

Notes from NWABSD Team:

Opportunities During Covid-19:

There are a lot of changes during Covid, but there are also opportunities. NWABSD noted these opportunities:

- Working more one on one with a smaller group of students.
- We can get more people to become tech savvy
- More involvement from families
- To be able to create stronger relationships with families in the community.
- Opportunity for families and students to feel more ownership for their education.
- Smaller class sizes, providing more individualized learning opportunities for students- also exploring learning/teaching opportunities outside of the traditional classroom
- Work closer with families on dual teaching and getting better on my computer tech skills!
- More parent support and contact than before, hopefully involvement.
- Kids will know how much we care about them and how far we are willing to go to stay in their lives
- Parent involvement
- Build stronger relationships with families
- I'm excited that we are going to be working in smaller class sizes so I can have more one on one with my students and get them caught up!
- More time and open lines to communication with parents, more time with individual students, more parent support
- To learn skills to reach those student who don't generally participate very well in the learning in the physical building.
- Reach out to others in very strategic ways
- Increased dialog with parents regarding students "at home" teaching.
- It will be a great time to grow in patience, compassion, and understanding with our students, parents, and community.
- For my 5th graders, getting them used to the technology they will increasingly use over the coming years will be highly beneficial
- We might have more parent involvement with what their children are doing
- There's even 'more' contact with parents/guardians.
- Opportunity for creativity
- Opportunity to build stronger relationships w/ Parents
- Build better relationships with families
- Our school has grouped the students into two groups; this allows teachers the opportunity to work with smaller groups.
- How to deeply engage students with technology. Playing to students strengths

- Technology is taking on a new and even more of a renaissance than in the 1990s.
- To have more interactions with students' families
- Making sure use of technology is meaningful, not superfluous
- I am here to really support the parents with working with their children. I am frightened of the new technology since I am a dinosaur but looking forward to learning more about Canvas, Zoom, etc.
- Parent involvement with students and technology.
- It's a new style of learning for everyone. Learning to not get anxious will be a big thing for me
- Creativity - we must step out of our comfort zones!

There is almost always something that is learning positive. Find it and build on it. What can we see that is learning positive in the picture? Reading material; TV for educational videos; Child is playing; Music; Food; Drum; Singing; Lots of discovery materials. The display of child work on the front of the fridge, Creative, showing strong grades on the fridge, Room to sit for reading a book, Mom knows how to multitask, Mom is present; There is a newspaper; There is a working phone; The family is one room.

NWABSD Staff Reflections on Important Mindsets for Partnering With Families:

- A good reminder not to judge too harshly, mindset matters
- Parents are experts on their own kids interests and motivations
- Parents need supports to know how to help their students at home
- All families have hopes and dreams for their children
- It hits me that many parents don't know how to support their kiddos in school. Didn't realize that.
- Family participation = better academic outcomes.
- Most families do not feel confident in how to support their child at school
- I learn the most about a child from discussing their strengths and needs with caregivers/parents.
- How many parents feel comfortable coming to the school? Scared what you will say about their child? Don't know how to help them with their work at home.
- Families are often children's first teachers, whether they know it or not.
- I like the family being a resource to school staff one (second).
- The most important part of education is not your wealth or fame, it is the love you provide to support each other's learning
- Families from generation to generation are losing values.
- Creating opportunities for parents to participate in their child's learning at school where the family feels comfortable in volunteering, joining their child for lunch, etc. contributes to building that relationship with a family.

Approaches to Communicating with Families (NWABSD staff):

NWABSD are using postcards, zoom, emails, text, outside meeting, VHF/radio, phone calls, and communicated through other community members to connect with families. Staff shared some of the things they wanted to talk over or convey.

- Maintain an open door policy and reinforce that you're there as a resource to them and not just their child
- Greetings and positive comments about what their child is doing well
- make sure the families know how to use PowerSchool and how to quickly get in touch with me
- Ask questions to build individual connections
- Make it personal. we care about the person, family, not just education
- Even knowing their names and their families
- Gathering information
- Being positive about everything. Teaching them about how to contact me for any questions about anything.
- I am going to be participating in community events, family knowledge (cousins/aunts/uncles), common interests, authenticity
- Share contact info
- Get to know the Elders and honoring how to help them with their students
- How to contact me and letting them know that their child is still in special ed.
- We live in a small village, so individual connections are important.
- Daily Homework Calendar communication.
- Keep relationships with families that were established with past classes. Let them know you still care even if their child has moved on.
- Get to know parents' jobs in the community.
- Attending church and funerals and help pick up trash times of the year
- Contacting home for positive things as well not just when the students are struggling
- "The "Feel, felt, found" method that has served me well in education. "I understand how you feel. I had a family last year who felt similarly. They found that when they set aside 20 minutes for XYZ each day, their student's engagement and achievement improved."
- Wonderful Inservice, thank you Lori, Konrad, and Tyler.

Values and Lessons We Learned from Our Families:

- My Parents taught myself and my siblings how to live off the land. Learn our inupaiq culture. We also had to go to school and get our education
- I try to place great emphasis on the tools of learning every time we engage on content. Students may miss content due to absence, interest level, or other barrier, but if they are fluent in the tools that we use to access, analyze, and interpret information, they will always be able to find what they need when they need it.

- Understanding the brain, 3 slots, phone numbers, social security #, Programs build on this concept such as Linda MoodBell, Oron Gillingham.
- So anchoring to relevant previous experience and knowledge..
- Students get excited when they can relate new vocabulary/ or “the big idea” to what they have experienced at home or the community.
- The brain is very complex and I took a class on brain learning. It was a 10 week class and I was amazed at how differently people learned and through what process they used that worked for them.
- Invite parents to my classroom when the specialists are coming so we can learn together and to join in working with us so we can be on the same page with the students daily needs.
- If they’re learning something new, we’ve got to somehow connect their new learning with their background knowledge.
- Discussing with families how they and their student are interacting with learning.
- My family created a messenger page with just our family. So when we want to go and do something with each other we text a message. It’s because we want to get our children off of their devices.
- I think when parents own childhood experiences in school were negative they are more hesitant to get involved

Changes to our classes, instructional practices, or schools:

- I put up a lot of words of Inupiat around my classroom to help kids remember those words. I use fish/seals in my lessons since I teach math.
- Would be great if each site can teach our children the cultural names and creeks in our communities etc in our language
- #getonourlevel (be like the 5th grade☺)
- Most of the parents I’ve worked with are receptive especially if I approach them with positive ideas, asking for their help, or let them know that when we are writing an IEP THEY are the ones who are in charge of the meetings.
- This new school year our children are coming in twice a week which is great, however not all the students will be in school at once. So it’s going to be like in my day, old school. Two days of one on one.
- My students get a big kick out of teaching me how to say Inupiaq words. That is a good way to build connections.
- Those digital books are fun to make. My students had to Interview an Elder to gain more information! We need to make books relevant to our lives in our communities/villages/state
- A book about Inupiaq villages with translations would be great for our area!
- It really helps the kids take pride in their community and heritage.
- It’s hunting season, perhaps you can compare and contrast moose to caribou or different types of fish. fun
- On the lesson plan, it allows students to choose 2 activities of 4 to complete to meet the objective, so one activity can include culture/family.

Take-aways from Day 1: NWABSD Staff Reflections.

- Get to know the family so that you get to know the student better.
- Connecting with families in ways they can relate to you... look for commonalities
- Recognize what the student brings with them
- What- meaningful relationships will be more integral now, than it ever was. so what- how to establish a relation
- The relationship between school - teacher - and home is very important.
- Parents have an essential role in their child's learning and must be acknowledged.
- I learned I could be more intentional about developing family partnerships rather than blanket communications, etc. That partnerships and communication can be part of the healing process.
- Bringing in local culture and experiences is key to giving the learning a sticking point.
- The learning of students is going to be a working relationship between the student, parent, and teacher this year. More responsibility will be put on the parents so we, as instructors, need to scaffold them to support their students. We need to be available and ready for anything - not that we know it all! :)
- Creating partnerships helps build relationships
- With the restrictions on people being allowed into the school buildings, I wonder how that will impact my ability to build rapport and relationship/encourage involvement.
- Build on the familiar. Loved the blueberry analogy from Thursday
- What -reach out to everyone in the beginning before things get rolling; so what - dealing with students that don't want to be there
- The connection between family and education is immense. The more students realize that every event/task can be a learning opportunity, especially when shared with family- can have a tremendously positive impact- not just on them but for generations
- Relationships with families are important, otherwise the partnerships may not work.
- How to establish a relationship with a group that may be evasive for whatever reason
- Family partnerships are important because the parents help provide support in academics and discipline.
- Huge empathy for parents and their learning curve with all this new tech and so many changes.
- Build on what I know works in a new format
- I am concerned that some of the necessary changes may not be understood in a positive way by some of my students' families.
- A key is finding a commonality
- With or without Covid these partnerships are important. Since I have been back in the village the students want to check in and visit, but we have to

keep our distance. I hope they have a true understanding that it's not them.
It's Covid!!!!!!

- Have learned about the importance of establishing positive interactions early in the relationship with parents, as doing so will help with establishing support in the home-school partnership.
- Keeping in touch with parents is a must, lots of our children don't tell their parents what is happening in school at times
- I have learned that building positive relationships with families to develop strong partnerships is very important.
- The critical question I have is how can I still accomplish this with the physical distance of COVID to make it engaging and supportive for my families.
- I feel parents, students, and teacher are all in this together, parents feeling anxious with teaching curriculum and teachers now learning new computer "remote" learning, so we feel each other's challenges. Knowing this brings us closer to depend on each other to support our students.
- It will be a community effort. The parent's role will increase exponentially. They are the enforcers.
- How to involve parents (to buy into education) without seeming to be above them.
- Yes, and they know their kids.
- Awesome comment Mindy, find the 'teaching' in their daily life skills.
- Have guests during a lesson.
- Use local information- Inupiaq values - seals- fractions
- I am going to use journal buddies (someone from home/community) to help my students reflect with someone from home.
- Translate from free ways to rivers
- Use Native Values for sure
- I like the morning meetings with the students at the start of the day.
- Use the seasons
- When teaching third graders about reading maps, we have mapped out different animal migrations into the region (this also usually ties to a Journey's story about locust and whale migration).
- Estimate diameter of table to find the right size table cloth – geometry
- Whose stories are missing- whose perspective it told from
- Have a season/activity calendar up that pertains to their village
- Elder projects are yearly ongoing and we will figure out how to keep it going with Covid
- We did art with the elders in our community
- We use culture camp and field trips a lot--we need to think of different ways to link learning to our culture.
- I am asking families to provide pictures that their children can take comfort to create home books to have a piece of home in school.

- It would be awesome if we could have places, animals in the curriculum of our areas in books where names of rivers, creeks, mountains, can be learned etc
- I've had students interview family members to learn something in particular.
- Maybe take the twelve (I believe) and create writing prompts
- At one point I thought you could focus on a value one per week or month
- I used to use recipes like stinkweed salve and akuktuk to teach about sequencing and measurement.
- Inupiaq word of the day (helps me to learn too!). Counting in games in Inupiaq.
- Having parents share pics of their activities...I really like that one...I am going to borrow and use that more.
- Making bar charts of caribou that students in the class caught over the summer.
- Have students bring pictures from home that reflect their life - family, culture, activities...use as a writing prompt
- I have the values posted all along my 'Heart Agreement.' We tell a joke every morning for Humor. When we refer to our 'Heart Agreement,' we also talk about the Native Value that corresponds to that rule or affirmation.
- I want to survey parents about family activities to get ideas.
- Respect for Elders, they may not be able to answer math question but they are life long problem solver with a lot of experience to impart to their young family members.
- We had an Inupiaq Word of the Week last year. I'd like to try and use that more to incorporate into our weekly lessons. I can share the word with the family and ask them to share their experience around that item - maybe it's a berry/animal that they have hunted or gathered.
- We worked with the shop class to make small Tlingit paddles and then with our Tlingit language classes to paint the names of each classroom on each paddle. We hung the paddles above the doors of each classroom.
- Why are we so focused on the values when they are not practiced with in the community. Example Respect nature.
- As a young indigenous parent i see a large disconnect between education and parenting when i feel both are hand in hand. a lot of young parents have parents who were in boarding schools and a lot of us dont know our language.
- Long time ago Ruthie Sampson created some amazing materials...don't know what happened to all of them..Jennifer Greene, do you know?
- Its great to see teachers take the initiative to show our children that we are a whole and we dont look at educators as a different part. i think thats how a lot of the older generation looks at teachers.
- For the younger elementary classes, i think talking circles sharing verbally their thoughts and feelings and being able to express their own opinions and feelings and feeling important or that their input is important

- We have an Inupiaq word of the day that is included in the morning announcements. I plan to add the Inupiaq word to the students ipad, so the parents can be involved.
- Having an honor board class room wide or school wide to post student names perhaps in small school mascot cut outs that celebrate certain values- asking the parents to contribute as well- asking them to notice if one of their children exhibits a value. For example, catching fish or picking berries is providing for your family. Posting Inupiaq words next to English words in the classroom, asking elders a particular question related to what a student is studying-
- We had Inupiaq Days and we make food, dance, dissect seals (hands on), and have elders come in to talk to the students about various subjects. We do an Inupiat work of the week.
- We had an annual culture camp trip, and hunting/camping trips with our students. What can we do instead? I total appreciated all the work the principal would put into setting up Inupiaq Days.
- Math in the Cultural Context
- Theresa Cowden makes the Inupiaq values visual for students and she connects to every lesson. She is amazing!
- For new teachers, ask your inupiaq teachers and aids they are your number one resource for cultural and traditional connections and may have ideas and seen ideas that were used before you can always adapt and recreate your own spin
- We study/teach/learn one inupiaq value per week & discuss everything about that value of how it ties in with our everyday life. Also, Inupiaq word of the day.
- There are also inupiaq stories that have examples of those values or they can create their own using animals they are familiar with as characters
- yaaaas, a lot of the older elders were born in certain places, my taata (grandfather) has two names the place he was born and the name his mother gave him. i just learned this recently, today, not many students know traditional names, theyre only familiar with villages and things they can find on the map, vs when they are traveling and get stranded they dont know the name of the place they are at.
- I wanted or start a newspaper club for the upper grades. I teach elementary, but the older students could gather stories from the village. I would assist in the publishing. I had this idea last year, my first year up here, but the work load made it too hard to pull together. It's still rattling around in my head.
- What a cool idea Diane.. wonder how to make that one bite sized? One blog story at a time? yes, with an elder wisdom corner! (Diane and E Khansen wanted to connect around this)
- Diane ask nellie for material students have done this before and there are examples in the inupiaq room some where awesome!!!!
- I sometimes find that this can be difficult when the curriculum topics are so far removed from our students' experience. How do we flip this?

- The SWRSD and LKSD also have created a digital map online that includes fish camps, ancient settlements, etc. What a great idea for our students to get involved with.
- I love the district's Inupiaq stories they had made with the Ecks, Norm & Jerry Eck, & high school students from around the region. Very intact history, values, stories that were told by our Elders in the region.
- Our team gave so many examples and resources, it was very interesting and informative. I got a lot of neat ideas to try this school year! Thank you Team!
- Many great ideas for "virus times" when we can't have visitors. Very productive...thank you!!!
- Link to community issues (erosion, soil, water quality, governance relationships, or other community issues). WOW!!!! it didn't even dawn on me! It would be great to have an Alaska issues class. Some issues facing our region: solid waste, water & sewer issues, heat electricity and energy, shortage of food, elder care
- Yes, what plants to use for a certain sickness.
- The driving question was how have the Inupiaq remained healthy over the centuries.
- We could have distance learning across communities and work on similar issues.
- Local issues: this is a great way to learn about our government, programs, grants, and how it all works together for us to be able to drink water....etc
- Parents(teachers) child (students) USE ANCHORCHARTS! Parents can teach themselves through the anchor chart and then teach their child using the anchor chart
- Include at least one Cultural Value on each lesson plans each week, include at least one family exploration item on the (may do) section of the lesson.
- I look forward to the new lesson plans to tie in to the families who are in this with us 3/5 of the week

Some personal commitments

- I need to work on more Communication
- Be available and make more phone calls to home, keep websites updated with pictures of students in the classroom and student's work at school.
- Join in community events.
- Continue to incorporate the Elder's knowledge and use of the Inupiaq language to enrich our understanding of the Inupiaq way of life
- Write a letter acknowledging the parents as major players in their child's education along with including culturally relevant content in lessons.
- Relating stories from parents to Math in the classroom.
- Always paper trail!!
- **It would be nice if each site brainstormed ideas, then all of the sites ideas were combined and then shared with all the sites.**
- Some of us bilingual is going to each room this year.
- I thought of sending notes to my students before school starts.