

GALENA INTERIOR LEARNING ACADEMY'S POSITION TO IMPROVE RURAL ALASKA EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES



GILA Composite Building



GILA Two Seasons Dining Hall



GILA Aviation Tech Lab

I. White Paper Objective

The objective of this white paper is to outline background information regarding Galena Interior Learning Academy's position to improve rural Alaskan education opportunities.

II. Galena Interior Learning Academy Background Information

A. Galena Interior Learning Academy

Galena City School District has operated the Galena Interior Learning Academy (GILA) on the vacated Galena Air Force Base for the past 15 years. GILA is a statewide boarding facility for students seeking choice. It is Alaska's longest operating secondary career and technical (CTE) education boarding school and offers industry-standard certification in aviation, automotive technology, cosmetology, and culinary arts. GILA also offers a strong academic program with dual credit opportunities unprecedented in rural Alaska. During the 2012-13 school year, GILA has served over 224 students from 79 communities, most of them rural and remote. 91% of the students are Alaska Native. GILA began operations in 1997 using vacated Air Force Base facilities; its core mission is providing academic and career and technical education for rural, Alaskan Native students.

B. Galena Interior Learning Academy's Course Offerings

GILA offers rural Alaskan students a balanced array of course offerings that blend high school core academic courses with a CTE foundation. It has been the mission of GILA since its inception to provide rural Alaskan students access to CTE courses that are not found in most rural Alaskan settings. Students can choose to explore aviation, cosmetology, automotive, culinary arts, welding, carpentry, electricity, small engines, and computer technology. Students also have the opportunity to work towards industry standard certifications in aviation, cosmetology, culinary arts, and automotive technology. 38% of the course offerings at GILA are CTE course offerings, 44% are core academic course offerings, and 18% are electives. Many GILA students take two or more CTE courses during a typical semester of study. GILA provides access for rural Alaskan students to CTE and academic course offerings that are unaffordable to smaller schools. GILA provides an opportunity for students to develop the skills necessary for transition to college, to post-secondary vocational training, or directly to the work force upon graduation.

II. Defining Galena Interior Learning Academy's Role in Alaska's Statewide Educational Plan

Galena City School District (GCSD) has benefitted from a stable forward-thinking school board searching for better than the status quo. Galena Interior Learning Academy, with existing infrastructure and well-established programs is positioned to serve a larger role in a statewide educational plan, especially addressing the educational needs of rural Alaskan students and students impacted in their home communities by declining student numbers. GILA is located in a rural setting appealing to the lifestyle of rural students. GILA also allows students from more urban communities to pursue an education that is focused on the individual student. The GILA campus is located on a previous U.S. Air Force base and offers modern residential and educational facilities. Currently GILA occupies ten buildings for student use:

- The Composite Building is the main school facility and houses six classrooms, a 200 seat auditorium, and the school's administration.
- The GM Automotive Technology Lab is home to GCSD's automotive technology program. The building has one classroom, automotive shop, and offices for the GCSD post-secondary program.
- The Vocational Education Building is a brand new 3,600 square foot facility with state of the art welding and carpentry shops.
- Headquarters Building houses four classrooms with plans for expansion.

- Two Seasons Dining Hall can provide food service for 400 people and is home for all culinary art courses.
- Health and Physical Education Facility houses one classroom, a full weight room, full length basketball court, and female and male locker room space. It was fully remodeled during the summer of 2010 and provides health and PE courses as well as evening and weekend recreation opportunities for students.
- The Cosmetology Center provides industry standard cosmetology instruction for high school and post-secondary students.
- The Aviation Technology Lab is a 6080 square foot facility that has two classrooms and large hanger space. The Aviation Technology Lab building houses GCSD's two instructional airplanes and also houses the Civil Air Patrol's Yukon Squadron airplane. This building provides instruction in private pilot's ground school, and flight training through a Frasca flight simulator and the three planes noted above.
- Student Union Building provides evening and weekend recreational opportunities for students.
- Ptarmigan Hall provides housing for GILA students and residence advisors. It contains 116 double rooms and 18 suites/offices

GILA is Alaska's longest operating residential secondary CTE school. It is an accredited school for 9-12 and post secondary adult vocational programs and provides an alternative educational option for many rural Alaska Native students at risk of dropping out, and provides an "alternative education" for students with limited educational choices in their community schools. It is positioned to improve the quality of academic/CTE education for rural Alaskan students and play a greater role in Alaska's plan to improve public education statewide. As GCSD prepares for the future our intent is to provide greater opportunities for more students statewide to benefit from our strong academic and CTE course offerings.