over half a century old and requires significant renovations. Its isolated location northwest of Browerville does not allow it to integrate into the community. During severe storm events, the road to NARL can be overtaken by flooding or be washed out, further isolating the college from the community. As such, Iļisaġvik College has assembled a team to bring this project into fruition. The site selected

by the Iļisaġvik College Board of Trustees is south of the Samuel Simmonds Memorial Hospital. Because on-site training, internships, and apprenticeships may also be more readily available in the Prudhoe Bay region, developing an educational / training center located in Deadhorse may present new opportunities for North Slope residents. The education center could provide formal instruction while hands-on training could take place in the Prudhoe Bay oilfields. This education model would also be beneficial in that it would embrace a zero-incident safety culture and drug and alcohol free work environment. Partnerships between the NSB and oil and gas industry would be required to make this model a success to meet the region’s future workforce needs with the existing local workforce.

An additional effort to expand educational opportunities on the North Slope is the Residential Learning Center. Students from





North Slope villages will be able to seek educational opportunities in Utqiagvik. The students will be housed at the former Top of the World Hotel on the corner of Agvik Street and Stevenson Street. In 2013, Pepes North of the Border restaurant was destroyed in a fire. The attached Top of the World Hotel was suffered significant smoke damage and was closed. ASRC, the hotel owner, donated the building for use as the Residential Learning Center. A design to renovate the former hotel has recently been finalized. The improved building will offer 28 dormitory rooms for two students each and two

for one student each. It will also have living space for residential advisors, an office, kitchen facility, dining room, and sitting and study areas.

With the growth of national and international awareness and discussion regarding opportunities with Northern shipping and transportation, energy and defense, new facilities are needed to host these conversations about America's Arctic, in America's Arctic. The growth of essential infrastructure is necessary to meet the needs of the North Slope, Alaska, and our nation at large.

COMMUNITY INPUT, FINDINGS, NEEDS, AND CHALLENGES

Control of the education system for North Slope youth has come a long way since the founding of the borough and visionary leader Eben Hopson, Sr.'s pivotal speech on the educational needs for the communities of the North Slope. The NSBSD has an Iñupiaq Language Program that is intended to foster fluency in Iñupiaq and uses the Iñupiaq values, culture, history, language, and worldview as an instructional foundation. Recently, North Slope government, North Slope history, and Alaska studies classes have become a graduation requirement. However, graduation rates are still lower than the state average, the number of Iñupiaq language speakers continues to decline, and many parents are concerned about the effect of technology and outside culture on local youth. There have been great strides in improving the local school system overall and fostering a greater appreciation for the local culture, more can be done to improve graduation rates and preparing students for future higher education and employment.

Education issues and concerns identified by workshop participants are provided in Chapter 2 and listed below:

- Borough revenue is not keeping up with cost of capital maintenance or replacement
- There is a lack of interest from community stakeholders and youth in becoming police officers, teachers, pilots, professionals
- Many buildings and other infrastructure need to be updated and renovated due to their age
- Village infrastructure/facility equity
- High teacher turnover
- Lack of a sufficient number of Iñupiaq speaking teachers
- There is not childcare in all the villages
- Iļisaġvik College facility is spread throughout Barrow and is not sufficient for needs
- Lack of respect by youth





- Parents need to be proactive and advocate for children and young adults to succeed in school
- Create small businesses utilizing training services and loans
- The road system will allow greater infrastructure expansion and investment in villages
- Establish a regional training center for police and fire protection
- Foster police officers, teachers, pilots, and professionals from within the community
- Teach traditional knowledge to students
- Elders should be more included in school activities
- Ensure village equity in education space and training programs
- Implement DARE program (Drug Alcohol Resistance Program)
- Reinstate the regional leadership team for follow-up and accountability
- Technology has taken away youth’s desire to learn culture
- Teacher turnover
- Loss of language and knowledge
- Curriculum mandates from state and federal government
- Non-governmental organizations (NGO) are influencing youth

Findings

Eben Hopson, Sr. asserted that ‘possibly the greatest significance of home rule is that it enables us to regain control of the education of our children.’

There have recently been substantial increases in younger children enrolled in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten.

The average education expenditures per student in the NSBSD was \$39,418; the average student expenditure for the state was \$18,466 (FY 2013 - 14).

The North Slope Borough is home to Iļisaġvik College, Alaska’s only Tribal college.

Iļisaġvik College has long sought a new campus in Utqiaġvik or Browerville. The facility that the college is housed in at NARL is over half a century old and requires significant renovations.

Iļisaġvik College provides post-secondary academic, vocational, and technical education. Continuing Education Unit credits or non-credit are offered for workforce development courses.

Needs & Challenges

NSBSD graduation rates is much lower than the state, at 48.2 percent and 71.1 percent, respectively.

Because on-site training, internships, and apprenticeships may be more readily available in the Prudhoe Bay region than in the villages or Utqiaġvik, developing an educational / training center located in Deadhorse may present new opportunities for North Slope residents.

The Iļisaġvik College facility is spread throughout Utqiaġvik and is not sufficient for needs





PRIMARY EDUCATION GOAL

Goal Eleven: Increase education and employment opportunities for all residents.

Objective 1: Evaluate educational and training needs of the unemployed.

11.1.1. Determine needs of current and future employers and design education and training programs to target programs to these employment needs.

Objective 2: Develop an areawide education plan for primary, secondary, and higher education with a focus on graduate retention in our communities.

11.2.1. Focus resources on the burgeoning youth population to provide sufficient services.

11.2.2. Maintain and increase coordination between NSBSD and Iḷisaḡvik to offer workforce training programs at the high school level.

11.2.3. Develop internships, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and student hire programs through NSBSD, NSB, ASNA, ASRC, village corporations, TNHA, industry, and other local and regional agencies and entities.

11.2.4. Continue developing daycare centers in the villages to offer a strong academic foundation through pre-kindergarten education.

11.2.5. Create or strengthen programs to train future teachers from within the community.

11.2.6. Research causes for the high teacher turnover and seek programmatic solutions and funding, if necessary.

11.2.7. Educate parents on the importance of parental involvement in their children's academic achievements and offer ample opportunities to volunteer in the classroom or assisting outside the classroom.

11.2.8. Assess village training program and education quality equity and adjust as needed.





Objective 3: Evaluate future capital needs to meet educational demand.

- 11.3.1. Assist Iñisaġvik College in seeking funding to construct a new facility in Utqiagvik to better meet their needs.
- 11.3.2. Assess village educational space equity and future needs and plan accordingly.
- 11.3.3. Improve Native language fluency through partial or full immersion programs from pre-kindergarten through high school.
- 11.3.4. Seek funding and opportunities to assist fluent Iñupiaq speakers to become certified teachers.
- 11.3.5. Encourage the North Slope Borough School District and educators to further incorporate traditional and cultural values throughout the school curricula.
- 11.3.6. Integrate Elders into school activities through shared lunches, invitations to speak with classes, and involvement in student projects.
- 11.3.7. Teach traditional values to new generations by highlighting local success stories and how traditional and cultural values assisted in their success.





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