

Dr. Michael Johnson
Commissioner

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PRESS RELEASE

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Alaska Nonprofit Receives Grant to Support Rural Charter School

JUNEAU – The U.S. Department of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos [announced](#) more than \$131 million in new grant funding to create and expand hundreds of high-quality public charter schools across the country. Among the selected is Learning Point Alaska, Inc., an education nonprofit agency. Learning Point will receive over \$500,000 to support the Hooper Bay Charter School (HBCS), located in the traditional Alaska Native village of Hooper Bay on the west coast of the Bering Sea. Learning Point is backed by the by Sea Lion Corporation, a federally recognized Alaska Native tribal organization that initiated the development and continues to support the implementation of HBCS.

“Increasing culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs was identified as one of the top priorities in Alaska’s Education Challenge,” said DEED Commissioner Dr. Michael Johnson. “Culturally-aligned curriculum increases students’ likelihood of success.”

This federal grant funding will empower HBCS to:

- Provide a high level of training for staff in the collaborative and interdisciplinary instructional methodology to support a unique STEM and dual-language focus;
- Support the development of the week-long multidisciplinary place-based and culturally responsive science curriculum;
- Allow for the training and support of at least three local Alaska Native teachers; and
- Provide resources for the regularly scheduled community events to showcase locally-relevant and science-based student learning for the community.

"This grant honors a dream that the people of Hooper Bay have for their students to accomplish big things in science through the Yup'ik perspective, values and traditions," said HBCS Principal Jamie L. Wollman. "I am happy to be a small part of their journey."

HBCS opened its doors this fall and serves students in grades 4 through 8. The grade range was thoughtfully selected for the school based on the results of a feasibility study, community interest, and the highest need to impact student achievement. The mission of HBCS is to embrace the reality of its unique rural environment with its rich Alaska Native traditions, tribal governments, native villages, Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Corporations, cultural-based learning organizations, and to create a partnership to develop capable and conscientious Alaska Native students who, in-turn, become stewards of Alaska’s future. HBCS’s curriculum converges locally relevant and culturally consistent STEM fundamentals while promoting and preserving traditional values and language. The goal is to increase academic achievement while fostering pride and cultural identity.

"As a teacher who has family roots in Hooper Bay, I am excited to see how our school will help students build a foundation in education. HBCS’s goal of integrated mathematics, science, and the Yup'ik culture

will set students on the path to success beyond high school,” said Renee Green, HBCS’s Yup'ik Culture teacher. “I have already noticed a difference in kids taking an active role in their education. I am thankful to everyone who helped make this school a reality.”

*The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development provides information, resources, and leadership to support over 130,000 students in 503 public schools across Alaska. The mission of the department is to ensure an “**Excellent Education for Every Student Every Day.**”*

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