

NEED FOR THE PROJECT “*Why Rural Matters 2011-12*,” by the Rural School and Community Trust² compares rural education indicators among the fifty United States. Alaska rural schools rank at the bottom for educational outcomes of students – from getting children through high school to achieving an advanced degree in a timely manner. It has the lowest rural National Assessment of Educational Progress reading scores in Grades 4 and 8 in the nation, and comparatively low math scores. More than one in three ninth-graders will leave school before getting a diploma. Only one of twenty students entering ninth grade will have a college degree ten years later, giving Alaska the worst postsecondary education rate in the nation.

Rural matters. Almost two-thirds of Alaska’s schools are in rural areas. Race matters in these statistics as well. Of Alaska’s 100-plus small rural schools within 31 predominately rural school districts, 14,000 of the 19,000 students are Alaska Natives. Factors influencing educational success for Alaska’s Native youth include socioeconomic status, poverty of access and parental educational history—each contribute to persistent academic achievement and postsecondary matriculation gaps. In recognition of these troubling realities, Project GRAD Kenai Peninsula (PGKP), a school improvement initiative, was welcomed in 2004 to work in partnership with low-performing, rural schools on AK’s Kenai Peninsula. Since that time, PGKP has implemented measures to systematically address and begin to reverse these debilitating educational trends. **Project ACCESS (PA)**, proposed by PGKP in cooperation with four Native Alaskan communities and detailed herein, is one such initiative. It employs a research-based, comprehensive approach to overcome barriers unique to rural, AK Native youth such that students graduate from high school and are prepared to succeed in postsecondary programs.

The Kenai Peninsula and its school district (KPBSD) is predominantly rural; it lies directly south of Anchorage, the State's principal population center, and is vast. It covers 25,600

sq. miles (larger than the entire state of West Virginia) with a population of only 50,000. It takes over four hours to drive the district end to end and reach *almost* all schools. The four villages proposed for PA services are geographical outliers located either off the main road system or accessed only by a half hour plane ride, fair weather permitting: **Nanwalek** and **Port Graham**, Alutiiq villages accessed only by small plane or boat in fair weather; **Tyonek**, a Dena'ina Athabascan village separated from the road system by Cook Inlet and accessed only by small plane (weather permitting) and **Ninilchik**, comprised of a population primarily of Dena'ina, Athabaskan and Aleut ancestry mixed with Russian Orthodox heritage and which is on the road system, but forty miles from the school district hub.

Village Demographics ⁷				2011-2012 School Characteristics ¹⁰				
	Total Population	% below poverty	% 25-65 y.o. with degree	# teachers/ # aids	# K-12 students	% AK Native students	% Econ. Disadv students	Grad Rate
Nanwalek	276	31.4	0	6/4	78	97	91	60
Ninilchik	880	18.6	3.1	15/3	171	24	48	78
Port Graham	169	54.9	9.1	3/1	22	91	85	50
Tyonek/Tehbuhna	182	35.9	0	4/2	38	93	73	0
Total Served	1,507	-	-	38	309	-	-	-

These schools have historically been KPBSD's lowest-achieving schools. The following conditions present a unique set of challenges that impact student educational outcomes, weaken overall school services and warrant PGKP PA services:

✓ **“Poverty of access” issues** – High transportation costs and difficult access limit provision of KPBSD educational services (i.e. by counselors, school nurses, etc.) and prohibit enrichment field trip activities. Counselors work on an itinerant schedule, visiting three of the target schools

only once/month, weather permitting. Travel costs for math, science and college/career enrichment activities prevent KPBSD from providing these important formative opportunities.

Poverty of access also creates high teacher turnover. Turnover in Alaska's rural districts is higher than just about anywhere in the U.S. with an overall average of 22%. Turnover rate for first year rural teachers is 33%, double the rate for urban teachers. Rural principals are three times more likely than their urban counterparts to leave their job with turnover rates at 27%.³ With the AK University system producing only about 30% of the teaching force, many new hires are from the "lower 48" and are generally unprepared for the physical and social isolation, the high cost of living in (often) insufficient housing and the inconvenience in obtaining groceries and health care.⁴ Teachers report feeling isolated without a familial or cultural connection to the village and are untrained to work in multi-grade/multi-subject classrooms.⁵ Teacher turnover leaves already poorly-achieving schools with the least qualified, least experienced teachers. Student achievement research shows a strong inverse relationship to teacher turnover rates--the higher the teacher turnover rate, the lower students achieve as measured by standardized test scores.⁶ This disparity is strongly reflected in the yearly Standards Based Achievement results.

<i>Grade 3-10 Alaska Standards Based Assessment Benchmark Results: <u>% Not Proficient</u></i>																
<i>School</i>	Language Arts								Mathematics							
	Year	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
<i>Nanwalek</i>	59	61	38	27	26	29	27	11	56	63	41	30	36	46	21	29
<i>Ninilchik</i>	16	13	19	14	13	16	16	17	26	25	25	34	17	22	18	20
<i>Port Graham</i>	37	41	40	57	50	70	40	73	46	41	53	71	80	90	60	82
<i>Tebughna</i>	90	42	73	52	29	67	50	62	90	65	85	52	18	67	50	67
<i>KPBSD ave.</i>	19	17	16	13	13	12	13	13	27	28	27	21	21	23	21	21

High turnover also causes turmoil and problems in organizational function as it interferes with a school's ability to establish a coherent instructional program and negatively impacts the working relationships among teachers, staff and tribal educators. This leads to disengaged students and families who end up simply fulfilling their obligatory years of education, or leaving early.

✓ **Cultural and language diversities** – Studies suggest that the cultural discontinuity between the public school and the Alaskan Native population it serves partially accounts for the gap between Native Alaskan and White students' academic achievement.⁸ Only 11% of KPBSD's total student population is Alaska Native, many of whom are enrolled in the four target village schools. And while over 80% of the students in PA's schools are Alaska Native, each with distinct language and cultural practices, only 6% of the teachers are Native and KPBSD's adopted curriculum does not include Native-derived materials.

✓ **High percentage of low income students due to high adult unemployment rates in locations with astonishingly high costs of living** – Food and fuel costs range from 50-75% more than in Anchorage; unemployment rates range up to 45.5% in Nanwalek, with an average of 25.7%, triple the Borough-wide average and current US average of 8.3%.^{9,10} On average, 35.2% of residents live below poverty and the schools are all Title I. Students raised in poverty are subject to a wide variety of stressors (emotional and social challenges, cognitive lags, health and safety concerns) that undermine school behavior and performance.¹¹

✓ **Parental Background** - The inability to connect with schools in positive ways compounds students' lack of success. Historically, many Alaska Native parents have felt that school personnel didn't respect the skills and traditions they think necessary for their child's success. Hesitant to question authority, many parents and community members disengage from the process. Additionally, in a First Alaskans Institute study, 38% of respondents attributed low

school achievement rates and high dropout rates to parents' struggles to maintain traditional Native and subsistence practices amidst the appeal and convenience of mainstream society.¹² This challenge is cited as one cause of widespread depression, substance abuse and increased social services needs addressing domestic violence, teen pregnancy, sexual abuse and FAS. Respondents also cited the lack of parent role models and their inability to help students through the process of accessing postsecondary education. Only two schools to be served under PA have any college graduates in the general population: Nanwalek at 3.1% and Ninilchik at 9.1%).¹³ Being primarily first generation college-bound students situated in rural locations, these students create college aspirations much later than other students. They do not have family promoting college as an expected next step, exposure to college campuses or a high school program that adequately prepares them for the academic rigor of college.

Equally significant for these students to persevere with educational/life plans are positive experiences and personal assets, or qualities, which greatly influence young people's choices. These assets (numbering forty and representing relationships, opportunities and common personal qualities) have been extensively researched by the Search Institute. They found that these Developmental Assets® are powerful influences on adolescent behavior— youth with the most assets are least likely to engage in patterns of high-risk behavior, including: alcohol use, violence, illicit drug use and sexual activity, and are most likely to engage positive attitudes and actions.¹⁴ In Alaska, however, the Alaska Association of School Boards found that teens average only between 13-17 developmental assets, far below the forty that promote successful, healthy and productive futures. Furthermore, when teens in PA schools were surveyed by PGKP, only 37% felt they had adult support in developing their interests and assets.

Combined, these factors present extraordinary challenges to academic and social success.

This reality does not mean that success in school or life is impossible. Through its work with the schools, including a successfully executed FY09 AK Native Ed grant, PGKP has built a strong foundation and acquired strategic insights for solidifying gains and helping Native Alaskan students reach the next level of success. PA targets three specific areas of opportunity in which it can build upon work already underway in the communities and can continue to see improvement in student outcomes. Substantial research literature also cites these areas as the most influential factors in students' school performance: (1) Teachers providing relevant and rigorous instruction. Studies report that outside the home environment, teacher quality and effectiveness are the most important influences on student achievement.^{15,16} Their influences greatly affect a student's academic preparation, self-esteem and motivation to achieve. However, these schools have had difficulty retaining teaching staff. This year Nanwalek is experiencing 60% teacher turnover. In 2008-2009 Tebughna School in Tyonek experienced such high turnover that students saw three different classroom teachers.

Working conditions, student characteristics, mentoring and professional development opportunities are the most important factors affecting teacher retention and turnover.^{17,18} PA will provide comprehensive professional development opportunities for teachers to increase teacher effectiveness and cultural understanding through the use of Instructional Coaches. Coaches provide peer guidance to help teachers plan lessons, carry out lessons incorporating best practices and assist with student assessment and differentiated instruction. These opportunities are important for teachers who are too often new to village Alaska, new to the teaching profession and work in isolation due to their remote locations. PA's Instructional Coaches' sustained commitment and connection to the villages better orient new teachers, increase teacher effectiveness, improve teacher evaluations and tenure and ultimately improve

student educational outcomes.¹⁹ (2) Parental support and community engagement in students' educational lives. In-depth interviews with over 120 Native students from the US and Canada identified connections to parents, communities, teachers and schools as major contributors to the resilience of Native youth.²⁰ They also reported that being well grounded and connected to their tribal culture was a big reason they stayed in school. Resilience describes a set of qualities that fosters a process of successful adaptation and transformation despite risk and adversity. The students in the study who were doing well (often after experiencing serious adversity) shared four positive characteristics in particular: good self-concept, a strong sense of direction, tenacity and an ability to feel comfortable living in both the Native community and mainstream schools. Important aspects included participation in cultural activities, appreciation of the influences of parents and elders and participation in a school curriculum that included Native history and culture. Through a variety of activities (see Project Description), PA's Campus-Family Support (CFS) provides avenues for students to increase their resiliency: opportunities to build development assets with their families; collaborative engagement in learning and community projects with parents, Native leaders and schools to connect community-based education to the school's education system and information to keep students and their families on a college-going track. As parents and communities engage supportively in their students' educational careers, youth will be better prepared to appreciate learning, stay in school and improve and extend their academic life.

(3) Enrichment activities designed to develop and support student Life, College, Career and Leadership skill sets. The transition from elementary school is marked by increased disengagement and declining motivation, particularly for low-performing youth, when academic gaps can turn into chasms.²¹ Disengagement and declining motivation, in turn, predict school

dropout (9th grade course failures and high school dropout rates exceed all other grade levels) or the “drift” of many AK Native students after high school, neither entering the postsecondary programs nor attaining the job to which they aspire.²² PA proposes four “Institutes” and associated enrichment activities to nurture three elements deemed critical to easing the transitions for high-poverty populations in lower-performing schools: keeping students on the graduation path, paired with efforts to close achievement gaps and nurture strong parent/community support.^{23,24} These activities also help develop students’ skill sets to surmount economic/home stressors that undermine attitudes toward education, personal performance and postsecondary achievement.

PA’s three-pronged initiative benefits from and expands impacts realized during PGKP’s previous three years of work. PA’s continued partnership in the schools, its established organizational structure and positive community relations will allow critical progress toward the mutual long-term goal of successfully breaking the model where poverty, fiscal incapacity, low levels of student achievement and expectations and low levels of adult education run in mutually reinforcing circles. Thank you for the opportunity to build upon this important work.

QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN PGKP’s PA is committed to achieving this long-term goal through delivery of coordinated, comprehensive and research-supported services to meet the unique educational needs of AK Native students, raising student academic proficiencies and increasing the high school graduation rate of students prepared to enter postsecondary programs and succeed. Project beneficiaries include 309 K-12th graders enrolled in the identified schools. Research shows that intervening early in a student’s educational experience is crucial for retention and developing college aspirations.²⁵ PA also serves all educators working with students, including 42 instructional staff/administrators at the schools, many

tribal educators and parents, building capacity from within. The project design (below) describes key activities and outcomes expected from PA services; each objective is numbered and links with specific benchmarks and outcome measures in the evaluation section.

Goal 1: Increase percentage of ANE students who meet or exceed proficiency standards in reading, math and science on Alaska’s Standards Based Assessment (SBA):

Objective 1: Increase teacher capacity through systematic/sustained professional development

by site-based Instructional Coaches. Implementation activities:

(a) Coaches meet annually with each school administrator to create a professional development plan for all instructional staff (certified and paraprofessional) which aligns with KPBSD goals;

(b) Instructional Coaches provide 14 hours/week of professional development utilizing Charlotte Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*²⁶ (the evaluation tool recently adopted by the KPBSD). Professional development will take the form of presentations, individual conferences with the teachers, observation and demonstration and shared feedback in Danielson’s four domains: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction and Assessment for Learning, Professional Responsibilities.

Objective 2: Increase teacher capacity to raise student achievement across core content areas.

Implementation activities:

(a) Instructional Coaches provide 18 hours/week curriculum support to teachers to raise student language arts, math and science outcomes. Coaches address challenges common across grade levels (fidelity to and effective implementation of district-approved core curriculum and instructional practices with embedded 21st Century Skills of critical thinking, non-routine problem solving, and communication and collaboration), as well as challenges specific to elementary and secondary levels. For the elementary grades, reading support is based on research

proven practices targeting: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension. Instructional staff and administrators will meet monthly to review fidelity to reading programs and address implementation challenges. Math instruction is organized around the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Principles and Standards, where coaches advocate carefully selected instructional activities, supported by the consistent use of developmentally appropriate manipulatives to foster understanding of algebraic concepts and stimulate higher order thinking. Coaches support KPBSD's Discovery Education science curriculum through utilization of the Alaska Science Curricular Initiative for differentiated instruction.

At the secondary level (grades 9-12), curriculum support focuses on cross-curricular support developing effective learning strategies (note taking, use of graphic organizers, summarizing strategies and study skills), and helping to navigate the complexities of technology in an environment of increasing online or distance delivered science and advanced math courses.

(b) Instructional Coaches support and assist teachers' abilities to utilize student assessment data to assess student mastery and needs, develop differentiated teaching and establish a cycle of intentional planning. Coaches will assist teachers with appropriate use formative assessment data that give valid and reliable "scaled information" that can be used by educators to determine overall student placement, clearly define individual student needs, suggest groupings and measure academic growth. Coaches will provide formal training in Differentiated Instruction to new teachers and refresher training to returning teachers.

Objective 3: Staffing levels adequate to insure fidelity to district reading and math curricula.

Implementation activities:

(a) PA will hire and train four tutors who will work 10 hours/week in each school, insuring fidelity to the reading program and best possible student achievement outcomes. Reading and

math curricula are most successful when students receive instruction at their ability level. In the past, inadequate staffing has compromised program success: students are placed either above their ability level, resulting in frustration, or below their ability level, resulting in boredom and potential behavior problems. Additionally, as tutors are drawn from the village population, this program component helps develop capacity among local tribal teachers as they participate in trainings and gain teaching skills through their work with PA's Instructional Coaches.

Objective 4: Engaging teaching techniques and topics relevant to Native Alaskan experience and ways of knowing. **Implementation activities:**

(a) PA staff will attend annual trainings in culturally appropriate pedagogy practices and share their learning with teachers through the coaching model.

(b) Instructional Coaches assist teachers in developing lesson plans relevant to students' cultures and lived experiences. Particularly, PA activities will integrate Alaska Native literature into KPBSD's reading program and will supplement math curriculum with "Math in a Cultural Context," culturally-resonant curriculum developed at the Univ. of AK Fairbanks through an Alaska Native Education grant.²⁷

Goal 2: Increase percentage of students who graduate from high school within four years with a regular diploma and successfully attend a postsecondary program. To address this goal, Instructional Coaches, CFS staff and Site Community Engagement teams will collectively plan and variously implement a set of activities, including four Development Institutes over the course of each year. The activities and Institutes are designed to meet a variety of objectives, ensuring a broad base of support for students at times of critical academic transitions. Middle grade students identify academic ability as especially important to succeeding in secondary school.²⁸ After entering high school, students in the study added time management, ability to

stay on task, social skills and behavior as essential elements in success.

Middle school and high school are also important times for postsecondary planning. They are the times that schools should provide the tools, information and resources to guide students and their parents through the postsecondary planning process to make successful educational transitions. However, in the proposed schools, limited resources make it difficult for schools to access and effectively deliver this information. These schools are less likely to offer upper level and college preparatory courses, particularly in mathematics and science. For instance, few seniors in these schools have access to geometry, compared with 74% of students in more affluent schools. Existing research suggests that summer transitional programs have positive effects on students. One national study, *Toward Resiliency: At Risk Students Who Make It To College*, revealed that participants in transitional programs had nearly twice the odds of enrolling in a four-year college than non participants.²⁹ PA addresses these challenges by providing targeted early intervention programs that develop important student and family developmental assets, foster rigorous academic preparation, support parent involvement in college and career planning and reduce financial barriers to postsecondary training through scholarship support.

Objective 1: Empowered students who confidently plan their life path, are capable of meeting their goals along that path and are supported through key educational transitions.

Implementation activities:

(a) CFS Manager will train coaches and community liaisons in the research-based Developmental Assets® Framework. Because of its basis in youth development and prevention research and its proven effectiveness across cultural and socioeconomic groups, Developmental Assets is one of the most widely used approaches to positive youth development in the US.

(b) CFS hosts Family Nights (academic and social enrichment programs) once every two months

in each community. Family Nights provide culturally relevant, highly engaging, academic family events to encourage parental involvement in their children's education, find fun in learning and discovery, develop assets and teach parents about the process of college matriculation. These programs build understanding and engage caregivers and teachers in activities and meaningful discussions to build rapport and family trust for supporting their students' educational endeavors.

(c) CFS, in coordination with various community partners, will implement four Development Institutes, modeled after PGKP's highly successful Summer Institute. The Institutes range from four days to two weeks in duration, are residential and are held either in the Kenai Peninsula or Anchorage so that rural students have the opportunity to become familiar with college campuses in a supportive atmosphere and practice life skills needed for attending college. The *Exploration Institute* is a middle school to high school bridging program for 7th and 8th graders. Its focus is teambuilding, asset and life skill development, job tours based on individual student interests and initiation of six-year academic plans (8th grade – first year after high school). Additionally, after students return to their villages, they will participate in a carefully selected, community-identified project. CFS will provide generative planning and facilitate collaboration among varied community partners who can bring resources to the project. Participation in these projects provides real-life learning and practice for students; realizing successful outcomes models meaningful community engagement for parents and youth and helps create communities of hope.

The *Leadership Institute*, for 8th – 11th graders, empowers students as leaders through learning western and Native leadership styles and processes. Students learn strategies in communication, motivation, consensus, problem solving, decision making and goal-setting with Native and non-Native leaders, reporting what they learned to site and village tribe councils.

In the *College, Technical & Career Institute*, 9th - 12th graders explore postsecondary options

including college, technical school and careers, including job shadowing, meeting with advisors and updating their six-year academic plan. During this Institute, students also practice college life skills: creating and working within a budget for meals and travel.

The *Summer Institute* (SI), two weeks in duration and held at the Kenai Peninsula College, gives high school students the opportunity to experience college life—the campus, professors and challenging curriculum in a supportive atmosphere. During SI, students participate in applied Math, Science and Language Arts instruction and activities to develop and enhance 21st Century skills and themes, preparing them for improved academic performance in the following school year. Attendees also have the opportunity to experience various professions, broadening perspectives on possible high demand career sectors that can contribute to rural economies. Overall, SI's result in increased college familiarity and readiness, easing students' transition to college and putting them on equal footing with more advantaged peers. They are also central to ensuring eligibility for PGKP's 4-year college scholarships, which provide hope to youth who otherwise might not consider college a realistic goal for lack of financial means.

Institutes collectively support students by providing immersion in academically enriched residential experiences where students i) enhance knowledge and skills for completion of their next year at school and familiarize with a college atmosphere; ii) strengthen and expand socio-cultural experiences and confidence by working with students from all PGKP sites, college faculty and community professionals from a variety of backgrounds as they would in a real college setting; iii) gain skills and motivation to set personal, educational/career goals and college attendance aspirations and iv) practice skills learned in community-based projects.

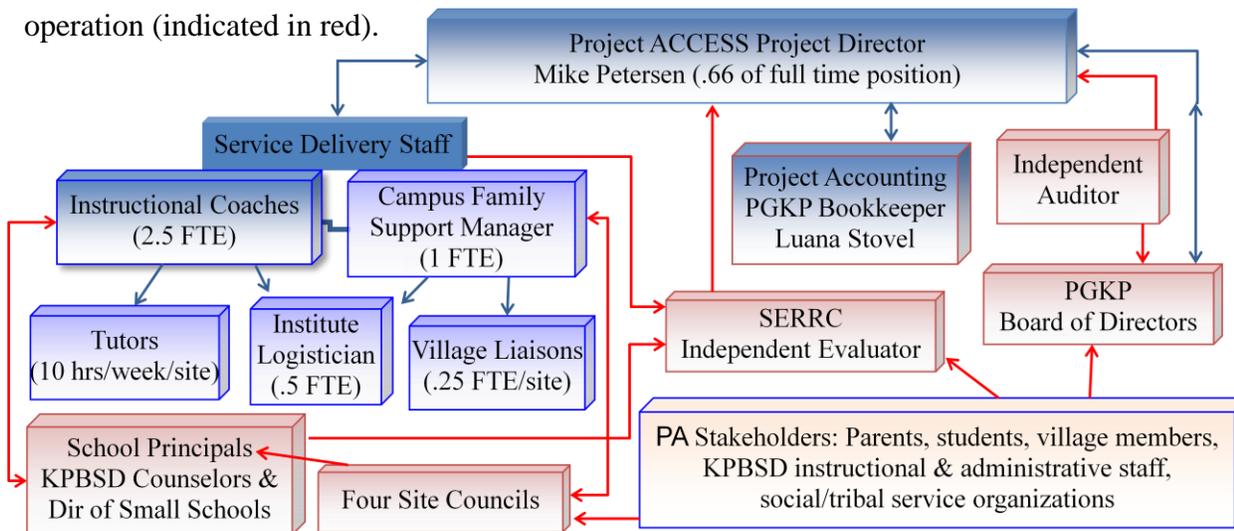
Objective 2: Students/families connected to services to reduce risk of drop outs and to improve academic proficiency. Students have a better chance to succeed in school when their basic needs

are being met and when parents model lifelong learning. Students who come from homes headed by alcoholic and/or abusive parents often have immediate and pressing needs that prevent them from productively engaging in academic activities. CFS staff is a “safety net” for students, providing counseling, mentoring and referrals to service agencies and institutions. KPC also offers Adult Basic Ed/GED instruction as a method of increasing parent engagement in education, opening employment opportunities and modeling lifelong learning.

Implementation activities: PA will provide intervention support to students and their families facing problems both in and outside of school that affect classroom performance:

(a) CFS staff and KPBSD counselors connect students and families with social services to assist with special personal and academic needs. Students can be provided any or a combination of services including district-supplied supportive services and guidance, tutoring and access to enrichment activities. If necessary, counseling referrals to outside agencies will be offered.

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN Management for PA is structured to ensure that the project is on track to reach clearly defined goals and fulfill grant and fiscal reporting obligations on a timely basis. This is accomplished through an explicit system of supervisory duties/communication channels (indicated by blue lines below) and procedures for eliciting feedback from a diversity of perspectives to insure continuous improvement in program operation (indicated in red).



PA's Project Director, Mike Petersen, is responsible for overall program continuity, staff hiring and management, fiscal accountability and project reporting. As PGKP's Executive Director for the past two years, Mr. Petersen works full time, of which 2/3 will be dedicated to PA duties. He will provide direct oversight of three full-time Instructional Coaches and one full-time CFS Manager, work in close partnership with Tim Vlasak (KPBSD's Director of Federal Programs and Small Schools) to ensure smooth integration of PA's services in the schools and work with SERRC to coordinate evaluation procedures. Complying with fiscal management and reporting is also key to PA oversight. Assisting Mr. Petersen in this is PGKP's bookkeeper, Luana Stovel. Ms. Stovel has six years of successful experience with DOE grant accounting and reporting procedures; 3/4 of her time will be dedicated to the project.

Specific PA staffing is provided at each site. Instructional Coaches (Jane Beck, Jenny Andersen and Erik Knudtson) hold full-time, 10-month positions and work in collaboration with administrators, faculty and staff to implement prescribed activities in accordance with the goals of the school and PA. They provide direct services to build campus competency, increase high school graduation and college matriculation rates, conduct community workshops and events and maintain positive communication with community stakeholders. A partnership agreement with KPBSD that specifies PGKP-provided trainings is one of the critical management tools that ensure effective teacher professional development and student enrichment activities. Tutors are under the supervision of the instructional coaches with input from each school principal.

Campus Family Support Manager, Bonnie Pierce, has a full-time, 12-month position charged with designing and implementing the parent and community engagement component of PA. She, along with two part-time village liaisons, carries out Family Nights, facilitates subsequent community and school-based projects and recruits and attends quarterly advisory Site Teams.

She will co-design and implement the PA Institutes with the help of Instructional Coaches and a half-time Institute Logistician (who will be hired fall 2012, pending funding.) Over her six years with PGKP, Bonnie has formed strong links to the four Native communities and with a variety of social service organizations which factor greatly in overall project and student success.

The Project Manager is available to all PA/school staff via telephone and internet on a full time basis. Additionally, PA holds staff meetings every two months at a minimum to monitor project implementation and progress.

An integral piece of PGKP's management approach is to engage parents and community members as leaders to renew and strengthen the community network. PA's activities aid in creating communities of hope where students, teachers, parents and community members find value and fulfillment by engaging in public life with their schools – building a lasting constituency for quality public education and college access. The vision is that the program's impacts reverberate across the communities and over time build capacity from within. As such, PA's management structure insures a deep, established feedback relationship with each community and the KPBSD through four avenues. One is PGKP's Board membership, comprised of highly engaged citizens representing the PA beneficiary communities (Native Village of Tyonek, Nanwalek IRA Council, Ninilchik Traditional Council and Port Graham Village Council), representatives from KPBSD and their School Board, the Kenai Peninsula College and Project GRAD USA. These representatives meet every two months with the Project Director where they assess PA progress and provide feedback from the communities.

Secondly, Instructional Coaches spend a great deal of time on site, working closely with teachers, administrators and students and receive on-going observations and assessments of our progress. Regular staff meetings and reviews of quarterly evaluation reports (described below)

provide opportunities for exchanges of ideas and suggestions for improvements.

The third is through four Site Teams. Site Teams are comprised of school site councils, parents and school administrators who meet quarterly. Part of every Site Council meeting is devoted to advising PA's parent-community engagement activities and providing feedback to the CFS staff and instructional coaches as to the site-specific operation of the project to ensure that students receive the support and full benefits intended by the PA effort.

Finally, PA's evaluator (SERRC) reviews progress on assessment measures and stakeholder feedback on a quarterly basis. SERRC meets annually with PGKP staff and board members to summarize progress and suggest areas of improvement to ensure that PA is having a positive, aggregate impact on the schools and their communities. The results of these four efforts provide feedback for continuous improvement and to capture best practices and lessons learned. The many avenues of involvement enable students, caregivers, external publics, service providers and educators across the K-12 spectrum to have a place and time to bring their diversity of perspectives and ensure the mission is carried forth in an effective, culturally appropriate manner.

ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES PGKP is uniquely capable of leading the PA partnership. It was established in 2003 by invitation from KPBSD and with support from area schools and their communities. They believed a Project GRAD initiative (a successful school reform program first initiated in Texas in the early 1990's and currently being implemented in 247 schools across the nation) tailored for Alaska's cultural heritages and geographic locations could successfully address the alarming academic achievement gap in rural KPBSD schools. PGKP currently serves ~600 K-12 students, their families and 47 teachers in seven schools that have in recent history been among the lowest performing by implementing carefully researched and data-driven comprehensive school improvement strategies to reverse the downward trajectory of educational

achievement and provide opportunities for students to complete high school with the skills and ambition to further their education and contribute to Alaska's economic vitality.

All of the core components of the PGKP program have been widely and individually piloted and validated as effective interventions. Its proven record of improving public education for disadvantaged students has earned broad, bipartisan bicameral support in Congress. Project GRAD is federally authorized by the US Department of Education in the Higher Education Act of 2008. PGKP is the only youth support organization on site (beside their own tribe) in two of the three fly-in villages and Ninilchik. In Tyonek, PGKP is one of two organizations that supports youth. PGKP enjoys tremendous community and regional support and, importantly, leverages significant resources for the program. Key partners and their contributions include:

- **KPBSD** is a diverse, multi-national body (48% of its student population is a member of at least one ethnic minority group) with the core philosophy that all Pre-K to 12th grade students can be effective learners regardless of their socio-economic background, ethnicity or society's misperceptions of their cultural and religious beliefs. KPBSD supports this endeavor due to PGKP's history of success in underserved schools and its cost effectiveness, working with the assets that already exist in each school. KPBSD's relationship with PGKP is formalized in a long-term agreement where the District provides PGKP in-kind donations of office space, equipment, supplies, administrative and school counselor support for services in the schools. Counselors work with PA staff to support students in high school credit reviews, college and career exploration, financial aid and college applications.
- **Kenai Peninsula College** is a unit of the University of AK Anchorage comprised of four campuses on the Kenai Peninsula and enrolling almost 2,000 students. It offers three Bachelor's degree programs, many Associate of Applied Science degrees and several Certificate programs

in office systems and process technologies. Many students served by PGKP begin their postsecondary studies at a Kenai Peninsula College campus. KPC partners with PGKP by serving on PGKP Board of Directors and contributing resources in the form of student advisory services, co-hosting annual College/Career Fairs and providing college facilities and faculty for some of PA's activities and providing GED/ABE services in the communities.

- **PGKP** brings resources to PA through stable staffing and administrative organization for school services and on-going fundraising efforts, both at the community and state level to ensure quality, uninterrupted support programs. Additionally, PGKP raises private funds for scholarship awards; the fund balance is currently over [REDACTED]. Students who successfully meet minimum requirements (graduate with at least a 2.5 GPA within four years, participate in at least two Summer Institutes and college awareness activities) are eligible for an award of [REDACTED] per year for up to four years of accredited post-secondary study. The promise of the PGKP Scholarship enhances college access efforts and influences the belief in both students and parents that college is a possibility.

- Support from PA's **four village partners** is signified by leaders from each of the communities participating on PGKP's Board of Directors. Annual meetings with each village tribe solicit input on village-identified needs that can be addressed within the parameters of the PA Project and project feedback to ensure the program is having a positive, aggregate impact. Village partners also donate the use of community centers for Family Nights and other events. Letters of support from PA's partners are attached.

PGKP and KPBSD work consistently and cooperatively to realize cost savings through their partnership and to independently develop options for long-term sustainability through grant and in-kind support. District provided resources (purchasing agreements to maximize purchasing

power, technological infrastructure to facilitate speedy communications and PGKP office space) help keep project costs very reasonable. Costs for service delivery is [REDACTED] per project beneficiary (309 students and 42 certified teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators.) When assessing cost benefits of the program, the high cost of travel must be considered. KPBSD, as described earlier, covers a vast area and poses distinct barriers to educational achievement. Isolation from other communities has insulated the people from change and opportunity and is a hardship on teachers. To achieve change, travel to and from the villages by PA staff and students is essential. Allowing students to experience (in person) the opportunities that await them at the universities (rather than relying on brochures or videos) is vital for students from remote villages who may one day attend college away from home in new communities.

An additional consideration for determining reasonable cost is that the average cost is based on the 351 students and school staff to be served; however services are also directed at families and community members, increasing the numbers of people directly served and exponentially increasing program impacts. Success for students relies heavily on changes by the parents, older siblings, members of the community and the faculty at each school. The project budget provides for essential game-changing services at each level, thoroughly accounting for personnel costs for service delivery (including travel to villages), instructional supplies, travel and rental costs of Developmental Institutes and community engagement activities and college tuition assistance.

QUALITY OF PROJECT EVALUATION Project evaluation is built into the very fabric of PA's management and oversight system to ensure that evaluation protocol and priorities are successfully implemented. PA's Project Director will oversee on-going, systematic PA assessments in cooperation with a contracted evaluator from South East Regional Resource Center (SERRC). SERRC is a non-profit corporation familiar with rural Alaskan communities

and known for its exemplary service in designing and implementing effective evaluation systems (in accordance with DOE guidelines). (The proposed evaluator's resume is included in the resumes attachment.) The Project Director will work with SERRC to design the evaluation plan around desired project outcomes as outlined in the Project Design and detailed in the evaluation matrix below, but at a minimum it will employ 1) comparative change analysis, a quasi-experimental research methodology where evaluation includes baseline measures to derive change scores—specifically the difference from baseline (pre-treatment) measures (course grades, standardized test scores, graduation rates etc.) and outcomes obtained after participation in PA; 2) qualitative reports that chronicle and assess all major activities in terms of effectiveness, relevance, strengths, weaknesses and timely occurrence; 3) site visits by the evaluator to view activities first-hand and interview intended beneficiaries and stakeholders and 4) annual evaluation reports with a final project report at the end of three years.

Data collection will be inclusive of all targeted project beneficiaries and is part of routine program operation. Instructional Coaches, CFS, KPBSD and SERCC each collect information. Effectiveness of Professional Development/Coaching strategies will be ascertained through teacher surveys, coach observations and service requests, an instructional coaching scale to show effective coach use in classrooms and aggregate Teacher Evaluation data shared by KPBSD. Student academic readiness data is available through KPBSD in the form of student transcript information and standardized test data. Ed Performance, AIMSWeb, Scholastic Reading Inventory, survey data and attendance records are tabulated by PA staff and will be analyzed for feedback on effectiveness of Student Development and Enrichment activities and as indicators for changes in interventions.

Program evaluation reports will be shared quarterly with PA staff to gauge the

effectiveness of the project (a) in achieving its objectives which have been stated in terms of student outcome benchmarks and measures detailed below, (b) to provide a basis for meaningful program impact analyses and adjustments and (c) to gather feedback for program improvement. This data will be assembled into annual reports, which focus on significant events and progression and serve as vehicles to share project outcomes and solicit program improvement strategies from key stakeholders and partners. Strong communication among all partners, teams and project staff will provide ongoing feedback for continuous project improvement.

<u>Project ACCESS Performance Measures</u>	<u>Baseline</u>	<u>Benchmark</u>
<u>PA Goal 1:</u> Increase percentage of ANE students who meet or exceed proficiency standards in reading, math, and science on the Alaska Standards Based Assessment (SBA):		
<u>Goal 1 Measures:</u> By Year 3, at least 80% of ANE students achieve proficient scores on Alaska SBA & High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) in Language Arts & Math. (Data collected once annually.)	LA proficient <u>2011: 74%</u>	3% increase annually
	Math prof. <u>2011: 68%</u>	4% increase annually
By Year 3, at least 62% of ANE students achieve proficient scores on AK SBA & HSGQE in Science.	Sci. Proficient <u>2011: 47%</u>	5% increase annually
<i>Objective 1: Increase teacher capacity through professional development.</i>		
1.1.1 By year 3, teacher surveys (bi-annual) and Coach reports (monthly) show a 50% increase in ongoing professional development activities and Instructional Coach use.	Establish Fall 2013	8% increase annually
1.1.2 Yearly increase in the <i>Instructional Coaching Scale</i> to show effective Coach use in classrooms (Data collected biannually.)	Establish Winter 2013	5% scale score increase annually
1.1.3 Yearly increase in aggregate KPBSD Teacher Evaluation scores (Data collected annually.)	Establish Spring 2013	3 pt. increase annually
<i>Objective 2: Increase teacher capacity to raise student achievement across core content areas</i>		
1.2.1 By Year 3, 90% of ANE students promoted on time to	Establish Fall	2% increase

successive grade levels (Data collected once annually.)	2013	annually
1.2.2 By Year 3, 7-12 th graders show a 18% decrease in below average and failing grades (Data collected each semester)	Establish Fall 2012	6 % annual decrease
1.2.3 By Year 3, 70% of ANE students pass Pre-algebra by end of 8 th grade (Data collected annually.)	Establish Fall 2012	7% increase annually
<i>Objective 3: Staffing levels allow fidelity to KPBSD's reading & math curriculum</i>		
1.3.1 Four tutors trained/hired annually - 80% of PA students proficient on the Alaska SBA by year 3.	Establish Fall 2012	4% increase annually
<i>Objective 4: Engaged teaching techniques & topics relevant to Native AK ways of knowing</i>		
1.4.1 By Year 3 85% of teachers will use culturally relevant materials and strategies in their instruction.	Establish Winter 2012	12% increase annually
1.4.2 6 reading/math lessons incorporating Native lit, etc.	Established Fall 2012	2 added per year
<u>PA Goal 2:</u> Increase percentage of students who graduate from high school in four years with a regular diploma and successfully attend a post-secondary program		
<u>Goal 2 Measures:</u> By Year 3 at least 90% of ANE students will graduate from high school (data collected annually). By Year 3, increase % of ANE students who enroll in postsecondary education programs.		
<i>Objective 1: Students empowered to plan life path, achieve goals and receive support through key educational transitions</i>		
2.1.1. Increase in Student Developmental Assets (data collected annually through Developmental Assets Surveys).	Establish Fall 2012	3 gained annually
2.1.2 By Year 3 75% of eligible students will have attended the annual Exploration Institute (Data collected annually.)	Establish Spring 2013	5% increase annually
2.1.3 By Year 3, 50% of ANE students will actively engage in community project with parents/guardians.	Establish Spring 2013	8% increase annually
2.1.4 By Year 3, 70% of eligible students will have attended the annual Leadership Institute (Data collected annually.)	Establish Spring 2013	10% increase annually
2.1.5 By Year 3, 70% of students present at least one Site Council and/or Village Tribal Council meeting.	Establish Spring 2013	10% increase annually

2.1.6	By Year 3, 70% of students attend annual College/Tech/Career Institute (Data collected annually.)	Establish Spring 2013	10% increase annually
2.1.6	By Year 3, at least 85% of students will be aware of college options and career pathways (biannual surveys).	Establish Winter 2012	8% increase annually
2.1.7	By Year 3, 70% of eligible students will have attended annual Summer Institute (Annual attendance records.)	Establish Summer 2013	10% increase annually
2.1.8	By Year 3, 40% of parents participate in Summer Institute Closing Ceremony (Annual attendance sheets.)	Establish Summer 2013	8% increase annually
2.1.9	By Year 3, 75% of ANE students will have knowledge of, and demonstrate, necessary academic preparation for college (6-year plan, class schedule review biannually & Scholarship Agreement signed annually beginning Year 2).	Establish Spring 2013	10% increase annually
2.1.10	By Year 3, 70% of ANE parents will attend one family night. (Data collected annually)	Establish Winter 2012	10% increase annually
2.1.11	By Year 3, 25% increase in parent/community members actively engaged in the life of the school (school volunteer hours collected monthly, Site Council and/or community project participation records collected biannually, stakeholder feedback)	Establish Spring 2013	5% increase annually
2.1.12	By Year 3, 60% ANE scholars qualify for PGKP scholarship (minimum 2.5 GPA, attend 2 SI's w/in four years)	Establ. 2012	5% increase annually
<i>Objective 2: Students/families connected to social services to reduce risk of drop outs and to improve academic proficiencies</i>			
2.2.1	By Year 3, CFS will have connected with 95% of PA students to provide appropriate services and connections.	Establish Spring 2013	12% increase annually
2.2.2	By Year 3, PA will connect 12 individuals with KPC for ABE/GED instruction.	--	4 individuals annually
2.2.3	By Year 3, average daily attendance is 90%.	Establish Fall 2012	8% increase annually
2.2.4	By Year 3, ANE student population will show a 15% decrease in drop out rate.	Establish Fall 2012	5% decrease annually

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