

NWABSD



Atautchikun Iñuunialiptigun

Through Our Way of Life Together as One

Terri Walker, Superintendent

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Serving the communities of:

Ambler • Buckland • Deering • Kiana • Kivalina • Kobuk
Kotzebue • Noatak • Noorvik • Selawik • Shungnak

Rural Challenges

1. Cost of Operations

- Cost of Living
- Operations & Maintenance

2. Staff Shortages

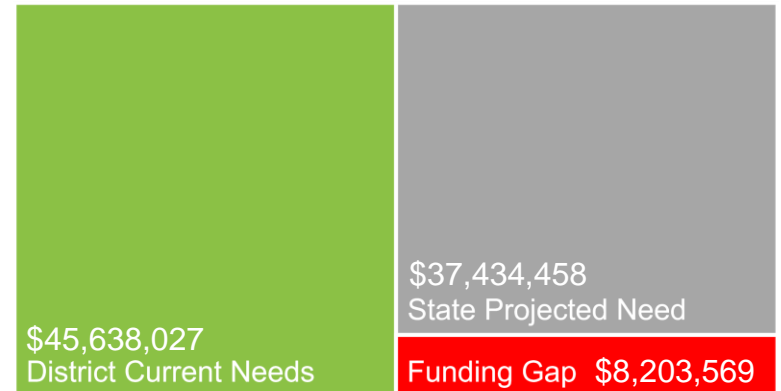
- Recruiting & Retention

3. Broadband Capacity and Affordability

4. Other Challenges

- Public Safety
- Behavioral Health Supports
- Workforce Development

NWABSD State Funding Needs



Demographics

PK-12 Students	1917
Classified Staff	171
Certified Staff	212
Certified Vacancies	44
Alaska Native	92%
Migrant Education	30%
English Language Learners	2%
Special Education	12%
Free & Reduced Meals	100%
Graduation Rate FY22	67%
Drop-out Rate FY22	8%
FY22 State Foundation Funds	\$37M
FY22 Grant Funds	\$16M



Cost of Living

as presented by NWALT December 2022



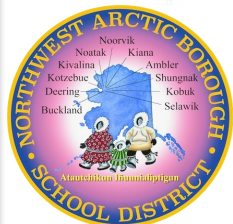
High cost of living



Unaffordable housing



Lack of public safety

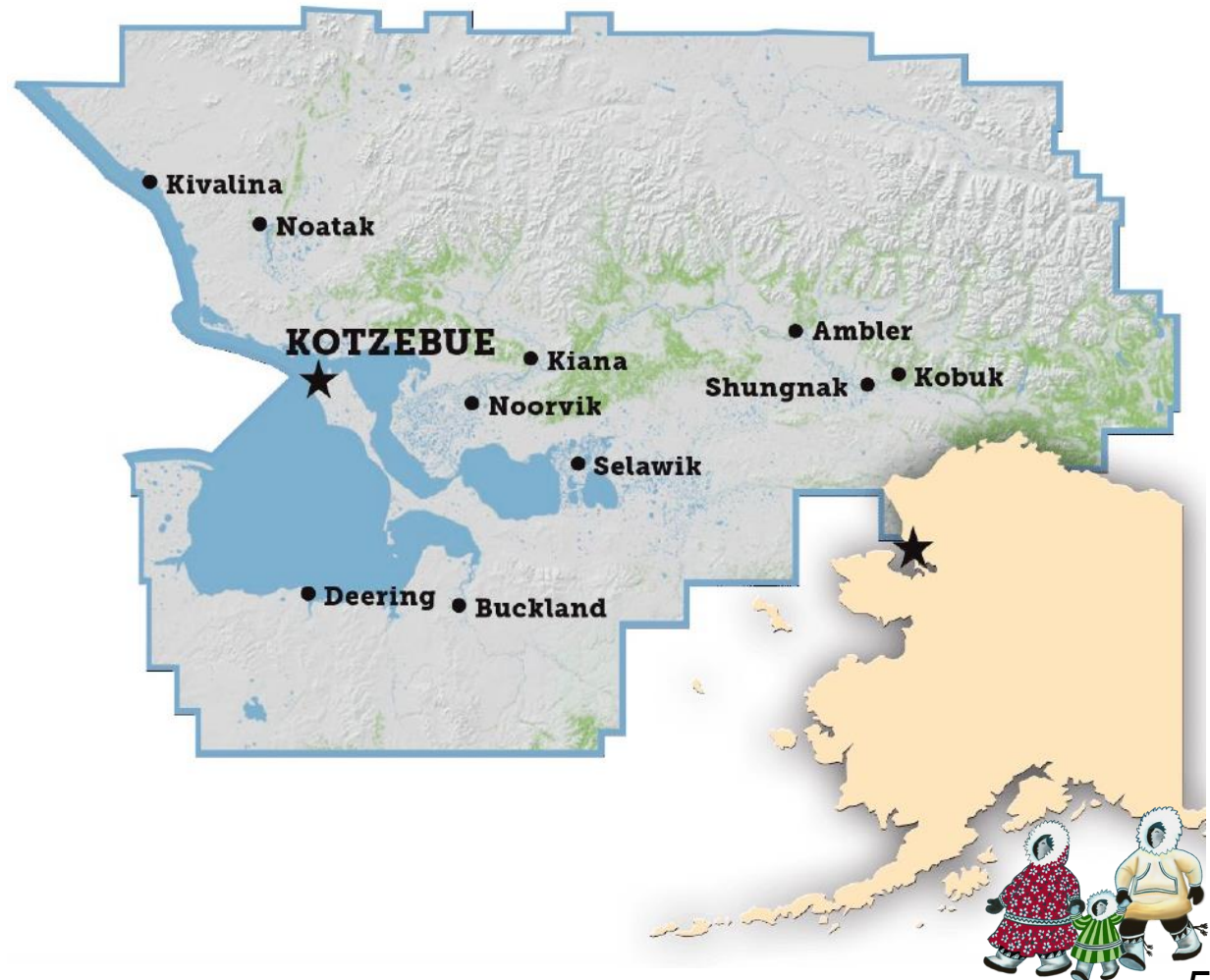


Community	Gasoline \$/gal.	Diesel \$/gal.
Ambler	\$14.42	\$14.42
Buckland	\$7.65	\$7.66
Deering	\$5.50	\$5.20
Kiana	\$7.98	\$7.73
Kivalina	\$6.52	\$6.52
Kobuk	\$13.91	\$15.45
Kotzebue	\$7.80	\$7.97
Noatak	\$13.77	\$13.77
Noorvik	\$9.00	\$7.73
Selawik	\$6.39	\$7.72
Shungnak	\$14.03	\$15.05

Cost of Living

continued

1. Travel within the region
2. Shipping
3. Emergency travel



Cost of Living Examples

- One-bedroom apartment – \$1800/mo (plus utilities)
- Two-bedroom apartment – \$2800/mo (plus utilities)
- Gallon of Milk - \$10 - \$30 (depending where you live in the region)
- Diapers - \$95 (116 pk)
- Candy bar - \$3.50
- Case of bottled water - \$38-\$50 (\$6.99 at Costco in Anchorage)
- Tissue 4 pack - 10.29
- Eggs dozen - 9.59



Operations & Maintenance

With ten remote villages in the district spread out over 39,000 square miles and three schools in Kotzebue, maintaining the schools has numerous hurdles.

1. Hiring skilled, capable people that want to work, and being able to keep them.
 - a) Electricians, plumbers, carpenters, and heating controls technicians
 - b) Eight maintenance staff currently service the entire District with one electrician and one plumber
2. Proper equipment and acquiring parts for old equipment to keep it running
 - a) The cost to replace is too expensive
 - b) Majority of our schools are old and parts are only found on eBay; if we can find them at all
3. Cost of electricity and fuel to run the schools and coordinate the delivery of fuel to sites.
4. Cost of Operations & Maintenance is 24% of our District's general operating fund budget



Operations & Maintenance



In 2022, the Governor vetoed \$63M of \$100M for School Major Maintenance. No NWABSD capital projects (roofs, HVAC, etc.) were funded.

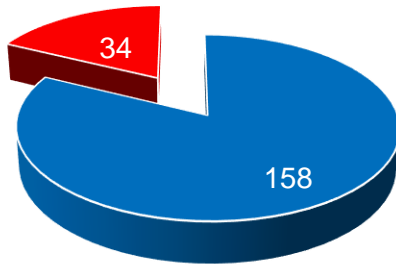
The District has the following needs:

- 1) **June Nelson Elementary Roof:** Needs to be replaced as it is 20 years past its useful life (2000).
- 2) **Buckland K-12 School Exterior and Teacher Housing:** The school windows and roof are failing and the 50-year-old trailer houses are falling apart.
- 3) **Noorvik K-12 Roof Replacement and Heating Controls:** The roof has reached the end of its usefulness as of this year 2022. The heating controls have completely failed and no longer function.
- 4) **Kotzebue K-12 Heating Controls:** Kotzebue heating controls have failed and are outdated.
- 5) **Deering K-12 School:** A new school is needed on a new site due to erosion and safety concerns.



Recruiting & Retention

NWABSD Staffing



■ Teaching Positions
■ Teacher Vacancies

1. The NWABSD used to have a 20% turnover rate which was the expected average for all Alaskan rural districts. The turnover rate is now approximately 40%.
2. In 2000, the NWABSD had less than 10 unfilled positions and now in 2023, there are more than 45 unfilled positions.
3. Teacher's do not come to the NWABSD since the pay is not worth leaving their hometown or state:
 - a) District of Columbia - \$116,408, California - \$98,616, Washington - \$95,006, Alaska - \$75,860
4. Teachers do not stay in our district for a long time since Alaska's Tier III retirement system works like a 401K, which can follow the employee to another state.
5. School staff do not have a defined benefit pension are excluded from social security.
6. Teacher retention and recruitment is hindered greatly by expensive, low-quality, and availability of housing.



Broadband Capacity and Affordability

Students cannot achieve excellence in education without adequate and affordable internet access in their schools and homes.

1. The NWABSD has been awarded high dollar Emergency Connectivity Fund monies only until December 2023. After this point, our homes will once again be unable to afford the 10Mbps \$1,700/month internet.
2. Our schools have been throttled by high internet costs and the School Broadband Assistance Grant (BAG) that only funds 25Mbps per school which is well below the 2014 FCC goals for internet.
3. In addition, the NWABSD is working to create safer environments online and protect all student and staff data with cybersecurity plans and policies. E-Rate needs to continue to fund internet and hardware and add the data protection component of cybersecurity for sustainability.

In the long term, we urge Alaska's elected leaders to:

1. Address the existing inequity in broadband capacity and internet access for all Alaska students and families by lowering families' costs through the coordination of funded projects that improve community broadband infrastructure. High-cost projects get passed on as high costs to families and districts.
2. The School Broadband Assistance Grant (BAG) needs to be increased minimally to allow all our schools to get to the 2014 FCC Broadband goals.
3. E-Rate needs to support cybersecurity costs

In the short term, Legislature must quickly address the cost of Cybersecurity for the next E-Rate funding year. The State of Alaska USF (Universal Service Fund) should be reformed to help anchor institutions pay for broadband as other states are doing. Supporting broadband through Alaska USF monies could help to fund the increase School BAG mentioned above.



Other Challenges Affecting Our Students

1. Public Safety

- a) Lack of public safety personnel
- b) Reactive vs proactive
- c) Delayed response

2. Behavioral Health Supports

- a) Substance abuse
- b) Anxiety and depression
- c) Self-harm
- d) Lack of counseling services and supports

3. Workforce Development

- a) Post-pandemic recovery is slow
- b) Availability of local training for place committed people
- c) High turnover rates which lead to loss of experienced workforce
- d) Skilled workers leave the region and do not return



Questions?



Quyaana! Thank you!