



January, 21 2025

To:
Senate Education Committee Chair Senator Tobin
120 4th St, Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Request for State Tribal Education Compacting Pilot Legislation HB 59 STATE-TRIBAL EDUCATION COMPACTS to be heard in House Education on behalf of Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Iñupiaq Community of the Arctic Slope, Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Ketchikan Indian Community, King Island Native Community, and Knik Tribe.

We appreciate Governor Dunleavy for introducing HB59 and SB66. The development of this legislation was led by the five tribal compacting partners. We stand ready to collaborate with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, school districts, and state policymakers to ensure the successful advancement of the tribally led education compacting as a demonstration model for long-term education self-governance in Alaska. We formally request hearings in both the House and Senate Education Committees early during the 34th legislative session.

In the Tlingit language, where your offices reside on Tlingit Aaní, they say "Gunalchéesh," a word that carries deeper meaning than a simple "thank you." It expresses gratitude that recognizes partnership, a more accurate translation is "without you, this would not be possible." Gunalchéesh Senate President Stevens for introducing "An Act relating to a demonstration state-tribal education compact; relating to demonstration state-tribal education compact schools," and your dynamic leadership in signing the bill into law, Chapter 43 SLA 22. As Self-Determined Tribal Governments we are sending the following official government communication formally requesting committee hearings and passage of HB59 and SB66 to create Pilot State Tribal Education Public Compact Schools in Alaska.

Alaska Native communities have sought greater self-determination in education, recognizing that culturally appropriate learning environments improve student outcomes and preserve our Indigenous languages, cultures, and ways of knowing. Five tribes completed negotiations with the Alaska and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in December of 2023. The outcome of these negotiations was transmitted to the legislature during January 2024 as the State Tribal Education Compact Schools Demonstration Legislative Report.

Tribal governments have the inherent right to define and lead the education of their citizens, and state-tribal education compacting represents a meaningful step toward

realizing this right. Any legislation implementing state-tribal education compacting should be carefully structured to uphold tribal sovereignty and ensure that public education funds remain dedicated to supporting tribal education and self-determination. As introduced, HB 59 and SB 66 represent a respectful public process that provides for developing pilot state-tribal education compacts through full collaboration with tribal governments, ensuring the pilot is tool for strengthening tribal self-governance in education.

The following undersigned tribal governments express our full support of Tribal Education Compacting through the passage of HB59 & SB66.

Respectfully,

The Alaska Native Tribal Education Consortium