

MUSH ON!

Monthly Newsletter of the Iditarod Education Department

NEWS & FEATURES

December Teaching Ideas

PAGE 2

What's In Kate's Sled Bag?

PAGE 3

K9 Journalist
Sanka W. Dog

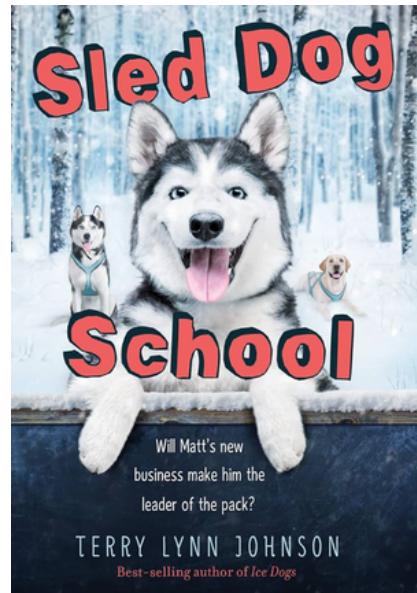
PAGE 4

Sled Dog of the Month

PAGE 5

Mark Your Calendar

PAGE 6



Book of the Month

Sled Dog School

This month's book recommendation comes from our 2017 Teacher on the Trail and third grade teacher, Annie Kelley McGuire. Everyone who knows Annie, knows that this is her favorite Iditarod book.

"It's a book that kids can relate to (struggling with friends and school), but it also uses the correct dog sledding terms. Students learn about the sport, while also learning how to navigate being a kid. It's a fantastic story for grades 3-5. It's also VERY funny! My kids have been known to roll around laughing at times!"



December Teaching Ideas

by Heidi Sloan

Technology/STEM

2021 and 2022 Teacher on the Trail, Jim DePrez, uses this lesson involving coding of Dash and Dot Bots to overlap technology and the Iditarod trail breakers. Trail breakers go through and clear the trail across Alaska, making sure downed trees are cut and snow bridges are built across small water ways. Check this lesson out along with the trail breaker video provided!

[Coding Bots](#)

[Trail Breakers Video](#)

Literacy

Can a rookie win the Iditarod? This lesson can be explored using our current line up of rookies, signed up for the 2024 race. Students will see two perspectives and then write a persuasive piece on whether or not it is possible.

[Could A Rookie Win the Iditarod?](#)

Social Studies

While "snail mail" has become a bit foreign to our students, this history lesson can help them understand the importance of mail as well as trail mail on the Iditarod.

[Trail Mail](#)



"Redington spoke of how people in the villages no longer were running dogs ... that seemed like a big loss to him, and he began to dream of a dog race from Anchorage to Nome."

Joe & Norma
Delia in
["Iditarod: The First Ten Years."](#)



Dick Wilmarth
Winner of first Iditarod

What's In Kate's Sled Bag?

By Kate Newmyer

"Denali Highway"

Winter has arrived in Alaska, and with it a new opportunity to appreciate the beauty. This month's lesson plan will teach art concepts that students can apply to Iditarod photographs. Students will study the elements of art such as light and shadow, texture, perspective, line, color, and composition. They will practice observing and talking about these elements and then create their own artwork in a grade-level appropriate medium.

December's Classroom Culture post will talk about building a visual culture in your class that students help create. December is a perfect time to create winter- and Alaska-themed decorations. In this post I will also share how I do "Alaska Day" in my class.

Many astronauts have an artistic outlet, from photography, painting, quilting and many other art forms. "Houston, We Have a Connection" for this month draws connections between artists of the Iditarod and artists of NASA.



by Kate Newmyer
2024 Iditarod
Teacher on the Trail™



Make an Iditarod themed
Christmas Tree!



Husky Talk is back!
Listen to Season 7 Episode 1
with guest Shannon Noonan

K9 Journalist Corner

by Sanka W. Dog



Photo by Terrie Hanke

There's An Application For That!

When it comes to teaching with real world applications, Iditarod has ideas for just about anything and everything. Here are some seed ideas for you to nurture and build lessons around.

*Use the Jr. Iditarod to understand basic race concepts like start differential (adding time to the required rest to make up for the 2 minute staggered start)

*Compare Jr. Iditarod musher biographies ([2024 Junior Iditarod Bios](#)) to Iditarod racer ([2024 Iditarod Musher Bios](#)) biographies. How are they different? What did you learn about the musher? Have students write their own biography using the best points observed.

*Apply Newton's Laws of Motion to dogs pulling a sled.

*Use the Iditarod Air Force to understand the forces of flight – lift, drag, thrust and weight. Which forces of flight apply to a dog sled? See this post [Four Forces of Flight](#) by Sanka W. Dog

*Returned Dog Math – Practice/Understand percentages and fractions by calculating percentage and fractions of dogs remaining in harness for any five mushers each day during the race. Use graphing to depict return dog statistics.

*Blanket Math – dog blankets are generally 36 inches by 36 inches. Calculate the amount of material needed and total cost of making one set of fleece blankets for 16 dogs. How would this change if the blankets measured 36 by 30 inches? 2014 Teacher on the Trail, Jen Reiter, wrote about discovery through blanket math in this [Warming Up the Pups](#) post.

Use the Musher Bio link above for this lesson idea. Mushers have through the end of November to sign up at the \$4,000 rate. When the calendar page flips to December the fee doubles. More practice with fractions and percentages using rookies/veterans, male/female, US/Foreign and Alaska/other states can be had here. For more practice, meet the Jr. Iditarod mushers (use above link) and consider the same categories.

Have you read the [2025 rules](#)? Mushers will be allowed to start with a maximum of 16 dogs in 2024! For the past five years, the maximum number of dogs has been 14. If you have lessons using fourteen dogs, you'll want to update!

Sled Dog of the Month

by Kelly Villar

This month the "Meet a Sled Dog" takes us to Fairbanks, Alaska to meet rookie musher Josi Thyr. Josi may be a rookie to the Iditarod but she has been mushing for many years and has handled for Iditarod mushers Aaron Burmeister and Jessie Royer. When asked about one dog that has touched her heart, here is what she had to share. Meet Tide!

"Yeah, that is a little hard...I guess if I had to pick just one very special dog in my kennel, it would be Tide. He's a little dog, only about 40 lbs, and usually runs in wheel or team and some people comment that he looks like a heeler (herding dog)...but his enthusiasm is catching and he is always jumping as high as he can into the air when it's time to go! As a puppy, Tide got Parvo really bad and I didn't think he would make it, but every day after work when I would go see him he would lift his head and it was clear he wanted me to know he hadn't quit. When he was a little older I put him in harness and he didn't pull very well, so he was part of the "B team" and I remember wondering if he'd ever finish a race. His first race was a really tough 300 mile race and he ran wheel the entire way and has never looked back! He's 7 years old now and has never been dropped from a race, but more importantly, whenever I stop or am getting ready to go, he is the first to bark and lunge into the air - sometimes pulling up both my snow hooks! I think of him as my "little dog that could" - he's small but mighty!"

Watch Josi complete her twenty year dream of competing in the Iditarod at the [Iditarod Website](#). Can't wait to see her dream come true!



Photos by Josi Thyr



Another idea from Sanka W. Dog ...

Build a Better Sled – Look at the photo of a unique sled on the left. What is different about the sled and how does it affect drag compared to the second photo of a more traditional sled? (Hint the runners are split so there is less drag and the aluminum frame is lighter than the wooden frame) Can you build a better sled?



Photos by Terrie Hanke

MARK YOUR CALENDARI

December 6, 2023 (new date): 2024 Trail Mail Sales Begin

February 27 - March 1, 2024: Iditarod Education Department Educators Conference, Anchorage, Alaska

(Click on Photo below for updated information)

February 29, 2024: Musher Banquet Gala

March 2, 2024: Ceremonial Start Iditarod

March 3, 2024: Official Start of 2024 Iditarod: The Last Great Race



Newsletter Staff

Editors:

Linda Fenton
Terrie Hanke
Jane Holmes

Photography:

All by Iditarod.com
unless otherwise credited

Contributing Writers:

Heidi Sloan
Kelley Villar
Kate Newmyer
Terrie Hanke
Linda Fenton

Newsletter feedback, questions, or suggestions?
email: jane.holmes@iditarod.com

