

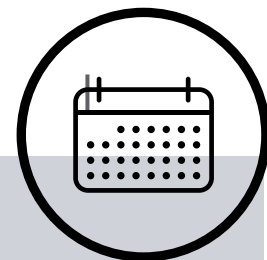


# MUSH ON!

YOU CAN LEARN A LOT FROM A TEAM OF DOGS

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**November:**

*Trail Mail Art Work Due - Look for more info next month*

**December:**

**1 - 2027 Teacher on the Trail  
Application Due**

**March:**

**3-6 Winter EDU Conference**

## EDU PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

### Teacher on the Trail

In 1999, Andrea “Finney” Aufder Heyde, an educator from Indiana, traveled to Alaska to experience the Iditarod firsthand. She caught rides from pilots to visit various checkpoints, introducing herself as the “Teacher on the Trail.” This marked the beginning of an inspiring program! Iditarod 2026 is proud to welcome its 27th teacher (check out Kari’s post below).

You too can become part of this exciting journey. The application for the 2027 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail is now available. Are you ready for the adventure of a lifetime? [Apply today!](#)



## Welcome To Our New Layout

As we embark on the sixth year of our publication, we’ve decided it’s time for a refresh. Jen Reiter, the 2014 Teacher on the Trail, initiated this Newsletter project to keep educators informed about developments in education. We will uphold this tradition while making it more streamlined by including links to our website and aiming to keep it to two pages. A big thank you to Jen for her insightful guidance in setting this course.

Additionally, we have introduced the Ikidarod page. This is designed as an “offline” activity page for your students. We appreciate your patience as we continue to refine this publication.



### What’s Next in EDU: POSTCARD CHALLENGE

Calling all classes or homeschool families wanting to participate in our annual Iditarod Postcard Challenge!

Be prepared to send 40+ postcards to other classes from around the country and possibly further! In return, you will receive cards from all over and learn lots of interesting information about other states. These should be sent between the start of school and when the first musher leaves the Iditarod starting line on the first Saturday in March!

In your postcard message, we ask you to tell a little about your state and what you look forward to in the 2026 Iditarod.

Want more information, or to sign up?  
Email: [Kellyvillar814@gmail.com](mailto:Kellyvillar814@gmail.com)

### KARI’S CORNER TEACHER ON THE TRAIL



As your Teacher on the Trail, I wish you the greatest start to the school year! I hope you are looking forward to all the Iditarod lessons coming your way. This month, you will find a simple plan to get those little brains in gear and chugging along the trail. It is titled “Doggone Dogs” Blocks and it’s waiting for you on the Iditarod EDU website. For younger students it might be an introduction to a few new math terms such as more, less, fewer, add, and subtract. For more experienced students it should be a fun way to review these concepts as the year begins. It also includes a great read-aloud story, “Doggone Dogs.” I hope you will take the time to locate it, use it now, or even tuck it away for another time closer to Iditarod 2026! Either way, I hope your students have a “Paw-sitively” great time with this lesson! Click [here](#) for Kari’s lessons.

## If You Mush Know By Lynne Witte

### How do dogs learn the commands for racing?

Similar to young students, young sled dogs need a trusting relationship with their musher who is to the pup one of their teachers. To achieve this, it is important to spend time with the puppies using simple commands like "ready" and/or "hike" (let's go), "whoa" (stop), "gee" (turn right), and "haw" (turn left).

An effective approach is to develop a buddy system that uses an experienced leader who is able to interact with young dogs while running them as partners. This helps the younger dogs to practice commands.

Through the tone of their voice, musher use positive reinforcement. Over time, the pups learn the commands and they become second nature.

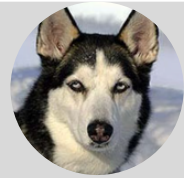


Follow Iditarod EDU on [Facebook](#)



## K9 Reporter - Zuma

Hi friends!



Get ready to mush into another thrilling year of Iditarod updates! Here at Iditarod HQ, we've been hustling to create an unforgettable experience for mushers, fans, and especially our four-legged friends! My fellow reporters and I have our noses to the ground to bring you all the latest and greatest in Iditarod Education and race excitement.

Meet the paws behind the updates:

Gypsy is on race update duty as we gear up for the big start. She's got the scoop for our upper elementary crowd.

Libby Littles is all about keeping our younger readers in the loop.

Sled Dog Ed is the go-to for teachers in search of lesson plans.

Sanka's got a treasure trove of info for students of all ages.

And me? I'm using my paws to keep you in the know about the race AND Iditarod Education.

Our whole pack is eagerly wagging tails in anticipation of the 2026 Iditarod. Stick with us for all the fun! Click below for more info.



## Iditarod<sup>®</sup> EDU

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## VOCABULARY WORD OF THE MONTH

FROM MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY

**musher** noun

mush-er

plural mushers

: one who drives a **dogsled** over snow



## THE 2025 RACE - SNOW? NOWHERE IN SIGHT!

The Iditarod Sled Dog Race usually kicks off with a grand Ceremonial Start in downtown Anchorage, AK on the first Saturday of March. Mushers steer their teams down 4th Avenue with an eager IditaRider in the sled, enjoying a 14-mile frosty adventure through Anchorage. But this year, Mother Nature had a plot twist!

In 2025, snow was scarce in south central Alaska. So, while the Ceremonial Start still began in downtown Anchorage, mushers could only treat their IditaRiders to a quick 2-mile jaunt. The real action? The race got uprooted to Fairbanks, AK, where snow was as abundant as Alaskan moose! With Fairbanks being a 6.5-hour road trip away, the official start, or Restart, got bumped to Monday.

Fingers crossed that in 2026, Anchorage will be buried in snowflakes again.

## Checkpoint of the Month

### ANCHORAGE

Population: 289,6000

Hold your sled dogs! Anchorage may not be an official Iditarod checkpoint, but it's still a big deal for the race. It's like the fun backstage where all the action happens! The Iditarod Headquarters in Anchorage during the race, welcoming judges, vets, and volunteers from all over before they dash off to their designated trail spots.

Plus, Anchorage hosts the Ceremonial Start! Picture this: on the Friday night before, huge dump trucks unload snow all over 5th Avenue. Then, on Saturday, sled teams with their enthusiastic IditaRiders zoom down the street and onto a maze of trails. It's a snow-filled spectacle!

So, while Anchorage isn't an official checkpoint, it's always a point on the Iditarod race maps—now you're in the know!



Anchorage



# Sniff Out the Words



U R Z B O P R R S Q V B F P Z F T E M S  
 L M V A I I Z R S A Q L Q T B U R E W P  
 T T R V Z D Z J N T A G M B H W A M F G  
 D D A R M Q I O O Q C J A U G N I B Y A  
 O D Q H T U K T W D M Y R Q N Z L A H E  
 G X N D O G T E A M Q P C B I R F A V P  
 S G X T P H E I P R G P H J F U R N T F  
 L J A J U H X N P X I D I I A L R C U R  
 E M U S H E R R V Q D D G Z I R S H S F  
 D V U W V N C D R F V P E K R X R O C F  
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 X M G G S X E M Z I R A S M A M E A E S  
 I B M G L L C H L F F E P O N S N G H M  
 T M Q P E F K U P H X G S R K N B E C N  
 D E N N D H P S B B Q G N T S M O O S E  
 Y O I Q O G O K M Q J R O T A I B W J I  
 Q K G J P E I Y V Z N F W N W R K A V M  
 J W I S J G N O B N P B N J X N T C N B  
 Y N C F W H T L P I D I T A R O D L O I  
 P Y R N N C Z O S I X O Y S S D W T E R

Iditarider

Iditarod

dogteam

moose

dogsled

checkpoint

Fairbanks

musher

husky

Anchorage

restart

March

snow

dogs

trail

sled