



STAR OF THE NORTHWEST
MAGNET SCHOOL



A Unique School

The Northwest Arctic Borough School District is taking a creative approach to addressing the need for specialized education in rural Alaska by establishing a unique new school in Kotzebue. Star of the Northwest Magnet School will provide students in grades 11-14 with curricula tailored to preparing them for careers in rural Alaska's high-demand fields, such as health care, resource development and education.

Star of the Northwest Magnet School will be Alaska's first dedicated statewide residential high school and post-secondary institution.

Rural Alaska is characterized by small, isolated communities that each rely on one school to provide a general curriculum for all students K-12. Although career opportunities exist in and near these communities, small, rural high schools are unable to provide students with the specialized education necessary to qualify for those opportunities.

Star of the Northwest Magnet School is open to students from anywhere in Alaska, but its primary purpose is to give rural students access to high-quality academic and vocational programs that are often absent or insufficient in their local schools. With that in mind, the school will eventually build a dormitory to house students from remote villages.

This new school maximizes existing educational resources and capitalizes on a successful, long-standing partnership within the Northwest Arctic Borough School District that includes Kotzebue High School, Alaska Technical Center and Chukchi College, which is a community campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks College of Rural and Community Development.



A Creative Solution

The district envisions Star of the Northwest Magnet School as a catalyst that will prepare rural students for careers in Alaska's classrooms, health clinics, hospitals and resource development industry. This new school will produce generations of teachers and professionals who were born and raised in rural communities and, therefore, are more likely to stay in their villages to form a stable foundation of long-term educators, health care providers and technical experts.

By combining career-oriented curricula with campus housing, Star of the Northwest will be a uniquely valuable facility that strengthens Alaska's workforce by developing the talents of rural students.

What is a Magnet School?

A magnet school is a public school that has a specialized curriculum or courses focused on specific areas. The term "magnet" refers to the fact that such a school attracts students from outside the school district in which it is located.

A magnet school gives each student the freedom and opportunity to concentrate on a single discipline, rather than a generalized course of study. This gives students the same opportunities urban students have to access advanced and specialized programs that provide a head start on their chosen careers.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, in many communities, magnet schools are the highest-performing schools in their systems. In general, they are known for higher student achievement, increased parent and community involvement, and staff and curricular coherence.

Alaska continues to import over 70% of its education workforce. On average, teacher turnover in rural communities exceeds 20%, double the rate in urban communities.



The Star of the Northwest Magnet School Advantage

Most public schools offer a standardized curriculum to provide all students with a general, broad-based education. Star of the Northwest Magnet School allows students to concentrate on one discipline, much like a college major.

This tailored approach allows the school to attract highly qualified educators who have expert knowledge in specific areas. In addition, the school has access to uniquely valuable resources because it has multifaceted support from federal and state agencies, borough departments, and private and Native corporation organizations.

Star of the Northwest Magnet School utilizes the following resources:

- Strategic plan
- Dedicated career and technical education staff
- Community infrastructure
- World-class mine nearby
- Regional hub community
- Support of regional corporation (NANA)
- Pre-K-14 governance of all operational services
- Federal investment
- State investment



High School and College in One

Star of the Northwest Magnet School has a unique structure in that the coursework covers the last two years of high school and continues for two years of post-secondary education, leading to an associate's degree (i.e. grade 14). Classroom study is combined with hands-on or field study through cooperation with several regional partners.

Education

- Instructional aide
- Early childhood aide
- K-12 teacher

The Northwest Arctic Borough School District is a member of the Future Educators of Alaska program. In addition to academic coursework, Star of the Northwest Magnet School students gain experience in classrooms.

Health care is the state's largest growth industry, expected to add more than 7,000 jobs by 2018.

Health care

- Prep for nursing school (to become a registered nurse)
- Aide
- Orderly
- Attendant
- Personal care assistant
- Home care assistant
- Medical coding technician
- Certified nurse's assistant

Star of the Northwest Magnet School partners with Maniilaq Association to provide students with hands-on experience in hospitals, doctors' offices and village medical clinics.

Process Technology

- Millwright
- Mill operator
- Welder
- Commercial driver
- Construction (various trades)

As a part of the Northwest Arctic Borough School District, Star of the Northwest Magnet School partners with Red Dog Mine, which allows students to get hands-on technical education and serve apprenticeships at the mine.



Progress to Date

Star of the Northwest Magnet School has opened its doors and is educating students on a limited basis. However, until funding is in place and a dormitory is built, the school cannot fulfill its primary function of housing and educating students from rural communities.

The school and district have made outstanding progress towards their goal of establishing Alaska's most innovative and effective magnet school. The curricula have been developed and are currently being implemented. The federal government has provided funding through a \$1.5 million Expanding Horizons grant and construction is underway on shop and classroom space with \$14 million in funding from the state of Alaska.

The next step is to move forward with plans to construct a 100-student dormitory.

Admission

Admission to Star of the Northwest Magnet School is granted upon approval of a student's application and differs from other public schools in that enrollment is limited to students entering 11th grade. The application and enrollment process will be consistent with Alaska's residential high schools.



Student Activities

Star of the Northwest Magnet School 11th and 12th grade students are enrolled as full-time students at Kotzebue High School and have equal opportunity to participate in all KHS programs and activities.

Jobs in the mining industry are among the highest-paying in the state and are often located in rural areas, where employment need is the greatest.

Long-Term Benefits

The long-term benefits of an innovative magnet school that prepares rural students for lasting careers will be critical to improving the economies and quality of living in both rural communities and the state overall.

At its full level of enrollment, Star of the Northwest Magnet School will graduate 50 students from high school and 50 or more students from Alaska Technical Center and Chukchi College programs every year. These graduates will provide a steady stream of qualified employees for Alaska's health care, resource development and education workforce.

Star of the Northwest Magnet School is positioned to both improve the lives of individual students and help the state grow its economy by inspiring Alaska's best and brightest to live and work right here at home.

Support for Star of the Northwest Magnet School

Northwest Arctic Borough School District

State of Alaska

Alaska Workforce Investment Board

NANA Regional Corporation

University of Alaska

University of Alaska Fairbanks School of Education

Alaska Mineral and Energy Resource Education Fund

Northwest Arctic Borough

City of Kotzebue

Avant Garde Learning Foundation

Maniilaq Association

Teck Cominco Alaska Inc.