

AYARUQ



2024 Action Plan for Alaska Native Languages

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Report to the Governor, Legislature, and People of Alaska
from the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory
Council

Ayaruunani yuk natmun kingunitesciigatuq.
No one can reach their destination without a walking staff.

We would like to introduce the *Ayaruq* as a metaphor for ANLPAC to consider as we move forward in leading our languages to safety. Without an *Ayaruq* we could face danger, difficulties, or even death. The *Ayaruq* guides us by always placing itself in front of our paths to make certain the next step we are about to make is safe.

We see ANLPAC as the *Ayaruq* for all languages. We are "the staff" so that anyone who ventures into the paths of learning our heart languages safely reach their destination.

AYARUQ: A Guide to Safety.
 A Guide for our Languages.
 A Guide to the Future.
 A Guide for Ourselves.
 A Guide for Others.

Our goal is to increase the use and power of Alaska Native Languages everywhere in Alaska. The members of the Council have written the words in this report, to represent the thoughts, goals, and aspirations of all Alaska Natives

Cover Photo: UAF Advanced Yugtun student, Iyakik, from Iliamna
Ayaruq sketch by Walkie Charles, Ph.D.



Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

January 1, 2024

The Honorable Governor Mike Dunleavy, Esteemed Alaska State Legislators, and Beloved People of Alaska:

As members of the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council (ANLPAC), we extend to you *AYARUQ*, our *2024 Action Plan for Alaska Native Languages, to the Governor, the Alaska State Legislature, and the entire Alaskan community*. ANLPAC is the voice of Alaska Native languages.

In the vast expanse of Alaska, where the heartbeat of 23+ Indigenous languages resonates, our languages are not mere words; they are the threads that weave the fabric of cultural identity for every individual of Native heritage. They are also the languages that were born onto the lands upon which we as Alaskans reside, and it is our collective responsibility to ensure that these languages are nourished and protected. These languages flourished for thousands of years and have stood resilient against colonization and policies external threats, signifying the prosperity of our people.

Today, the State of Alaska stands at a crucial juncture, an opportune moment to act decisively in support of each Indigenous language. The Alaska Native Language and Preservation Council labors to support a strategic and purposeful language movement. In pursuit of this vision, we outline essential policy steps to propel progress toward the revitalization and stability of our treasured languages. The fate of Native languages rests on the collective shoulders of us all, and future generations will remember our actions or lack thereof as this document represents a call to action and you will be asked whether or not you answered that call.

Ayaruq: 2024 Action Plan centers on the overarching objective of fostering an increase in the number of speakers of all Alaska Native languages and promoting their widespread use across the state. To achieve this, we concentrate on four key areas, each accompanied by policy recommendations for the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the broader public:

This *Action Plan* urges Alaskans to formulate strategic plans for the growth and development of each Alaska Native language. It provides suggested pathways for individuals, families, communities, institutions, and governments to embark on a collective journey, breathing new life and vitality into our languages. Recognizing the imperative of self-reliance, we call upon our own communities, the State of Alaska Executive Branch, and the State of Alaska Legislature to champion healthy language and cultural practices for all Alaskans.

In light of these recommendations, ANLPAC respectfully seeks a response from both the Governor's Office and the Legislature, acknowledging the gravity of this call to action.

Our Ancestors have reached us. Our future generations depend on us. We stand up and call for action and encourage all Alaskans to have the courage and determination to collectively envision a future where all Alaska Native languages are safe and strong, We support one another on this journey of decolonization, Indigenous empowerment, acknowledgement and healing, and living a dream we know to be possible. Be strong and kind, and use the *Ayaruq* in your work, and become the *Ayaruq* for those who will come after us.

Iliġanamiik, Igamsiqanaghalek, Taikuu, Qu yana, Gunalchéesh, Háw'aa, T'oyaxsut 'nüün / 'Doyckshn, Qaġaasakung / Aang, Chin'an / Chiqinik,, Enaa baasee', Dogidinh, Mahsi' choo, Maasee, Mosiy' / Tsen'anh, Tsen'jj, Tsin'aen, Dogadinh, Awa'ahdah, Thank you. ¹

X'unei Lance Twitchell, Ph.D. - Council Chair

Bernadette Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle, Ph.D. A.B.D. - Council Vice-Chair

Walkie Charles, Ph.D. - Council Member

Annette Evans Smith - Council Member

Kay Ayang'aq Larson-Blair - Council Member

¹ The First Alaskans Institute documented many of the ways to say “thank you” in Alaska Native languages, and we are grateful for their work (<https://www.firstalaskans.org/learn-thanks>) and of others: https://www.sealaskaheritage.org/sites/default/files/tsimshiandictionaryonline_sml.pdf, <https://www.alaskanativelanguages.org/holikachuk>

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ABOUT THE COUNCIL

The Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council (ANLPAC) was created by the State Legislature in 2012 because the legislature understood that Alaska’s languages are a critical component in the sustenance of cultural identity of Alaska’s first nation peoples. The legislature further found that Alaska Native languages are the foundation of cultures and are vital in maintaining traditional knowledge and understanding. The Council is charged with recommending “the establishment or reorganization of programs to support the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages” and advise both the governor and legislature on programs, policies, and projects to provide for the cost-effective preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages in the state. The voting members of the Council are language professionals who work with their Alaska Native languages to see that all our languages continue and flourish as living languages. The statute language can be found in Appendix 4.

By Alaska Statute, the Council meets at least twice annually and produces its biennial report on January 1st of each even-numbered year. This 2024 Action Plan to the Governor and Legislature is the sixth such from the Council, following upon the 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022 Reports. Photographs and short biographies of each Council member appear in Appendix 8.

THE CHARGE TO THE STATE OF ALASKA

For *AYARUQ: 2024 Action Plan for Alaska Native Languages*, the Council has grouped its recommendations into four major focus areas with specific policy and public recommendations within each of those areas. Alaska will lose nearly all of its Indigenous languages unless substantial changes are made within governance and education that are intended to ensure that these sacred and irreplaceable languages are healthy and protected. The Council is committed to making recommendations that assist with building language movements that are strategic and directional. The focus areas are listed below, and then are explained in greater detail in the following section of the report, with recommendations to the Governor, the Legislature, and the Alaskan Public (**GOV**, **LEG**, **FGOV**, and **PUB**).



Xetli.éesh Lyle James – Lingít – First Alaskans Institute 40th Annual Elders & Youth Conference Dena’ina Center, Anchorage, Alaska.

FOCUS AREA #1: AFFIRM THE RIGHT TO INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Education in Alaska fails Alaska Native peoples, and pathways to equitable success must include opportunities to use Alaska Native languages as a medium of instruction at all levels of education. The State of Alaska must develop pathways to education through Alaska Native languages while decolonizing educational practices in all levels of public education.

FOCUS AREA #2: ADDRESS OPPRESSION AND INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

Alaskan education includes dark histories of language suppression and child abuse that included the removal children from their homes, the denial of having identities they were born into, and forced assimilation that included violent means of attempted linguistic and cultural erasure. The State of Alaska must bring the historical and lasting impacts of boarding schools and genocidal educational practices to the surface and determine methods of healing, reconnection, and acknowledgment of new and equitable directions in governance and education while providing increased access to trauma-informed mental health recovery practices for individuals, communities, and institutions.

FOCUS AREA #3: COMMIT TO LANGUAGE EQUITY

The damaging practices of colonization in Alaska has resulted in a privileging of English over Alaska Native languages. The State of Alaska must make a commitment to increasing the social status and prestige of Alaska Native languages through public education campaigns, increased language use in State facilities, and through partnerships that create real and lasting benefits for speakers of Alaska Native languages that are intended to undo decades of inequitable treatment.

FOCUS AREA #4: NORMALIZE THE USE OF ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES

When languages are suppressed to the point of endangerment, they can reach a point where they are rarely heard or seen, and conscious efforts are required to reconnect peoples, languages, and places. The act of normalization involves strategies and actions that ensure that Alaska Native languages are commonly heard and seen in the spaces where those languages were born. The State of Alaska must commit to language normalization through Indigenous place name restoration, increased language use in public spaces, and the development of Alaska Native language spaces.

I don't have all the answers, so I am listing some of the questions we need to address.

Quyana. Nita Yuurliq Rearden – Yup'ik from Kotlik/Homer – Letter to the Council

Here is the list I wanted to share with you as part of the additional comments. It was good to listen to the elders who expressed their feelings of their experiences in the languages they lost, practiced, noted, and how it should be taught from their stories.

1. I agreed with putting the policy recommendation first, calling to address the history of language suppression and the intergenerational trauma that has created. As we heard testimony of the language loss, it is still heartbreaking for the people how they were treated. Unless, apologies for the language punishments happen, our people will forgive. The trauma needs to be healed.
2. Bilingual classes have been in the school system for many years. We still don't have fluent speakers. Usually students are introduced to our languages in the schools. Many language teachers are placed in the classroom only because they are speakers and know the culture and the environment they live in. Our language teachers need training on how to teach the languages. So, we need training centers.
3. How about increasing language classes in the schools IF it is that important? Many teachers teach for a limited time in a day. English classes are all day. With the new mandated Reads Act, some of our language teachers are aiding the English classes. What messages are we sending to the children? It seems like Indigenous languages are not important, only English.
4. Why don't the language learners earn free course credits toward literacy, learning to speak, write, and read and to teach. We owe them classes to become fluent.
5. How to involve speakers in the classrooms needs to be discussed. Also, do the language speakers need some form of a stipend to share their knowledge?
6. How do we get the community members interested in language speaking communities?

A DETAILED PLAN OF ACTION

For *AYARUQ: 2024 Action Plan for Alaska Native Languages*, the Council has grouped its recommendations into four major focus areas with specific policy and public recommendations within each of those areas. We are working to build a language movement that is strategic and directional. Below are the focus areas with recommendations to the Governor, the Legislature, Federal Government, and the Alaskan Public (**GOV**, **LEG**, **FGOV**, and **PUB**).

FOCUS AREA #1: AFFIRM THE RIGHT TO INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Education in Alaska has and continues to fail Alaska Native peoples. Pathways to equitable success must include opportunities to use Alaska Native languages as a medium of instruction at all levels of education. The State of Alaska must develop pathways to education through Alaska Native languages while decolonizing educational practices in all levels of public education.

Findings

Education in Alaska has a powerful historical role in the prohibition and resultant endangerment of Alaska Native languages, and thus reform of education is necessary to ensure their survival and restoration to use and stability. By default, education in Alaska excludes Alaska Native languages, so specific and sweeping policy must be developed to become inclusive and to change how we view Alaska Native languages in education, with the intent of improving educational outcomes for all students.

GOV: Commit to including Alaska Native languages as a core part of education in Alaska and state that Alaska Native languages are vital to the future of Alaska.

LEG: Direct the Alaska State Board of Education to: 1) develop Alaska Native language teacher certification and licensure procedures, 2) establish an Alaska Native Language Schools Consortium, and 3) include Alaska Native Languages in State Standards of Education; urge the 4) University of Alaska to increase Alaska Native language instruction while developing “zero credit, zero dollar” options for Alaskans; and 5) fund an annual state-wide conference for Alaska Native language teachers.

FGOV: Fund the establishment of an Alaska Native University starting with a College of Alaska Native Languages. This collaborative effort aims to serve as a vital institution offering comprehensive language and cultural instruction, specialized training, essential education, and teacher licensure and certification tailored to meet the unique needs of Alaska Native languages, peoples, and communities.

The proposed College of Alaska Native Languages will play a pivotal role in fostering Indigenous language reclamation movements statewide, fostering a sense of identity



Ms. Kiminaq is teaching the children how to dance for the Christmas program. Inupiaq immersion class, Nome Public Schools 2023.

and belonging among Alaska Native populations. Additionally, the college will provide crucial training programs that address the specific requirements of these communities, promoting skill development and self-sufficiency.

Furthermore, the Alaska Native University will serve as a hub for education, offering programs that extend beyond traditional academics to encompass healthcare training,

education, community wellness, and culturally-focused locally-based programs. By integrating health education into its curriculum, the university can contribute to improving the overall well-being of Alaska Native communities, ensuring they have access to culturally sensitive and community-specific healthcare solutions.

This collaborative endeavor represents a significant step towards enhancing the educational, cultural, and healthcare landscape for Alaska Native populations. ANLPAC urges the Governor to actively support and champion this initiative, recognizing its potential to empower and uplift Indigenous communities throughout the state.

PUB: Advocate for an increase in Alaska Native languages instruction at the University of Alaska, collaborate on increasing the number of Alaska Native language immersion programs, and advocate for “zero credit, zero dollar” options within the University of Alaska framework.

Policy Recommendations

1. *Promote, establish, and increase Alaska Native Language medium schools and dual-language schools in all school districts where possible, and build towards that possibility in regions where it is not currently feasible.
2. *Promote, establish, and increase Alaska Native Language immersion programs in all regions within public schools and through community-based learning programs.
3. *Develop methods of certifying and licensing Alaska Native Language Teachers without considering them “alternative” certifications or licensures; especially help experienced teacher aides to become certified teachers and have equitable pay.

4. Have one Alaska Native language teacher for every 150 students enrolled in any public school in Alaska.
5. Establish an Alaska Native Language Schools Consortium.
6. Establish an Alaska State School Board high school graduation requirement of at least one semester of an Alaska Native language.
7. Develop and include Alaska Native languages in State Standards of Education.
8. *Increase Alaska Native language instruction at all levels: full State funding for Alaska Native language instruction in all Alaskan elementary schools and full State funding for more Alaska Native language instruction at the University of Alaska and establish “zero credit, zero dollar” methods for Alaskans to learn Alaska Native languages without cost.
9. Fund an annual state-wide conference for Alaska Native language teachers.
10. Clarify and strengthen Alaska Statute 14.30.420

FOCUS AREA #2: ADDRESS OPPRESSION AND INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

Alaskan education includes dark histories of language suppression and child abuse that included the removal of Indigenous children from their homes, the denial of having identities they were born into, and forced assimilation that included violent means of attempted linguistic and cultural erasure. The State of Alaska must bring the historical and lasting impacts of boarding schools and genocidal educational practices to the surface and determine methods of healing, reconnection, and acknowledgment of new and equitable directions in governance and education while providing increased access to trauma-informed mental health recovery practices for individuals, communities, and institutions.

Findings

The Indigenous educational landscape in Alaska carries a somber history marked by language suppression and child abuse, where young individuals endured the wrenching separation from their homes, parents, and families. This harrowing experience included the deliberate denial of their innate identities and subjected them to forced assimilation, often employing violent methods in an attempt to erase linguistic and cultural roots. ANLPAC emphasizes the imperative for the State of Alaska to confront these historical injustices, particularly the enduring effects of boarding schools and genocidal educational practices. It calls for a proactive approach in teaching and talking about these hidden narratives, seeking avenues for healing, reconnection, and the crucial acknowledgment of new and equitable directions in governance and education. Simultaneously, ANLPAC advocates enhanced accessibility to trauma-informed mental health recovery practices, not only for individuals but also for communities and institutions affected by the repercussions of this traumatic history. The State of Alaska must

make a strong commitment to community health and language stability by committing to addressing the systemic and lasting harm done to Alaska Native peoples through forced assimilation practices.

GOV: Make a statement about overcoming historical traumas as an entire state and declare Alaska Native languages as vital to the past, present, and future of Alaska.

LEG: Commit to an annual survey of the health of Alaska Native languages with an intention of informing political and educational decisions. Make an apology to Alaska Native peoples for historical suppression of Alaska Native languages and commit to inclusion. Fund a series of statewide listening sessions to document the experiences of historical trauma in order to inform future governmental action.

FGOV: Request that Secretary of Interior conduct a Comprehensive Study and identify the entities engaged in systematic cultural genocide against Native American populations and conduct a total expenditure analysis. Because of the historical injustices and systemic cultural genocide against Native American populations there is a pressing need to bring to light the entities responsible for orchestrating and implementing these acts and understanding the financial resources they allocated towards perpetrating cultural genocide is crucial for fostering transparency, accountability, and addressing the lasting impacts on Native American communities. This study will contribute to the healing, reconnection, and acknowledgment of historical injustices while paving the way for new and equitable directions in governance and education. We further call upon the academic institutions and Indigenous organizations to actively participate in and support the efforts to uncover the truth about historical injustices against Native American populations.



Kiminaq, Yaayuk, Annie Conger, and Margaret Castel return from Ilisaqativut's Inupiaq language Intensive camp at Sivunniugvik, near Noorvik, June 2022.

PUB: Document the experiences of elders who directly experienced language and cultural oppression in education. Create local and regional gatherings to address historical traumas, which include documenting those traumas and incorporating culturally appropriate ceremonies for overcoming traumas.

Policy Recommendations

1. Survey the health of Alaska Native Languages and develop methods to track the state of Alaska Native languages to raise awareness of language health and to help inform policy and planning.

2. Initiate a series of statewide listening sessions to document the historical traumas in relation to Alaska Native Languages.
3. Offer an apology for historical Alaska Native language suppression.
4. Commit to overcoming historical traumas of forced assimilation as an entire state.

FOCUS AREA #3: COMMIT TO LANGUAGE EQUITY

The damaging practices of colonization in Alaska has resulted in a privileging of English over Alaska Native languages. The State of Alaska must make a commitment to increasing the social status and prestige of Alaska Native languages through public education campaigns, increased language use in State facilities, and through partnerships that create real and lasting benefits for speakers of Alaska Native languages that are intended to undo decades of inequitable treatment.

Findings

We need decisive action and policy that elevates Alaska Native languages to a high priority, or we will continue to lose languages. Political discourse and party affiliations should not dictate whether our State government is focused on the health and future of Alaska Native languages.

GOV: Declare Alaska Native Languages Day, reconfirm the declaration of *State of Linguistic Emergency* for Alaska Native languages in 2018, include Alaska Native languages in more statements made to the public, and express a commitment to the health and future of Alaska Native languages. Reaffirm within each State department that the State of Linguistic Emergency stands (A.O. 300) and make a formal commitment to the health and future of Alaska Native languages.



UAF's Advanced Yugtun students. Foreground: Nalugalria from Seward/Cev'aq and Iyakik from Iliamna. Background: Ciukiq from Akiacuar

LEG: Restore funding to the ANLPAC and move the Council from the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development to the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development and develop standing legislative committees that place Alaska Native languages into the regular work of Alaska's government.

FGOV: The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) allocates funding for language and cultural programs and positions across all tribes, enabling them to exercise self-determination in administering initiatives for cultural revitalization. Establishing dedicated positions and funding streams would empower each tribe to reclaim and revitalize their unique identities, aligning with the principles of self-determination. This approach will empower tribal nations to reclaim their own Indigenous languages identities that the Federal Government systematically tried to eradicate. Develop direct allocations for Native American language educational programs, with a focus on developing and implementing dual-language and language-medium schools and holistic adult-immersion programs.

PUB: Work within your community to develop and implement a language plan and to raise awareness of the need to focus on the health of Alaska Native languages, analyze the resources that are in your community and commit to develop methods of gathering and sharing those resources, and work with Alaska Native language speakers and teachers to develop and distribute new resources. Every region should develop a strategic language plan to promote the continued survival of their language(s).

Policy Recommendations

1. Move the Council from the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development to the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development.
2. Declare Alaska Native Languages Day annually on April 21st.
3. Reconfirm the Linguistic State of Emergency that was declared in 2018.
4. Restore Funding for the ANLPAC Administrative Assistant Position, and for Council travel.
5. Establish “Alaska Native Languages” as standing committees within the State House and State Senate.

FOCUS AREA #4: NORMALIZE THE USE OF ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES IN PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL SPACES ACROSS THE VAST LANDSCAPES OF ALASKA.

When languages are suppressed to the point of endangerment, they can reach a point where they are rarely heard or seen, and conscious efforts are required to reconnect peoples, languages, and places. The act of normalization involves strategies and actions that ensure that Alaska Native languages are commonly heard and seen in the spaces where those languages were born. The State of Alaska must commit to language normalization through Indigenous place name restoration, increased language use in public spaces, and the development of Alaska Native language spaces.

Findings

Alaska Native languages have been historically prohibited through active and passive means, and many of these practices have been institutionalized throughout society and are present in governance and education. In order to move against that, conscious governmental, community, and individual actions must be made to restore the regular use of Alaska Native languages in as many social and physical spaces as possible. The normalization of Alaska Native languages is the responsibility of all Alaskans.

GOV: Work with Alaska Native Tribes, Alaska Native Regional Corporations, and Alaska Native Village Corporations to reclaim Alaska Native language place names and highlight those names and phrases in a series of short public presentations in collaboration with Alaska Native language speakers and teachers.

LEG: Initiate an Alaska Native language place name restoration project, direct State offices to include local Alaska Native languages in public spaces, and allocate funding to support Alaska Native languages on public media.

FGOV: The Secretary of the Interior works with Tribes, Alaska Native Regional Corporations, and Alaska Village Corporations to reclaim Alaska Native language place names on Federal public lands and waters and highlight those names and phrases in a series of short public presentations in collaboration with Alaska Native language speakers and teachers.

PUB: Use Alaska Native languages as often as possible in as many different physical and social settings, and work within communities and regions to celebrate those who are teaching and learning.

Policy Recommendations

1. Restore Alaska Native Place Names.
2. Direct State, federal, and municipal offices to include local Alaska Native languages in signage within facilities.
3. Develop “Alaska Native Languages in the Workplace” documents within each Alaska Native language for distribution to local organizations, encouraging an increased presence of Alaska Native languages.
4. Increase the presence of Alaska Native languages within public media.

Restoring Indigenous Place Names in Alaska

The Council recommends a five-year project to restore Indigenous Place Names in Alaska. This should be a funded project with one full time employee who coordinates the project in collaboration with Alaska Native speakers and place name experts within language regions. The goal of this project is to restore as many Indigenous place names as possible. In pre-contact Alaska, every place had an Indigenous name, and colonization erased those names, often replacing them with the name of white men. The restoration of place names will help relink the people with languages and the land and will undue a process of unauthorized name changing that happened during colonization.

The Council proposes that this project be carried out in two phases that are each made up of two interrelated processes. **Phase One** is a high priority name restoration and **Phase Two** might take more time and effort in order to complete. Throughout the process, the Council urges the State of Alaska to partner with Alaska Native language teachers to educate the public on spelling and pronunciation of Indigenous place names. This phase consists of two parts.



Hkaditali ("Drift Lumber"), restored Dena'inaq' place name for a place where driftwood was traditionally collected; nowadays near the current Potter Marsh parking lot in Anchorage.

Restoring Indigenous Place Names in Alaska

PHASE ONE

1. **Spelling and Pronunciation Correction.** Anything that is close to the Indigenous place name will be submitted as a spelling and pronunciation correction, and the goal is to do as many of these as possible but to have at least one in each official language. There are many place names in Alaska that derive from Alaska Native Languages, but were mispronounced or spelled incorrectly, and this would seek to use the correct spelling and teach the proper pronunciation. Some examples are: Skagway → Shgagwei, Hoonah → Xunaa, Angoon → Aangóon, Alakanuk → Alarneq, Kotlik → Qerrullik, Emmonak → Imangaq, Chevak → Cev’aq, Tununak → Tununeq
2. **Names With Direct Connection to Colonial Violence or Indigenous Erasure:** Change place names that have direct links to colonial violence of Indigenous erasure. The goal is to identify as many of these as possible and fast-track them for name changes to Indigenous place names. For example, there is a place in Alaska where a sexual assault of Indigenous peoples took place and it was given a name that hints at sexual arousal, which is inhumane and abhorrent for a state that has sexual assault rates that are out of control.

PHASE TWO

This phase also consists of two parts:

1. **Batch Naming for “Unnamed” Places.** Places without official names might be eligible for a batch naming process through the USFS. This would be a process developed to bypass the current method of establishing official place names, and would allow for up to ten names to be pushed through so they can appear on official maps.
2. **Restoration of Colonized Names.** Places where Indigenous place names were ignored and colonial ones established should have their Indigenous names restored. The project should analyze the ease with which this process might be carried out, and then strategize on how to develop community backing for the restoration of names.

An Alaska Native language high school graduation requirement

The Council recommends that all graduates of high school in Alaska’s public schools take at least one semester of an Alaska Native language. This can be done through asynchronous methods and also can be done via distance so students can choose which language they would like to take. This would normalize Alaska Native languages in public education in ways that no single other move could, and the method of doing so is proposed be editing the following Alaska Statute:



Kusamasiluataumausi! Reading each Christmas card for parents. Inupiaq immersion class, Nome Public Schools 2023.

CURRENT VERSION

4 AAC 06.075. High school graduation requirements. (a) Each chief school administrator shall develop and submit to the district board for approval a plan consisting of district high school graduation requirements. The plan must require that, before graduation, a student must have earned at least 21 units of credit.

- (b) Specific subject area units-of-credit requirements must be set out in each district plan and must require that, before graduation, a student must have completed at least the following:
- (1) language arts - four units of credit;
 - (2) social studies - three units of credit;
 - (3) mathematics - two units of credit for students graduating from high school on or before June 30 2017, and three units of credit for students graduating from high school on or after July 1, 2017;
 - (4) science - two units of credit; and
 - (5) health/physical education - one unit of credit.

PROPOSED EDIT

4 AAC 06.075. High school graduation requirements. (a) Each chief school administrator shall develop and submit to the district board for approval a plan consisting of district high school graduation requirements. The plan must require that, before graduation, a student must have earned at least 21 units of credit.

(b) Specific subject area units-of-credit requirements must be set out in each district plan and must require that, before graduation, a student must have completed at least the following:

(1) language arts - four units of credit;

(2) Alaska Native languages - one unit of credit;

(3) social studies - three units of credit;

(4) mathematics - two units of credit for students graduating from high school on or before June 30 2017, and three units of credit for students graduating from high school on or after July 1, 2017;

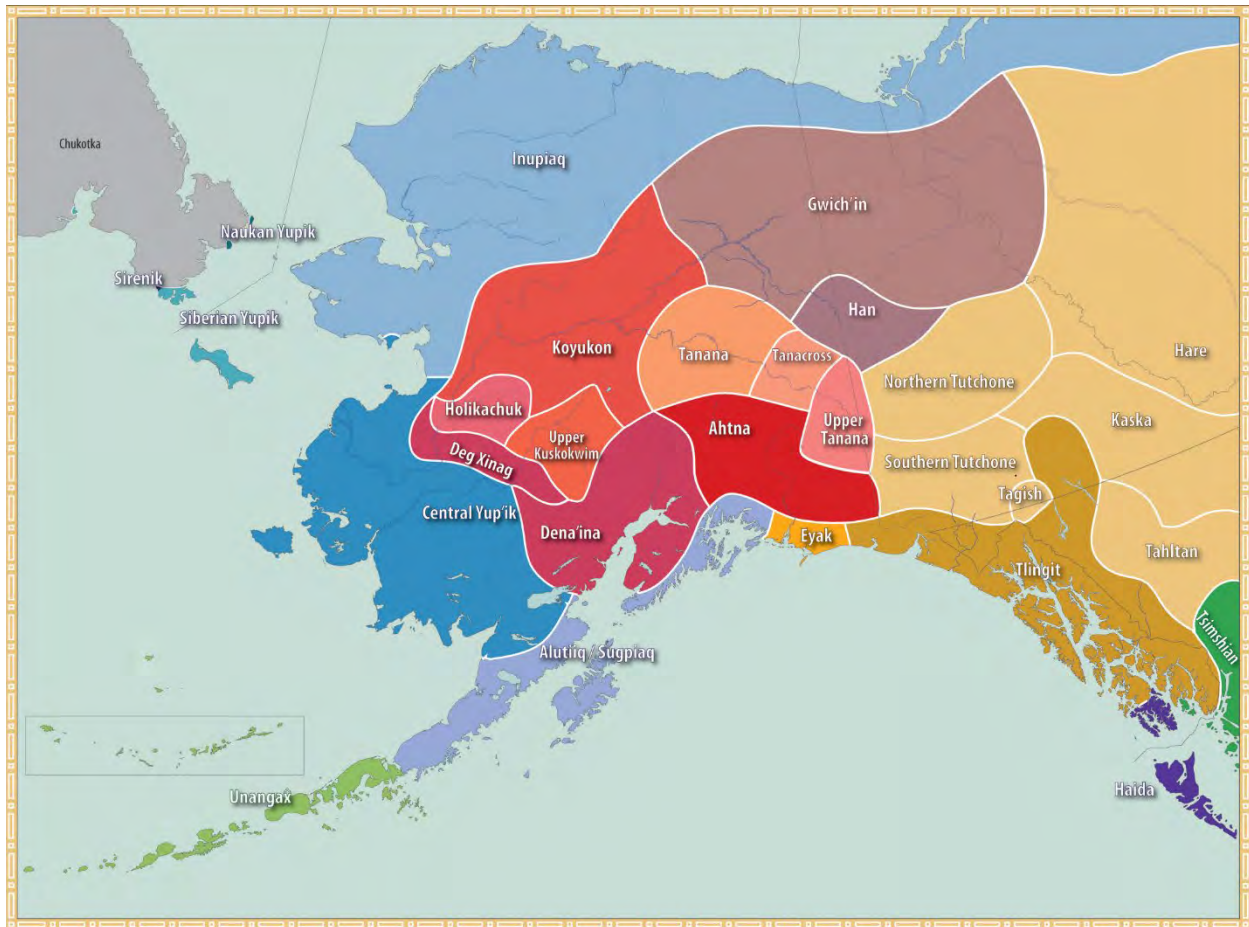
(5) science - two units of credit; and

(6) health/physical education - one unit of credit.

OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGES AND LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

The land we call Alaska is home to around two dozen Native languages, spoken in and near Alaska for many thousands of years. Each Alaska Native language is a treasure beyond value, holding cultural knowledge of a unique people, a unique history, and a unique way of viewing life.

Every Indigenous language in Alaska faces threats from colonial, English-only policies and practices, and all of them are endangered.



Indigenous peoples and Languages of Alaska map. Alaska Native Language Center, 2011; Michael E. Krauss, Gary Holton, Jim Kerr, and Colin T. West

LANGUAGES AND LANGUAGE FAMILIES

Linguists group Alaska Native languages into four *language families*, sets of languages which appear to be related to each other, descendants of a common, ancestral language in the ancient past. The two large language families in Alaska are the Inuit-Unangan language family—with ten or 12 languages across much of the Arctic—and the Na-Dene language, with about 40 or 50 languages across western North America. The other two are the

Tsimshianic language family (four languages) and the Haida language, a ‘language isolate,’ that is, a family of one.

TERMINOLOGY AND SELF-DETERMINATION

Over time, the names of languages and the ways that Indigenous peoples refer to themselves can change. One of the patterns found in colonization is the mis-labeling of Indigenous peoples and languages, and over time as the language communities begin to be heard and listened to, those names will change. Throughout the process of colonization, oftentimes one Indigenous group might share their name for another and that becomes a common way to refer to them for the colonizer, or at other times a term might be used that is pejorative and informed by concepts of racial superiority. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine what to call themselves and what to call their language, and the authors of this Action Plan have attempted to hear the voices of the people and to listen. With that, the recommendation of this Council is to use the names listed here for the languages of Alaska, and also for the language family, and to retire outdated and external labels for Alaska Native peoples and languages. Some of these terms, such as *Eskimo*, are okay to be used internally, but not externally, and we respect the wishes of the people to use names that are rooted in the languages themselves.

LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS.

The identity of Alaska Native peoples is directly linked to Alaska Native languages and the dialects within those languages. Individuals tend to strongly identify with the particular type of speech from their home community, or that of their family. The Council recognizes the importance of dialect and identity, and encourages all languages in Alaska to work collaboratively to respect dialects and to ensure that any disagreements over dialect selection be handled with care so it does not impede work or cause conflict. Issues of dialect differences often arise in language revitalization contexts, and with the development of learning materials groups often must determine which version of a word will be used. Choosing one dialect over another in an official capacity and adopting it as a standard can lead to conflicts between speaker groups and go against cultural morals and beliefs. If the differences in the language are not captured sensitively, speakers and learners of certain styles may be affronted. Some may choose to disengage with



Dora Andrew-Ihrke - Aleknagik Yup'ik Elder demonstrating the ways she was taught by elders, First Alaskans Institute 40th Annual Elders & Youth Conference, Dena'ina Center, Anchorage, Alaska.

language revitalization efforts and publication to avoid this conflict altogether.

If dialect is creating a division within an Indigenous language reclamation movement, the Council suggests bringing in educators and administrators from language programs that have successfully integrated multiple dialects into their schools and programs. Our recommendation is to be respectful of differences and identities, but to find ways to grow a language program together rather than compete with each other or leave others out.

IGAMSIQAYUGVIKUMANGINAGHYAGHQAQSAGHAGHPESIKUT

*“You need to always show our gratitude to us,
which you don’t seem to be doing anymore.”*

St. Lawrence Island Yup’ik Elder

Oftentimes the most impactful voices in these conversations come from Indigenous language movements that are successful in their efforts and are willing to share their knowledge. In addition, the Council

suggests working with the developing National and Regional National Native American Language Resource Centers. We cannot afford to be divisive in our work or to let momentum slide due to different dialects of the same language. Colonization has contributed to the idea that we are in competition with one another, or that only one way should survive or be elevated as the default, so those working in languages are encouraged to be respectful and loving with each other, and to see the larger picture of all Alaska Native languages and dialects growing stronger together.

Linguists recognize a dialect as a specific, regional or social variety of a language. All living languages have multiple dialects—and every time someone speaks, they are speaking in a dialect of a language. Linguists employ a rule of thumb to distinguish between distinct languages and dialects: they may request speakers of each variety to engage in conversation, ideally without prior exposure to each other’s way of speaking. If a seamless conversation occurs on the first attempt, linguists categorize the varieties as dialects of the same language. However, if frequent misunderstandings arise, they may consider the varieties as closely related but separate languages. There is a large “grey area” in which two speakers understand each other fairly well but not very well the first time they attempt to converse with each other; because of this, there can be disagreement on how many “languages” there are in a particular language family. This is true of Alaska Native languages as well and this is the larger reason why some people will come up with different numbers of languages.

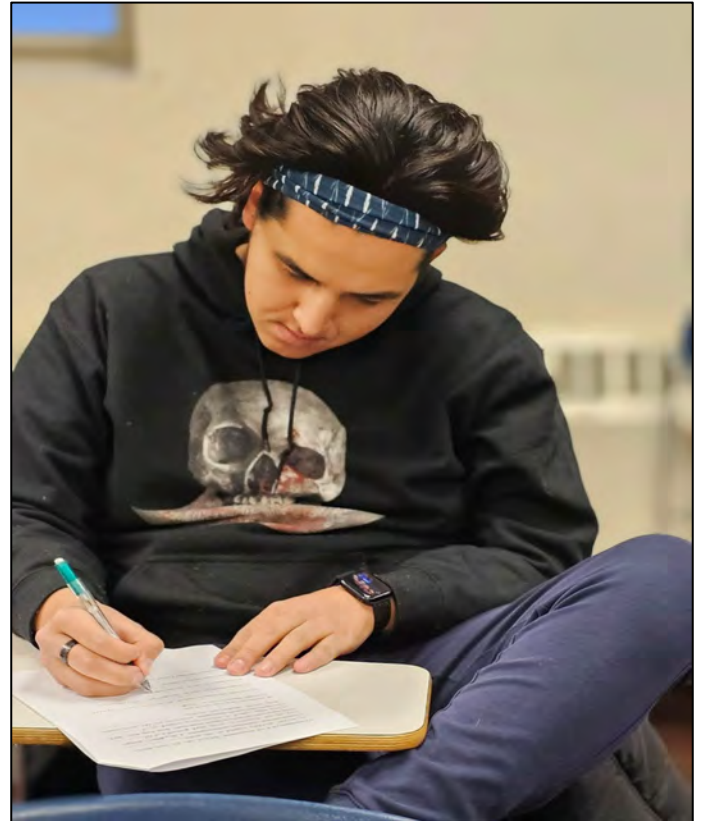
THE STATUS OF ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES

Measuring the health of a language can be difficult. There are many challenges to counting who is a “speaker” of a language and there always will be. The numbers presented in the following table, if the number is fewer than 100, come from community members who tell us that they have sat down with other language community members and written down lists of who all they can name who is a strong speaker. Sadly, those numbers are easier to come by as the number of speakers becomes quite small.

Surveys that simply ask, “Do you (or does that person) speak the language?” result in poor data. One person who speaks the language quite well, but knows that they are far from being a “perfect” speaker, may modestly reply “no” whereas someone else, who knows a couple hundred words and a few dozen phrases, may reply “yes.” Neither one is wrong as such but it illustrates how a simple “yes/no” question about speaking does not provide useful information.

With declines in the number of speakers of Alaska Native languages over the last several generations, the Council is very interested in learning how many speakers (at different levels) there are of each language and how many teachers there are of each language and how quickly new teachers are being developed, but also what the social situations are—in the home and in the broader community—in which Alaska Native languages are being used today. Having detailed information on how many people can speak, how many do speak, how many are learning, and how and where our languages are spoken will be of great benefit in planning for the continued survival of all Alaska Native languages.

In order to have a more valuable, more detailed understanding of what successes are happening with Alaska Native languages, it is important to learn the health of each language, considering how and when the languages are spoken in the house and community as well as the overall numbers of speakers by language in four categories. These categories are based in large part upon the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (<https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines->



UAF Advanced Yugtun student, Tartuilinguq, from Kuinerraq

2012), with our “highly proficient” corresponding to their “superior” and our “conversational” speakers corresponding with “intermediate” speaker.

1. Those who learned the language as children and speak the language well: highly proficient speakers
2. Those who learned their language as children but, due to childhood trauma associated with physical and psychological punishments for speaking their language, became “dormant speakers” who understand but now cannot converse
3. Second-language learners who speak the language well: highly proficient speakers
4. Second-language learners who can carry on short conversations (five or ten minutes)—more than simply using memorized dialog: intermediate speakers

As noted above, there never has been a systematic study of the number of language teachers available, nor an actual count of language speakers. Research indicates that it is vital to understand the status of a spoken language in order to develop plans, policies, and materials for revitalizing that language. For Alaska, information is very limited. The information, below, is a listing of the best data available based upon a variety of sources including language workers in the communities, linguists who work with particular languages, and sometimes late 20th century estimates on the Alaska Native Language Center that we suspect are overly optimistic. If you have more up-to-date or more accurate information on numbers of speakers in your community, please email anlpac@alaska.gov or phone (907) 269-3646 (see also Appendix F).

- **Preliminary rubric:** Numbers of highly-proficient First-language (L1) speakers, numbers of highly-proficient Second-language (L2) speakers, and numbers of Alaska Native language learning programs.
- **Challenges with the data:** The numbers of highly-proficient, L1 speakers, is difficult to estimate for the languages with more than 100 speakers, since we have no actual census, or counts, of the numbers of speakers. Sadly, the fewer speakers there are, the easier it is to find an accurate count. Most published data I can find on numbers of speakers (apparently meaning highly-proficient L-1 speakers) are estimates made by Michael Krauss from the late 1970s through the early 1990s. Furthermore, we can find data published from the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s which are using Krauss’ early 1990s estimate, even though they present the numbers as if they were based upon more recent data. The second-most often cited source for numbers of speakers is the ANLPAC web page.
- The numbers of highly-proficient, L2 speakers come in large part from Alaska Native language teachers and activists. An important goal for staff during the upcoming fall is to contact more teachers and solicit counts or estimates of numbers of highly-proficient, L2 speakers.
- The number of Alaska Native language learning programs is not always clear. The new data from DEED do help; many school districts which have ignored our requests to know which schools teach which languages have replied to DEED’s fall

2022 request for data. Unfortunately, the nature of the data is such that it is difficult to distinguish actual language learning opportunities from “word of the day” themes in schools, impossible to know whether the classes are taught in English or in an Indigenous language, and it is not possible to identify which schools actually have language immersion programs. Nonetheless, for giving us a raw “count”, it is helpful. I intend to continue to work with DEED and encourage them to refine the definitions that they use in their survey.

- PROGRESS in Alaska Statutes that support Alaska’s Indigenous languages, including Official languages.

KNOWN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS STATEWIDE

This table includes the number of K-12 programs reported to the Department of Education and Early Development in October 2022. Tribal programs refer to those offered by a federally-recognized tribe or another tribal organization, such as the Alaska Native Brotherhood/Sisterhood or a regional non-profit. College programs include those by any branch of the University of Alaska system, Iḷisaġvik College, or Alaska Pacific University. Community programs are those that are organized and hosted by individuals volunteering their own time.

Language Name	K-12 Programs	Tribal, College, and Community
Inupiatun	36	6
Yugtun / Cugtun	49	3
Akuzipik/Yupigestun (St Lawrence Is. Yupik)	2	1
Cup’ig (Nunivak Is Yupik)	1	0
Sugt’stun (Sugpiaq/Alutiiq)	3	5
Unangam Tunuu (Aleutian Aleut)	5	2
Lingít	32	6
dAkhunhuuga’ (Eyak)	0	1
Koht’aena Kenaege’ (Ahtna)	1	3
Dena’inaq’	0	2
Deg Xinag	0	1
Dinak’i (Upper Kuskokwim)	0	1
Holikachuk	0	1
Denaakk’e (Koyukon)	11	1

Language Name	K-12 Programs	Tribal, College, and Community
Benhti Kokhwt'ana Kenaga' (Lower Tanana)	1	1
Sahcheeg Xut'een Xneege' (Middle Tanana)	0	0
Dihthaad Xt'een Iin Aandeeg' (Tanacross)	0	2
Nee'aanèegn' (Upper Tanana)	0	2
Hän	0	2
Dinjii Zhuh K'yaa (Gwich'in):	4	1
Wetá (Ts'etsa'ut):	0	0
ᶑaad Kíl (Haida)	8	2
Sm'algyax (Tsimshian)	9	3

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF SPEAKERS

These estimates come from multiple sources. They start with estimates by the late Michael Krauss, who made estimates for all Alaska Native languages from the late 1970s (published in 1980) to 1991 (published in 1992). Many others have cited his 1991/1992 estimates up into the 2000s; in the 2010s, others cited the 2000s publication dates that used Krauss' 1991/1992 data, and in the 2020s there are still new publications which cite publications from early in the 21st century that were re-publishings of Krauss' 1991/1992 estimates.

www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra/AKNativeLanguagePreservationAdvisoryCouncil/Languages.aspx

ANLPAC staff has updated these estimated numbers of speakers in two ways:

1. When possible, actual numbers or estimates of numbers of speakers come from language activists who are proficient speakers of the languages; when no close estimates are available (such as with Yugtun, Yupigestun, or Inupiatun, staff took reports from Yup'ik, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, and Inupiaq elders about the ages of the youngest, highly-fluent speakers, combined these with Krauss' early 1990s estimates, and attempted to correct them for population aging over the past 30 years.
2. Additionally, when possible, we have included finer distinctions provided by language activists within each language community to distinguish highly-proficient from somewhat-proficient speakers, both for those who speak each language as a first language and those who speak it as a second language.

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Language	Estimated Speakers in Alaska
Inupiatun (Inupiaq)	500-1,500 highly proficient speakers, plus 10-50 proficient second-language speakers
Yupigestun / Akuzipigestun (St. Lawrence Island Yupik):	400-750 highly proficient speakers
Yugtun/Cugtun (Yup'ik / Cup'ik)	2,500-7,500 highly proficient speakers, 100-300 proficient second-language speakers.
Cup'ig (Nunivak Island [Yupik])	5-25 highly proficient speakers
Unangam Tunuu (Unangâ Aleut)	40-80 highly proficient speakers
Sugt'stun / Alutiit'stun (Sugpiaq/Alutiiq [Yupik])	80 highly proficient speakers, proficient second-language speakers
Dena'inaq' (Dena'ina)	5 highly proficient speakers, 2-10 proficient second-language speakers
Denaakk'e (Koyukon)	50-150 highly proficient speakers
Doogh Qinag (Holikachuk)	0 highly proficient speakers
Deg Xinag	2 highly proficient speakers
Dinak'i (Upper Kuskokwim)	0-5 highly proficient speakers
Benhti Kokhwt'ana Kenaga' (Lower Tanana)	1 highly proficient speaker
Sahcheeg Xut'een Xneege' (Middle Tanana)	0 highly proficient speakers
Dinjii Zhuh K'yaa (Gwich'in)	50-150 highly proficient speakers
Hän	2 highly proficient speakers
Dihthaad Xt'een Iin Aandeeg' (Tanacross)	5-10 highly proficient speakers
Nee'aanèegn' (Upper Tanana)	5-10 highly proficient speakers; 25 proficient second-language speakers in Alaska
Koht'aene kenaege' (Ahtna)	5-10 highly proficient speakers
dAXxhunhyuuga' (Eyak)	0 highly proficient speakers; 1 proficient second-language learner, 5-10 other second-language learners
Lingit (Tlingit)	10 highly proficient, 30 proficient first-language speakers, 5 highly proficient second-language speakers, 15-20 other proficient second-language speakers, and 100 active second language learners at lower levels

Language	Estimated Speakers in Alaska
Wetał (Ts'etsa'ut)	0 highly proficient speakers
Xaad Kíl (Haida):	1 highly proficient first-language speaker, plus 2 highly proficient second-language speakers, and 20 active second language learners at lower levels
Sm'algyax / Shm'algyack (Coast Tsimshian)	1 highly proficient first-language speaker, 5 highly proficient second-language speakers, and 30 active second language learners at lower levels

LEGISLATIVE ACTS RELATED TO ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES

Acts of the Alaska Legislature, and subsequent Alaska Statutes, affect policies regarding Alaska Native languages. Please see Appendix B for full texts of the following statutes:

- 1972, Establishment of the Alaska Native Language Center, AS 14.40.117
- 1995, Native Language Education, AS 14.30.420
- 2012, Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council, AS 44.33.520
- 2014, Official Languages Act (revising the 1998 English-only version), AS 44.12.310

The Official Languages Act, updated by our State Legislature in 2014, was the culmination of many hundreds of hours of effort by legislators and grass-roots efforts by Alaska Natives and others in Juneau. Alaska has now joined with the state of Hawaii in recognizing Indigenous languages as official languages within their own state. Alaska has formally recognized Inupiaq, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, Yup'ik, Alutiiq, Unangax, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in, Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Han, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian in Alaska. This public recognition is a powerful symbol of the value that Alaska's Native languages have to all Alaskans at a time when every Alaska Native language is threatened or endangered.



Joe Chythlook, Aleknagik , Yup'ik Elder, First Alaskans Institute 40th Annual Elders & Youth Conference Dena'ina Center, Anchorage, Alaska.

LANGUAGE PLANNING AND POLICY

If you are interested in promoting the future of your Alaska Native language, we encourage you to think *strategically* about how to remove the stumbling blocks that have been discouraging people from using your language. We offer here some proven suggestions for how you and your community can succeed at increasing the use of your language as an important part of daily life.

“[The major components of language revitalization are] one, what sort of language education do we use...to teach people the language and [the] other component is language use areas and opportunities: how communities and partners work together to ensure that you protect the speakers that you have, while making new ones, and to make sure that your language is the language of power and use. And those are huge, huge steps to take.”

X'unei Lance Twitchell.

To get started with planning for your language's future, two important questions for you to explore first are:

1. What is the status of your language?
2. What are your goals for your language?

When we talk about “language status,” we are referring to how many people *can speak* the language, how many *do speak* it on a regular basis, whether it is *learned as a first language* by all generations, whether it is *learned as a second language*, and how it is *spoken in the home* and local neighborhoods, and how many people also *read and write in the language*. Language status also refers to how the language is used in schools, local businesses, local government offices and services, in news media and social media that local people access.

When we talk about “language goals,” we are referring to what the language community desires the status of their language will be in the future. Your “strategic language plan” is an outline of the steps that you and your community intend to undertake in order to take your language from its current status to the language status that is your goal.

There are two, very important reasons why a strategic language plan has to start by considering the current status of your language. First, some language revitalization activities require that certain aspects of language status are already in place. For example, opening a language immersion school requires that you already have highly-proficient language speakers who are also experienced, certified teachers. If you don't already have highly-proficient speakers at all, developing new speakers must come before opening your language immersion school.

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The second, important link between your current language status and your language plan is as an aide to help you in considering all the relevant domains of language use. Language domains are the places and situations in which a language is used. In multilingual societies, it is often the case that the same people consistently use a different language in a different domain.

Degree of Endangerment	Intergenerational Language Transmission
Safe for Now	Language is spoken by all
Vulnerable	Most children speak the language but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., the home)
Definitely Endangered	Children no longer learn the language as a mother tongue in the home but parents speak it regularly
Severely Endangered	Language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to their children or among themselves
Critically Endangered	The youngest speakers are elders and they speak the language partially and infrequently
Dormant	There are no conversational speakers left now

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	Language Status Assessment	Language Status Planning	Decolonization and Healing Inter-Generational Trauma	Language Normalization Activities*	Breath of Life Institutes	Master-Apprentice Language Teams	Language Immersion Retreats	Communicative Language Classes in English-Medium	Language Nests & Language Immersion Schools	Language Medium Schools
Safe for Now	X	X	X	X					X	X
Vulnerable	X	X	X	X			X		X	X
Definitely Endangered	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Severely Endangered	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		
Critically Endangered	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
Dormant	X	X	X	X	X					

* Language normalization activities include: Reclaiming traditional place names; hosting language circles on a regular basis; using language casually when interacting with people in public; using language within social media; children speaking to each other in the Native language; the presence of the language on public signage; and more.

If Your Language Is “Definitely Endangered”: Language Restoration / Revitalization

A language that is *definitely endangered* is one in which “children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home” even though it is spoken by their parents and grandparents.”

This is the approximate situation in the two St. Lawrence Island Yupik villages and about sixteen of the Yup'ik villages. Your strategic language plan should focus on *language revitalization* or *restoration*, that is to say, helping younger people become fluent speakers.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/endangered-languages/atlas-of-languages-in-danger/>

Steps you need to take are:

- ✓ Conduct a Language Status Assessment.
- ✓ Develop a Language Status Plan.
- ✓ Work toward decolonization and healing intergenerational trauma.
- ✓ Normalize the use of your language.
- ✓ Consider starting master-apprentice language learning teams.
- ✓ Host language immersion retreats.
- ✓ Ensure that your language is taught in your schools communicatively.
- ✓ Work to establish language immersion education in your schools as soon as possible.

If Your Language Is “Severely Endangered”: Language Restoration / Revitalization

A language that is severely endangered is one in which “the language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves.”

This is the approximate situation in the Yup’ik villages, a few Inupiaq and Sugpiaq villages, and perhaps a few other communities. Your strategic language plan should focus on language revitalization or restoration, that is to say, helping younger people become fluent speakers. You can build upon the elder generations’ language abilities in your community.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/endangered-languages/atlas-of-languages-in-danger/>

Steps you need to take are:

- ✓ Conduct a Language Status Assessment.
- ✓ Develop a Language Status Plan.
- ✓ Work toward decolonization and healing intergenerational trauma.
- ✓ Normalize the use of your language.
- ✓ Start master-apprentice language learning teams.
- ✓ Host language immersion retreats with your master-apprentice teams and others.
- ✓ Ensure that your language is taught in your schools communicatively.
- ✓ Work to establish language immersion education in your schools as soon as possible, staffed with new, highly-proficient speakers.

If Your Language Is “Critically Endangered”: Language Restoration / Revitalization

A language that is critically endangered is one in which “the language speakers are grandparents or older and they speak the language partially and infrequently.”

This is the approximate situation in perhaps the majority of Alaska Native villages. Your strategic language plan should focus on language revitalization or restoration, that is to say, helping younger people become fluent speakers. You will want to build upon the elder generations’ language abilities in your community but also work to coordinate with speakers in other communities.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/endangered-languages/atlas-of-languages-in-danger/>

Steps you need to take are:

- ✓ Conduct a Language Status Assessment
- ✓ Develop a Language Status Plan
- ✓ Work toward decolonization and healing intergenerational trauma
- ✓ Normalize the use of your language
- ✓ Start master-apprentice language learning teams
- ✓ Host language immersion retreats with your master-apprentice teams
- ✓ Ensure that your language is taught in your schools communicatively

If Your Language Is “Dormant”: Language Revival

A language that is dormant is one in which there are no highly proficient.

This certainly is the case for Eyak and Wetal and appears to be the case for two other Alaska Native languages. Your strategic language plan should focus on language revival, that is to say, bringing new life to your language by building a community of learners who work to locate, use, and expand existing language-learning materials and practice using them with each other.

Steps you need to take are:

- ✓ Conduct a language status assessment
- ✓ Develop a language status plan
- ✓ Participate in a Breath of Life language institute for dormant languages
<https://aicls.org/breath-of-life-institute/>
- ✓ Work toward decolonization and healing intergenerational trauma
- ✓ Normalize the use of your language
- ✓ Lay the groundwork for your learners to start teaching the language communicatively in schools

Additionally, here are important action goals for every Alaska Native community to attend to, regardless of your language status.

For Everyone

- ✓ Identify your language partners and allies who are supportive
- ✓ Speak phrases or expressions of your language every day with your family and kids
- ✓ Learn new sentences in your language every day
- ✓ Promote the use and the public recognition of traditional place names
- ✓ Attend your local school board meetings and talk about your language during public comment

For Language Learners

- ✓ Network with other language learners
- ✓ Identify highly-proficient speakers (in your community or who can contact electronically) and spend time just in the language several times per week

For Highly-Proficient Speakers

- ✓ Talk with other highly-proficient speakers; encourage each other to use the language among yourselves and to speak it with learners.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: RECOMMENDED BOOKS ON REVERSING LANGUAGE SHIFT FOR INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 3: ALASKA NATIVE BOARDING SCHOOLS IN ALASKA

Adapted from [https://sites.kpc.alaska.edu/jhaighalaskahistory/files/2021/06/Boarding-Schools-in-Alaska -Annotated-List.pdf](https://sites.kpc.alaska.edu/jhaighalaskahistory/files/2021/06/Boarding-Schools-in-Alaska-Annotated-List.pdf)

- Akulurak Mission (See St. Mary’s Mission)
- Anvik Mission, a.k.a. Christ Church Mission, at Anvik on the Yukon, Episcopal, 1887.
- Brevig Mission: See Teller Mission Orphanage
- Copper Valley School, Glenallen, Roman Catholic, 1956-1971.
- Covenant High School, Unalakleet, Swedish Evangelical Covenant Church, 1954-1985.
- Douglas Island Friends Mission, a.k.a. Orthodox Friends Mission Home, 1887-1912 or 1887-1917.
- Eklutna Vocational School, a.k.a. Eklutna Industrial School, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), 1924-1946.
- Galena Interior Learning Academy, Galena City School District, 1997-present.
- Haines Mission, Haines, Presbyterian, 1881-1921.
- Haines House, Haines, Presbyterian, 1921—1960.
- Holy Cross Mission, Holy Cross village on the Yukon, Roman Catholic, 1888-1956.
- Jesse Lee Home, Unalaska (1889-1925), Seward (1925-1965).
- Kanakanak Government Orphanage and Industrial Training School, 1919-1930.
- Kodiak Baptist Mission and Orphanage, on Woody Island (1893-1937) and on Kodiak Island (1937 to present).
- Kotzebue Friends High School, Kotzebue, 1958-
- Mount Edgecumbe, Sitka, BIA boarding school 1947-1983; State of Alaska boarding school 1983 to present.
- Nenana Student Living Center, City of Nenana School District, 1994 to present.
- Nulato Orphanage
- Nunaptsinghak Moravian Children’s Home (near Kwethluk), 1926-1973.
- Pilgrim Hot Springs- Our Lady of Lourdes Orphanage, Pilgrim Hot Springs, Roman Catholic, 1919-1930s.
- Pius X, Skagway, Roman Catholic, 1931-1959.
- Sitka Training School, a.k.a. Sitka Mission, Sheldon Jackson Institute, Industrial Home for Boys, Sitka Industrial Training School, established 1880; high school closed 1967; Sheldon Jackson College, 1944-2007.
- St Marks Mission, Nenana, Episcopal, 1907-1955.
- St. Mary’s Mission, Akulurak, Jesuits and Sisters of St. Anne, 1894-1898. School reopened with the Ursuline Sisters, 1905-1951, then relocated to a site on the Andreafsky, 1951-1987.

APPENDICES

- Tanana Orphanage, Tanana, Episcopal, 1929-1934.
- Teller Mission Orphanage, Brevig Mission, Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1900-1933.
- Victory High School, (near Palmer?), Arctic Missions Inc., 1959-1982.
- White Mountain Industrial School, U.S. Bureau of Education, 1926-1934 or 1935.
- William Beltz Vocational School, State of Alaska using B.I.A. funds, 1966-1969.
- Wrangell Institute, Shoemaker Bay near Wrangell, 1932-1975.

WALKIE CHARLES, PH.D.

Faculty Fellow of Language and Revitalization
Troth Yeddha' Campus, UAF
College of Rural and Community Development

At age 12 I was taken away to boarding school – 53 years ago today. Upon my arrival I was stripped naked and every belonging that I possessed was given a number (12). It was either marked with an engraver or a permanent magic marker. I had a name, but I was called by my number, and so were the rest of the boys in the dorm. The beatings that we hear about in boarding schools prior to my experience had just ended, but the culture of being “owned” by an institution, living under strict rules, eating food that was foreign to us, and rigorously learning the language of the academy was a challenge for all of us. We were scorned if we spoke in our heart languages. Many of us quit speaking the only language we knew; the system had a way of telling us indirectly what was proper or not. I became ashamed to speak the language of my mother (but no one could take away my ability to celebrate it with her until she died in 2014).

APPENDIX 4: ALASKAN LAWS RELATED TO ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES

1972 - AS 14.40.117. ESTABLISHMENT OF ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE CENTER

The University of Alaska shall establish an Alaska Native Language Center, the purposes of which are to

- (1) study languages native to Alaska;
- (2) develop literacy materials;
- (3) assist in the translation of important documents;
- (4) provide for the development and dissemination of Alaska Native literature; and
- (5) train Alaska Native language speakers to work as teachers and aides in bilingual classrooms

1995 - AS 14.30.420. Native language education

(a) A school board shall establish a local Native language curriculum advisory board for each school in the district in which a majority of the students are Alaska Natives and any school district with Alaska Native students may establish a local Native language curriculum advisory board for each school with Alaska Native students in their district. If the local Native language curriculum advisory board recommends the establishment of a Native language education curriculum for a school, the school board may initiate and conduct a Native language education curriculum within grades K through 12 at that school. The program, if established, must include Native languages traditionally spoken in the community in which the school is located. Each school board conducting a program of Native language education shall implement the program as a part of regular classroom studies and shall use

- (1) instructors who are certified under AS 14.20.020 or 14.20.025; and
 - (2) to the maximum extent possible
 - (A) instructors and instructional materials available through the University of Alaska; and
 - (B) audio-visual, computer, and satellite technology.
- (b) In this section,

- (1) "district" has the meaning given in AS 14.17.990;
- (2) "Native" means a person of one-fourth degree or more Alaskan Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut blood.

2012 - AS 44.33.520. ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE PRESERVATION AND ADVISORY COUNCIL

The legislature finds that the preservation of Alaska Native languages is a critical component in the sustenance of cultural identity. The legislature further finds that Alaska Native languages are the foundation of cultures and are vital in maintaining traditional knowledge and understanding.

(a) The Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council is established in the department for the purpose of recommending the establishment or reorganization of programs to support the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages.

(b) The council established under this section shall

(1) advise both the governor and legislature on programs, policies, and projects to provide for the cost-effective preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages in the state;

(2) meet at least twice a year to carry out the purposes of the council; members may participate in meetings telephonically; and

(3) prepare reports of its findings and recommendations for the governor's and the legislature's consideration on or before January 1 of each even-numbered year.

(c) The governor shall appoint to the council established in this section five voting members who are professional language experts and who represent diverse regions of the state. In addition, one member of the senate appointed by the president of the senate and one member of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives shall serve on the council as non-voting members. In appointing the non-voting members of the council, the president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint a member of the bush caucus, if a bush caucus exists. In this subsection, "bush caucus" means a group of legislators that represents rural areas of the state.

(d) The members appointed by the governor shall serve at the pleasure of the governor.

(e) Members of council shall serve without compensation but are entitled to per diem and travel expenses as provided under AS 39.20.180.

(f) The department shall provide staff as needed to support the council; the staff must demonstrate competency in an Alaska Native language.

2015 - AS 44.12.310. OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

(a) The English, Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq, Unangax, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in, Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Han, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian languages are the official languages of the State of Alaska.

(b) [Effective January 21, 2015]. The designation of languages other than English as official languages of the state under (a) of this section does not require or place a duty or responsibility on the state or a municipal government to print a document or record or conduct a meeting, assembly, or other government activity in any language other than English.

APPENDIX 5: 2022 RECOMMENDATIONS AND UPDATES

The items below include only those recommendations to the Governor or to the Legislature; recommendations to the general public are difficult to assess in a brief fashion.

Recommendation: Calling on the Governor to issue an administrative order, declaring a state of emergency for Alaska Native languages.

Update: On September 23rd, 2018, Gov. Walker signed A.O. 300 which did recognize the Council's call to recognize that there is a linguistic emergency. This A.O. did promote increased attention to Alaska Native languages in education, Alaska Native place names in road signage, but did not address AS 14.30.420 directly.

Recommendation: Calling on the State of Alaska to hold listening sessions across Alaska, as with Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Update: No action to date.

Recommendation: Calling for a formal apology from the Alaska Legislature, on behalf of past actions by the government in Alaska, to the generations of Alaska Natives who were involuntarily separated from their families and home communities and sent away to boarding schools.

Update: There has been no official action by the Legislature, however, Gov. Bill Walker did make a verbal apology on behalf of the State at the Alaska Federation of Natives on October 18th, 2018.

Recommendation: Calling on the Legislature to adopt legislation in support of language immersion schools and for training for Alaska Native language teachers in a framework that leads to teacher certification.

Update: No action to date.

Recommendation: Calling on the University of Alaska to offer instruction in Alaska Native languages, including the traditional language of each campus, in programs designed to lead to conversational fluency. The University should not cancel classes because of predetermined minimum enrollment levels and should creatively partner with other Alaskan organizations to underwrite tuition costs of all Alaska Native language learners. Furthermore, the University should ensure that it offers comprehensive instruction in the most effective teaching methods and curriculum design for Alaska Native language instruction.

Update: No specific action to date.

Recommendation: Calling on the Legislature to restore funding for the Administrative Assistant position within the ANLPAC section of the Division of Community and Regional Affairs.

Update: No action to date.

APPENDIX 6: ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

The following lists indicate language programs that ANLPAC staff is aware of, based upon data supplied directly by school districts, language program organizers, from the Department of Education and Early Development, and from social media promotions of language learning opportunities.. Some grant-funded programs may not be currently operating.

Ahtna

- Ahtna Heritage Foundation: Language Documentation Program. Glennallen, AHF Office.
- C’ek’aedi Hwnax “Legacy House” (Ahtna Cultural Center), Ethnographic & Linguistic Archive. Copper Center, Alaska. 1500 recordings in Ahtna and English.
- Kenai Peninsula College: Ahtna Language distance learning classes
- Ya Ne Dah Ah Tribal School, Chickaloon

Anchorage Area

- Ahtna language lessons weekly, at Ahtna, Inc. in Anchorage
- AlaskaNativeLanguages.org
- Alaska Native Charter School
- Alaska Native Heritage Center: Urban Eskimo Revitalization Project: Teacher training and instruction in Yup’ik and Iñupiaq languages
- College Gate Elementary, Yup’ik Immersion, Anchorage School District
- Cook Inlet Native Head Start, Yup’ik immersion program
- Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Clare Swan Headstart, Yup’ik immersion
- Ilisaqativut, Inupiaq language intensives
- Iñupiaragvik Isagviñmi, Anchorage Inupiaq Language Circle
- Iñupiaq Phrase of the Day
- Unangam Tunuu (Aleut) Wednesday noons and Thursday evenings, Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association

Arctic Slope Region

- Arctic language website assessment & teaching & learning policy
- Rosetta Stone, North Slope Iñupiaq, levels 1-3
- ICC-Alaska Education Steering Committee includes starting Iñupiaq / Yup’ik immersion
- Ilisaqativut, Iñupiaq language intensives

Bering Straits

- Aniguiin School, Elim, BSSD, Inupiaq and Yup’ik languages
- Brevig Mission School, BSSD, Inupiaq language
- Ilisaqativut, Inupiaq language intensives
- Koyuk-Malimiut School, Koyuk, BSSD, Inupiaq and Yup’ik languages
- Nome, Kawerak – Eskimo Heritage Program language project: Inupiaq, Yup’ik, and St. Lawrence Island Yupik languages
- Nome, Inupiaq language pre-school scheduled for fall, 2018; Kawerak and Nome Public Schools

- Nome, Norton Sound Education Working Group (Language & Culture)
- Nome, Strategic Planning Committee for Bering Straits languages
- Nome Elementary School, Nome Public Schools, Inupiaq language
- Shishmaref School, BSSD, Inupiaq language
- Shishmaref School, upcoming Inupiaq language nest, fall 2018, Kawerak
- Anthony A. Andrews School, Saint Michael, BSSD, Yup'ik language
- Tukurngailnguq School, Stebbins, BSSD, Yup'ik language
- James C. Isabell School, Teller, BSSD, Inupiaq language
- Unalakleet: BSSD Bilingual Bicultural Dept. Program

Bristol Bay

- Iliamna Communities Teaching Culture through Native Languages, Igiugig Village Council

Yup'ik / Yugtun

- Akiachak, Yupiit School District, Yup'ik language
- Aleknagik School, SWRSD, Yup'ik language
- Atmautluak, Joann A. Alexie Memorial School, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Bethel, Ayaprun Immersion Charter School, LKSD (1995 to present), Yup'ik language
- Chevak School, Kashunamiut School District, Cup'ik language
- Ekwook, William "Sonny" Nelson School, SWRSD, Yup'ik language
- Hooper Bay School, LYSD, K-3 Yup'ik Early Total Immersion program
- Igiugig Yup'ik language program, ANA Language Preservation grant
- Kasigluk, Akiuk Memorial School, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Kasigluk-Akula, Akula Elitnaurvik, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Koliganek School, SWRSD, Yup'ik language
- Kongiganak, Ayagina'ar Elitnaurvik, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Kwigillingok School, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Manokotak, SWRSD, Yup'ik language
- Mekoryak, Nuniwarmiut School, LKSD, Cup'ig language
- Napaskiak, ZJ Williams Memorial School, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- New Stuyahok Chief Ivan Blunka School, SWRSD, Yup'ik language
- Newtok, Newtok Ayaprun School, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Nightmute, Negtemiut Elitnaurviat, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Nunapitchuk, Anna Tobeluk Memorial School, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Oscarville, Qugcuun Memorial School, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Quinhagak, Kuinerrarmiut Elitnaurviat, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- St. Mary's School, St. Mary's, Yup'ik language
- Togiak School, SWRSD, Yup'ik language
- Twin Hills School, SWRSD, Yup'ik language

Chugachmiut

- Chugachmiut Language Program: Master-Apprentice Teams, Sugt'stun language
- Port Graham School, KPBSD, Sugt'stun language
- Nanwalek Preschool, IRA Council, Sugt'stun language
- Nanwalek Elementary/High School, KPBSD, Sugt'stun language

Dena'ina

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=moVZ94hNsK8
- [UAA Dena'ina language classes: Anchorage and Kenai](#)

Fairbanks

- Doyon Heritage Foundation: Nine Dene languages plus Iñupiaq
- UAF: ANLC; ANLP; ANLA
- B.A. in Yup'ik language
- B.A. in Iñupiaq language

Gwich'in

- Arctic Village: 3, half-hour classes day, 1-5, middle school, high school
- Ft. Yukon: Grades 1-5

Hän

- Eagle, Eagle Community School, AGSD, Hän language

Holikachuk

- Elizabeth Keating, from Holikachuk/Grayling, Athabaskan on FB word exchange; wants to record and have teleconference capabilities. 10-20 people speak [some of the language? Dr. Beth Leonard knows of two elders who are fluent speakers of Holikachuk]

Koyukon / Denaakk'e

- Allakaket School, YKSD, Denaakk'e language
- Hughes, Johnny Oldman School, YKSD, Denaakk'e language
- Kaltag School, YKSD, Denaakk'e language
- Koyukuk School, Ella B. Vernetti School, YKSD, Denaakk'e language
- Manley School, YKSD, Denaakk'e language
- Minto School, YKSD, Denaakk'e language
- Nulato, Andrew K. Demoski School, YKSD, Denaakk'e language
- Rampart School, YKSD, Denaakk'e language

Koniag

- Alutiiq Museum: Language Program
- Kodiak Alutiiq New Words Council
- Kodiak Alutiiq Dancers
- Alutiiqlanguage.org website
- Alutiiqeducation.org website (materials)
- Kodiak College Alutiiq Language Occupational Endorsement Certificate
- Alutiiq Language oral history archive
- Alutiiq Language Club
- Alutiiq Language & Learners Facebook page
- Kodiak High School, Alutiiq language class
- Port Lions School: Outreach through Native Village of Port Lions
- Native Village of Afognak: Language Materials & Curriculum
- Old Harbor: Preschool language lessons

Northwest Arctic Native Association (NANA) Region

- Aqqaluk Trust –language project – Iñupiaq Rosetta Stone CD, Level One
- Chukchi Campus, UAF, Iñupiaq language classes
- Iliasaqativut, Iñupiaq language intensives
- Nikaitchuat Iļisagviat Iñupiaq Immersion School, N.V.K.
- NWABSD Bilingual Bicultural Dept. Program
- Rosetta Stone, Kotzebue Sound Iñupiaq, level 1

Southeastern Alaska

- Angoon, Angoon School, Chatham School District, Tlingit language
- Haines, Haines Elementary, Haines SD, Tlingit culture
- Haida Language Learners Facebook page
- Hydaburg School, Hydaburg School District, Haida language
- Hydaburg, X̄ántsii Náay Haida Immersion Preschool
- Hoonah, Hoonah City School District, Tlingit language
- Kake, Kake City School, Tlingit culture
- Juneau, Central Council Tlingit & Haida, Haa Yoo X̄'atángi Kúdi language nest
- Juneau, Dzantik'i Héeni Middle School, Tlingit language
- Juneau, Douglas Indian Association, Tlingit language program
- Juneau – Goldbelt Heritage Foundation Tlingit language program
- Juneau, Harborview Elementary, Tlingit Culture, Language, and Literacy Program
- Juneau, Juneau-Douglas High School, Tlingit language
- Juneau, Sít' Eetí Shaanáx̄ - Glacier Valley Elementary, Tlingit language
- Juneau, Thunder Mountain High School, Tlingit language
- Juneau, Yaak̄oosgé Daakahídi High School, Tlingit language
- Juneau – Sealaska Corporation language projects in Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian
- Juneau – Sealaska Heritage Institute language program supporting Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian, Haa Yoo X̄'atángi Deiyí (Language Pathways Program supports 14 new language teachers)
- Juneau – Sm'alḡyax Learners Group
- Juneau – X̄aad Kíl (Haida) language learners group
- Ketchikan community, Haida and Tsimshian languages
- Ketchikan High School, Tlingit, Haida, and Sm'alḡyax / Shm'alḡyack literacy
- Klukwan School, Chatham Strait SD, Tlingit culture
- Metlakatla, Richard Johnson Elementary, Annette Island SD, Sm'alḡyax / Shm'alḡyack language
- Sitka, Baranoff Elementary School, Tlingit language
- Sitka, Blatchley Middle School, Tlingit language program
- Sitka, Mt. Edgecumbe High School, Yup'ik and Tlingit literacy
- Sitka, Sitka High School, Tlingit literacy
- Tlingitlanguage.com
- UAS Language Program and Classes in Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian languages, Indigenous Language Speaker Certificate, Indigenous Language Teacher Certificate
- Wrangell Public School, Tlingit language
- Yakutat School, Tlingit culture

Tanana Benhti Kokhut'ana Kenaga'

- Minto, Minto School, YKSD, Lower Tanana language class

Unangaŋ

- St. George, Summer Unangam Tunuu workshop, WAYK [Where Are Your Keys]
- St. Paul School, Pribilof School District, Unangax Aleut language
- Unalaska City School, Unangax Aleut language

Upper Kuskokwim / Dinak'i

- Upper Kuskokwim Language Revitalization Website <http://ukpreservation.com/>

Upper Tanana / Nee'aanèegn'

- Northway, Walter Northway School, Upper Tanana Athabascan language

APPENDIX 7: THREE LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION SUCCESS STORIES

DOYON FOUNDATION

With support from Native Language Preservation & Maintenance grants from the U.S. Administration for Native Americans, the Doyon Foundation has made great strides in serving the Shareholders of Doyon Ltd, residents of the Doyon region, and learners everywhere of the traditional languages of the Doyon region.

Doyon Foundation developed its Language Revitalization Strategic Plan in 2018-2021 as a roadmap for the future where current and future generations have the opportunity to hear, to learn, and to speak the language of their ancestors.

“All the ancestral languages of the Doyon region are critically endangered. The Athabascan languages in our region include: Benhti Kokhut’ana Kenaga’ (Lower Tanana), Deg Xinag, Denaakk’e (Koyukon), Dihthaad Xt’een Iin Aandëeg’ (Tanacross), Dinak’i (Upper Kuskokwim), Dinjii Zhuh K’yaa (Gwich’in), Hän, Holikachuk, and Nee’aanëegn’ (Upper Tanana). Inupiaq is the 10th language in our region, spoken historically in Alatna, Evansville, and Beaver. The current endangered status of our languages is an outcome of a long history of laws, policies, and institutions that sought to assimilate Alaska Natives into mainstream culture. If the current trend is allowed to persist, all of our region’s languages will be lost within the span of a few generations. When we look at the iconic map of Alaska Native languages produced by the Alaska Native Language Center, we see clear and sharp lines drawn between each distinct language. The reality is those lines are actually very blurred. Traveling up or down the rivers, the languages gradually shift dialects village by village, fish camp by fish camp, trapline by trapline. The comparison might be made to a hillside of aspen trees, which might appear as many individual trees, when in fact it is essentially one tree system, united through a network of roots sending up new shoots through the soil.”

https://vvmac7.a2cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/185_DLO-Language-Strategic-Plan_FINAL-LowRes.pdf

Doyon Languages Online continues to develop and offer online language learning lessons for the ten Alaska Native languages of the Doyon region. These lessons are easily accessible for free to all interested learners and teachers. Doyon Languages Online is accessible on all devices including desktop and laptop computers, as well as mobile devices using the Transparent Language app for iPhone and Android smartphones. Through Doyon Languages Online, our goal is to increase the number of people who speak Benhti Kokhut’ana Kenaga’ (Lower Tanana), Deg Xinag, Denaakk’e (Koyukon), Dihthaad Xt’een Iin Aandëeg’ (Tanacross), Dinak’i (Upper Kuskokwim), Dinjii Zhuh K’yaa (Gwich’in), Doogh Qinag (Holikachuk), Hän, and Nee’aanëegn’ (Upper Tanana) by:

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- Creating introductory online language-learning lessons for each of the languages
- Training teachers in the use of the technology through partnerships with school districts, and field testing lessons with students
- Creating a template document that helps other language communities in the Doyon area to complete similar online language lesson projects

Since 2021, Doyon Foundation's Mentor-Apprentice Program has provided training and compensation for participating mentor (fluent or proficient speakers) and apprentice (learners) teams. Mentors guide apprentices to become proficient speakers of Doyon region languages through hours of one-on-one language learning for one year. In turn, language learners who complete an apprenticeship can give back to their language community as a mentor, instructor or lesson developer. Learn more about Doyon Foundations Master Apprentice Program at <https://doyonfoundation.com/language/mentor-apprentice-program/>

BRISTOL BAY FOUNDATION

The Bristol Bay Foundation's journey in language began in 2020 with the ground work for development of their 10-year Strategic Plan. Recognizing the importance of a more inclusive and thorough approach, the Foundation conducted a needs assessment in 2020. Dubbed the "Cultural Wellness Check," this assessment involved interviews with influential Bristol Bay cultural leaders. The discussions delved into various aspects, including language, traditional arts and crafts, subsistence activities, local knowledge, traditional medicine, and historical and archaeological elements.

The findings from the "Cultural Wellness Check" were illuminating and revealed a shared concern across all cultural groups: the erosion of native languages and the lack of opportunities for their preservation. Language loss emerged as the primary concern among Tribes and cultural workers in Bristol Bay.

In response to this critical issue, the Foundation set forth a 10-year goal for its Cultural Heritage Program: to "Support and grow a Bristol Bay language reclamation and revitalization movement." This marked a turning point in the Foundation's mission, with a renewed focus on preserving and revitalizing the Indigenous languages of Bristol Bay.

The culmination of this commitment was the Bristol Bay Language Summit held in May 2022. The summit brought together Dena'ina, Yugtun, and Alutiiq Elders, speakers, teachers, and learners in Anchorage. The discussions and recommendations that emerged from this summit laid the foundation for the development of a Language Revitalization Strategic Plan. Currently the Foundation is contracting with Raven's Group for the development of a strategic plan and hosting a second Language Summit in May of 2024. Its their hopes that this guide will help to strengthen region-wide efforts, delineate specific objectives, streamline grant applications, and concentrate efforts on vital language revitalization projects.

INDIGENOUS PLACE NAMES PROJECT

The Indigenous Place Names Project is an organized, multi-party effort to reclaim traditional Dena'ina place names on traditional Dena'ina land, now within the Municipality of Anchorage. This project is a partnership between the Native Village of Eklutna tribal government, Anchorage Park Foundation, Rasmuson Foundation, Alaska Native Heritage Center, and the Anchorage Museum. It will eventually recognize 32 important place names on *Dena'inaq Elnen'aq'*, the land of the Dena'ina people.

<https://eklutna-nsn.gov/>

<https://www.anchoragemuseum.org/about-us/land-acknowledgement/projects/indigenous-place-names-project/>

<https://denaina.anchoragemuseum.org/multimedia/denaina/map.html>

<https://alaskapublic.org/2023/08/21/indigenous-place-names-project-celebrates-4th-anchorage-area-signpost/>

<https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/anchorage/2023/08/25/new-anchorage-signpost-explaining-denaina-place-name-is-part-of-broader-movement/>



Place names in the Municipality of Anchorage that are being restored.



Photo on the left is of the new marker along the Coastal Trail in August 2023 highlighting the traditional name *Nuch'ishtunt*, “the place protected from the wind” in Dena’inaq’, also known by its English name, Point Woronzof. Aaron Leggett, shown here at the dedication, is president of the Native Village of Eklutna and curator at the Anchorage Museum. He has been a leader of this project since its inception in 2018. Leggett explained that the artwork represents a traditional Dena’ina fire bag. The photo on the right is dancing at Celebration at *Nuch'ishtunt*, “the place protected from the wind” in Dena’inaq’

APPENDIX 8: COUNCIL MEMBERS AND STAFF

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Senator Donald Olson – *Inupiaq* – Senator Olson is from Golovin and a lifelong Alaskan.



Senator Olson was born in Nome and is a doctor, pilot, reindeer herder, businessman and Legislator. He and wife Willow have seven children: Colby, Martin, Donald Jr., Maggie Rae, Solomon, and David and Elise. In 2023-2024 Senator Olson served as the Vice Chair for the Senate Community & regional Affairs, Chair of the Senate Public Safety, Chair Senate Law, Co-Chair Senate Finance, Alternate Senate Select Committee On Legislative Ethics, Member Senate Legislative Council, Member Senate Governor(Fin Sub), Member Senate Conference Committee On Hb39, Member Senate University Of Alaska, Member Senate Legislature(Fin Sub), and Member Senate Special Committee On World Trade.

Representative C J McCormick – Representative CJ (Conrad) McCormick was born and lives in Bethel, Alaska. McCormick graduated from Bethel Regional High School in 2015. His career experience includes working as a communications specialist with the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation. He served two terms as vice mayor of Bethel. McCormick was elected to the Alaska House of Representatives in 2023-2024 and serves as the Chair House Community & Regional Affairs, Chair House Tribal Affairs, Member House Education & Early Development, Member House Fish & Game, Member House Health & Social Services, Member House Education, Member House Fisheries, Member House Corrections, Member House Public Safety, Member House Health & Social Services.



X'unei Lance Twitchell, Ph.D. (Chair) – *Lingít, Haida, Yup'ik, Sami* – Dr. Twitchell carries



the Lingít (Tlingit) names X'unei, Du Aaní Kawdinook, and the Haida name K'eijáakw. He lives in Juneau with his wife and bilingual children and is from the Lingít, Haida, and Yup'ik native nations of Alaska and the Sami of Norway. He speaks and studies the Lingít language and advocates for Indigenous language reclamation. Twitchell is a Professor of Alaska Native Languages at the University of Alaska Southeast, earned his doctoral degree at Ka Haka 'Ula o Ke'elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, and is a Northwest Coast artist, published poet, screenwriter, and musician.

Bernadette Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle, Ph.D. A.B.D. (Vice-Chair) – Inupiaq

Ms. Alvanna-Stimpfle, of Nome, is a fluent, first-language speaker of Inupiaq and is the director of the Kawerak, Inc. Eskimo Heritage Program, and a doctoral candidate at Ka Haka ‘Ula o Ke‘elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo. She has taught with Nome Public Schools for twenty-five years as a Bilingual-Bicultural Inupiaq language and culture teacher, a classroom teacher and worked with English as Second Language students and English Language Learners. She has taught Inupiaq at the Northwest Campus of the University of Alaska in Nome for many years. She has also worked as a teacher mentor for the Alaska Statewide Mentoring Project. From 1998-2008, Alvanna-Stimpfle was involved with the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative where Native educators from all over the state developed standards for Culturally Responsive School Standards and ways to teach students from the Indigenous perspective. She is a member of the King Island Drummers and Dancers and a former member of the King Island Native Community Tribal Council. She is a member of the King Island Native Community Elders committee. Alvanna-Stimpfle holds a master’s degree in Education in Language and Literacy and a bachelor’s degree in Inupiaq language from UAF.

**Walkie Charles, Ph.D. – Yup'ik**

Dr. Charles, of Fairbanks, a fluent, first-language speaker of Yup'ik, is an associate professor of Yup'ik and Director of the Alaska Native Language Center (ANLC) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). He is the first Alaska Native Director of ANLC. The Yup'ik language is one of two Alaska Native languages with bachelor's degree programs; the other being Inupiaq. He grew up in Emmonak speaking Norton Sound Kotlik and lower Yukon Yup'ik dialects. He earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, a master's degree at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and a Ph.D. in applied linguistics at UAF. His research interests are second language acquisition, dynamic assessment, and socio-cultural theory. A key interest of his is maintaining his language through teaching it at all educational levels. Charles also heads the Yup'ik Program at UAF. Dr. Charles was the Inaugural Chair of ANLPAC from 2012 to 2013.

APPENDICES

Annette Evans Smith – *Koyukon Athabascan, Alutiiq and Yup'ik* – Ms. Evans Smith, of Anchorage, is the former President and CEO of the Alaska Native Heritage Center. Under her leadership, the center initiated a study to identify Alaska Native language programs and learners of Alaska Native languages with the hope of connecting Alaska Native residents in Anchorage to the language programs that exist across Alaska. Her prior work involved service with Southcentral Foundation and The Northern Forum. She holds a bachelor's degree in international relations from Stanford University and is also a trustee with the Western States Arts Federation. Evans Smith is actively learning the Yup'ik language through her grandmother and Marge Nakak.



Kay Larson-Blair – *Yup'ik, Unangan, and Cherokee* – Ms. Larson-Blair from Dillingham and Tahlequah, Oklahoma (Cherokee Nation), is of Yup'ik, Unangan, Cherokee, and European heritage. She takes pride in her mixed cultural identity and is a tribal member of the Curyung Tribe. She currently calls Anchorage home, where she has raised her two daughters. Kay serves as the Cultural Heritage Program Director at the Bristol Bay Foundation where her work focuses on supporting language revitalization and reclamation efforts and grant management. Throughout her career she has strived to bridge the gap between tradition and the contemporary world, ensuring the preservation and celebration of Alaska's rich cultural

heritage and knowledge systems.

Council Staff

D. Roy Mitchell IV, *Research Analyst* – Mr. Mitchell is a linguistic anthropologist with B.A. and M.A. degrees in anthropology and a B.A. in Iñupiaq language from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and is a Ph.D. A.B.D. in linguistic and cultural anthropology from U.C. Berkeley. He has been a student of Alaska Native languages since 1976. At previous points



in his life he had basic conversational proficiency in Iñupiaq and Yup'ik but is rusty now; he's also studied St Lawrence Island Yupik, Sugt'stun, Tlingit, Eyak, Dena'ina, Koyukon, Ahtna, Sm'algyax and Haida. In 1982 he began team-teaching Iñupiaq with fluent elders at Northwest Community College in Nome, using a method that uses no English translation at all; he and some of these others then took this methods training on the road to Alaska school districts and the Alaska Bilingual Conference in 1985. In the early 1990s, he helped start the Yup'ik immersion school in Bethel and in the early 2000s helped Sealaska Heritage Institute expand its Native languages programs.

AYARUQ:

2024 Action Plan for Alaska Native Languages

