

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

Alaska School SPOTLIGHT

Unalaska School District

November 2023

This month DEED is highlighting Eagle's View Elementary in Unalaska City School District. Take a peek into their journey to reading proficiency through a two-year RTI/MTSS Refresh project with DEED, use of a Powerschool plug-in to help complete IRIP's, and how they've been awarded a DEED CLSD Supplemental Grant to use for after school support, decodable books, intervention materials, and literacy nights.

Eagle's View Elementary's Literacy Journey



Unalaska Elementary School

Unalaska City School District is proud to teach diverse learners from all over the world. Close to fifty percent of our population comes to us from multiple countries and cultures. This is what makes our community and classrooms so unique among rural Alaskan communities.

In August of 2022, faculty and staff of Eagle's View Elementary sat together to decide what we felt we needed most for our students to succeed. We talked about many things from after-school programs to different curriculum and even intervention options. We discussed the needs of multiple subgroups and the one thing that we all agreed on was the urgent need to get an RTI/MTSS program defined for our district and implemented. So, this became our focus.

With RTI/MTSS identified as our number one goal moving forward, we were able to apply for and become a part of the two-year DEED RTI/MTSS Refresh grant program. This helped us start to re-evaluate everything that was going well and what we needed to improve on. We used this opportunity and Alaska Science of Reading conferences to continue to learn, share, and grow together. We reached out to other districts to ask for help. Most importantly, teachers registered for courses to gain more knowledge and insight to what our kids need all on their own time.

As Reads Act legislation pushed us all to look deeper, we continued with the discussions both within our staff, and in the RTI/MTSS team professional development cohorts, to find what would most benefit our students but still be manageable for teachers and staff. Everyone on campus was and is still all in!



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

Then the opportunity to apply for the CLSD grant came up. We were excited at the prospect of being able to add to our ever-growing toolbox if awarded the funding. To our surprise, our grant was funded, and our focus continued to become clearer with each conversation. These funds in addition to the DEED RTI/MTSS Refresh grant, allowed us to move forward with providing after school tutoring, purchase decodable books and Amplify Intervention Kits, and host our literacy nights.

In year two, we returned with the intention of hitting the ground running with our RTI/MTSS plan. However, like many schools and districts out there we struggled to move forward with our plans with limited staff. We did not let obstacles get in our way. We worked to implement our plan and incorporate changes to our day. Our first change, was a 90 minute reading block across all grade levels. We restructured our 3rd and 4th grade classrooms to a departmentalized model allowing our teachers to focus on their strengths in order to deliver stronger instruction. We decided to add Heggerty into our Tier One instruction knowing that this would benefit all our students and begin to lay a stronger foundation of phonemic awareness across all grade levels. Amplify Intervention Kits were purchased to implement cross-grade level grouping for structured intervention time. We also devote more time to meeting the needs of our EL population through programs designed for language acquisition.



Two students on laptops.

Yes, we were ready to do it all! As we began implementation we met regarding data and used it when making all decisions. We have hit a few roadblocks. Lack of personnel to have smaller intervention groups was one of our biggest hurdles, along with how we accomplish managing the paperwork. After a few weeks of struggle, we came back together and rethought our plan. We evaluated what we could control, and what needed to be adjusted. This was a hard meeting, but probably one of the best. We decided to rethink the how we would meet our goals and focus on what we could control.

Letting ourselves off the hook for not having everything in place, allowed us freedom to brainstorm ways we could meet literacy goals in our school and move forward in a new direction. We discovered a PowerSchool plug-in for IRIP's that follows right along with DEED's template. This saves so much

time on paperwork. We moved from the cross-grade level intervention block to grade-level and are working on perfecting the process before attempting to go cross-grade level again. Our after-school tutoring program started that focuses on our students with the greatest needs in small groups. We ensure all staff internalize that they are a very important part of our students' learning. Even our custodian sits and reads with kids as seen in the photo at right!



Custodian reading to students.

We are hosting Literacy Nights and inviting multiple community partners to come to share their own love of reading with our kids.

The local library and radio station will partner with us on behalf of our students to talk about their favorite books to the community. We are growing and learning as educators to expand our own knowledge. But most importantly, WE are granting ourselves and each other the grace and mercy needed to continue to do what's best for our students, even when our best laid out plans don't succeed the first time.

Cheri Tremarco

Principal

Has your school proven great success increasing student reading proficiency utilizing evidence-based curriculum and materials? Do you have something you are really excited about as an outcome of a shift to Science of Reading best practices? We are interested in hearing what amazing things are happening in your school to positively impact student reading proficiency and achievement. Please submit your story to the e-mail below. You may be chosen as the next school spotlight in a future edition of the Alaska Reading Newsletter.

Please e-mail your submissions or questions to: Jenn.Miller@alaska.gov

You can view the 2022-2023 School Year Alaska School Spotlights here:

<https://education.alaska.gov/Alaska-Reading-Resources/alaska-school-spotlights>