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## Special Education Service Agency Newsletter



*The SESA office will be closed June 9, 2017 to July 17, 2017  
Have a wonderful summer!*

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**Letter from the Editor**  
*Jennifer Schroeder, SESA Multiple Disability Specialist*

Dear Educators, Families, and Students,

As the school year ends and we start to move into summer, I want to take the time to thank you all for a wonderful year. As SESA specialists, we all enjoy being able to visit so many communities and meet so many wonderful people. One of the greatest privileges of my job at SESA is all of the things that I am able to learn from the teachers, related service providers, families, and of course, the students. Every week I wake up in a new place, but a place where I feel very welcome and get to spend my day with some of the greatest kids in Alaska. Thank you all for the commitment to these students, to the kindness that you show to them and to those that visit and work with them. Have a wonderful summer, and I look forward to seeing many of you next year.

Jennifer Schroeder  
SESA MD Specialist

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**Thanks for a Wonderful Year - Have a Great Summer!**  
*Patrick Pillai, SESA Executive Director*

Dear School District Staff,

The end of the school year is upon us and summer with it's fun times beckoning! Before you leave, we want to let you know how much SESA specialists enjoy working with each and every one of you. Your dedication to students with disabilities, your innovativeness in adapting curriculum, and your ability to make your students feel welcome every morning, are blessings you bestow throughout the school year. It is now time to enjoy your summer! Have fun, travel safely, practice mindfulness and stay in the moment. It is an honor to work with you! I hope as you leave for the summer, each of you feels the warmth of knowing how much you are appreciated!

Patrick Pillai  
SESA Executive Director

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**End of the School Year Transitions**  
*Tara Maltby, AARC Program Coordinator*

If your student is transitioning to a new classroom or a new school the following school year, it is a good idea to plan for that transition ahead of time. Speak with your child's education team about creating an opportunity to visit their new classroom with their current teacher before the school year ends. Venturing into the new classroom with their current teacher will help keep the student calm. Allow the student to become comfortable with the new school and/or classroom,

the new teacher, and the features of their new environment. Introduce the student to objects you think they will enjoy in their new setting.

Try bringing a favorite toy or activity to the new classroom to let the student know that the new classroom will be a comfortable place to learn much like their old classroom was. This "field trip" can be repeated as necessary to help the student become comfortable in the new environment.

If your student is transitioning to a new school walk around the whole building to give them an idea of where everything is. Look for places that are important to the student such as the cafeteria, bathroom, library, classroom, etc. If your student is feeling overwhelmed, you could create a map of the school for them to hold onto. Having a map may help the student feel more comfortable in the new school environment. If your student is feeling comfortable with their new teacher and their new school environment, try introducing to key staff at the new school such as the OT, PT, counselor, paraprofessionals, and the principal. Creating a book with the pictures of the new people and what they do to send home with the student for the summer is a great way to help the student get to know the school staff.

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### Open for Learning

*Emily Berliner, SESA Executive Assistant*

The school year is coming to a close, but this summer, let's work toward staying open. Open to learning, exploring, discovering...open to adventure and experiences that empower us as teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrative professionals. The education community in Alaska is tight-knit and we certainly look to each other for ideas and support. Wouldn't it be great to reach out to your peers with new insights from your summer of being open?!

Make a commitment to yourself, and the Alaska education community at large, to try something new this summer, to engage your mind, and to add strategies to your professional toolbox. There are many summer activities to consider:

- Volunteer at [summer camps](#) or [education programs](#)
- Join a group to go [hiking, biking, or running](#)
- Visit your local library and museum
- Get involved with [nonprofit organizations](#)
- Connect with your peers to share experiences from this past school year
- Attend plays, book readings, art shows, or cooking classes

Learning never closes, so keep your thinking cap open and enjoy an amazing summer!

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**Hello School Staff and Parents**  
*Kendra Wolf, SESA Autism Specialist*

Summer is finally here! I have enjoyed working with you and feel fortunate to have been able to get to know you and your students over the past school year. As you prepare for summer break, remember there are simple ways you can continue to help support your children and students with autism:

- Prepare your child for routines or activities that may change when transitioning from a school to summer schedule. Use social stories or videos to provide your child with information about what to expect.
- Create a daily schedule for your child that follows the school schedule as much as possible when regarding eating times or breaks. If your child uses a visual schedule at school, provide a picture schedule so the child has consistent visual cues of how to go about their day.
- Continue to reinforce and reward your child's positive behavior. Use fun stickers or reward charts to keep track of their good behavior. Once your child has earned a specified number of stickers or tokens, celebrate with a fun activity - something outside in the summer sun!

Wishing you a wonderful summer!  
I am already looking forward to seeing you in the fall!

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**Dear School Staff**  
*Samantha Weiland, SESA Autism Specialist*

I want to let all of you know that it has been a pleasure to meet each of you this school year and I look forward to working with each of you next school year. I want to applaud each of you for your hard work and celebrate your student's progress this year! I hope each of you have a relaxing yet adventurous summer. See you in the fall!

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**Greetings Administrators, Teachers and Paraprofessionals**  
*Olivia Yancey, SESA Deaf/Hard of Hearing Specialist*

With appreciation, I look back on a productive school year providing on-site and distance delivery services to you. Thank you for your warm welcome at school; and your willingness to collaborate with me during in-service trainings, in-person, and during video-conferencing meetings. I look forward to working with you again when we get back from summer vacation.

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**Thank You from the Bottom of My Heart**  
*Angel Black, SESA Vision Impairment/Multiple Disabilities Specialist*

When I accepted the MD/Vision Specialist position at SESA one year ago I had no idea what to expect. I had no idea of the wonderful adventures that awaited me, the amazing people I would meet, the dedicated professionals that I would have the privilege of working with, or the students that would touch my heart and become a part of me forever. But, these are the gifts that I found waiting for me. I want to thank each of you for allowing me to come into your schools to work with you and your students so that we can guide each of them on the road to reaching their full potential. It's been a tremendous year and I am already looking forward to the next one! Have a great Summer and I will see you in August!

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**End of the Year Reflection**  
*Julie Burger, SESA Multiple Disabilities Specialist*

As the lesson plans come to an end and the 4th quarter reports are being finalized, I wanted to say thank you to all the staff who welcomed me into their classrooms with open arms and minds. I appreciate all the collaboration we have done this year and every success, big and small, you have helped your students achieve. Your long hours and devotion to your students never goes unnoticed. In the poetic words of Dr. Seuss...

***"And will you succeed? Yes, you will indeed. 98 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  percent guaranteed.  
Kid, you'll move mountains!"***

Wherever your summer traverses may take you, keep moving mountains!

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**SESA Library Materials**  
*Anne Freitag, SESA Librarian*

***For more information or questions about the SESA Lending Library, please contact:  
Anne Freitag, SESA Librarian.***

The library has a lot of books, videos, assessments and curricula materials, but about 17% of the collection is assistive devices and learning kits. This includes communication devices, brailers, iPads, magnifiers, and more. I always enjoy purchasing switch-activated materials (okay, toys!) that will provide appropriate and different rewarding responses for the students that use them. I used many of these toys myself in making a library tour video that was finished this year.

While I don't travel around the state the way the SESA specialists do, my library materials have the chance to get out to provide training and learning opportunities for students. If you are ever looking for something in particular for a student, please let me know. I keep a running wish list.

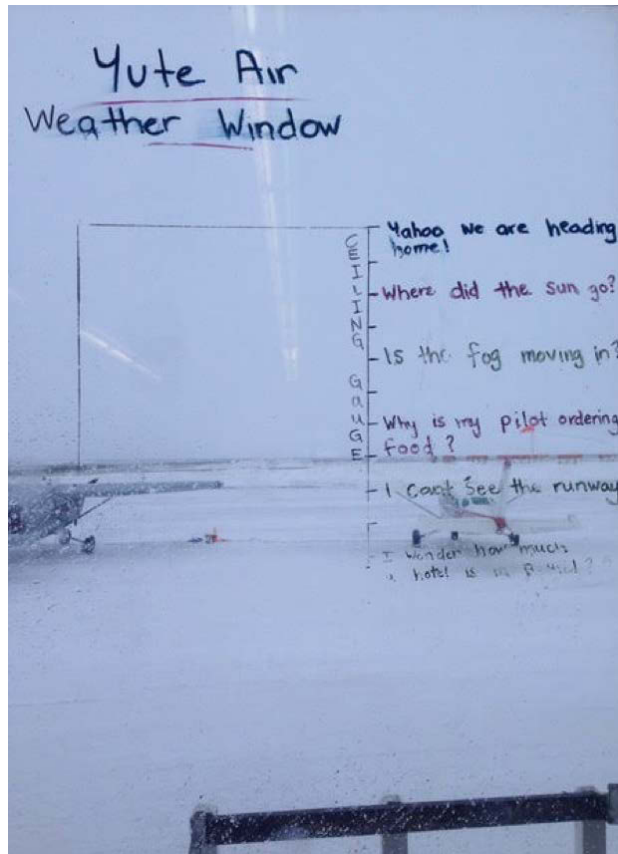
I wish everyone a wonderful summer and I look forward to sending you materials for a new school year in the fall!

## SESA Adventures!



We do take time out to play...part of the job is all of the wonderful places that we get to go and visit!

*Tara Maltby AARC Program Coordinator and Kendra Wolf, SESA AI Specialist*



Sometimes the weather just doesn't cooperate and we don't go anywhere. This great sign was written on the window at Yute Air in Bethel.

*Julie Burger, SESA MD Specialist*



You never know how you will get picked up - but rest assured, whoever comes to get you will be ready to tie everything you need to the vehicle! *Angel Black, SESA VI/MD Specialist*



Enjoying the beauty of the Arctic!  
*Samantha Weiland, SESA AI Specialist*



Traveling in many of our villages means traveling on the boardwalks. You can get anywhere you need to go, and keep your feet dry!  
*Olivia Yancey, SESA DHOH Specialist*






We fly in all sorts of weather- what a treat to be up in the air and see this rainbow! Kendra Wolf,  
*SESA AI Specialist*

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