

## **A Note From Joe Krause (Nenana City School Principal) November 2007**

My parents grew up in Detroit. My dad's mother was from Poland and his father was from Germany. My grandparents spoke Polish at home and my dad still knows a lot of Polish cuss words. My mom's father was from Quebec and was part French and part Cree Indian. My mom's mother was French. So, I'm Polish, German, French, and Cree (where am I going with this?).

My dad's father (Grandpa Krause) was well educated. However, he died when my dad was 16. My mother and father both dropped out of school by 10<sup>th</sup> grade and held a variety of jobs. My mom's main jobs were cleaning houses and working as a custodian at a bowling ally. My dad worked as a machine repairman for most of his life but also worked laying concrete, selling ice cream, and making pizzas.

My parents didn't "send" me to college. I kind of stumbled my way into the world of college-educated people. There were no footprints left by my family members to help me understand what it took to make it in college. My high school friends were all going to college; so I went in order to *not* feel left out. It took me about two years to figure out that I better get the heck *out* of college, start making some money by painting in the Detroit area, and get my head together.

After too many years of painting I knew I needed options. Painting gave me headaches, I spent too much time by myself, and I didn't see a lot of career options in my future. My father always stressed the value of:

- ✓ Hard work
- ✓ Being on time
- ✓ Being honest
- ✓ Being happy doing what I do

My dad was the perfect example of all of these. He loved having a steady job. At one point (our government cheese and powdered milk years) my father was laid off for three straight years. He still cobbled together work by painting for my brother and cutting the neighbor lady's grass. He raised us to think that *any* job was a *good job*.

Going to college has provided me with options. Yes, I still have over \$30,000 of student loans to pay back. However, I love what I'm doing and I have options. I can always go *back* to painting. However, I now have a variety of other things I can do *in addition* to painting. My father was always big on having something to fall back on. He always knew where he was, where he wanted to go, and what it would take to get him there.

As principal of Nenana City School, part of my job is to participate with our educational staff in doing what my dad did over the course of his life. If I put what my father did in "education-ese", he:

- ✓ Analyzed and disaggregated data
- ✓ Developed and implemented summative and formative assessments
- ✓ Helped close achievement gaps

Together, as a staff, we're daily doing the sensible tasks that are necessary to help Nenana City School students know where they are academically, where they need to go, and what they need to do in order to achieve success. The Nenana Community can be proud that our students were **16.4% higher** than 06-07 Alaska State Proficiency goals in Math and **12.52% higher** than 06-07 Alaska State Proficiency goals in Language Arts. Our teachers have helped our students "get to where they are supposed to go". They are helping provide our students with options that are only available via an education. **Nenana staff members WILL CONTINUE TO GIVE OUR ALL** to help Nenana City School students achieve success!