

Accelerating Learning for Alaska Native Students (ALANS)

(a) *(Need for project ... magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out...*

Introduction: The *Accelerating Learning for Alaska Native Students (ALANS)* project addresses the low academic achievement of Alaska Native students in all 27 schools of the Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD). *ALANS* will provide three years of scientifically-based, comprehensive, high-quality professional development for approximately 440 LKSD instructional and support staff, resulting in greatly improved student academic performance.

LKSD serves students in the **Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta**, one of the largest river deltas in the world and roughly the size of Oregon. The delta, which mostly consists of tundra, has virtually no roads and travel is by Bush plane or by river boats in summer and snowmobiles in winter. The delta has approximately 25,000 residents of which **85%** are Alaska Natives, mostly Yup'ik Eskimos. Many people live a traditional subsistence lifestyle of hunting, fishing and gathering. Approximately 4,208 PK-12 students are served, of whom **94%** are Alaska Native. The indigenous Yup'ik language is spoken in 18 communities in Lower Kuskokwim School District, so it is not surprising that **67%** of students are considered English Language Learners.

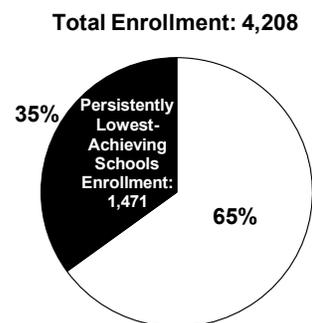
Large District, Small Schools: LKSD is the largest of any of Alaska's 43 off-road districts in terms of numbers of schools (27 schools in 22 villages) and enrollment (4,208 Pk-12 students).

The smallest school (Arivq) has an enrollment of 15 students, and the largest 493 students (Bethel Jr./Sr. High).

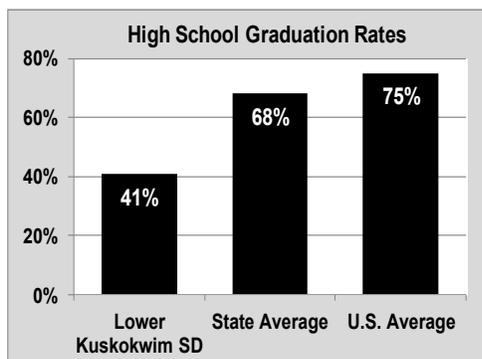


Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools: Nine (9) of the 27 schools are designated among the lowest 5% in the state, being 'Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools' based on consistently low academic achievement and graduation rates. (See Appendix B, p. 41) These 9 schools serve **35%** of the students in the district. Furthermore, **24**

of the 27 LKSD schools do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and all but two are in mandated “School Improvement” status with the State of Alaska.



Magnitude of the Needs, Gaps and Weaknesses

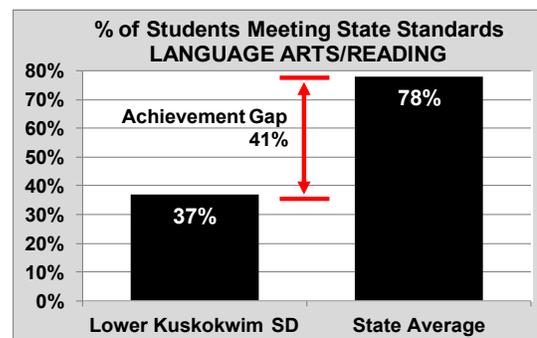
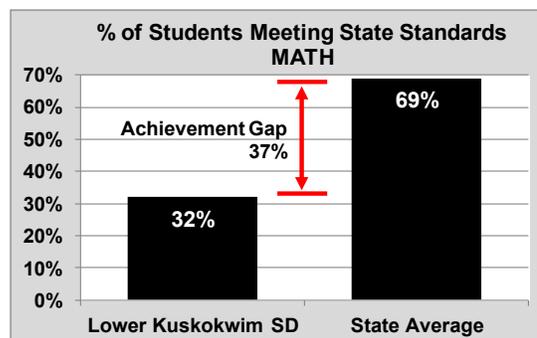


Low Graduation Rates:

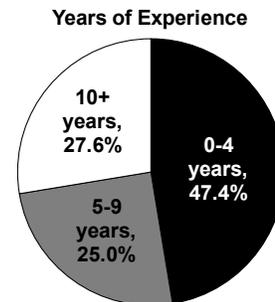
The multiple at-risk factors of LKSD students result in low high school graduation rates (41%). Only 4 of every 10 students graduate –some of the lowest rates in the state and nation. (Source: AK EED, 2010-11 Report Card)

English Language Learners: A great majority of LKSD Alaska Native students are assessed as English Language Learners (67%) compared to the state average of 11%. (Source: AK EED, 2010-11 Report Card)

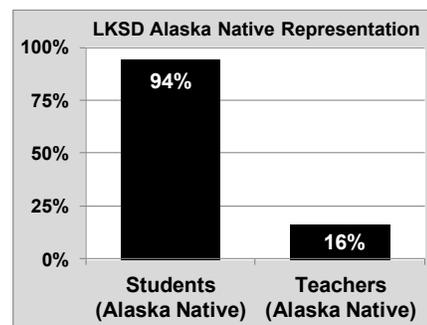
Academic Achievement Gap: There is a large Language Arts/Reading and Math academic achievement gap when comparing LKSD students to other students in the State. Only 32% of the students in 3rd –10th grade in LKSD schools are meeting/exceeding the state standards in Math compared to the state average of 69%. In addition, only 37% of the LKSD schools’ students in 3rd –10th grade are meeting/exceeding the state standard in Language Arts/Reading compared to the state average of 78%, as illustrated here. (Source: AK EED, 2010-11 Report Card)



High Number of Inexperienced Teachers: Just about all LKSD schools have a large number of inexperienced teachers. Based on school district personnel records, almost half (47.4%) of teachers and administrators have less than four years of experience, with 24.2% having one year of experience. A study titled *Monitoring School Quality*, by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) through a contract with Mathematica Policy Research, clearly documented that more teacher experience results in higher student achievement. A more recent study conducted by Rivkin, Hanushek and Kainⁱ found that fourth, fifth and sixth grade students in more experienced teachers' classrooms over the course of one year gained about 0.10 of a standard deviation in reading and math compared with their peers in classrooms where teachers had less than two years' experience. This lack of teaching experience combined with unfamiliarity of the Alaska Native culture is adversely impacting learning in the schools.



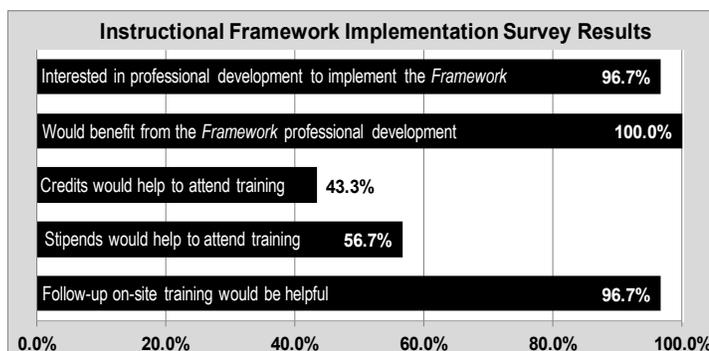
Cultural Disparity: There is a great disparity between the ethnic composition of teachers and students in LKSD schools. As previously reported, the ethnicity of students in the target schools is approximately 94% Alaska Native. In contrast, the schools only have an average of 16% Alaska Native teachers with the other 84% being Caucasian or other.



Most of these teachers (77%) are from out of state and are unfamiliar with the Alaska Native culture. This disparity presents several teaching barriers and challenges for teachers in the target schools. Teachers are unfamiliar with using culturally-based curriculum and pedagogy to increase student learning abilities. Furthermore, teachers are unable to use local knowledge and culturally-appropriate learning methods that students can better comprehend and connect with. A study by the University Alaska, titled *The Educational Aspirations/Attainment Gap Among*

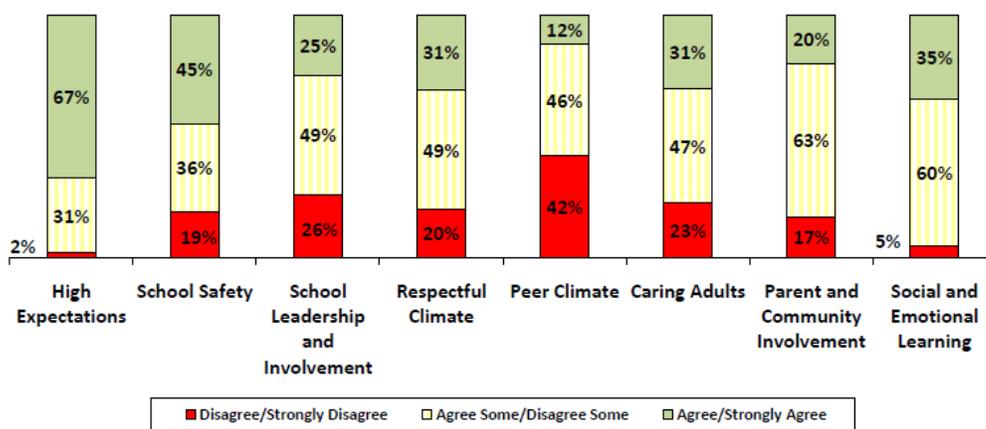
*Rural Alaska Native Students.*ⁱⁱ recommends that teachers spend more time in rural communities to develop culturally relevant teaching methods instead of using rural schools as a stepping stone to urban teaching jobs. It also suggests the employment of more Native teachers from the community, who can then develop connections between the curriculum and students' cultural experiences.

Educators' Training Needs: The project planning team conducted a comprehensive and inclusive needs assessment to ensure all the students' needs were identified; parents were involved and teachers were included along with principals and community partners. The assessment included parent meetings, student input, teacher input meetings and overall partnership planning meetings with representatives from all the partners. This inclusive process not only identified needs, but also informed the program design to address those needs. A more detailed Educators' Survey found them very interested in (96.7%) training about the proposed subject of this project (the *Instructional Framework*), indicated they would benefit from such training (100%), and identified what would be help motivate them to attend trainings.ⁱⁱⁱ



Low Student Motivation and a So–So School Climate The Alaska Association of School Boards (AASB), as part of its Initiative for Community Engagement (ICE), sponsored the use of a school climate and connectedness survey statewide.^{iv} While most all LKSD students say the schools have high expectations, fewer see a respectful climate, attention to social/emotional learning, and school involvement. (Arrived at by adding all the Disagree/Strongly Disagrees to ½ the Agree Some/Disagree Some.) These findings led to a program design that includes activities to boost student motivation and improve school climate, recognizing that those factors influence school achievement. The Community Engagement results:

Student Opinions of School Climate and Connectedness



(b) Quality of the project design "... the extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs."

The *Accelerating Learning for Alaska Native Students (ALANS)* project was developed by a Consortium of the Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD), the Alaska Staff Development Network (ASDN), and the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP). Consortium members agreed at the onset of planning that all project objectives, strategies and activities would incorporate these three principles:

- **Evidence-Based** Practices and programs must meet the test of being research-based and have proven effectiveness with Alaska Native students.
- **Culturally Appropriate** Activities and materials will be culturally appropriate and relevant for 4,208 Yup'ik students and their parents.
- **Coordinated** All services and activities need to integrate and further on-going LKSD school improvement initiatives and efforts: we are not re-inventing the wheel!

ALANS will result in the full implementation of a powerful learning model, called the *Instructional Framework*, that will greatly improve the graduation rates and academic success of LKSD students. It does this by:

- Training principals in the skills they need to lead *Framework* implementation

- Training classroom teachers, support staff and classroom aides to organize and deliver instruction according to the *Framework*
- Mobilizing Native Organizations, the school staff, and Advisory School Boards to construct stronger school connections for students, parents and the community.

What is The Instructional Framework? A few years ago LKSD began to notice that test scores had flatlined, student attendance was down and higher-performing students were leaving us for urban districts. They drilled down on this information and found that the then-adopted instructional model, while it had positive features, too often resulted in teaching time being spent on small, discrete skills. Students were stuck in a remedial rut with large numbers not being taught at grade level, and parents were frustrated because their children seemed to always be so far behind.^v A year-long district-wide effort to address these shortcomings was undertaken, resulting in the *Instructional Framework*.

The *Instructional Framework* ('*Framework*' for short) is a research-based model to inform and guide classroom instruction^{vi}. The *Framework*, adopted for use district-wide:

- begins with grade level appropriate instruction and keeps moving onwards and upwards as rapidly as possible
- provides a curriculum that spirals, with opportunities to learn skills at multiple points and gives teachers and students rich and varied materials
- cuts to the essential core of instruction; uses those teaching techniques and classroom management approaches that research has shown, when implemented with fidelity by all teachers in a school, result in predictable and significant student progress
- where skills gaps exist –there's no wishing that away– uses strategies that accurately pinpoint the skills needing help, identifies multiple, individual interventions for the child,

provides many engaging resources (videos, the web, Elders, the community) and gives extra time to learn the skills

- emphasizes school connectedness', with parents, local village Advisory School Boards and the community helping teachers and principals engage and motivate students.

Accelerating Learning for Alaska Native Students provides the ongoing training and technical assistance necessary to fully implement the *Framework* in all of LKSD’s classrooms by the end of three years. *ALANS* has these goals and objectives:

Goals	Objectives
<p>Goal 1: Improve the Success of Alaska Native Students.</p>	<p>Objective 1.1 Increase the percentage of Native students who meet or exceed Alaska proficiency standards in mathematics, reading and science. (Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Measure 1.3) 10% over 3 years.</p> <p>Objective 1.2 Decrease the dropout rate of Alaska Native middle and high school students. (GPRA Measure 1.1) 10% over three years</p>
<p>Goal 2: Improve LKSD Instructional Leadership and Classroom Instruction</p>	<p>Objective 2.1 Implement the <i>Instructional Framework</i> in all 27 LKSD Schools.</p> <p>Objective 2.2 Provide 5 district office administrators and 32 school principals with the knowledge and skills necessary to lead <i>Framework</i> implementation.</p> <p>Objective 2.3 Provide 12 Instructional Coaches and Curriculum Specialists, 292 teachers, 110 paraprofessionals, and 60 Associate Teachers of Yup'ik the skills and knowledge needed to use <i>Frameworks</i>–related programs and methods effectively.</p> <p>Objective 2.4 Include competencies necessary to use the <i>Framework</i> in the classroom in the LKSD Teacher Evaluation Process.</p>
<p>Goal 3: Improve School Climate and Connectedness</p>	<p>Objective 3.1 Advisory School Boards (all 27 schools) will help build student aspirations and motivations for school success.</p> <p>Objective 3.2 The Association of Village Council Presidents will be a lead partner in activities to improve school climate.</p>

There are three major project components. The first creates the leadership skills necessary to fully implement the *Framework* in LKSD schools, the second provides the instructional programs and classroom management skills teachers need to use the *Framework* in their classrooms, and the third improves school climate and connectedness for academic gains.

Component I: Creating A Cadre of *Framework* Implementation Leaders

School principals are essential leaders in school reform, as they alone have the responsibility, authority and position to lead school-wide improvement. The purpose of *ALANS* principal training is to a) familiarize them with the *Framework's* research-based instructional elements (such as *Response to Instruction* academic and behavior supports, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), Core Instruction, Academic Literacy, etc.) and how they are used in the classroom, b) build skills and strategies for the effective and swift implementation of the *Framework* in schools, and c) conduct teacher evaluations that include gauging a teacher's effectiveness in use of the *Framework*.

Implementation training is to be guided by exemplary principal training resources. While some of the content overlaps, each has its own unique contribution to make in giving LKSD principals the skills they need to lead *Framework* implementation.

The *Handbook on Effective Implementation of School Improvement Grants*^{vii} was developed for the Federal Department of Education to bolster the effective implementation of the models and strategies outlined in the 2010 School Improvement Grant (SIG) program. Since nine of LKSD's 27 schools are SIG eligible schools^{viii} (i.e., 'persistently lowest-achieving'), and most of the remaining ones did not meet AYP^{ix} in 2010–2011, it makes sense to use materials tailored to challenging schools. The *Handbook* materials are especially strong in the area of documenting and reporting progress to inform practice. That is, what data should be collected that indicates student, classroom and school-wide progress, how can it be collected and reported, and how can school teams analyze the data and use it to improve practice? Complementing the *Handbook* is the *School Leaders' Implementation Field Guide: Designing and Supporting High-Performance Teams*. This is a practical guide to leadership skills principals need to improve individual and organizational performance, and written by two of the *ALANS* project consultants, Gary Whiteley and Lexi Domaradzki. Enough background is given so concepts can be

understood, followed by useful, real-school activities. The *Field Guide* contains many tools, resources and simulations where principals can practice leadership strategies and language, either as a team of principals and/or with an experienced 'Coach'. Finally, The Center on Innovation & Improvement's *School Turnarounds: Leader Actions and Results for Principals in Rapid Improvement, Turnaround, and Transformational Situations* is tailored to the 9 persistently lowest-achieving schools. It promotes leadership strategies for the most heavily impacted district schools through a process that includes identifying essential core problems, solution identification, and solution implementation. *School Turnarounds* 'Rapid Improvement Leaders' have skills in areas of Initial Analysis and Problem Solving, laser-like Driving for Results, Influencing Inside and Outside School, and ability to Measure, Report and Improve.^x This resource is geared towards 'triage' situations, where a few critical moves must be instituted perfectly and swiftly to revive the most needy of schools. Frankly, only after this is done can further improvements be made.

The above training complements existing LKSD leadership development efforts. For example, Shared Leadership (AKA Collaborative Leadership) is an exemplary practice regularly used in LKSD that is effecting lasting improvements in the way schools run. *ALANS* Shared Leadership training for principals will give them even more skills in building a school culture where all staff have a voice in determining school programs, ground rules and understandings about process and checks and balances are clear, and contributing teachers are kept energized and safe from petty criticism.

Principals and district staff will also upgrade the teacher evaluation process to ensure inclusion of competencies needed to effectively implement the *Framework*, and revise the associated LKSD principal observation of practice tool to reflect this. A useful document here is the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funded study on Measures of Effective Teaching (MET),

called *Gathering Feedback for Teaching: Combining High-Quality Observations with Student Surveys and Achievement*.^{xi} A revised principal observation document will (1) focus the LKSD principals' attention on specific aspects of teaching practice that support the *Framework*, and (2) establish common evidentiary standards for rating each aspect, including student achievement.

We see *ALANS* principal training as being done in a mix of large group, small group and individual settings. The small groups can be determined by need (i.e., all persistently–lowest achieving schools), region (upriver, downriver, etc.) or even self-selection ('schools like us', or 'people we work best with'). In all settings we will share knowledge/best practices and model and practice implementation skills. Group training is followed by individual visits (on–site, videoconference and/or Skype) by an *ALANS* Coach (Whiteley, Domaradzki, LKSD Instructional Coaches, etc.) for calibrating and troubleshooting. In addition to using superior training materials, such as the MET strategies on DVD and the award–winning *Teachscape* teacher observation system^{xii}, the Coaches practice with principals on using the right language when talking practice with teachers, language stems for deeper probing, etc.

The lead **Component I** trainers will be Dr. Gary Whiteley, Gary Danielson, and Lexi Domaradzki (focus: leadership skills for all principals, coaching), Hank Overturf (focus: Shared Leadership) and Dr. Al Bertoni (focus leadership skills for the lowest achieving schools.)

Component II: Using the *Framework* for Student Success: Building Teacher Capacity

ALANS will train teachers in a) the *Frameworks* instructional model (Purpose, Classroom Environment and Culture, Student Engagement, Curriculum and Pedagogy, Assessment) b) those instructional programs and methods used within it, such as StoryTown Reading, *Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI)*, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), Core Instruction, etc., and c) how all those elements can be used collectively to focus and accelerate student learning.

For example, one relatively new program to LKSD, critical to the *Instructional Framework*, is that of the research-based *Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI)*. *RTI* is a student progress management tool; it checks student progress frequently –about every one to three weeks– and then, when deficiencies are apparent, makes adjustments in the multiple instructional approach, materials and/or support options. *RTI* works with a continuum of learners, from those who make steady progress and can go faster to those who are severely challenged and need intensive academic and/or behavioral interventions. Nationally about 80% of students are progressing well, 15% need some type of intervention and 5% need intensive intervention. Given the great learning needs of LKSD, the proportion is nearer to 60%-30%-10%. In the *RTI* system, every classroom day needs to have some combination of core instruction, re-instruction for those who are struggling with parts of the core, and assessments that pinpoint who is ready to move on and who needs more instruction on particular core content. Lexie Domaradzki, of REACH Education Consulting and lead facilitator of the Alaska State Birth to Graduation Literacy Plan, will provide *RTI* professional development along with Shelby Skaanes, also of REACH.

Attention also needs to be paid to specific programs and activities used to instruct Native students in the classroom. LKSD has very large numbers of students who speak a dialect called "village English ", which is a mixture of English and Native languages. This non-standard English can be a hindrance for learning, employment or advanced study. Over three years, *ALANS* trains every LKSD teacher and principal to use best practices with ELL students to improve spoken and written English literacy. For example, consultants such as Dr. Anita Archer of the Center On Responsible Education (CORE) will provide information and skills on "**Explicit Instruction**", a promising approach that provides an unambiguous and direct approach to teaching ELL students that includes both instructional design and delivery

procedures.^{xiii} Explicit instruction is characterized by a series of supports or scaffolds, whereby students are guided through the learning process with clear statements about the purpose and rationale for learning the new skill, concise explanations and demonstrations of the instructional target, and supported practice with feedback until independent mastery has been achieved. Dr. Deborah Short and others will help build "**Academic Language**" for ELL students, helping teachers deepen their understanding of the critical role language plays in their classroom.

Academic Language is the common language used in textbooks, in classrooms, and on tests, such as the words evaluation, contrast, compare, analyze, and validate. It is different in structure and vocabulary from the everyday spoken English of social interactions, and even students who speak English well have trouble comprehending the academic language used in high school.^{xiv}

When we combine the Explicit Instruction and Academic Language the student learns both an approach to constructing meaning from language, and the vocabulary to do so. And, LKSD is heavily invested in **Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)**, a research-validated model of lesson design and delivery that incorporates 30 known features of effective instruction. Additional SIOP training at an advanced level by Ms. Domaradzki and Ms. Skaanes will assist LKSD teachers in meeting the needs of their many ELL Native students.

Attention, too, must be paid to improving classroom management practices, as poor student behaviors create a barrier to learning which is just as significant as lagging academic ability.

With LKSD classrooms containing much higher-than-average numbers of Fetal Alcohol Effected children there are many students who need intensive intervention services, with fewer available supports. Training here will tap the expertise of Dr. Mark Shinn, Professor of School Psychology at National Louis University^{xv} and the *RTI*-linked *CHAMPS* program of Dr. Randy Sprick^{xvi} from the *Behavioral Center for Safe and Civil Schools*^{xvii}. The goal of *CHAMPS*

classroom management is to develop students who are responsible, motivated, and highly engaged in meaningful tasks.

Many LKSD paraprofessionals are directly involved in supporting academics inside and outside of the schools, like the 60 Associate Teachers of the Yupik' language and 110 classroom aides. A training strand for these valuable paraprofessionals will be set up, covering such topics as what *Frameworks* is, its programs (*RTI*, *SIOP*, etc.), and aides' roles in helping implement each program. The training for paraprofessionals will be delivered by a team consisting of the applicable training expert, a master classroom teacher and an exemplary para-professional. The expert provides the program knowledge, and the master teacher and paraprofessional demonstrate best practices for applying the training in a specialized support role.

LKSD also has nine part-time district-funded Curriculum Specialists and three full-time Instructional Coaches who can assist with *Frameworks* implementation and skills training. Presently they are assigned to specific schools and serve as resources to model classroom instruction, train teachers (new and experienced) on instructional programs like *SIOP*, and demonstrate core materials such as *StoryTown Reading*. *ALANS* will train this cadre in how to work with teachers and paraprofessionals to implement the *Framework* in the classroom. To recap: principals lead, monitor and troubleshoot implementation, consultants provide large and small group training, and the 12 Specialists/Coaches conduct very specific, job-embedded training for teachers, classroom aides and associate teachers. The benefits of including Specialists and Coaches are:

- We have more highly trained people working directly with students
- Training these people means building the capacity of LKSD to train in the *Framework*
- The positions have been funded by the district for years and will remain district funded; we are locking in sustainability and won't create a 'funding cliff' common to many grants.

The Alaska Staff Development Network (ASDN), Alaska's largest provider of professional development for educators, will direct this extensive professional development program, primarily using distance-delivered technology such as webinars and videoconferencing. The webinar format allows for real-time access for LKSD central office and every school. Participants can ask questions and see instructor videos and charts. The webinars will be recorded and put up on a project web site, hosted by ASDN, for later viewing by principals and teachers who could not access the scheduled program, for new teachers who start in later years of the project, and for dissemination to districts with similar needs for high-quality professional development. LKSD has an extensive technology infrastructure that includes sophisticated videoconferencing equipment in all 27 schools and very high bandwidth. Videoconferencing is most suitable for individual school workshops or workshop follow-up, plus individual coaching. A survey we did with school principals^{xviii} has all of them indicating they prefer a mix of on-site and distance delivered training, and they are very comfortable with using distance delivered training. These are important answers because *ALANS* relies so heavily on distance-delivered professional development.

In-person, face to face training complements distance delivered technology.^{xix} We will do in-person training at LKSD's all-staff Bethel in-service (three days; before school starts), at smaller workshops during the school year in Bethel where we bring people in from the schools, in the schools themselves at various times, and at a special Summer Institute. The Summer Institute will be voluntary but scheduled to coincide with when LKSD teachers leave for the school year to promote attendance. Tuition reimbursement and small stipends will be offered to promote turnout. ASDN will coordinate both the distance delivered training and school year/summer in person professional development by consultants and experts.

A feature of *ALANS* that we believe is forward-thinking is establishing a video-conferencing link directly between lead trainers' home bases, LKSD district office, and the schools. The technology is available to place entry-level videoconferencing equipment in the home offices of two of the most heavily used experts, Dr. Gary Whiteley and Lexi Domaradzki. This enables them to deliver training to an entire school staff without travelling to LKSD videoconferencing studios and will allow for more training sessions at a reduced cost. Skype is suitable for one-on-one training and we will use that when appropriate.

Component III: Accelerating Success Through A Positive School Climate

Implementing the *Framework* with its effective instructional components is by itself not enough to drive student achievement gains. LKSD firmly believes, and promotes as part of its district culture, that student, staff and community aspirations strongly influence students' personal, social, physical and academic growth. Students with affirmative outlooks prosper in school, on the schoolyard and in the village.

A promising national program to build student motivation, improve school climate and more closely connect students, the school staff and the community is called *Aspirations*. This model comes from the *Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations*, and it will address some of the school

climate deficiencies revealed in the survey conducted in 2011.^{xx} ^{xxi} The

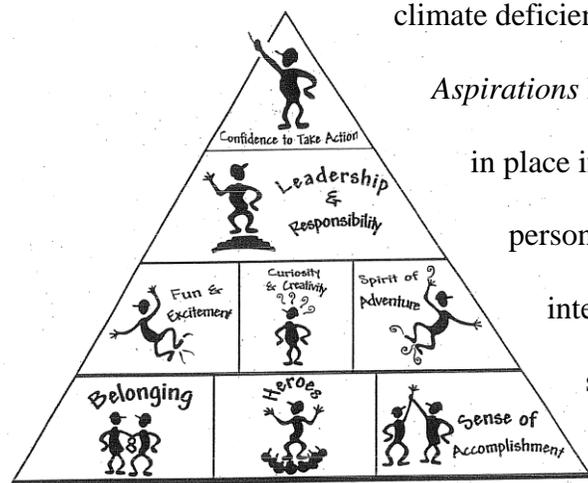
Aspirations Model, seen to the left, has 8 Conditions that need to be

in place if students are to strive for, and fulfill, their academic, personal and social promise. Through this project LKSD

intends to train district staff, (principals, teachers, aides)^{xxii},

selected AVCP staff and Advisory School Boards in the

Aspirations model to facilitate its implementation



with students.

Training will take place over three years. First, one current *Aspirations* trainer working with our district and one AVCP representative will be certified as *Aspiration* 'Trainers of Trainers' by the Quaglia Institute. They will then train all district administrators, Curriculum Specialists and Instructional Coaches in the program, believing that training in these 8 Conditions can be used as another type of framework to improve school climate and connectedness. The next year we'll take this a step further, using our two experienced LKSD/AVCP trainers and district office staff to train school principals and staff in using the *Aspirations* model with students. This second year is where *Aspirations* begins to influence the success of our academic program efforts. The third year we see moving past the school walls and picking up powerful community allies in our efforts to improve school climate and connectedness. Here we will train our 27 Advisory School Boards (ASBs) in *Aspirations*, preparing them to help us develop and maintain positive strivings in our students, and communicate to parents why this is important and what they can do to help. We look forward to the 135 ASB members being active partners, taking them through a process of identifying what exists in their school and village that promotes the 8 Conditions and what does not. From there, each ASB will undertake a project to enhance the 8 Conditions that are present and add them if they are not, the goal being to grow and support activities that result in positive student engagement and connection to schools. The Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) has a major role to play in the implementation of Component III due to their existing positive presence in every community, intimate knowledge of the barriers to Native engagement in a primarily Western education system, and extensive communications channels.

Training Schedule for All Components Because the LKSD has accomplished the foundation work to familiarize all staff with the *Framework* and its associated elements (*RTI*, *SIOP*, etc.) and have their buy-in, the specialized skills training can begin the very first year for all 27 schools. The following chart describes our training schedule for project participants:

Accelerating Learning for Alaska Native Students (ALANS) Professional Development Plan

Audience	Subject	Provider
District Office & Principals	Effective Leadership in Low Achieving Schools (8 hrs.)**	Baldwin, Walker, Whiteley, Bertani
	Measures of Effective Teaching: Combining High-Quality Observations with Student Surveys and Achievement <i>ALANS</i> (24 hrs.)	Whiteley, Bertani, Curran, Danielson
Principals, District Office, Principals in Training.	Frameworks This Year: What's New; What To Emphasize This Year (8 hrs.)	Baldwin, Walker
	Teacher Evaluation: <i>Framework</i> Implementation, Use, and Teacher Observation (8 hrs.)	Whiteley, Overturf,
	Effective Implementation: Shared Leadership, Importance of Fidelity; Implementation Challenges; Principal Support (24 hrs.)	Walker, Whiteley, Overturf
	Key Instructional Programs: What Leaders Need to Know About <i>RTI</i> , <i>RTI</i> Behavioral Support (CHAMPS), Explicit Instruction, Academic Language, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) (24 hrs)	Domaradzki, Shinn Short, Sprick, Archer, Skaanes
Teachers, Curriculum Specialists, Instructional Coaches, Aides & Advisory Teachers	<i>Framework</i> Intro (for new teachers) & Update (for all) (3 hrs.)	Walker, Domaradzki
	Shared Leadership: For Teachers on Shared Leadership Teams in schools (12 hrs.)	Whiteley, Overturf, Walker
	Effective Programs (all): 5 Elements of Core Instruction; Explicit Instruction; <i>RTI</i> ; <i>RTI</i> Behavioral Support (CHAMPS); Academic Language; StoryTown Reading, etc. (60 hrs.)	Domaradzki, Shinn Short, Sprick, Archer, Skaanes
	Mentoring and Coaching Teachers (Specialists & Coaches): Job–embedded Training; Mentoring Skills; Using Instructional Checklists to Improve Practice (96)	Domaradzki, Skannes
	(<i>Aide Specific</i>) <i>Framework</i> Elements; Supporting Classroom Implementation; Extending Learning; Tutoring Best Practices; Informal Assessment; Keeping Progress Records (96 hrs.)	Walker, Domaradzki, Teacher, Aide
Adv. Boards, Principals, District Office, Teachers	<i>Aspirations</i> Model: What It Is, Building School Connectedness; How Parents and the Community Can Help; Feedback Channels to School and District Staff; Projects to Improve School Climate and Connectedness. (48 hrs.)	Baldwin, Overturf, Kuhns, AVCP Trainer

** Professional development hours over three project years. Persistently Lowest–Achieving Schools will receive additional hours each year.

(c) Quality of the management plan (i) *The Secretary considers... clearly defined responsibilities, timeliness, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks...*"

Project Timelines and Activities

Years	Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Outcomes and Anticipated Result
Aug 2012	Final grant paperwork to US DOE	Project Director	Permission to Proceed obtained
October 2012	Review Consortium Agreements Issue sub-awards	Project Director	Responsibilities and expectations formalized among partners
July/Aug 2012	Hire Project Staff – LKSD .5 Project Specialist.	LKSD Supt.	LKSD has capacity to swiftly match training to schools and staff, distribute training materials, collect feedback for Evaluators, etc.
4x a year each year	Consortium Leadership Team meets to discuss project goals, general activities and coordination w/LKSD and school improvement plans (e.g., AYP)	Consortium Leadership Team (see p. 19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project activities meet LKSD district and school-level needs • All stakeholders informed and up-to-date • Project problems discussed and addressed • Coordinated efforts result in more efficient and effective project
1x month each year	Project Management Team meets to plan specific project activities	Project Director	Project updates; activities identified, schedules developed, evaluation data shared
Every 2 months each year	Evaluator meets with Management Team to discuss evaluation plan, progress data	RGI Evaluator	Outcomes identified, evaluation instruments developed, data acquisition constantly in motion and monitored
2x month each year	Project Instructional Team	Project Director	Experts matched to district and school training needs; Trainers have thorough information to craft their professional development
October of each year	Annual presentation on Project goals and activities to Stakeholders	Project Director & LKSD Supt.	Key groups informed such as school board, AVCP Board, village councils, Advisory School Boards; support built
Years 1, 2 & 3	Components I, II, & III Professional Development	Project Director & LKSD Supt., Consultants	As stated in Objectives, p. 7, and in proposal Narrative.
Years 2 & 3	ALANS Introductory Training for all new teachers/principals	Project Director & LKSD Supt	Every year new staff are trained in LKSD's important, core initiative to improve learning; ensures fidelity of implementation
Year 3	Final Report and Grant Closeout	RGI & Director	Federal grant requirements met

(ii) "...adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement...".

Three project teams are used, (1) Leadership, (2) Management, and (3) Instructional, to organize and carry out the project with regular input and feedback from key participants.

The **Consortium Leadership Team** is composed of the ASDN Project Director (Tonsmeire), Project Manager (Blanc), Lead Evaluator (Ozuna), LKSD Superintendent (Baldwin), LKSD Asst. Supt. of Academic Programs (Walker), two school principals, AVCP representative and Advisory School Board representative. This Team meets four times a year by teleconference and works on the larger issues of project approach, coordination and cooperation, with the goal of making sure the project is on course and meeting *Framework* implementation needs. Schools have the opportunity at this meeting to lay out their specific professional development and service needs and ensures the project delivers tailored activities of high value. It is also the meeting where coordination with other on-going school improvement efforts and plans is accomplished. For example, 24 schools have not meet AYP and are operating under some form of School Improvement Plan.

A **Project Management Team** meets twice monthly by teleconference and crafts the who, what, when, where, how long, and how much details of project implementation. The Project Director chairs this group, attended by the Project Manager, Instructional Team, lead RGI evaluator, LKSD Supt., Asst. Supt of Academic Programs, Assistant Supt. for Student Services (Kuhns), LKSD principal representative, LKSD *ALANS* Local Project Specialist, and the lead ACVP representative. This group will use the *ALANS* timeline as a basis for project scheduling and activities and will make adjustments if necessary. The group also solves various problems, such as scheduling conflicts, and suggests and approves workshop and presenter training content.

It is an important group in scheduling as the district representative can identify such event barriers as spring basketball tournaments or subsistence hunts for caribou and whales.

The Project Director leads an **Instructional Team**, which matches school and district needs to appropriate professional development content and content providers. Instructional Team members are those consultants named in this proposal who provide training to school staff, Project Director, Project Manager, LKSD Asst. Supt. of Academic Programs, a LKSD principal, and LKSD *ALANS* Project Specialist. At these teleconferences, experts are given information on what types of training the schools and district are asking for (e.g., language literacy, using assessments to drive instruction, behavior management), give their input into what training might fill those requests (e.g., Academic Language, SIOP, StoryTime Reading), and suggest how the training might be delivered (e.g., videoconference, on site, teleconference, 2 days or 3 days). The Project Director uses this Instructional Team to match district/school needs to the *ALANS* consultants (Appendix A, pp. 12–28), and further, to coordinate consultant work to ensure efficiency and accountability. This Team meets twice monthly by teleconference for these types of discussions, and individually with the Project Director as needed.

(d) Adequacy of resources "...extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits."

ALANS will serve 4,208 K–12 students and about 440 instructional staff in the BSSD at a Year 1 cost of [REDACTED]. This works out to a per-pupil expenditure of [REDACTED] per student. We can compare our Year 1 costs on a per pupil basis to similar ANE Year 1 program awards that include large amounts of professional development aimed at improving student academics. In 2009, Lake and Peninsula School District wrote a project (*Birth to Graduation Project*, S356A090070) implementing *Response to Intervention (RTI)* protocols for K-8 students; language arts and math skills remediation for high school students; and literacy training for teachers. The [REDACTED]

project serves 480 children, at a Year 1 cost of [REDACTED] per student. In the 2011 grant round Anchorage School District was awarded funds for a project (*Project Ki'l-S356A110040*) building school success for Native boys through an emphasis on social-emotional learning (SEL – similar to our *Aspirations* model) and academic supports. The first year they are serving 450 PK–5 students and 30 teachers at a cost of [REDACTED] which works out to [REDACTED] per student. *ALANS* implements a promising instructional model in all its schools, trains every staffperson (district administrators, teachers, principals, aides), affects every child, and achieves sustainability for [REDACTED] per student per year, much less than similar projects.

(ii) *The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project...*

(Note: The Consortium Agreement in Appendix B, pp. 29–32) expands on commitments.)

LKSD is making significant contributions to this project in three areas: professional development time and planning, staff assigned to project activities, and technology. LKSD allocates 13 days a year to professional development for all staff. The district is directing that 7 of those days be tied to the *ALANS* project (e.g., *RTI* training), and anticipates that schools will request even more training. New teachers have an additional five paid days of training and two or more of those days will be dedicated to *ALANS*–related content, such as Core Instruction and *RTI*. Implementation of the *Framework* is a top district priority. LKSD is directing that the principals lead this effort in their schools, that teacher evaluations include competencies necessary to implement the *Framework* (and thus raise student achievement), that district support staff (such as Instructional Coaches and Curriculum Coordinators) train school staff on key programs within the *Framework* (*RTI*, *SIOP*, etc.), and that support staff such as classroom aides and Yupik' language teachers gain instructional skills they can use with students in small group and individual settings. LKSD has an extensive videoconferencing capability, with systems in

all schools and three complete home–base studios at Central Office. The District will extensively employ these training systems and the staff needed to operate and maintain them to deliver *ALANS* project activities. **The Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)** is the regional non-profit corporation authorized by tribal resolution to provide services to Native people throughout the Lower Kuskokwim region. AVCP administers programs in the areas of Community Services, Education, Employment & Training, Children & Family Services, and Natural Resources for the fifty-six (56) federally recognized tribes in the area, and operates in all 22 villages with project schools. AVCP places a high priority on youth leadership and education. The director of the **Alaska Staff Development Network (ASDN)** Director, will serve as *ALANS* Project Director due to that organization's extensive distance–delivered professional development background. He will be assisted by Project Manager Kathy Blanc and Distance Learning Specialist Troy Choquette. ASDN is Alaska's largest provider of professional development and has built an extensive distance–delivery infrastructure that brings scores of highly–qualified, national–level instructors to very isolated schools. In 2011, more than 4,000 educators statewide enrolled in ASDN-sponsored events, including 25 face-to-face trainings, 53 distance education courses and 45 webinars. Mr. Tonsmeire has an extensive federal grants management track record with seven large, distance–delivered rural school improvement projects (such as the *Alaska Native Student Success Project* (84.356A), and the [REDACTED] Gates Foundation *Alaska Quality Schools Coalition Program*.

(iii) *The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project.*

Our budget includes items reasonably expected to be found in professional development projects, such personnel costs for project management, consultants/experts to deliver professional development, and costs for staff to access training, such as travel, communications (videoconferencing, teleconference, etc.) and stipends. ASDN has considerable experience in

conducting similar projects (p. 22) so they have a solid understanding of training requirements and the associated budget needs. Much of this background is with training for rural, isolated schools and this is also reflected in included budget items and costs. Assigned to this project are 1.5 people, which indicates a serious commitment. Finally, ASDN's previous projects have required a minimum of budget adjustments and been completed on time and within budget.

(e) Quality of project evaluation (10 points).

Introduction and Overview The project's evaluation design serves both formative and summative evaluation purposes and corresponds with Objectives and Performance Measures included in Project Design Section, p. 7. The Consortium has jointly developed this evaluation design and recognizes the importance of a strong evaluation. Independent Evaluators from RGI Research Corporation will conduct the program evaluation. RGI evaluators will also assist the ALANS Director prepare USDE Annual Performance Reports and the Final Evaluation Report at the project's conclusion.

1. The Formative or Process Evaluation Component provides ongoing feedback to the project's Management Team addressing attainment of benchmarks and early identification of any emerging problems or issues associated with project activities. This component requires that process measures (i.e. benchmarks) relevant to each objective be clearly articulated and then routinely monitored by project evaluators. Driving questions are: **Were project activities successfully implemented with fidelity? If not, why not? What was done instead? Why? With what results?**

2. The Summative or Outcome Evaluation Component focuses on specific performance and outcome measures identified for each project objective during Consortium planning. (See page

7) Driving questions focus on outcomes associated with, or attributable to, different project activities: Were intended outcomes attained? **Were specific performance measures identified for each objective met in the prescribed timeframe?**

The Secretary's Two GPRA Performance Measures are also addressed in this component. Driving questions are: **Are students graduating on time and are they meeting or exceeding proficiency state academic standards in math, science and reading?**

Data Retrieval and Generation Specifics The Project evaluation will use data systems and technology to support ongoing decision making processes at the local service delivery and project administrative level. RGI Research Corporation has successfully developed and implemented a web-based Management and Evaluation Data Collection System (MEDC) for many of its other large federal grant evaluations. This data system will be adapted for use with this project. MEDC is accessed by project and school staff via a web-based interface. Service level data is continuously maintained and accessed for specific or summary reports on hours/types of professional development provided, specific services provided, student academic data, teachers' skills learned, implementation of the *Framework*, along with other data elements.

Process data analysis will include descriptive statistics about the number of trainings provided, schools served, types of trainings provided, skills learned, implementation fidelity of the *Framework*, challenges faced and how they were overcome, and participation data at all project levels.

Ongoing Performance Feedback and Periodic Progress Assessment RGI evaluators will oversee all data collection activities on an ongoing basis to develop quarterly reports. These reports will be developed using a mixed method research approach. Quantitative and qualitative data will be included, and a case study approach used to document overall program development. The reports will also include assessments of the quality and completeness of services. As the quarterly reports are

developed, notable data points and findings will be shared at Management Team and Consortium Leadership Team meetings. These reports will include interpretations of the data, recommendations for program/service revisions, modifications or new capacity– building strategies as necessary. Ongoing generation of data-driven quarterly reports allows stakeholders to review results and collectively make program/ service modifications as necessary. Ad-hoc reports on special topics will also be developed as needed. Annual reports will be generated using the quarterly reports, to summarize grant activities, impacts and results each year. A final report will be generated at the completion of the project.

The following table includes, for each performance measure, the type of data to be collected, data/methods to be analyzed, instruments to be used, key benchmarks and timelines for the evaluation design.

Performance Measures	Data-Evidence Indicator	Analysis Methods	Key Benchmarks	Timelines
Improve the Success of Native Students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student math, science and reading state test scores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis • Comparison of test scores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students test scores increase by 5% annually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected annually • Assessment at end of school year
Improve LKSD Instructional Leadership and Classroom Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training agendas • Training materials developed • Participant's evaluation's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis • Implementation results • Participant evaluations analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of teachers trained each yr. • 100% of teachers will be trained by end of project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected at each training • End of year report develop
Improve School Climate and Connectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training agendas • Training materials developed • Participant's evaluation's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis • Implementation results • Participant evaluations analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of trainers trained each yr. • No. of principals, staff and ASB's trained each yr. • No. Climate Improvement. Projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected at each training • End of year report • Year 3 School Climate survey

ENDNOTES

- ⁱ S.G. Rivkin, E.A. Hanushek and J.F. Kain (1988). *Teachers, Schools and Academic Achievement*
- ⁱⁱ University of Alaska Fairbanks (Spring 2009). *The Educational Aspirations/Attainment Gap Among Rural Alaska Native Students*.
- ⁱⁱⁱ District devised using Survey Monkey. See at:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=a9jScmpsLQP8lx4iZlvJ8ILKvMj2mItvA2PwKbfGzE8_3d
- ^{iv} American Institute of Research for the Alaska Association of School Boards, *School Climate and Connectedness Survey Report*, Lower Kuskokwim School District, 2011. P. 6
- ^v Ibid, p. 89
- ^{vi} Based on the *5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning*, University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership, College of Education. Seattle, Washington. At <http://www.k-12leadership.org/services/5-dimensions>. In short, the five elements are Purpose, Classroom Environment and Culture, Student Engagement, Curriculum and Pedagogy, and Assessment.
- ^{vii} Perlman, L., Redding, S., Eds., *Handbook on Effective Implementation of School Improvement Grants*, Center on Innovation & Improvement, Revised 1/2011
- ^{viii} <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>
- ^{ix} http://www.eed.state.ak.us/AYP/2011/List_of_Schools_Not_Meeting_by_District.pdf
- ^x Brinson, D., Kowal J., and Hassel B., *School Turnarounds – Actions and Results*, Public Impact for the Center on Innovation & Improvement, 2008.
- ^{xi} Thomas J. Kane, T., Staiger, D., et.al., *Gathering Feedback for Teaching: Combining High-Quality Observations with Student Surveys and Achievement Gains*, produced for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, January, 2012. (http://www.metproject.org/downloads/MET_Gathering_Feedback_Practioner_Brief.pdf)
- ^{xii} *Teachscape* is a leader in delivering professional learning content, innovative tools, and expert services to improve teaching practice, mostly on–line. It was awarded three 2012 Best Educational Software Awards (BESSIE Awards) from The ComputED Gazette. The awards program, now in its eighteenth year, recognized three of the *Teachscape* materials. See <http://www.teachscape.com/about/press-releases/2012/teachscape-wins-three-2012-bessie-awards.html>.
- ^{xiii} Ziemer–Andrews, K., The Effects of Implicit and Explicit Instruction on Simple and Complex Grammatical Structures for Adult English Language Learners, *Teaching English As A Second Language E–Journal*, Volume 11, Number 2, September 2007.
- ^{xiv} An excellent summary of this research can be found in Kim, J. S., White, C.E. (May, 2009). "Putting the Pieces of the Puzzle Together: How Systematic Vocabulary Instruction and Expanded Learning Time Can Address the Literacy Gap." Center for American Progress, Harvard Graduate School of Education. At http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/05/pdf/elt_may09.pdf
- ^{xv} http://web.me.com/markshinn/Mark_Shinn_Professional_and_Personal_Webpage/Homepage.html
- ^{xvi} *CHAMPS: A Proactive and Positive Approach to Classroom Management*, 2nd ed. (Sprick, 2009), and *Discipline in the Secondary Classroom: A Positive Approach to Behavior Management for Grades 9–12*, 2nd ed. (Sprick, 2006).
- ^{xvii} http://www.safeandcivilschools.com/research/professional_judgment.php
- ^{xviii} Ibid, https://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=a9jScmpsLQP8lx4iZlvJ8ILKvMj2mItvA2PwKbfGzE8_3d
- ^{xix} Quillen, I., *E-learning Delivery Debated*, Education Week, (2010), and Toch, T. *In an Era of Online Learning, Schools Still Matter*, Phi Delta Kappan, (2010). 91(7), 72-73.
- ^{xx} Information at the Quaglia <http://www.qisa.org/>
- ^{xxi} American Institute of Research for the Alaska Association of School Boards, *School Climate and Connectedness Survey Report*, Lower Kuskokwim School District, 2011
- ^{xxii} The National Association of Elementary School Principals validated and published a full manual on applying Aspirations at the staff level a few years ago. At <http://myvoice.pearsonfoundation.org/about/research>