

SB 210: Indigenous Cultural Heritage Education

Amending AS 14.03.015 | 34th Legislature, Second Session

SPONSOR: SENATOR LÖKI GALE TOBIN



Alaska's Education Foundation Has a Gap


AS 14.03.015 is the foundational statute governing Alaska's education system — DEED's regulatory authority, district goals, and school priorities all flow from it. Yet the strategic priorities DEED itself has already identified are missing from this cornerstone document.

DEED's Alaska Education Challenge Already Calls For:

- Culturally relevant and responsive education
- Meaningful tribal partnerships in schools
- Closing the persistent achievement gap for Alaska Native students

The Problem

Because these priorities have no home in the foundational statute, they remain **perpetually discretionary** — well-intentioned but structurally unanchored. Without a statutory foundation, implementation is uneven and vulnerable to shifting priorities.

 **21% of Alaska's public school students are Alaska Native** yet their heritage finds no recognition in the state's core education law.

What SB 210 Does

One amendment. Designed to be practical, respectful, and locally driven.

1

Encourages Every Alaskan to Learn

Affirms that all Alaskans should have the opportunity to learn about Alaska Native and American Indian cultural heritages in a **culturally responsive manner** — honoring both historical depth and living traditions.

2

Calls for Cooperative Tribal Engagement

Directs local educational institutions to **work cooperatively with tribes** when providing instruction, setting educational goals, or adopting rules — ensuring heritage content and contemporary contributions are represented authentically.

3

Establishes a Pathway for Partnership

Creates a clear, voluntary pathway for every local educational institution to **consult and partner with local tribal entities** — so that school personnel develop genuine understanding of the students and communities they serve.

Why This Works



Authoritative, Local Knowledge

Tribal entities are the authoritative source on their own heritage. SB 210 creates a **direct, local connection** between schools and that knowledge — bypassing one-size-fits-all curriculum mandates in favor of community-driven content.



27 Years Without an Anchor

DEED's culturally responsive school standards have existed since **1998** — a full 27 years of voluntary implementation with no statutory foundation. This bill finally gives those standards the home they need to achieve consistent, lasting impact.



Documented Impact on Outcomes

Teacher-community alignment is a **documented factor** in student engagement, belonging, and academic outcomes — for Alaska Native and non-Native students alike.



No Prescribed Curriculum

It gives schools a **framework and a pathway** — empowering local decisions while establishing the statutory intent that has long been missing.



Thank You

The Ask

Support SB 210 and help give Alaska's education system the statutory foundation it needs to serve every student.

Contact

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34th Alaska State Legislature

Questions?