



## Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council

19 January 2021

The Honorable Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol Room 411  
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Representative Kreiss-Tomkins,

The Alaska Native Language Preservation & Advisory Council strongly supports the passage of HB 19, improving the opportunities for high-quality instruction in languages other than English and limited teacher certificates. Particularly for language immersion education, the most qualified instructors may not have an Alaskan teacher certificate. Nonetheless, fifty years of academic research supports the value of language immersion education in 1) increasing students' fluency in English and the immersion languages, 2) increasing students' educational scores in mathematics, science, and social studies, and 3) increasing students' IQs.

While certificated teachers are preferred, Alaska has its own, particular challenges in filling the needed positions. This bill allows school boards to request limited teacher certification for individuals who otherwise have demonstrated their competency at teaching through a language other than English. With the urgent need for more language immersion schools in Alaska—and particularly for Alaska Native language immersion schools—Alaska needs the flexibility that this legislation will provide if we are to put the quality of our children's education first.

Additionally, the Council supports this bill as a needed step in recognizing the invaluable knowledge and expertise that Alaska Native language and culture teachers bring to schools in Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "April Counciller".

April Counciller  
ANLPAC Chair

Sen. Donald Olson  
(Inupiaq)

Rep. Andi Story

April Counciller, Chair  
(Alutiiq)

Annette Evans Smith, Vice-Chair  
(Athabaskan, Alutiiq, Yup'ik)

Bernadette Yaayuk  
Alvanna-Stimpfle (Inupiaq)

Walkie Charles  
(Yup'ik)

X'unei Lance Twitchell  
(Tlingit/Haida/Yup'ik/Sami)