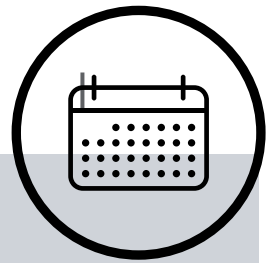




MUSH ON!

YOU CAN LEARN A LOT FROM A TEAM OF DOGS



DECEMBER 2025 VOL. 6, NO. 4

EDU PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Musher Banquet Centerpieces

Have you ever wanted your students to be a part of "The Last Great Race" without being there in person? This is your chance!



Submission Guidelines:

- Keep your design SIMPLE for inexpensive mailing and ease of set up at the banquet. Easy, ready to go, freestanding designs will be best. Designs that are complicated or will require multiple steps in setting up on the tables, or extra volunteer time to help set up, won't meet the criteria for this project.
- Centerpieces should not exceed 8" high by 10" wide and should be freestanding. They should be ONE piece and should not require additional set up or building from banquet volunteers.
- Keep in mind shipping, ease of set up, size and theme.
- Final submissions need to be received in Anchorage on February 20th.

Lots more information [here!](#)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- January:
9 Return Dog Blankets Due
- February:
20 Centerpieces to Anchorage
- March:
3-6 **Winter EDU Conference**
Please consider joining us for this conference adventure!
7 Ceremonial Start
8 Iditarod Re-start

What's Next in EDU: Final Call for Postcard Challenge

It's not too late to sign up for the Postcard Challenge. The mailing list will go out the first week of January - it's a great way to get students back into writing after the winter break. We're still missing a few states and would love for you to join us.

Click the postcard for more information:



KARI'S CORNER TEACHER ON THE TRAIL



Hello fellow Iditarod Teachers! December is upon us as snow is beginning to fall in places around the good old USA. Just as the weather getting colder is the cause and snow is the effect, this month's lesson will set your cause and effect sleds in motion! Lots of options are coming your way this month on how to use the Iditarod to teach this essential reading skill. In addition, you will get to hear some inspiring words from Justin Olnes, owner of ReRun Kennel, made up almost entirely of rescue dogs. You won't want to miss that! Stop back to the website later in the month to find out about this "Fun on the Trail Friday". I appreciate all of you who are following along with my lessons, and I can't wait to share the Iditarod Trail ahead with you! Click [here](#) for Kari's lessons.

December Lesson Ideas

By Heidi Sloan

Social Studies

One of the reasons Joe Redington, Sr. started the Iditarod race was to preserve the Iditarod Trail across Alaska. This trail had been used by dog teams to ferry mail and supplies to the gold miners in the winter. A lesson created by 2023 Teacher on the Trail™, Juli Westrich, highlights aspects of the Klondike Gold Rush with activities for debate and persuasion as well as writing with economic standards being covered. An example focus for an elementary classroom is: We are trying to discover what was so appealing about the Gold Rush and whether the quest for gold was worth the effort. There are also engaging activities for middle and high school students!

[It's A Rush Lesson Plan](#)

[It's A Rush Article](#)

Narrative Writing/Literacy

We teachers know that having students write helps them synthesize and organize information. In the following lesson, 2025 Teacher on the Trail™, Kate Newmyer, provides Iditarod book ideas to kick off student personal narrative writing. Providing sentence starters, hook ideas and more, these ideas give a teacher just what is needed to guide and motivate students to write.

[Why Are They Pulling? Lesson Plan](#)

[Why Are They Pulling Article](#)

Trail Mail Winner

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's Trail Mail Design Contest. This year's theme was "Honoring the Veterinarians". We received artwork from across the United States and were overwhelmed by the creativity. Finalist's artwork was submitted to Alaska artists, Jon & Jona VanZyle, who chose the winner.

Congratulations to Violet H., a 6th grade student from Scituate, MA. Violet's design will be printed on hundreds of envelopes that will be signed and carried down the trail by the 2026 Iditarod mushers. Join us in congratulating Violet!

The winning design is below. You can see finalist's artwork on the second page of Iditarod.



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Violet H.

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Follow Iditarod EDU on [Facebook](#)



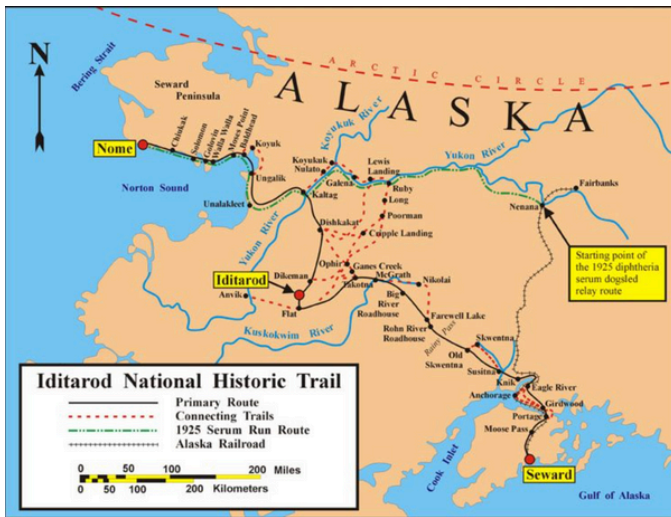


VOCABULARY WORD OF THE MONTH

FROM MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY

mail

: material (such as letters and packages) sent or carried in a postal system



TRAIL MAIL

Navigating Northern Alaska is no walk in the park! Forget about roads to Nome or those remote villages; today we fly in planes. But rewind to the early 1900s, and winter travel meant walking or hitching a ride with a trusty dog team. With no email or texts, folks relied on pen, paper, and a hearty team of dogs to deliver letters across icy terrains to eagerly waiting villagers. (The map to the left shows the trails.)

To honor this paws-itively adventurous mail route, we celebrate with Trail Mail. Students from across the United States submitted artwork to be stamped on the Trail Mail for the 2026 Iditarod. Mushers must pack a bundle of mail from Anchorage to Nome, stamped with winning student artwork. Flip to the next page to see this year's winner and fabulous runners-up!

Checkpoint of the Month

SKWENTNA, ALASKA

Population: 62

After leaving Yentna, it's just a breezy 30-mile glide to Skwentna, where teams trail the Yentna River until it meets the Skwentna River. The first teams usually roll into this small remote checkpoint by 9:00 p.m. Dog traffic is close together since it's still the first day of the race.

This secluded village might be school-free, but it's got a trusty post office and heaps of snow! And don't miss those snowshoes chilling on the wall!



skwentna

2026 Trail Mail Artwork Winner and Runners-Up



Iditarod 2026
Since 1975

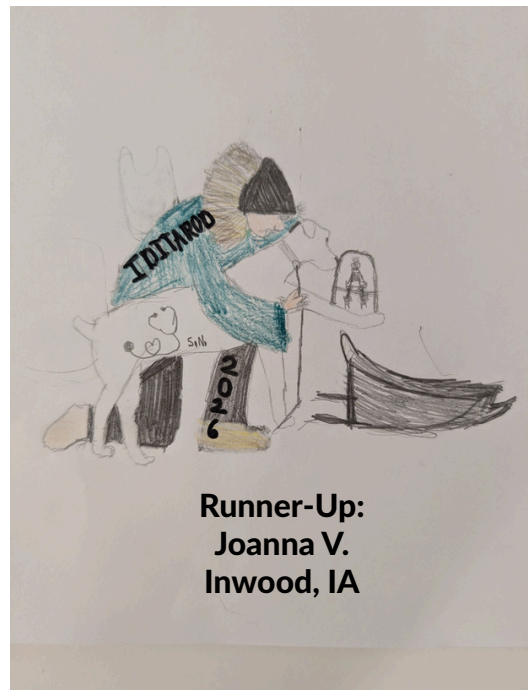


Winning Design:
Violet H.
Scituate, MA

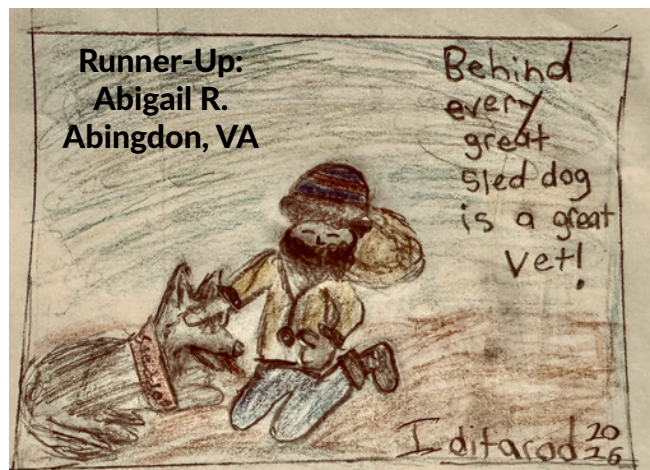
Runner-Up:
Kerrington D.
Abingdon, VA



Runner-Up:
Isaac P.
Rogers, AR



Runner-Up:
Joanna V.
Inwood, IA



Runner-Up:
Abigail R.
Abingdon, VA

**WE AGREE ABIGAIL -
BEHIND EVERY GREAT SLED DOG IS A GREAT VET!**