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NORTH SLOPE EDUCATORS CELEBRATE A YEAR OF NUNAAQQIURAT TUMITCHIAŊIT
March 20, 2023, Utqiagvik, AK

Nunaqqiurat Tumitchianjit, New Tracks for our Communities, met in plenary session in January to continue their work on atauchimutka, working together as one.

Nunaqqiurat Tumitchianjit, a quadrilateral board composed of the leadership of the North Slope Borough (NSB), the North Slope Borough School District (NSBSD), Ilisagvik College, and the Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope (ICAS) began meeting in January of 2022. The goal of the collaboration is to maximize equity in educational, career, and technical training opportunities across the North Slope.

The January 2023, meeting included the complete steering committee and the five subcommittees focused on Iñupiat Education, Broadband and Infrastructure, Student Outcomes, the Qatqiññaagvit Program for career exploration, and the Harry Brower, Jr. Technical Training Center. Each subcommittee reported on progress made over the last year and established priorities for moving forward.

Particular attention was paid to the importance of reinstituting immersion language teaching in the school district, broadband equity, and the idea of village Qargi Academies as a conduit for traditional knowledge. Most importantly, the participants continued to break down silos and improve communication among the entities. As Tennessee Judkins from the NSBSD said, “Pilujaatugut,” we are doing good!

Another focus was carrying on the work of elder leaders and fostering the next generation of leaders committed to continuing to promote Iñupiat culture and language. Heather Dingman, representing the Ilisagvik College Board of Trustees, closed by saying, “Kaman qaqtuq savaaqsi ikuksraupak. Aarigaa tumitchiaq savaqatigiik-suni. Savautisaqlugi nutuqauravut.” The work over this past week is impressive. I see a positive path moving forward and commitment to action. I look forward to the continued work together from this group and leadership for our youth.

Official copies of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in both Iñupiaq and English were signed by the members of the steering committee. Ceremonial copies, printed large and hung on the wall, were signed by all the attendees. The MOA pledged to “improve success and equity for residents of all ages while centering Iñupiaq language, culture, and traditional values in defining what success means to Nunaqqiurat Tumitchianjit and all the people of the North Slope.”

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