



# WRANGELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS



SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE – SEPTEMBER 2020  
*To Educate and Inspire Every Student*

## Greetings team!

What an interesting year! Teachers hit the ground running and began MAP testing students for summer learning loss on Sept 21. They will continue make up tests until the end of this week.

A topic of interest for all of our stakeholders is our decreased enrollment and the Hold Harmless Provision. On a good day, the **Foundation Funding Formula** is complex. During the pandemic, the complexity increases. It all begins with the official student count.

This week begins the official student count done each year by school districts in Alaska. Currently, the student count period is September 28 – October 23. Once count is completed, we will project our Average Daily Membership, ADM, for FY21 and turn in a report to the state by November 6, 2020.

Using the ADM and the Foundation Funding Formula, WPS will begin a new budgeting cycle plan for FY22.

The Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) recognizes the challenges of educating students during the COVID-19 health pandemic and has provided a guide for school districts on how to apply the new regulation when determining the fulltime equivalent (FTE) of a student for the 2020-21 school year. Our administrative and district leadership will continue to work tirelessly on fiscal responsibility for the rest of the school year and formulate projections for the next school year.

Because enrollment is around 55% of last year, we may qualify for **Hold Harmless Provision**.

Enacted in 2008, House Bill 273 established a Hold Harmless (HH) provision for those school districts experiencing a reduction in their brick and mortar school's average daily membership (ADM) after it has been adjusted for school size in the foundation formula.

Eligibility is determined *after* the district's adjusted for school size ADM are calculated and totaled up for all schools. The sum total of the district's adjusted for school size ADM is compared against the prior fiscal year's total adjusted for school size ADM to determine if a decrease of 5% or greater has occurred. If the answer is "yes", then the *prior* fiscal year is locked in as the "base year" for the next three years. The new school size adjustment with Hold Harmless continues through formula adjustments such as the District Cost Factors, CTE at 1.015, SPED at 1.20, etc. This results in approximately 75% of the basic need calculation restored in the first year.

The HH provision is available to school districts over a three-year step-down of 75% in the first year, 50% in the second year, and 25% in the final year, provided the adjusted for school size ADM total stays below the established "base year"

None of this is easy to wrap our heads around, but we have great support locally and at the state level.

The next Newsletter date is October 30, 2020 and the topics will include the most current Audit and the Budget Cycle.

Warmest regards,  
Debbe Lancaster, Superintendent