

# Superintendent Search Service

## Application Deadline:

**March 25, 2024**

## Timeline

**Selection of Finalists:**  
April 11, 2024

**Interviews with the  
Board:**  
April 22-23, 2024

**Employment Begins:**  
July 1, 2024

## School Board

Willow Olson – Board  
Chair

Annie Weyiounanna –  
1st Vice Chair

Silas Paniptchuk – 2nd  
Vice Chair

Irene Navarro –  
Treasurer

Edward Jackson –  
Secretary

Jane Kava –  
Parliamentarian

Aaron Iworriagan

Milton Cheemuk

Stanley Tocktoo

Sam Mokiuk

Richard Elachik, Sr.

## Bering Strait School District

### *Unalakleet, Alaska*

The Bering Strait School District Board of Education is conducting a search for a Superintendent. The board is especially interested in applicants with outstanding school district leadership and communication skills. Candidates should also have had successful experiences in and be committed to being culturally responsive, especially with Alaska-Native or other indigenous cultures. The new Superintendent is expected to begin July 1, 2024.

A salary of \$150,000 with a multi-year contract is being offered to the successful candidate. A comprehensive benefits package includes affordable district rental housing and a moving stipend.

The Board of Education recognizes that selecting the Superintendent is one of the most important decisions it will make and is seeking a candidate that can help the Board meet its established mission and achieve quality education for all students in attendance.

The district's vision is that "All students are thriving and contributing culturally ~ locally ~ globally," through its mission of "Achieving excellence by nurturing the whole student in a culturally based learning community that is safe and supportive."

The Board is committed to a selection process that is fair and open to all qualified candidates. Priority will be given to candidates whose experience and background match the desired characteristics.

Candidates who do not possess a Type B administrative certificate with a superintendent endorsement in the State of Alaska should begin the process in order to be considered for this position.

### **Application Process**

The Association of Alaska School Boards uses an online application system. Please visit the Association's website at [aasb.org/superintendent/](https://aasb.org/superintendent/) for more information about this search and guidance on applying through the Revelus online application system ([aasb.myrevelus.com](https://aasb.myrevelus.com)).

Visit the Bering Strait School District website at <https://www.bssd.org/> for more details on this dynamic Alaskan school district.

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## Bering Strait School District Profile

### *Unalakleet, Alaska*

#### District Data

Communities: 15  
 District Facilities: 15  
 Students: 1,850  
 Administration: 30  
 Secondary Teachers: 60  
 Primary Teachers: 90  
 Instructional Staff: 200  
 Non-instructional Staff: 100

#### Budget

Current Budget: 91,476,502  
 Capital Budget: 1,039,043  
 Special Programs/Grants: 19,882,506  
 Operating Budget: 70,554,753

#### Revenue

Local: 1,781,922  
 State: 36,503,095  
 Federal: 32,269,726

#### Fund Balance

Reserved: 31,212,152  
 Unreserved: 3,538,557

Average Teacher Salary: \$70,000

The Bering Strait School District, in northwest Alaska, serves fifteen villages on the Seward Peninsula, on the eastern end of Norton Sound and on two islands in the Bering Sea. It borders the Arctic Circle, the International Dateline and the Yukon River. The district headquarters is in Unalakleet (400 mi NW of Anchorage) and serves 15 schools and a regional career and technical education facility (NACTEC).



Current enrollment is approximately 1800 students and is almost 100% Alaskan Native; Inupiat, Yup'ik or Siberian Yup'ik. Although the number of students served is relatively small, the area served covers approximately 80,000 square miles. All communities are accessible only by small bush aircraft, with the exception of Diomedea, which requires helicopter service most of the year. Many communities have a subsistence-based economy, and a portion of the student body speaking English as a second language.

#### Instructional Program

The Bering Strait School District is a recognized leader in implementing a standards-based program. The district is committed to providing a comprehensive instructional program to serve students' educational needs, while integrating students' cultural backgrounds along with local context. Each school has a Bilingual/Bicultural Department where local culture bearers teach native language, folklore, cultural practices, and values.

#### District Headquarters - Unalakleet

Unalakleet, serving as the Bering Strait School District headquarters, is a regional hub and is located on Norton Sound at the mouth of the Unalakleet River, 148 miles southeast of Nome and 395 miles northwest of Anchorage. Unalakleet has a sub-arctic climate with considerable maritime influences when Norton Sound is ice-free, usually from May to October. Winters are cold and dry. Average summer temperatures range 47 to 62; winter temperatures average -4 to 11. Extremes have been measured from -50 to 87. Precipitation averages 14 inches annually, with 41 inches of snow.

Unalakleet has a history of diverse cultures and trade activity. The local economy is the most active in Norton Sound, along with a traditional Unalagmiut Eskimo subsistence lifestyle. Fish, seal, caribou, moose and bear are utilized. The sale of alcohol is prohibited in the community,

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although importation and possession are allowed. Both commercial fishing and subsistence activities are major components of Unalakleet's economy.

Unalakleet has a State-owned 6,004' long by 150' wide paved runway, which recently underwent major improvements; and a paved strip that is 2,000' long and 80' wide. There are regular flights to Anchorage. Local overland travel is mainly by ATVs, snow machines and dog sleds in winter.

BSSD operates K-12 school programs in:

- Brevig Mission
- Diomedede
- Elim
- Gambell
- Golovin
- Koyuk
- St. Michael
- Savoonga
- Shaktoolik
- Shishmaref
- Stebbins
- Teller
- Unalakleet
- Wales
- White Mountain

These communities range in size from a population of 150 up to a population of nearly 900, while the student population in our schools ranges from 40 to 225 students.

## Excellence in Governance

The Board of Education of the Bering Strait School District consists of eleven members representing all areas of the District. The School Board has the responsibility of setting district goals, developing policies, approving school programs, hiring staff and conducting evaluations of the Superintendent. The Board has adopted a strategic plan (2021-2026) that is centered around four goal areas: Language and Culture, Student Support, Staff Development and Support, and Facilities/Infrastructure.

Each community has an elected Advisory Education Committee (AEC), which serves as an advisory group for all local educational programs in the village. The AEC works closely with and makes recommendations to the School Board on matters affecting the school programs in the village.



## Leadership Profile

### Professional Experience Minimum Qualifications

- Hold, or be able to obtain, a Type B administrative certificate with a superintendent endorsement in the State of Alaska.
- Prefer an individual with Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent experience and, at a minimum, have 3 years of principal or district-wide administrative experience.

### Desired Professional Background and Experiences of Candidate

- Experience and willingness to be culturally responsive, especially with Alaska-Native or other indigenous cultures.
- Experience in school finance, budget development and implementation.
- Comprehensive understanding of State and Federal laws that have an impact on education.
- Demonstrated experience of collaborative leadership leading to improved student achievement.
- Demonstrated experience of supporting creative and innovative ways to achieve the goals identified in the strategic plan.

### Desired Personal Characteristics of Candidate

- Passionate about improving the educational experience for ALL students to succeed.
- Demonstrated ability to engage parents and communities in the educational process of their children.
- Supportive & respectful of traditional language and traditions.
- Ability to problem solve and think critically.
- Approachable in demeanor and has an “open door philosophy.”
- Strong communication skills with a wide variety of audiences. For example, School Board, Staff, Families, communities, businesses and nonprofits.

### Board Priorities for the Superintendent in the Coming Year

1. Continue to build on positive relationships through strong communication, knowledge of cultural backgrounds and be transparent between district office, staff, board and communities.
2. Work to increase student achievement scores and ensure each student has a post-secondary plan.
3. Focus on staff/teacher retention to include a ‘Grow Your Own’ focus.
4. Streamline the process for maintenance districtwide, and address needs on a timely basis, especially in the rural sites.

