

A graphic of a spotlight shining from the top left towards the center of the page.

Alaska School SPOTLIGHT

Mountain Village School

October 2023



This month DEED is highlighting Mountain Village School of the Lower Yukon School District. Their educators are taking advantage of DEED Professional Development, implementing new ELA curriculum and interventions, and working hard on family engagement.

In remote, rural Alaska, opportunities often arise to stop what one had been doing in order to do something better that just came up! A lazy Sunday afternoon nap may be put aside to take advantage of the offer to go by boat to pick the last berries of the season. Household cleaning is skipped in order to join a group of friends headed out by snow machine to go ice fishing. Ineffective teaching habits and practices are discarded to move toward Science of Reading best practices as know better, do better knowledge spreads across Alaska on the heels of the Alaska Reads Act passing. Mountain Village School in the Lower Yukon School District has the right mindset.

Over the last year, the Lower Yukon School District has begun making significant changes to meet the needs of students, families, and schools as they seek to increase reading success. At Mountain Village School, they work to make their school stand out as one that is focused on bringing sustainable change around reading. Principal Jeremy Miller shared, "While we acknowledge that we have a long journey ahead of us, DEED's encouragement means a great deal to all of us at Mountain Village School. Historically, we have faced challenges in achieving desirable reading proficiency scores, but we remain optimistic that the groundwork we are laying now will yield significant benefits for our students, their parents, and our wider community." Leadership matters, and there are not more true words spoken than recognizing challenges and rising to the occasion of removing barriers.

Mountain Village School's staff has been busy taking advantage of the many free offerings from DEED to support the work of improving reading proficiency. Teachers participated in DEED's ELA Curriculum Grant, they are taking the Keys to Beginning Reading course, as well as the LETRS course. Mountain Village educators Amanda Queenie and Hanna Rosales have been approved to be participants of DEED's new, rigorous Alaska K-12 Reading Specialist Endorsement Program. Mountain Village is implementing new ELA curriculum Amplify's CKLA, along with mCLASS DIBELS and mCLASS Interventions.



Our Mission: An excellent education for every student every day.



*3rd Annual Under-5 Fair
in Mountain Village*

One way that Mountain Village School is working hard to stand out from the rest is with monthly parent engagement activities. Their “Under-5 Fair” is a favorite, and their largest, parent engagement event to date. Please read this news report written just after the event in September:

3rd Annual “Under-5 Fair” in Mountain Village was a Success

The many, many hours of behind-the-scenes preparations over summer break came into fruition this weekend as we hosted our 3rd Annual “Under-5 Fair” here in Mountain Village on Saturday, September 23rd. With 32 adults, 45 children, and 9 vendors, this was the biggest fair to date. Although intended for children 0 to 5 years, we had children as old as 12 in attendance. The growing interest in this annual fall event brings us great joy and encouragement.

Our fair’s objective is to put ready-to-use tools for learning and early childhood development into the hands of as many families as possible. This year’s vendors helped to make that possible by donating everything from dental hygiene products to exercise equipment (beach balls and frisbees), from book sets to coloring supplies. Perhaps most exciting is that this year we welcomed our first “in person” vendors: Matt Hebard and Pam Walker with thread (<https://www.threadalaska.org/>), Alaska’s leading voice on child care. Matt and Pam took the theme of “Super Strivers, Super Readers” to its pinnacle and dressed as Mr. Incredible and Poison Ivy. Real, live superheroes alongside hourly book readings, cake walks, and raffles added just the right touches of excitement for young and young at heart! The youngest learners in Mountain Village thank all who helped to make our “Under 5 Fair” a resounding success.



*thread Alaska provides our first
in-person vendors.*

Meeting the new requirements of the Alaska Reads Act brings challenges. Hosting events that buoy the ability of families to develop early literacy and math skills at home brings positive changes. Principal Miller offers words that show dedication, commitment, and a positive mindset toward gaining reading proficiency for all students:

"Our collective commitment to our students' success, shared by our dedicated teachers, aides, custodians, office staff and parents, is the driving force behind our recent positive changes. We have strategically placed strong teachers to lead in specific areas, which has contributed to our efforts to turn the tide and steer our ship in the right direction. Our shared belief is unwavering: our students can and will make progress. We have implemented strategic approaches to instruction, hosted engaging parental engagement events, and fostered a school culture that places reading at the forefront of our educational priorities."

DEED looks forward to continued support and hearing more about progress in Mountain Village.



Super Strivers, Super Readers!