

HB

157

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157</SUBJECT><COMM>HEDC29</COMM></TARGET>

ALASKA LEGISLATURE
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

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rep.jonathan.kreiss-tomkins@akleg.gov

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Juneau, Alaska 99801 (Jan. – April)
State Capitol, Room 426
(907) 465-3732

Sitka, Alaska 99835 (May – Dec.)
201 Katlian Street, Ste. 103
(907) 747-4665

Representative Wes Keller
Chair, House Education Committee
Capitol 403, Juneau, AK 99801

March 31, 2015

Representative Keller,

I respectfully request a hearing for HB 157, Language Immersion Schools and Teacher Certifications, before the House Education Committee.

Please find attached all requested documents.

Possible testifiers include:

- Jennifer Schmidt, Principal, Fronteras Spanish Immersion Charter School (Wasilla)
- Mike Smith, Principal, Ayaprun Elitnaurvik Yup'ik Immersion Charter School (Bethel)
- Brandon Locke, Director of World Languages, Anchorage School District (Anchorage)
- Diane Hirshberg, Director, Center for Alaska Education Policy Research, ISER (Anchorage)
- Lance Twitchell, Assistant Professor of Alaska Native Languages, UAS (Juneau)
- Gayle Miller, Academic Director, Lower Kuskokwim School District (Bethel)

I also request that off-site testimony be available.

The staff contact for this bill is Reid Magdanz. He can be reached at 465-3306 or reid.magdanz@akleg.gov.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

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

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

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HB 157 Sponsor Statement
Language Immersion Schools and Teacher Certification

Language immersion education is an increasingly popular educational model, especially in today's rapidly globalizing world. Language immersion education also produces impressive educational outcomes. Decades of experience from around the world have shown that language immersion education can create second-language fluency while also contributing to academic success in other subjects.

Alaska already has a variety of successful and popular immersion programs. Fronteras in the Mat-Su (Spanish) and Rilke Schule in Anchorage (German) are both planning moves to new facilities as interest grows. Anchorage School District's world languages immersion program teaches three languages – Japanese, Russian, and Spanish – and is in the process of adding French and Chinese. In rural Alaska, interest is growing in immersion as a way to teach endangered Native languages, Ayaprun Elitnaurvik in Bethel leading the way.

HB 157 creates a charter school designation with the specific mission of delivering a curriculum in a foreign or Native language, and holds these schools to a strict immersion standard. It requires fully certified teachers in these charter schools to have the specialized skills necessary to successfully teach in an immersion setting, and it includes provisions that will put in the classroom language speakers who know how to teach but may not be able to get the necessary formal qualifications to be fully certified. HB 157 also gives the Department of Education the authority to allow teachers in immersion charter schools that teach an Alaska Native language to be certified through processes developed by local tribal governments. And last, it allows students to be tested in their language of instruction, if benchmark tests comparable to English-language tests exist.

Immersion education broadens students' knowledge of the world, gives them skills to help them succeed in their future careers, and often improves their academic performance not just in language classes, but in all subjects.

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Sectional Analysis

HB 157 – Language Immersion Schools/Teacher Certifications (version S)

Section 1 requires the charter contract between a school board and a language immersion charter school established under section 2 of the bill to contain provisions requiring compliance with section 2.

Section 2 provides for the establishment of language immersion charter schools, describes the purpose of immersion charter schools, and describes how they differ from regular charter schools.

- **Subsection (a)** requires that 50% of the instructional hours at each grade level in a language immersion charter school are provided in an indigenous or foreign language. The subsection also requires language immersion charter schools to comply with all other charter school laws, except as otherwise provided in the section.
- **Subsection (b)** requires that an application for a language immersion charter school identify the language(s) of instruction and describe the percentage of instructional hours that will be provided in that language.
- **Subsection (c)** allows individuals who are proficient speakers of the language taught at the charter school or who have substantial knowledge of the culture of the people who spoke that language to serve on the school's academic policy committee, in addition to parents and school employees.
- **Subsection (d)** requires a language immersion charter school that does not provide at least 50% of the school's instructional hours in an indigenous or foreign language to work with the Department of Education and Early Development to develop a plan for reaching that benchmark. The plan must be submitted to the Department for approval.
- **Subsection (e)** requires that teachers at a language immersion charter school hold either a teacher certificate issued under AS 14.20.015, 14.20.017, 14.20.020, or 14.20.022 and a language immersion endorsement issued under section 3; a limited teacher certificate issued under section 6; or a certificate issued by an Alaska Native tribe under section 7.
- **Subsection (f)** exempts teachers teaching classes in English at language immersion charter schools from the requirement to hold a language immersion endorsement.

Section 3 creates a language immersion endorsement. To receive a language immersion endorsement, a person must apply to the Department, hold a teacher certificate issued under AS

14.20.015, 14.20.017, 14.20.020, or 14.20.022, demonstrate ability to conduct classroom activities entirely in an indigenous or foreign language, and have completed a course or program of study in language immersion education. The course or program must be offered by an institute of higher education or be approved by the Department of Education and Early Development.

Section 4 amends the existing limited teacher certificate program (Type M in regulation). The section removes Alaska Native languages from the list of subjects certificate holders are eligible to teach and removes the state board of education's authority to require certificate holders to undertake academic training.

Section 5 further amends the existing limited teacher certificate program by making newly issued certificates valid for only one year. Upon certification by the school board of the district or REAA in which the person teaches that the certificate holder has demonstrated skills in classroom instruction, curriculum development, and student assessment, the certificate can be extended for an additional four years. It can be renewed afterwards in accordance with regulations. Section 5 also prohibits the state board from requiring additional academic training as a condition of certificate renewal.

Section 6 creates a new limited teacher certificate for teachers instructing in a language other than English. A certificate can be issued if the state board of education determines there are an insufficient number of certified teachers in the state capable of teaching in a language. A limited certificate is valid for teaching any subject in grades K-8, so long as the language of instruction is not English, and for teaching language classes at any grade level.

- **Subsection (b)** states that a limited certificate can be issued if:
 - A school board or the academic policy committee of a language immersion charter school requests issuance of the certificate;
 - The certificate applicant has demonstrated instructional skills sufficient to assure the public the person is competent as a teacher, as defined by regulation;
 - The applicant has demonstrated subject matter expertise, if teaching a class other than a language class in grades four through eight; and
 - The applicant has language proficiency sufficient to conduct classroom activities wholly in the non-English language.
- **Subsection (c)** prohibits the holder of a limited certificate under the section from teaching a subject other than the language itself unless the person has completed a course or program of study in language immersion education. The course or program must be offered by an institute of higher education or be approved by the Department of Education and Early Development.
- **Subsection (d)** provides that newly issued certificates are valid for only one year. Upon certification by the entity that requested the limited certificate that the holder has demonstrated skills in classroom instruction, curriculum development, and student assessment, the certificate can be extended for an additional four years. It can be renewed afterwards in accordance with regulations.

- **Subsection (e)** prohibits the state board from requiring additional academic training as a condition of certificate renewal.

Section 7 relates to teacher certificates issued by an Alaska Native tribe.

- **Subsection (a)** empowers the Department of Education and Early Development to recognize a teacher certificate issued by an Alaska Native tribe as valid for teaching in the state if:
 - The tribe submits a description of its certification procedures to the Department;
 - Those certification procedures include evaluations of language proficiency, subject matter knowledge, and instructional skills, including skills specific to immersion education;
 - A school board requests the certificate be recognized, if the teacher is teaching in a school that is not an Alaska Native language immersion charter school; and
 - The person submits fingerprints and fees in accordance with AS 14.20.020(c).
- **Subsection (b)** limits the validity of teacher certificates issued by tribes. A certificate issued by a tribe and recognized by the Department is valid for teaching in a language immersion charter school in which the language of instruction is an Alaska Native language. A certificate holder can teach in any public school, but only if the class is taught in an Alaska Native language and the school board requests the Department recognize certificates issued by the tribe.
- **Subsection (c)** prohibits the Department from recognizing tribally issued certificates if the person holding the certificate has been convicted of an offense under AS 11.41.410-460 (sexual assault and abuse crimes).
- **Subsection (d)** prohibits the Department from imposing requirements for tribally-certified teachers beyond those requirements imposed by the tribe.
- **Subsection (e)** defines “Alaska Native tribe” as a tribe recognized by the US Secretary of Interior under the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994.

Section 8 requires the Department of Education and Early Development to allow students in immersion programs to take statewide standards-based assessments in the language of instruction of the school if tests comparable to the English-language tests exist and if the Department can allow such testing without violating federal law.

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Why Immersion?

In 2008, the Utah Senate passed the International Initiatives (Senate Bill 41), creating funding for Utah schools to begin Dual Language Immersion programs in Chinese, French, and Spanish. In addition, then-Governor Jon Huntsman Jr. initiated the Governor's Language Summit and the Governor's World Language Council both with a goal to create a K-12 language roadmap for Utah. These groups aimed to address the needs for language skills in business, government, and education. In 2010, current Governor Gary Herbert and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Larry Shumway issued a challenge to Utah educators to implement one hundred Dual Language Immersion programs throughout Utah by 2015, with a goal of enrolling 30,000 Utah students. Due to the early success of the program and public demand, Governor Herbert and State Superintendent Shumway have moved the target completion date to 2014, with a continuing goal to mainstream Dual Language Immersion programs throughout the Utah public school system. Portuguese will be added to the program for the 2012-13 school year.

Utah Dual Language Immersion Program uses a fifty-fifty model, in which students spend half of their school day in the target language and the other half-day in English. Most of the state's programs begin in "1st grade, with a few starting in kindergarten. All state-sponsored schools with Dual Language Immersion programs are required to implement the fifty-fifty model and use two teachers, one who instructs exclusively in the target language for half of the day and a second who teaches in English for the remainder of the day.

From kindergarten through third grade, the target language curriculum includes literacy study and the majority of the content subjects (math, science, and social studies). The English curriculum focuses on English language arts and some collaborative reinforcement of the content. Teamwork is essential! The curriculum shifts in the fourth and fifth grades, as most conceptual instruction in math and social science is taught in English. Practical application of these subjects remains in the target language. In the sixth grade, social science shifts back to the target language and science shifts to English instruction. These curriculum changes in the upper grades purposefully allow for more instruction time in the target language, focusing on literacy study and increasing student proficiencies. Specific proficiency goals for every Dual Language Immersion language are set at each grade level in all areas: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

The Utah Dual Language Immersion Program then offers one course in grades seven through nine. Participating students are expected to enroll in Advanced Placement language coursework and complete the AP exam in either the ninth or tenth grade. In grades ten or eleven through twelve, students will be offered upper division university-level coursework through blending learning with six major Utah universities.

One-way Immersion programs serve one group:

This program serves a student population comprised of a predominant majority of native English language speakers with limited to no proficiency in the L2 (e.g. Chinese, French, Portuguese, Spanish, etc.).

Two-way Immersion programs serve two groups:

This program serves English speakers and L2 speakers. A 1:1 ratio is the ideal ratio to be maintained for these two language groups, but a minimum requirement is a 2:1 ratio, or at least one-third of students native speakers of the L2. Two-way Immersion programs are sometimes called two-way bilingual or Dual Language.

Teacher Qualifications

1. Teaching License: English Teachers are required to have an elementary Utah teaching license. Target Language Teachers (Chinese, French, Portuguese, and Spanish) are required to have an elementary or secondary Utah teaching license, or be accepted into the Alternative Routes to Licensure (ARL) program.

2. Endorsements: Target Language Teachers (Chinese, French, Portuguese, and Spanish) are required to have a World Language endorsement in the immersion language and a Dual Language Immersion endorsement. English Teachers are strongly recommended to have an ESL endorsement in two-way Dual Language Immersion programs.

The Benefits of Dual Language Immersion

1. Second Language Skills: Students achieve high proficiency in the immersion language.

2. Performance on Standardized Tests: Immersion students perform as well as or better than non-immersion students on standardized tests in English.

3. Cognitive Skills: Immersion students typically develop greater cognitive flexibility, demonstrating increased attention control, better memory, and superior problem-solving skills as well as an enhanced understanding of their primary language.

4. Cultural Competency: Immersion students are more aware of and generally show more positive attitudes towards other cultures & an appreciation of other people.

5. Long Term Benefits: Immersion students are better prepared for the global community and job markets where 21st century skills are an asset.

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Demand high for dual immersion programs in Utah

By Melinda Rogers The Salt Lake Tribune

Published August 4, 2012 7:48 am

Education • Utah a leader nationwide in number of Chinese language programs offered at elementaries.



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Riverton • It's only the second week of school, but first-graders at Foothills Elementary in Riverton can count to five in Chinese.

They can stand up and sit down when teacher Pei Chi Chang commands them in her native language. And when visitors peek into the classroom, students offer an enthusiastic "Ni hao!" instead of the English "Hello."

"As you can see, they can already follow simple orders like 'sit down for me, please,' " said Chang, who arrived in Utah two weeks ago from Taiwan to teach in one of the Jordan School District's 10 dual immersion language programs.

"To learn a language at an early age is always good, especially when learning the pronunciation part. We know that China is a very powerful country and Chinese is a tool. I'm hopeful in the future the kids can use Chinese as a tool to get them anywhere."

Chang's beliefs are emblematic of a philosophy held by Utah parents, who are increasingly enrolling their children in dual immersion programs offered at 78 elementary schools statewide.

This year, approximately 14,000 children will start school in dual immersion programs in Utah, taught in Spanish, French and Chinese. Portuguese will be offered for the first time in 2012, provided by programs at three elementary schools in the Alpine, Murray and Provo school districts.

Demand is greater than the number of chairs open for students, said Gregg Roberts, world-language specialist and dual language-immersion specialist at the Utah State Office of Education.

The Jordan School District has expanded its dual immersion programs to 10, with waiting lists at several schools.

Roberts attributes the interest to the savviness of parents, who know there are economic benefits for people who can speak another language.

State Superintendent Larry Shumway has set a goal to have 30,000 students enrolled in dual immersion programs at 100 elementary schools by 2015, Roberts added.

To prepare students for future jobs, "We must educate students who are multi-lingual and globally confident," Roberts said. "It takes many, many years of hard work to learn a language at a business-quality level."

—

A new kind of school day • Students are taught entirely in the new language they are learning for half the day. The second half is spent learning in English.

While hearing a foreign language can be bewildering and a little scary for a 7-year-old on the first day of school, students need to look no further than their counterparts down the hall to see just how quickly fluency can emerge.

At Foothills Elementary, first-graders in Chang's class learned how to ask for a drink of water on Wednesday.

Third-graders in Yufang Huang's class were spouting new vocabulary words and reading aloud from worksheets and books written exclusively in Chinese.

"They can do a lot," said Huang, who like Chang arrived in Utah from Taiwan through a program designed to recruit language teachers. "With Chinese, their whole world will change. They make friends in different cultures; it boosts their confidence."

Nationwide, there are Chinese programs at 75 elementary schools, and a third are in Utah, Roberts said.

He credits former Gov. Jon Huntsman, also a former U.S. ambassador to China, with touting the importance of learning about Chinese language and culture.

Many students enrolled in Chinese dual immersion programs were at Utah Valley University this week for a two-day camp, where they dined on Chinese food and enjoyed cultural activities. Students mingled with like-minded children and teachers, including educators from abroad who have relocated to Utah to help meet the need for language instructors.

In the Jordan School District, three guest teachers recently arrived from Taiwan and another three from France will teach after they obtain a one to three-year visa, said Carolyn Gough, the district's world language consultant.

The teachers live with American host families while they do tasks such as finding an apartment, car and setting up a bank account.

—

More programs ahead? • Only 125 first-graders were enrolled in dual immersion programs in the Jordan School District in 2008, the first year they were offered.

This year, 600 district first-graders are enrolled in 10 programs — five Spanish, four Chinese, and one French. Welby Elementary in South Jordan and Herriman Elementary are offering programs for the first time this year.

Gough predicts the number of programs will grow.

"A person who knows a second language is always going to be able to get a job or interact with another culture," said Gough. "We have a lot of culturally sensitive people in Utah. Whether they spoke a second language themselves, were a native speaker of another language or came to learn a language through church service ... they recognize the value of a second language."

To help add Portuguese programs, the state received grants from the Department of Defense, which has identified it as a language needed to communicate in Brazil and many African countries.

Utah is home to about 30,000 people fluent in Portuguese, Roberts said, including 15,000 people from Brazil and another 15,000 people who learned the language while serving a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

With Brazil one of the top LDS missionary destinations, the community is interested in children learning Portuguese, Roberts said.

A second language will benefit children in the future, said Barbara Yost, principal at Foothills Elementary.

"By January, they'll be talking and writing," she said, pointing to Chang's first-graders, who were on day five of learning Chinese Wednesday. "It's a huge advantage for our community."

mrogers@sltrib.com (mailto:mrogers@sltrib.com) Twitter: @mrogers_trib —

How dual immersion programs get their start

Dual immersion language programs are driven by parent requests, first made to school community councils. They are considered by school and then district administrators.

Officials must weigh factors that include where students will attend middle and high school programs.

The state will consider new programs as ideas are presented by school districts, said Gregg Roberts, dual language immersion specialist at the Utah State Office of Education.

Last spring, low interest scuttled a plan to offer a German program in Provo, Roberts said.



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Wednesday, April 1, 2015

Dear Representative Keller,

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I write this letter of support for HB 157, authored by Representative Kreiss-Tomkins.

As the Principal of the only immersion school in the Mat-Su Borough School District, Fronteras Spanish Immersion Charter School, I have first-hand knowledge of the difficulty immersion programs face when hiring qualified instructional staff that must fulfill state requirements. HB 157, if passed, will significantly and positively impact current and future immersion charter schools. Currently, instructional staff must have an Alaska State Type A teaching certificate and be Highly Qualified in the subject/grade level they teach. In the past four years as Fronteras' administrator, I have met many native and heritage (Spanish) speaking individuals with classroom experience and a strong desire to teach, but lack certification. Not only have these particular individuals possessed the cultural knowledge and desired dialect, but they have the innate ability to dispense knowledge in a purposeful and appropriate manner.

I applaud Representative Kreiss-Tomkins for recognizing the hole this has left in immersion programs, and his desire to correct it. Creating a special certificate, similar to the already existing Type M, will allow immersion charter schools to employ native speaking individuals, who through the use of their language, will deliver a standards based educational program, all while honoring cultural awareness.

Research shows that a language immersion education provides individuals with increased problem-solving skills, improved linguistic awareness, higher academic achievement among peers, and an increased advantage in both national and international job markets.





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Lastly, I would like to address the importance that HB 157 brings to our Alaska Native tribes and community members specifically. The sustaining and/or revitalization of Alaska's languages are of the utmost importance if we are truly invested in the preservation of Alaska's rich history.

I highly recommend and support the passing of HB 157.

Most Sincerely,

Jennifer A. Schmidt
Principal
Fronteras Spanish Immersion Charter School





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Cherokee Nation

The Cherokee Nation Immersion School began in 2001 as a language preservation program.

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Teaching the Whole Child: Language Immersion and Student Achievement

TERESA L. MCCARTY | 9/1/14

As Congress considers two bills to support Native American language immersion, including the Native Language Immersion Student

Achievement Act, it's time to take stock. What does research say about the impact of Native-language immersion on Native students' academic achievement? We now have 30 years—more than a generation—of data on Native-language immersion in the U.S. and beyond.

But first, what do we mean by Native-language immersion? It may be easier to begin with what immersion is not. Native-language immersion is not simply "Native language instruction." It is not a pullout program or a 50-minute class. Native-language immersion is not submersion, a method that compels students to learn a second language at the expense of their mother tongue.

Native-language immersion is voluntary; parents often participate in immersion themselves to support their children's language learning at home. Native-language immersion is additive, building on students' first-language abilities as a foundation for learning the Native language as a second language. Native-language immersion is full-day or most-of-the-day teaching and learning in the Native language, often complemented by after-school and summer programs. Native-language immersion systematically incorporates Native cultural content and culturally appropriate ways of teaching and learning. Most important, Native-language immersion not only engages students in learning the Native language,

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but also math, science, social studies, music, art, and even English through that language. In other words, Native-language immersion is a whole program that cultivates what language researcher Fred Genessee calls "the whole child, the whole curriculum, the whole community."

Hawaiian language immersion provides the most dramatic example of the success of such a program. From a situation in the early 1980s in which fewer than 50 children spoke Hawaiian, Hawaiian-medium schooling has produced 4,000 children assessed as fluent speakers of Hawaiian. These changes have come in tandem with impressive academic gains for historically underserved Native Hawaiian students. In a 2012 issue of the Journal of American Indian Education (JAIE), Professor William Wilson of the University of Hawai'i Hilo reports on the P-12 Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u (Nāwahī) School, which boasts a 100 percent high school graduation and 80 percent college attendance rate. Although English is not introduced until grade 5, Nāwahī produces graduates who are college-, career-, and civic life-ready for English-dominant settings.



Earlier this year, the 'Aha Pūnana Leo's Hawaiian language preschools in Hilo, Hawaii were granted the first ever accreditation of an early education program conducted through an endangered and indigenous language worldwide by the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC). ('Aha Pūnana Leo)



March 26, 2015
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On the Navajo Nation, the Window Rock Unified School District (WRUSD) has

run a voluntary Navajo immersion program since 1986. Reporting on the program's first 10 years, **Agnes and Wayne Holm** note that immersion students performed as well on local tests of English as their non-immersion peers, and better in English writing and math. Now a whole-school program called **Tséhootsooí Diné Bi'ólta'**, immersion in WRUSD continues to demonstrate student achievement outcomes equivalent or better than those of English-medium schools serving Navajo students.

Between 2009 and 2011, I conducted a study of Navajo immersion at the K-5 Puente de Hózhó (Bridge of Beauty or PdH) Public Magnet School in Flagstaff, Arizona. Part of the national Promising Practices study led by Professor Bryan Brayboy of Arizona State University, the PdH study responded to Executive Order 13336's call for research on the role of Native languages and cultures in American Indian/Alaska Native student achievement. On state-required tests, PdH students equaled or surpassed their Native peers in English mainstream schools. In recent years, PdH has ranked among the district's top-performing schools. Equally important, the study showed that Navajo immersion brought parents and elders into the program, reinforcing intergenerational ties.

These are but a few examples of Native-language immersion programs demonstrating success:

- Akwesasne (Mohawk) Freedom School** in upstate New York
- Ayaprun Elitnaurvik Yup'ik Immersion School** in Bethel, Alaska
- Cherokee Immersion Charter School** in Tahlequah, Oklahoma
- Cuts Wood (Blackfeet) Academy** in Browning, Montana
- Native American Community Academy** (Lakota, Navajo, Tiwa) in Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Waadookodaading (Ojibwe) Language Immersion School** in Hayward, Wisconsin



Students at the Native American Community Academy in Albuquerque, New Mexico. (Native American Community Academy)

While individual program data are informative, equally revelatory are national data. In a 2005 government-commissioned **study of best practices** in immersion schooling in New Zealand, Professor Stephen May and his associates at the University of Waikato found that Māori-medium programs in which 81 to 100 percent of instruction took place in Māori—called Level 1 programs—produced the strongest academic gains. The researchers attributed this to the well established “language interdependence principle”: The stronger a child becomes in Māori, the more likely s/he is to be successful in English. This also means that immersion requires several years to demonstrate optimal results; students who participated in Level 1 immersion for 6 to 8 years reaped the greatest linguistic, cognitive,



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Watch the Film That Earned an 18-Year-Old Director a Trip to the White House



Sh*t NDN Girls Say



Tocabe x2: Native American Eatery in Denver Doubles-down on Success



'It Wasn't Always This Way': An Indigenous Reflection on Women's History Month

A quick little survey.

1 Have you heard of the YouTube Music Awards?

Yes
No
I don't know

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cultural, and academic benefits.

In the **Promising Practices study**, we found that strong Native language and culture programs (equivalent to Māori Level 1) produced the greatest academic benefits, and benefits were cumulative. Therefore, programs need to be long-term. Long-term programs that begin with 90 to 100 percent of instructional time in the Native language and provide high-quality English instruction by the end of the program promote high levels of language acquisition and academic achievement.



Teresa L. McCarty

Overall, what do three decades of research show? Close examination of the data confirms the benefits of well-implemented immersion in promoting students' language acquisition, enhanced test performance, increased school retention and graduation rates, college entry, and more diffuse but important outcomes such as parent involvement and cultural pride.

These are not the only goals of these programs, of course, as they are rooted in Native peoples' inherent and constitutionally and internationally recognized rights to sovereignty and self-determination. Further, Native-language immersion is a positive influence on diversity and equity in schools and society. More research is needed, but the evidence to date strongly indicates that Native-language immersion significantly benefits Native students.

Children get one chance at their P-12 education, and it serves them for life. They deserve the opportunities and academic benefits that Native-language immersion provides.

Teresa L. McCarty is the G.F. Kneller Chair in Education and Anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles, and the Alice Wiley Snell Professor Emerita of Education Policy Studies at Arizona State University. She is a fellow of the American Educational Research Association and the International Language Revitalization Center. Her recent books include *Language Planning and Policy in Native America: History, Research, Praxis* (Multilingual Matters, 2013).

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Comment *

March 31, 2015

Re: HB157 / SB84

Dear Representative Keller,

Many thanks for your continued support of education in Alaska and choice for students across our great state. As a public charter school student parent, I appreciate all that you and your fellow legislators have done to strengthen our schools.

As I review HB157 / SB84, as introduced on March 20, 2015, it appears as though this is just one more bill that would only strengthen the integrity of the state's language immersion charter schools. As written, it appears as though this bill does not impact HB278, it does not impact funding for our state's charter schools, and this bill does not alter the language of HB278. We would not be supportive otherwise.

We appreciate public school choice in Alaska. As parents, we have opportunities to send our children to schools which better fit their needs. We are thankful to have legislators who are willing to fight for these special learning environments. We look forward to continue working together with you to further strengthen Alaska's charter schools.

Thank you for your time and efforts,

Meghan Steenburgh
Parent of 2nd grader at Aquarian Charter School

ALASKA LEGISLATURE

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

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State Capitol, Room 426
(907) 465-3732

Sitka, Alaska 99835 (May – Dec.)
201 Katlian Street, Ste. 103
(907) 747-4665

HB 157 Sponsor Statement (ver F)

Language Immersion Schools and Teacher Certification

Language immersion education is an increasingly popular educational model, especially in today's rapidly globalizing world. Language immersion education also produces impressive educational outcomes. Decades of experience from around the world have shown that language immersion education can create second-language fluency while also contributing to academic success in other subjects.

Alaska already has a variety of successful and popular immersion programs. Fronteras in the Mat-Su (Spanish) and Rilke Schule in Anchorage (German) are both planning moves to new facilities as interest grows. Anchorage School District's world languages immersion program teaches three languages – Japanese, Russian, and Spanish – and is in the process of adding French and Chinese. In rural Alaska, interest is growing in immersion as a way to teach endangered Native languages, Ayaprun Elitnaurvik in Bethel leading the way.

HB 157 creates a charter school designation with the specific mission of delivering a curriculum in a foreign or Native language, and holds these schools to a strict immersion standard. It requires fully certified teachers in these charter schools to have the specialized skills necessary to successfully teach in an immersion setting, and it includes provisions that will put in the classroom language speakers who know how to teach but may not be able to get the necessary formal qualifications to become fully certified. HB 157 also allows teachers in immersion charter schools that teach an Alaska Native language to be certified through processes developed by local communities.

Immersion education broadens students' knowledge of the world, gives them skills to help them succeed in their future careers, and often improves their academic performance not just in language classes, but in all subjects.

ALASKA LEGISLATURE
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Summary of Changes, version S to version F
HB 157 – Language Immersion Schools/Teacher Certifications

Section 2

Subsection (e) has been added, which makes explicit that a language immersion charter school shall hold its students to the same state performance standards as students at any other public school, including standards for English, math, and other subjects.

Slight changes in language have been made to paragraph (f)(3) to conform with changes to section 7.

Section 3

The title of the section has been amended by the drafter.

Paragraph (a)(3) has been amended to provide the Board of Education (“Board”) the explicit authority to define in regulation how a person can meet language proficiency standards.

Paragraph (a)(4) has been amended to eliminate the costs associated with the Department of Education and Early Development (“Department”) approving language immersion teacher preparation programs. In the new version F, a course or program of study meets the requirements of the paragraph if one can earn college credit for the program.

Section 4

Language has been added that allows the academic policy committee of a charter school to request a limited teacher certificate for teachers of military science, Alaska Native culture, or vocational or technical courses.

Section 5

Subsection (b) has been amended to allow the academic policy committee of a charter school to request extension of a limited certificate issued under Section 4. This is to conform section 5 to the changes in section 4.

Subsection (b) has been amended to remove the requirement that extensions of limited certificates be for exactly four years.

The last word of subsection (b) has been changed from “department” to “board” to correct a drafting error.

Section 6

Subsection (a) has been amended to remove the requirement that the Board of Education specifically define in regulation the languages for which there is an insufficient number of certified teachers in the state.

Subsection (a) has been amended to allow any charter school, not just a language immersion charter school, to request a limited teacher certificate for language immersion. This conforms section 6 with the changes to section 4.

To clarify section 6, subsections (a) and (b) have been rearranged. The following substantive changes have been made:

- “The department shall issue” on pg 5, ln 12 of version S has been changed to “the department may issue” (found on pg 5, ln 23 in version F);
- A limited language certificate holder must demonstrate subject area expertise no matter what grade he or she is teaching (version S only required this demonstration if the teacher was teaching in grades four through eight);
- New sub-paragraph (a)(2)(B) has been amended to eliminate the costs associated with the Department approving language immersion teacher preparation programs;
- New paragraph (b)(2) has been amended to state that a non-English speaker may not be required to demonstrate subject matter expertise by taking an English language test, and that a person may not be required to hold a specific degree in order to demonstrate subject matter expertise; and
- New paragraph (b)(3) addresses a concern of the Department by giving the Board the authority to set standards for language proficiency in regulation.

Subsection (c) is amended to remove the requirement that extensions of limited certificates be for exactly four years.

The last word of subsection (c) has been changed from “department” to “board” to correct a drafting error.

Section 7

Section 7 has been amended and reorganized to reduce costs to the Department, strengthen criminal background checks, and clarify the structure of the tribal teacher certificate program.

Subsection (a) has been rearranged but makes no substantive changes. Similarly worded language appeared in subsection (b) and paragraph (a)(3) of version S.

Sub-paragraph (b)(1)(A) has been amended to clarify the intent that the language proficiency evaluation must evaluate proficiency in the language historically spoken by the Alaska Native tribe.

Small drafting changes have been made to sub-paragraph (b)(1)(B).

Paragraph (b)(2) strengthens the language in version S by requiring the tribe to submit a “complete” description of its certification program to the Department.

Paragraph (b)(3) is added to ensure the Department can keep track of teachers certified by tribes.

Subsection (c) requires that the program description submitted under (b)(2) be publicly available.

Subsection (d) is strengthened by borrowing language from AS 14.20.022(b)(2) to ensure teachers certified by a tribe are subject to the same criminal history review as all other certified teachers.

Subsection (e) is added to give the Department authority to prohibit graduates of a tribal certificate program from teaching in public schools if the program does not meet the requirements of the section.

Section 8 (ver S)

Section 8 from version S, related to standardized tests, has been deleted.

Section 8 (ver F)

A new section 8 gives the commissioner of the Department or the Professional Teaching Practices Commission the authority to prohibit a teacher certified by a tribe from teaching in a public school for the same reasons that any other teacher could have their teaching certificate suspended or revoked under AS 14.20.030.

Section 9

Section 9 has been added to describe the administrative review procedures available to tribes and teachers certified by tribes in the case that the Department or the Professional Teaching Practices Commission prohibits the use of a tribal certificate in public schools.

Section 10

Section 10 has been added to provide for a transition period from the current limited teacher certificate statutes to the new limited teacher certificate statutes. This section is only relevant to limited certificates for teaching Alaska Native languages.

ALASKA LEGISLATURE

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

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Sectional Analysis

HB 157 – Language Immersion Schools/Teacher Certifications (version F)

Section 1 requires the charter contract between a school board and a language immersion charter school established under section 2 of the bill to contain provisions requiring compliance with section 2.

Section 2 provides for the establishment of language immersion charter schools, describes the purpose of immersion charter schools, and describes how they differ from regular charter schools.

- **Subsection (a)** requires that 50% of the instructional hours at each grade level in a language immersion charter school be provided in a foreign or indigenous language. The subsection also requires language immersion charter schools to comply with all other charter school laws, except as otherwise provided in the section.
- **Subsection (b)** requires that an application for a language immersion charter school identify the language(s) of instruction and describe the percentage of instructional hours that will be provided in each language.
- **Subsection (c)** allows individuals who are proficient speakers of the language taught at the charter school or who have substantial knowledge of the culture of the people who spoke that language to serve on the charter school's academic policy committee, in addition to parents and school employees.
- **Subsection (d)** requires a language immersion charter school that does not provide at least 50% of the school's instructional hours in a foreign or indigenous language to work with the Department of Education and Early Development ("Department") to develop a plan for reaching that benchmark. The plan must be submitted to the Department for approval.
- **Subsection (e)** makes explicit that a language immersion charter school shall hold its students to the same state performance standards as students at any other public school, including standards for English, math, and other subjects.
- **Subsection (f)** requires that teachers at a language immersion charter school hold either a teacher certificate issued under AS 14.20.015, 14.20.017, 14.20.020, or 14.20.022 and a language immersion endorsement issued under section 3; a limited teacher certificate issued under section 6; or a certificate issued by an Alaska Native tribe under section 7.
- **Subsection (g)** exempts teachers teaching classes in English at language immersion charter schools from the requirement to hold a language immersion endorsement.

Section 3 creates a language immersion endorsement. To receive a language immersion endorsement, a person must apply to the Department, hold a teacher certificate issued under AS 14.20.015, 14.20.017, 14.20.020, or 14.20.022, demonstrate ability to conduct classroom activities entirely in an indigenous or foreign language, and have completed a course or program of study in language immersion education.

Section 4 amends the existing limited teacher certificate program (Type M in regulation). The section removes Alaska Native languages from the list of subjects certificate holders are eligible to teach, allows the academic policy committee of a charter school to request issuance of a limited certificate, and removes the state Board of Education's ("Board's") authority to require certificate holders to undertake academic training.

Section 5 further amends the existing limited teacher certificate program by making newly issued certificates valid for only one year. Upon verification by the school board or academic policy committee that requested the certificate that the certificate holder has demonstrated skills in classroom instruction, curriculum development, and student assessment, the certificate can be extended. It can be renewed afterwards in accordance with regulation. Section 5 also prohibits the state board from requiring additional academic training as a condition of certificate renewal.

Section 6 creates a new limited teacher certificate specifically for teachers instructing in a language other than English. A certificate can be issued for a particular language if there is an insufficient number of certified teachers in the state capable of teaching in that language.

- **Subsection (a)** states that a limited certificate authorized by this section may be issued only upon request of a school board or charter school academic policy committee. The certificate is only valid in the requesting district or school. The certificate is valid for teaching language classes at any grade level, and for teaching other subjects in grades pre-K through eight if the language of instruction is a foreign or indigenous language. A person teaching a subject other than the language must have completed a course in language immersion education and demonstrate subject matter expertise.
- **Subsection (b)** states that the Department may issue a limited certificate if:
 - The certificate applicant demonstrates instructional skills sufficient to assure the public the person is competent as a teacher, as defined by regulation;
 - The applicant demonstrates subject matter expertise (for the purposes of this demonstration, the person may not be required to hold a specific degree; nor may a non-English speaker be required to take an English-language test); and
 - The applicant has language proficiency sufficient to conduct classroom activities wholly in the non-English language.
- **Subsection (c)** provides that newly issued certificates are valid for only one year. Upon certification by the entity that requested the limited certificate that the holder has demonstrated skills in classroom instruction, curriculum development, and student assessment, the certificate can be extended. It can be renewed afterwards in accordance with regulation.

- **Subsection (d)** prohibits the Board from requiring additional academic training as a condition of certificate renewal.

Section 7 relates to teacher certificates issued by an Alaska Native tribe.

- **Subsection (a)** allows a person who has been certified as a teacher by an Alaska Native tribe to teach classes taught in an Alaska Native language
 - in a language immersion charter school or
 - in another public school in the state, upon approval of the relevant school board, if the tribe's certification program complies with the provisions of the section.
- **Subsection (b)** requires that a tribe's certification program include evaluations of language proficiency, subject matter knowledge, and instructional skills (including skills specific to immersion education). It also requires the tribe to submit a complete description of its certification program to the Department, and notify the department when a person is certified or when a person's certification status changes. If the tribe does not comply with these requirements, teachers certified by the tribe may not teach in any public school.
- **Subsection (c)** makes publicly available the description of the tribal certification program submitted to the Department.
- **Subsection (d)** requires that a person certified by a tribe pass a background check and submit fingerprints and fees in the same manner as any other certified teacher in the state.
- **Subsection (e)** gives the Department authority to prohibit graduates of a tribal certification program from teaching in public schools if the program does not meet the requirements of the section.
- **Subsection (f)** defines "Alaska Native tribe" as a tribe recognized by the US Secretary of Interior under the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994.

Section 8 gives the commissioner of the Department or the Professional Teaching Practices Commission the authority to prohibit a teacher certified by a tribe from teaching in a public school for the same reasons that any other teacher could have their teaching certificate suspended or revoked under AS 14.20.030.

Section 9 describes the administrative review procedures available to tribes and teachers certified by tribes in the case that the Department or the Professional Teaching Practices Commission prohibits the use of the tribal certificate in public schools.

Section 10 provides for a transition period from the current limited teacher certificate statutes to the new limited teacher certificate statutes. This section is only relevant to limited certificates for teaching Alaska Native languages. Under this section, limited certificates for teaching Alaska Native languages are valid until they expire. If the limited certificate expires before July 1, 2017, it can be renewed under law as it stood on this bill's effective date.

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 157()

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY

**Offered:
Referred:**

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to language immersion charter schools; and relating to teacher**
2 **certification."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 *** Section 1.** AS 14.03.255(c) is amended to read:

5 (c) A charter school shall operate under a contract between the charter school
6 and the local school board. A contract must contain the following provisions:

- 7 (1) a description of the educational program;
- 8 (2) specific levels of achievement for the education program;
- 9 (3) admission policies and procedures;
- 10 (4) administrative policies;
- 11 (5) a statement of the charter school's funding allocation from the local
- 12 school board and costs assignable to the charter school program budget;
- 13 (6) the method by which the charter school will account for receipts
- 14 and expenditures;

- 1 (7) the location and description of the facility;
- 2 (8) the name of the teacher, or teachers, who, by agreement between
- 3 the charter school and the teacher, will teach in the charter school;
- 4 (9) the teacher-to-student ratio;
- 5 (10) the number of students served;
- 6 (11) the term of the contract, not to exceed a term of 10 years;
- 7 (12) a termination clause providing that the contract may be terminated
- 8 by the local school board for the failure of the charter school to meet educational
- 9 achievement goals or fiscal management standards, or for other good cause;
- 10 (13) a statement that the charter school will comply with all state and
- 11 federal requirements for receipt and use of public money;
- 12 (14) other requirements or exemptions agreed upon by the charter
- 13 school and the local school board;
- 14 **(15) a clause requiring compliance with AS 14.03.257 if the charter**
- 15 **school is a language immersion charter school.**

16 * **Sec. 2.** AS 14.03 is amended by adding a new section to read:

17 **Sec. 14.03.257. Language immersion charter schools.** (a) A language

18 immersion charter school may be established for the purpose of producing bilingual

19 students, revitalizing endangered languages, or providing an education consistent with

20 one or more indigenous or foreign cultures. Except as provided in (d) of this section, a

21 language immersion charter school shall provide at least 50 percent of the school's

22 instructional hours for each grade level in an indigenous or foreign language. Except

23 as otherwise provided in this section, the requirements of AS 14.03.250 - 14.03.290

24 apply to a language immersion charter school.

25 (b) An application to a local school board under AS 14.03.250 for the

26 establishment of a language immersion charter school must state that it is an

27 application for a language immersion charter school, identify the language or

28 languages in which the school will teach, and describe the percentage of the school's

29 instructional hours for each grade level that will be provided in each language of

30 instruction.

31 (c) The academic policy committee of a language immersion charter school

1 shall consist of parents of students attending the school, school employees, and
2 individuals who either are proficient speakers of the language of instruction of the
3 school or have substantial knowledge of the culture of the people that historically
4 spoke the language of instruction of the school.

5 (d) If a language immersion charter school does not provide at least 50 percent
6 of the school's instructional hours for each grade level in an indigenous or foreign
7 language, the academic policy committee of the language immersion charter school
8 shall work with the department to develop a plan describing how the school will reach
9 the goal of providing at least 50 percent of the school's instructional hours for each
10 grade level in an indigenous or foreign language. The academic policy committee of
11 the language immersion charter school shall submit the plan to the department for
12 approval.

13 (e) A language immersion charter school shall implement the state educational
14 performance standards developed by the department under AS 14.07.020.

15 (f) A teacher at a language immersion charter school shall possess

16 (1) a teacher certificate issued under AS 14.20.015, 14.20.017,
17 14.20.020, or 14.20.022 and an indigenous or foreign language immersion
18 endorsement issued under AS 14.20.021;

19 (2) a limited teacher certificate for language immersion teachers issued
20 under AS 14.20.026; or

21 (3) a teacher certificate issued by a qualified teacher certification
22 program established by an Alaska Native tribe as described under AS 14.20.028.

23 (g) Notwithstanding (f) of this section, a person who possesses a teacher
24 certificate issued under AS 14.20.015, 14.20.017, AS 14.20.020, or 14.20.022, but
25 does not possess a language immersion endorsement issued under AS 14.20.021, may
26 teach classes in English at a language immersion charter school.

27 * **Sec. 3.** AS 14.20 is amended by adding a new section to read:

28 **Sec. 14.20.021. Language immersion endorsements.** The department shall
29 issue an indigenous or foreign language immersion endorsement to a person who

30 (1) applies to the department on a form approved by the department;

31 (2) possesses a teacher certificate under AS 14.20.015, 14.20.017,

1 14.20.020, or 14.20.022;

2 (3) demonstrates, as required by regulations adopted by the board,
3 sufficient proficiency in the indigenous or foreign language to conduct classroom
4 activities entirely in the indigenous or foreign language; and

5 (4) completes a course or program of study in language immersion
6 education for which the person is eligible to receive academic credit at a
7 postsecondary educational institution.

8 * **Sec. 4.** AS 14.20.025 is amended to read:

9 **Sec. 14.20.025. Limited teacher certificates.** Notwithstanding
10 AS 14.20.020(b), a person may be issued a limited certificate, valid only in the area of
11 expertise for which it is issued, to teach Alaska Native [LANGUAGE OR] culture,
12 military science, or a vocational or technical course for which the board determines by
13 regulation that baccalaureate degree training is not sufficiently available. A limited
14 certificate may be issued under this section only if the school board of the district or
15 regional educational attendance area in which the person will be teaching or the
16 academic policy committee of the charter school in which the person will be
17 teaching has requested its issuance. A person who applies for a limited certificate
18 shall demonstrate, as required by regulations adopted by the board, instructional skills
19 and subject matter expertise sufficient to assure [ENSURE] the public that the person
20 is competent as a teacher [. THE BOARD MAY REQUIRE A PERSON ISSUED A
21 LIMITED CERTIFICATE TO UNDERTAKE ACADEMIC TRAINING AS MAY
22 BE REQUIRED BY THE BOARD BY REGULATION AND MAKE
23 SATISFACTORY PROGRESS IN THE ACADEMIC TRAINING].

24 * **Sec. 5.** AS 14.20.025 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

25 (b) A limited certificate issued under this section is initially valid for one year.
26 The department may extend a limited certificate issued under this section if the school
27 board or academic policy committee that initially requested the issuance of the limited
28 certificate requests that the certificate be extended and certifies that the person has
29 demonstrated skills in classroom instruction, curriculum development, and student
30 assessment. The certificate may be renewed in accordance with regulations adopted by
31 the board.

1 (c) The board may not require, as a condition for extending or renewing a
2 limited certificate under (b) of this section, that a person complete additional academic
3 training.

4 * **Sec. 6.** AS 14.20 is amended by adding a new section to read:

5 **Sec. 14.20.026. Limited teacher certificates for language immersion**
6 **teachers.** (a) Notwithstanding AS 14.20.020(b), a person who meets the requirements
7 of this section may be issued a limited certificate to teach in a language other than
8 English if there is an insufficient number of certified teachers in the state capable of
9 teaching in that language, and the school board of the district or regional educational
10 attendance area in which the person will be teaching or the academic policy committee
11 of the charter school in which the person will be teaching requests that the department
12 issue the certificate. A limited certificate issued under this section is valid for teaching
13 the

14 (1) language in which the person demonstrates proficiency under
15 (b)(3) of this section in pre-elementary school through grade 12; and

16 (2) subject in which the person demonstrates expertise under (b)(2) of
17 this section in pre-elementary school through grade 8 if the

18 (A) subject is taught in the language in which the person
19 demonstrates proficiency under (b)(3) of this section; and

20 (B) person completes a course or program of study in language
21 immersion education for which the person is eligible to receive academic credit
22 at a postsecondary educational institution.

23 (b) The department may issue a limited teacher certificate to a person under
24 this section if the person demonstrates, as required by regulations adopted by the
25 board,

26 (1) instructional skills sufficient to assure the public that the person is
27 competent as a teacher;

28 (2) subject matter expertise; the board may not require the person to
29 take a test in English, unless the person is a fluent or native English speaker, or require
30 a person to hold a specific degree to demonstrate expertise under this paragraph; and

31 (3) sufficient proficiency in an indigenous or foreign language to

1 conduct classroom activities entirely in the indigenous or foreign language.

2 (c) A limited certificate issued under this section is initially valid for one year.
3 The department may extend a limited certificate issued under this section if the school
4 board or the academic policy committee that initially requested the issuance of the
5 limited certificate requests that the certificate be extended and certifies that the person
6 has demonstrated skills in classroom instruction, curriculum development, and student
7 assessment. The certificate may be renewed in accordance with regulations adopted by
8 the board.

9 (d) The board may not require, as a condition for extending or renewing a
10 limited certificate under (c) of this section, that a person complete additional academic
11 training.

12 * **Sec. 7.** AS 14.20 is amended by adding a new section to read:

13 **Sec. 14.20.028. Teachers certified by Alaska Native tribes.** (a) A person
14 who is certified as a teacher by a qualified teacher certification program established by
15 an Alaska Native tribe and who is not disqualified under (d) or (e) of this section may
16 teach a class at a

17 (1) language immersion charter school established under AS 14.03.257
18 if the language of instruction is the language historically spoken by the Alaska Native
19 tribe; and

20 (2) public school that is not a language immersion charter school, with
21 the approval of the school board of the district or regional educational attendance area
22 in which the public school is located, if the language of instruction for the class is the
23 language historically spoken by members of the Alaska Native tribe.

24 (b) A teacher certification program established by an Alaska Native tribe is a
25 qualified teacher certification program if the

26 (1) program includes an evaluation of the person's

27 (A) proficiency in the Alaska Native language historically
28 spoken by members of the tribe;

29 (B) expertise in the subject the person is certified to teach;

30 (C) instructional skills, including instructional skills specific to
31 language immersion education;

1 (2) Alaska Native tribe provides the department with a complete
2 description of the teacher certification program; and

3 (3) Alaska Native tribe notifies the department when a person is
4 certified or when a person's certification status changes.

5 (c) The department shall make available to the public the complete description
6 of a teacher certification program provided to the department under (b)(2) of this
7 section.

8 (d) A person is only eligible to teach under this section if the

9 (1) person submits fingerprints and the fees required by the
10 Department of Public Safety under AS 12.62.160 for criminal justice information and
11 a national criminal history record check to the department;

12 (2) department submits the fingerprints and fees to the Department of
13 Public Safety for a report of criminal justice information under AS 12.62 and a
14 national criminal history record check under AS 12.62.400; and

15 (3) department finds the person to be suitable for employment as a
16 teacher under AS 14.20.020(f).

17 (e) The department may prohibit a person who is certified as a teacher by a
18 teacher certification program established by an Alaska Native tribe from teaching in a
19 public school if the department finds that the teacher certification program does not
20 meet the requirements of (b) of this section.

21 (f) In this section, "Alaska Native tribe" means a tribe that is recognized by
22 the United States Secretary of the Interior to exist as an Indian tribe under 25 U.S.C.
23 479a (Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994).

24 * **Sec. 8.** AS 14.20.030 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

25 (d) The commissioner or the Professional Teaching Practices Commission
26 may prohibit a person who is certified as a teacher by a qualified teacher certification
27 program described under AS 14.20.028 from teaching at a public school for the same
28 reasons that the commissioner or the Professional Teaching Practices Commission
29 may suspend or revoke a certificate under (a) or (b) of this section.

30 * **Sec. 9.** AS 14.20.040 is amended to read:

31 **Sec. 14.20.040. Applicability of the Administrative Procedure Act.**

1 AS 44.62 (Administrative Procedure Act) applies to all proceedings under
2 AS 14.20.030 and AS 14.20.028(e), and revocations, [AND] suspensions, and
3 decisions to prohibit a person from teaching in a public school under
4 AS 14.20.028(e) and 14.20.030(d) are final and reviewable in accordance with
5 AS 44.62.560 - 44.62.570.

6 * **Sec. 10.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
7 read:

8 TRANSITION. (a) A person who holds a valid limited teacher certificate under
9 AS 14.20.025 that is issued before the effective date of this Act may continue to teach under
10 the certificate until the certificate expires normally under AS 14.20.025 and regulations
11 adopted under AS 14.20.025, as AS 14.20.025 read on the day before the effective date of this
12 Act.

13 (b) A person who holds a valid limited teacher certificate under AS 14.20.025 that is
14 issued before the effective date of this Act and that expires before July 1, 2017, may renew
15 that certificate under AS 14.20.025 and regulations adopted under AS 14.20.025, as
16 AS 14.20.025 read on the day before the effective date of this Act.

HB157 QUESTIONS FR

CHAIR KELLER noted that the legislation appears to create a particular type of charter school model that is new to the state and establish new educational policies. He stated his understanding that charter schools are an effort to return local control to districts; however, this legislation appears to involve the Department of Education and Early Development (EED) in the specific area of language schools.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS said that language schools are quite different from other facilities, requiring that subject teachers also be fluent in the immersion language. He pointed out that these teachers may have difficulty in attaining a state teaching certificate. The bill is a vehicle to address the unique character of immersion schools and enhance the ability for teachers to meet the certification demands. It is important to understand that a qualified teacher, who has English as a second language, may find it difficult to achieve a state teaching certification.

8:44:14 AM

REPRESENTATIVE COLVER expressed concerns for injecting burdensome bureaucracy into the charter school system.

CHAIR KELLER said the proposed legislation may create a template containing a new policy that will extend beyond the linguistic programs.

OM COMMITTEE;

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked if the main thrust of HB 157 applies to a type M permit. The M permit is generally issued to someone with a specialized skill to allow them to lead a class, such as an expert welder. The immersion teacher doesn't necessarily fall under the M permit, as they must provide a wider expanse of topics, he noted, and asked for clarity regarding the intent of the bill.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS concurred and opined that the current state certification process is not accommodating to language specialists. REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked if the main thrust of HB 157 applies to a type M permit. The M permit is generally issued to someone with a specialized skill to allow them

to lead a class, such as an expert welder. The immersion teacher doesn't necessarily fall under the M permit, as they must provide a wider expanse of topics, he noted, and asked for clarity regarding the intent of the bill.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS concurred and opined that the current state certification process is not accommodating to language specialists.

CHAIR KELLER surmised that the certification portion of the bill is the priority aspect.

MR. MAGDANZ turned to the bill Sec. 2, page 3, and lines 22-25, which read:

(f) Notwithstanding (e) of this section, a person who possesses a teacher certificate issued under AS 14.20.015, 14.20.017, AS 14.20.020, or 14.20.022, but does not possess a language immersion endorsement issued under AS 14.20.021, may teach classes in English at a language immersion charter school.

MR. MAGDANZ pointed out that subsection (f) is specific to an immersion language charter school, and no other charter schools.

CHAIR KELLER referred to the bill requirements indicated on page 2, lines 9-11, and expressed interest in knowing whether the language indicates a need for EED to write new regulation.

8:59:52 AM

MR. MAGDANZ said Sec. 3 includes language for implementation of higher standards and specific training for teachers at immersion schools. The section is modeled after one Utah has in place, called a world languages endorsement, which attaches to a standard certificate and verifies a fitness for teaching other subject matter in a foreign language.

9:00:44 AM

CHAIR KELLER referred to the bill requirements indicated on page 2, lines 9-11, and expressed interest in knowing whether the language indicates a need for EED to write new regulation.

LES MORSE, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development (EED), pointed out that a limited certificate is currently allowed, as shown in Sec. 4, page 4, line 7, specific to teaching Alaska Native language or culture. He suggested the language proposed for removal be retained and the term "world" inserted. Thus, the concerns addressed by the previous two witnesses might be satisfied. The Sec. 4 language, proposed for removal, lines 19-22, were adopted to ensure that a skilled worker, such as a carpenter, could not be required to attend college classes in carpentry in order to receive a type M certificate, but could be required to take classes specific to teaching and assessing students.

9:19:10 AM

MR. MORSE moved to Sec.6, beginning on page 5, line 3, and said the proposed language would allow a limited certificate teacher to instruct any subject class, with allowance for the board to impose content testing of an instructor's knowledge. However, the concern is that although a teacher may be capable of teaching a subject, such as math in a foreign language due to having passed a content examination, they may not have a full, extended knowledge of math. Additionally, a teacher not holding a bachelor's degree, is not qualified to be enrolled in the teacher retirement system (TRS). It is the teaching of the other content areas that raises concern, he stressed. The proposed language is appropriate to describe a paraprofessional position, or teacher's aide. He added that the forthcoming bill version may alter these concerns, as well as change the fiscal note.

9:23:05 AM

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON requested transcripts of the new criteria indicating how the bill aligns with the goals of the APS.

REPRESENTATIVE COLVER asked for the percentage of the overall high school graduates who attend vocational/technical postsecondary education, versus pursuing college degrees.

MS. BARRANS offered to provide further information, and added that not all vocational facilities are required to file federal reports, from which the statistics are drawn.

MS. BARRANS clarified that the total eligibility group in 2014 was about 28 percent and, of those, 48 percent attended college in Alaska.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked if the percentages have changed over time.

MS. BARRANS reported that the last two graduating classes have had a slight increase, perhaps as high as 32 percent; however, the percentage of the graduates who are eligible for the career technical education award, has increased significantly.

8:33:22 AM

REPRESENTATIVE COLVER asked for the percentage of the overall high school graduates who attend vocational/technical postsecondary education, versus pursuing college degrees.

MS. BARRANS offered to provide further information, and added that not all vocational facilities are required to file federal reports, from which the statistics are drawn.

CHAIR KELLER said public testimony would be held open.

8:35:02 AM

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON assured the committee that the bill does not act retroactively, and agreed that the military duty question will require further consideration.

8:37:04 AM

CHAIR KELLER announced HB 264 as held.

HB 157-LANG. IMMERSION SCHOOLS/TEACHER CERTS.

8:37:17 AM

CHAIR KELLER announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 157, "An Act relating to language immersion charter schools; relating to teacher certification; and relating to standards-based assessments in language immersion charter schools and language immersion programs."

8:39:00 AM

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS said the information from the previous hearing was incorporated into a new committee substitute and every section of the bill has been revised. The goal of the bill is to encourage and streamline immersion schools in Alaska.

8:41:49 AM

CHAIR KELLER noted that the legislation appears to create a particular type of charter school model that is new to the state and establish new educational policies. He stated his understanding that charter schools are an effort to return local control to districts; however, this legislation appears to involve the Department of Education and Early Development (EED) in the specific area of language schools.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS said that language schools are quite different from other facilities, requiring that subject teachers also be fluent in the immersion language. He pointed out that these teachers may have difficulty in attaining a state teaching certificate. The bill is a vehicle to address the unique character of immersion schools and enhance the ability for teachers to meet the certification demands. It is important to understand that a qualified teacher, who has English as a second language, may find it difficult to achieve a state teaching certification.

8:44:14 AM

REPRESENTATIVE COLVER expressed concerns for injecting burdensome bureaucracy into the charter school system.

CHAIR KELLER said the proposed legislation may create a template containing a new policy that will extend beyond the linguistic programs.

8:45:40 AM

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked if the main thrust of HB 157 applies to a type M permit. The M permit is generally issued to someone with a specialized skill to allow them to lead a class, such as an expert welder. The immersion teacher doesn't necessarily fall under the M permit, as they must provide a wider expanse of topics, he noted, and asked for clarity regarding the intent of the bill.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS concurred and opined that the current state certification process is not accommodating to language specialists.

8:46:58 AM

CHAIR KELLER established that the original HB 157 labeled, 29-LS03234\S was before the committee, and asked for a review of changes that might affect the current charter school statutes. He referred to the committee packet document, titled, "Sectional Analysis, HB 157 - Language Immersion Schools/Teacher Certifications (version S)," and the Section 1 entry, which read:

Section 1 requires the charter contract between a school board and a language immersion charter school established under section 2 of the bill to contain provisions requiring compliance with section 2.

CHAIR KELLER asked to whom the compliance language refers.

REID MAGDANZ, Staff, Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins, Alaska State Legislature, responded that immersion institutions would have a contract indicating compliance and ensuring that the requirement to provide 50 percent of instructional hours in a non-English language was being met.

8:48:35 AM

CHAIR KELLER noted that Sec. 2 represents a new section, and expressed concern that it may contain restrictions to district programs.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS assured the committee that the intent is to eliminate the cumbersome process currently in place and address the specialized field of language immersion. However, he stressed, the expectation is for the bill to be complimentary, and additive without displacing existing charter school statutes.

8:50:20 AM

CHAIR KELLER asked if the 50 percent instructional requirement could cause Fronteras to make significant curriculum changes to remain in compliance, and whether the proposed bill provide any benefits over current statute.

8:50:50 AM

JENNIFER HUTCHINS, Principal, Fronteras Spanish Immersion Charter School, stated support for HB 157, and emphasized the need for the legislation, as a means to bolster other programs and alleviate the stress involved in staffing. She explained the difficulty in recruiting language/culture holders, who can also qualify for a state teaching certificate. The existing statutes include specifications that ensures adherence to the established standards and evaluation processes for all teachers.

CHAIR KELLER surmised that the certification portion of the bill is the priority aspect.

MS. HUTCHINS concurred.

8:54:25 AM

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON noted that the bill doesn't prevent a school from using a 40 or 60 percent language practice, only if a request is being made for this type of teacher certification.

MR. MAGDANZ said correct.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS added that many immersion programs have a blend of curriculum to provide more than 50 percent

target language instruction, which is the minimum that the bill establishes.

CHAIR KELLER theorized that a school offering 40 percent would not qualify for the proposed certification changes.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS clarified that the 50 percent represents an aspirational benchmark. A school would submit a proposal to EED to indicate how the benchmark would be reached, and the agency would make the determination for compliance.

8:58:07 AM

MR. MAGDANZ turned to the bill Sec. 2, page 3, and lines 22-25, which read:

(f) Notwithstanding (e) of this section, a person who possesses a teacher certificate issued under AS 14.20.015, 14.20.017, AS 14.20.020, or 14.20.022, but does not possess a language immersion endorsement issued under AS 14.20.021, may teach classes in English at a language immersion charter school.

MR. MAGDANZ pointed out that subsection (f) is specific to an immersion language charter school, and no other charter schools.

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CHAIR KELLER referred to the bill requirements indicated on page 2, lines 9-11, and expressed interest in knowing whether the language indicates a need for EED to write new regulation.

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MR. MAGDANZ said Sec. 3 includes language for implementation of higher standards and specific training for teachers at immersion schools. The section is modeled after one Utah has in place, called a world languages endorsement, which attaches to a standard certificate and verifies a fitness for teaching other subject matter in a foreign language.

9:00:44 AM

CHAIR KELLER directed attention to the bill Sec. 4, page 4, line 2, which read:

(3) demonstrates the ability to conduct classroom activities entirely in the indigenous or foreign language; and

CHAIR KELLER surmised that this would require additional departmental regulation to ensure compliance.

MR. MAGDANZ concurred, and to a follow-up question, responded that the department will not be required to approve the course or program of study that the immersion teacher attends.

9:02:20 AM

CHAIR KELLER questioned the deletion of the language on page 4, line 11, which reads:

... expertise for which it is issued, to teach Alaska Native [LANGUAGE OR] culture, ...

MR. MAGDANZ responded that in creating a new limited teacher's certificate, specific to language, the deletion is appropriate from this section and the intent is recaptured in Section 6.

CHAIR KELLER noted deletion of language from Sec. 4, page 4, lines 19-22, which read:

... competent as a teacher [. THE BOARD MAY REQUIRE A PERSON ISSUED A LIMITED CERTIFICATE TO UNDERTAKE ACADEMIC TRAINING AS MAY BE REQUIRED BY THE BOARD BY REGULATION AND MAKE SATISFACTORY PROGRESS IN THE ACADEMIC TRAINING].

MR. MAGDANZ clarified that it is being removed as it applies to someone teaching a specific skill, such as carpentry, and the requirement was deemed unnecessary for the purposes of the language endorsement being proposed.

9:04:59 AM

CHAIR KELLER directed attention to Sec. 5, page 4, line 31, and page 5, lines 1-2, which read:

(c) The board may not require, as a condition for extending or renewing a limited certificate under (b) of this section, that a person complete additional academic training.

CHAIR KELLER noted that the wordage is in keeping with the preceding language adjustments.

MR. MAGDANZ concurred.

9:05:33 AM

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS moved to Sec. 6, beginning on page 5, to comment that it represents the vital organs of the bill in order to provide a pathway for language speakers to be in the classroom.

CHAIR KELLER opened public testimony.

9:07:48 AM

SUSAN SCHMIDT, Recruiting and Operations, stated support for HB 157, and said that all of the immersion classes are very popular and have waiting lists. Recently a Spanish speaking teacher was out of the classroom, and finding a substitute was difficult. The person finally located has indicated interested in continuing in the classroom, however, he would be required to enroll in a class at the university.

9:10:51 AM

DR. BARBARA AMAROK, PhD, provided a brief history of the depression of the Native languages and erosion of the culture, during the last century in Alaska. Fortunately, the generational change has seen a turn of events and refocused the importance for acceptance and preservation of the Native's authentic history and culture. She provided personal anecdotes illustrating her families' experiences of the initial cultural divide and the recent reunion.

9:13:12 AM

SHAWN ARNOLD, Superintendent, Nome Public Schools, stated support for HB 157, noting the importance for having a method in place that will help to recruit language speakers. Some people are unable to attain certification until they have been hired, due to financial constraints.

9:15:51 AM

LES MORSE, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development (EED), pointed out that a limited certificate is currently allowed, as shown in Sec. 4, page 4, line 7, specific to teaching Alaska Native language or culture. He suggested the language proposed for removal be retained and the term "world" inserted. Thus, the concerns addressed by the previous two witnesses might be satisfied. The Sec. 4 language, proposed for removal, lines 19-22, were adopted to ensure that a skilled worker, such as a carpenter, could not be required to attend college classes in carpentry in order to receive a type M certificate, but could be required to take classes specific to teaching and assessing students.

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9:23:05 AM

CHAIR KELLER inquired about the status of immersion schools in Alaska and whether they are all charter schools.

MR. MORSE said there is no charter requirement for an immersion school, and he conjectured that some exist which aren't charter facilities.

CHAIR KELLER asked about immersion school status in other states.

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND offered that Anchorage School District (ASD) has had language immersion classes available, within the neighborhood schools, since the 1990's.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS confirmed that ASD, as well as other states, have immersion programs in public schools.

CHAIR KELLER noted that the limited certification applies to all schools not only the charter school.

9:26:34 AM

KEVIN ALLEN, Student Representative, Thunder Mountain High School, stated support for HB 157, suggesting that it may be the best way to preserve Alaskan Native languages.

9:28:39 AM

CHAIR KELLER closed public testimony and announced HB 157 as held.

CHAIR KELLER thanked the participants and announced the next meeting.

9:29:20 AM

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:29 a.m.

Janet Ogan

From: Reid Magdanz
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 1:20 PM
To: Janet Ogan
Cc: David Russell-Jensen
Subject: Rep. Keller's Thoughts on Charter Schools

Janet,

David did the good work of listening to the last committee hearing on HB 157 and pulling Rep. Keller's comments on charter schools:

"We were creating a particular type of charter school, and having been involved with charter school law, it occurred to me that we have not done that; this is a new model for education policy in the State of Alaska. There are no other special schools that we have, I don't think, and maybe you can confirm that or not, that we have made a charter school and then added a section of, especially in this case, responsibilities by the State DEED. The general purpose of charter schools as I understood it and understand it is to return authority and control back to the district who approves or disapproves the charter schools. ... What do you [Rep. JKT] see and what does Jennifer at Fronteras see about this bill that makes things easier; specify what about this bill makes things easier." (@ 8:41 am)

Rep. Keller followed up a few minutes later with the following comment:

"The rest of my question is, are we creating a model, we have to think about it in a context of what other, you talk about at template, you make a template, then what kind of schools will try to follow that template, and you know that's fine, we just have to take that into policy considerations into mind, not just for language immersion, but also for other potential charter schools down the road." (@ 8:44 am)

Could you check in with your boss to get a bit more context on these statements, so we can get to the bottom of his concerns?

Reid

Reid Paaluk Magdanz
Legislative Aide
Office of Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
reid.magdanz@akleg.gov
907-465-3306



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
Dr. Deena M. Paramo

Mission: Mat-Su Borough School District prepares students for success

April 14, 2015

Legislature of the State of Alaska
Twenty-Ninth Legislature – First Session

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing as the Superintendent of the Mat-Su Borough School District in support of SB 84, "An act relating to language immersion charter school; relating to teacher certification; and relating to standards-based assessment in language immersion charter schools and language immersion programs." As a district who highly values choice in educational programs and delivery, this Bill provides for specific certification and recognition of teachers at language immersion charter schools.

Immersion programs are unique in that they require educators to have language fluency in addition to content knowledge and teacher preparation. SB 84 formally recognizes through certification all those components of a successful immersion teacher and provides additional flexibility for school districts to hire non-traditional teachers who have the necessary language skills. Similar to the Type M certificate that currently exists for Career & Technical Education, this certificate values not only the preparation of teachers but provides for the recognition of fluency in the language for which the immersion is grounded. It is the district for whom the applicant of this certificate will be hired and teach. While Mat-Su's first priority is always to secure fully certified teachers, there is not always a sufficient candidate pool in these specialized areas. SB 84 will allow school districts the flexibility needed to provide the best instructors for their courses and schools. SB 84 additionally benefits school districts in the statutory process for retaining staff during times of shortage, which is an important consideration for the long term maintenance of a choice program.

Finally, in summary, MSBSD's understanding of SB 84 is that an effective date for transitioning to this new certificate for language immersion charter schools would be ample time to communicate to our employees for which the certificate applies.

Thank you,

Dr. Deena M. Paramo
Superintendent

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2016 Legislative Session

Bill Version: HB 157
Fiscal Note Number: _____
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier: HB157-EED-SSA-1-29-16
Title: LANG. IMMERSION SCHOOLS/TEACHER
CERTS.
Sponsor: KREISS-TOMKINS
Requester: House Education Committee

Department: Department of Education and Early Development
Appropriation: Teaching and Learning Support
Allocation: Student and School Achievement
OMB Component Number: 2796

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2017 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY2017 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
			FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	***	0.0	***	***	***	***	***
Personal Services	***		***	***	***	***	***
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants & Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
Total Operating	***	0.0	***	***	***	***	***

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None							
Total	***	0.0	***	***	***	***	***

Positions

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

Change in Revenues							
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Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2016) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2017) cost: 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency? Yes
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed? 09/30/16

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

Not applicable, initial version.

Prepared By:	Paul R. Prussing, Deputy Director	Phone:	(907)465-8679
Division:	Teaching and Learning Support	Date:	01/19/2016 12:00 AM
Approved By:	Mike Hanley, Commissioner	Date:	01/29/16
Agency:	Department of Education & Early Development		

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

STATE OF ALASKA
2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 157

Analysis

Section 1 amends AS 14.03.255, Organization and operation of a charter school, (c) by adding: (15) a clause requiring compliance with AS 14.03.257 if the charter school is a language immersion charter school.

Section 2 amends AS 14.03, Public Schools Generally, by adding a new section AS 14.03.257, Language immersion charter schools, that defines what requirements must be met in order to be considered a language immersion charter school; such as, teachers must possess an "indigenous or foreign language immersion endorsement."

Section 3 amends AS 14.20, Teachers and School Personnel, by adding a new section AS 14.20.021, Teachers at language immersion charter schools. This requires the department to issue indigenous or foreign language immersion endorsements to a person who meets four requirements.

Section 4 amends AS 14.20.025, Limited teacher certificates, by removing the ability to teach Alaska Native Languages with a limited certificate. The bill also removes the ability of the board to require additional academic training under limited teacher certificates.

Section 5 amends AS 14.20.025, Limited teacher certificates, by adding a new subsection (b) and (c). (b) of this section defines the period of time a limited certificate may be valid. Initially, one year with and an optional four year extension based on meeting certain criteria. (c) states that "the board may not require, as a condition for extending or renewing a limited certificate under (b) of this section, that a person complete additional academic training."

Section 6 amends AS 14.20, Teachers and school personnel, by adding a new section AS 14.20.026, Limited teacher certificates for language teachers. This section authorizes the board to issue limited teacher certificates for language teachers when there are insufficient number of teachers available to a person who meet four specific criteria. Certificates issued under this section are valid under the same criteria as Section 5, AS 14.20.025, as amended.

Section 7 amends AS 14.20, Teachers and school personnel, by adding a new section AS 14.20.028, Recognition of teacher certification for Alaska Native language immersion teachers by Alaska Native tribes. This allows Alaska Native tribes to issue teacher certification for language immersion. The Alaska Native tribe must submit to the department their certification procedures, but it is not approved by the department.

Sections 3 through 7 would require a Project Coordinator to have independent and overall authority over this review at DEED. Project Coordinator = \$131.2; plus \$9.5 department chargebacks for a total cost of \$140.7.

Section 8 amends AS 14.30, Pupils and educational programs for pupils, by adding a new section AS 14.30.430, Testing in language immersion educational programs. "The department shall, to the extent permitted by federal law, allow students enrolled in language immersion charter schools established under AS 14.03.257 or other language immersion programs to take statewide standards-based assessments in the language of instruction of the language immersion charter school or language immersion program."

The fiscal note is indeterminate because currently the number of programs that fall under this bill is unknown, and an assessment would need to be developed for each language represented. The cost of the assessment development for each program would be significant as many of the languages approach words within the language differently and a simple translation will not be appropriate. The administration of the assessment will also have ongoing costs based on the number of different languages as each may require specific scoring protocols and scorers who know each language for open ended items.

ALASKA LEGISLATURE

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

Angoon · Coffman Cove · Craig · Edna Bay · Elfin Cove · Game Creek · Hollis · Hoonah · Kake · Kasaan · Klawock · Kupreanof · Naukati · Pelican
Petersburg · Point Baker · Port Alexander · Port Protection · Sitka · Tenakee Springs · Thorne Bay · Whale Pass

rep.jonathan.kreiss-tomkins@akleg.gov

Committees:
Education
Fisheries
Rules
State Affairs



Juneau, Alaska 99801 (Jan. – April)
State Capitol, Room 426
(907) 465-3732

Sitka, Alaska 99835 (May – Dec.)
201 Katlian Street, Ste. 103
(907) 747-4665

HB 157 Sponsor Statement

Language Immersion Schools and Teacher Certification

Language immersion education is an increasingly popular educational model, especially in today's rapidly globalizing world. Language immersion education also produces impressive educational outcomes. Decades of experience from around the world have shown that language immersion education can create second-language fluency while also contributing to academic success in other subjects.

Alaska already has a variety of successful and popular immersion programs. Fronteras in the Mat-Su (Spanish) and Rilke Schule in Anchorage (German) are both planning moves to new facilities as interest grows. Anchorage School District's world languages immersion program teaches three languages – Japanese, Russian, and Spanish – and is in the process of adding French and Chinese. In rural Alaska, interest is growing in immersion as a way to teach endangered Native languages, Ayaprun Elitnaurvik in Bethel leading the way.

HB 157 creates a charter school designation with the specific mission of delivering a curriculum in a foreign or Native language, and holds these schools to a strict immersion standard. It requires fully certified teachers in these charter schools to have the specialized skills necessary to successfully teach in an immersion setting, and it includes provisions that will put in the classroom language speakers who know how to teach but may not be able to get the necessary formal qualifications to be fully certified. HB 157 also gives the Department of Education the authority to allow teachers in immersion charter schools that teach an Alaska Native language to be certified through processes developed by local tribal governments. And last, it allows students to be tested in their language of instruction, if benchmark tests comparable to English-language tests exist.

Immersion education broadens students' knowledge of the world, gives them skills to help them succeed in their future careers, and often improves their academic performance not just in language classes, but in all subjects.

The Alaska Native Language Preservation & Advisory Council's

2016 Biennial Report to the Governor and Legislature



State of Alaska
Division of Community and Regional Affairs
Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council

Appointed members:

Annette Evans Smith, Chair
Delores Churchill
Walkie Charles, Ph.D (2012-2013 Chair)
April G.L. Counciller, Ph.D., Vice-Chair
Bernadette Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle

Legislative members:

Senator Donald Olson
Representative Benjamin Nageak

Distributed by:

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Representative Benjamin Nageak
Senator Donny Olson

1. Letter from the Council

January 1, 2016

Dear Governor Bill Walker, Alaskan State Legislators, and People of Alaska:

As members of the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council (ANLPAC), we are pleased to present our 2016 report to the Governor, the Alaska State Legislature, and the people of Alaska. This is our second report and builds upon the findings and recommendations of our 2014 report.

Alaska Native language preservation and revitalization issues of particular interest to the Council include:

1. Advocating for the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages through collaboration and sharing for all.
2. Developing adequate methods to encourage language revitalization and restoration.
3. Informing the Governor, the Legislature, and Alaskan citizens about the commission's role and duties.

The ANLPAC is honored to work collaboratively with the Governor, Alaska State Legislature and all Alaskans to address Alaska Native language issues and to help shape our state's future preservation and revitalization efforts for Alaska Native languages.

Sincerely,

ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE PRESERVATION AND ADVISORY COUNCIL



Annette Evans Smith,
Council Chair



Delores Churchill,
Council member



April Counciller, Ph.D.,
Council Vice Chair



Walkie Charles, Ph.D.,
Council member



Bernadette Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle,
Council member

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Ahtna Language enthusiasts, (L-R) Jeanie Maxim, Elsie Nicklie and Kevin Gene; First Alaskans Institute, Elders & Youth Summit. Anchorage, October 12, 2015. Photo by Grant Rebne

On cover: Boy and elder, photo courtesy Sealaska

2. Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations

Information Scarcity

Finding: There is a lack of accurate research data on 1) the status of Alaska Native languages, 2) the availability of programs to learn Alaska Native languages, and 3) the effectiveness of such programs to teach Alaska Native languages. This knowledge gap exists for individuals, families, and language communities: an effort is needed to consolidate information on language-learning opportunities and to make this information widely available to all Alaska Natives.

Recommendation: Alaska Native communities—villages, regions, language communities—are urged to assess your own community's state of its language, to share this information with ANLPAC, and to begin using these data to form plans for the future of your language.

Regional Disparities

Finding: There are huge differences among regions and among Alaska Native language communities in terms of language learning opportunities and efforts at language policy and planning for Alaska Native language survival. Communities and organizations within regions, and activities among regions and language communities, need to be coordinated.

Recommendation: Alaska Native communities—villages, regions, language communities—are urged to assess which language-learning opportunities exist locally, to coordinate with other villages and regions who share your language, to share this information with ANLPAC, and to consider language policy and planning steps to increase the opportunities for everyone to learn to speak Alaska Native languages.

Education

Finding: Schools have historically played a major role in undermining and threatening the survival of Alaska Native languages. Even though school-based programs alone cannot reverse the decline in Alaska Native languages, highly effective programs in schools can increase the number of fluent language speakers. Sadly, most Alaskan schools and school districts do very little or nothing to support Alaska Native languages. Alaska Native language programs in schools often rely on fluent (or less-than-fluent) speakers who have received very little training in effecting methods of teaching second language.

Recommendation: The ANLPAC strongly urges the Legislature to adopt HB 157 in support of language immersion schools and for training for Alaska Native language teachers in a framework that leads to teacher certification.

Recommendation: The Legislature should amend AS 14.30.420 to clearly apply to *all schools* in which a majority of students are Alaska Natives—calling for a Native language curriculum advisory board to be established and, furthermore, directing that school districts *shall* create Native language programs if so directed by their Native language curriculum advisory boards.

Recommendation: Offering accessible Alaska Native language instruction through the University of Alaska - including the traditional language of each campus - in programs designed to lead to conversational fluency. To support student access, UA and the State of Alaska should work together to broaden a scholarship program such as the UA Scholars Award, or the Alaska Performance Scholarship to apply to students' AK Native language study. Additional options include non-credit continuing education courses for those seeking traditional language education, and partnering with tribal organizations for community-based brokered/sponsored courses. Furthermore, the University should insure that "best practice" teaching methods and curriculum design are utilized system-wide for Alaska Native language instruction.

Recommendation: The Council urges Alaskans avail themselves of new amendments to Sec. 6004, Alaska Native Educational Equity Program (ANEP) and the Sec. 6133, Native American and Alaska Native Language Immersion Schools and Programs in the recently signed-into-law Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), to provide funding for Alaska Native language immersion programs.

Recommendation: The ANLPAC urges schools, public offices, businesses, Native corporations, and local leaders to make use of Alaska Native languages in their daily operations.

Reconciliation

Finding: The continued effects of forced language-loss in previous generations are still being felt by 21st century Alaska Natives and end up providing great discouragement to language learners nowadays. Efforts to heal and transcend these previous wrongs are a fundamental part of any successful program to revitalize Alaska Native languages. The Bureau of Indian Affairs and the U.S. Congress, have formally apologized for these destructive U.S. policies.

Recommendation: In order to localize this apology, Alaskan lawmakers are encouraged to declare an official apology, on behalf of the State of Alaska, for the earlier role that Alaska had in suppressing and forbidding Alaska Native languages in village schools and in boarding schools across the state.

Recommendation: The Legislature should declare April 21st of each year as Alaska Native Languages Day, to celebrate and recognize Alaska Native languages.

Recommendation: The Legislature should declare that the second Monday of every October annually be *Indigenous Peoples' Day* in Alaska.

Recommendation: The Council calls on all state, borough, city, and other regional groups to consider using traditional, Alaska Native place names when the local community desires and, to the degree possible, to recognize these names formally with the state and federal governments and to use these names in maps, signage, publications, and school curricula.

Recommendation: The Council urges the artist community to express Alaska Native Languages as both critical to our daily lives and to use artistic expression to create healing moments that promote our languages and cultures.

Technology

Finding: Electronic technology and internet communication have created new opportunities and new methods for individuals to learn Alaska Native languages and to use them to communicate with others over long distances. These efforts need to be supported and expanded.

Recommendation: The Council encourages the creation of electronic means to promote the learning and the everyday use of Alaska Native languages and supports human teaching, rather than learning from tech alone.

Native Language Council Funding

Finding: In order to achieve its legislatively-mandated goals, the Alaska Native Language section within DCRA should have its budget increased.

Recommendation: ANLPAC urges the Legislature to restore the PCN and the budget to support the return of the 2012-2015 position of Administrative Assistant to the ANLPAC section within the Division of Community and Regional Affairs.

"Qaġnutinatut magua nutaat tuġat Inupiuraaqsuġtuat pizaŋilagut nalutiblugit Inupiaqtun qaniġnamik, uaptiktun ilisimatitaagatigut aŋayugaaptalu, aanagutlu. Naguuġasualuta 'aa nuŋuluta Inupiaqtun qaniġnamik." [We need to apologize to our young people and children that we didn't speak to them like our grandparents and parents did for us. We need to reconcile our intergenerational grief of losing our language] - Bernadette Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle, ANLPAC member, May 6, 2014

3. Introduction

What would it mean if 90% or more of Alaska Native languages were lost?

Alaska is home to twenty, officially-recognized Native languages. Signed into law in 2014, the Official Languages Act by our State Legislature 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, Siberian Yupik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq, Unangax, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in, Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Hän, 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.

Language endangerment is a serious problem in Alaska but is not unique to the Great Land. Across the globe—if current trends were to continue—at least 50% of the world's 7,000 languages are expected to die out and another 40% are threatened with loss. What does it mean when up to 90% of all living human languages may be lost during this century? What would it mean if 90% or more of Alaska Native languages were lost? Each human language is literally unique, providing its own view on the human world and the natural world. Grammatical features of different languages provide unique means of understanding the relationships between people, objects, and events—including things not noticed by other languages. Alaska's Native languages literally are a unique cultural and social treasure.

How does the transmission of languages from one generation to another get halted? Broadly speaking, wars, colonialism, and globalization have led a few languages to replace many others. In some cases, parents stop speaking their language to their own children because they fear for their children's safety. In other cases, young children stop speaking their parents' language due to peer pressure and broader societal pressures. Both of these have been—and some continue to be—factors that are leading to a reduction in the numbers of speakers of every Alaska Native language. As it stands, every one of Alaska's Native languages is currently threatened. According to the Expanded version (Lewis and Simons 2010) of Joshua Fishman's (1991) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (*page 36*), Central Yup'ik—as the healthiest Alaska Native languages—is at best considered at 6b, *threatened*, in perhaps eight villages and is 7 or 8a, *shifting* or *moribund*, in all other villages. St Lawrence Island Yupik is now 7, *shifting*. All other Alaska Native languages are generally 8a or 8b, *moribund* or *nearly extinct*. Eyak is 9, *dormant*, and Tsetsaut—an Athabascan language once spoken in southernmost Southeast Alaska—has been *extinct* since approximately 1930.

Despite these declines in numbers, there are some *very* promising signs of *language revitalization* in Alaska Native language communities! The highly successful Ayaprun Yup'ik immersion school in Bethel has produced approximately 300 new, fluent speakers of Yup'ik since it began in 1995. Some highly-motivated individuals have learned their heritage languages to the point of *fluency* as young adults, through a combination of university courses and—especially—with very intensive one-on-one interaction with fluent elders, practicing speaking only in the language. These young adults are Tlingit, Gwich'in, and Sugt'stun speakers (though there may be others). These newly-fluent, second-language speakers are raising their own children with their heritage language in the home; this may be the beginnings of new generations of first-Native-language speaker again for the first time in twenty to sixty years!

4. Methodology

Since its inception late in 2012, the Council has pursued a vigorous agenda of meetings to establish the foundation for future efforts, holding strategic planning and work sessions, and developing the biennial reports to the Governor and Legislature. The Council began the process of gathering critically important public testimony and researched how others have met the challenge to preserve, restore and revitalize Alaska Native languages.

This work continues to be the basis for this 2016 report. Four methods were used to determine the findings and recommendations. These methods include: building partnerships, hearing public testimony, collecting data from across the state, and strategic planning and work sessions.

The ANLPAC has met with and consults with statewide Native organizations such as the First Alaskans Institute, Alaska Federation of Natives, Alaska Native Heritage Center, Alaska Native Language Center, Alaska Native Language Archive, and the Inuit Circumpolar Conference Alaska. The Council and staff meet with representatives of many regional Native non-profit corporations, foundations, and institutes to discern the pressing needs that each region and organization has for the survival of Alaska Native languages.

Since 2013, the Council has been collecting public testimony from statewide events such as the First Alaskans Institute (FAI) Elder and Youth Conference, the Alaska Federation of Natives, and the Rural Providers' Conference. Additionally, the Council in 2013 and 2014 conducted a survey via postcards, distributed to Alaska Natives at several state-wide events, to solicit input on which areas were of greatest concern. The Council takes it as imperative to share the voices of Alaska Native peoples, their experiences, and their goals for the survival of our languages. And it is the voices of our people that shape our findings and recommendations throughout this report.

At its meetings to collect public testimony, the Council also invites participants to identify specific Native language programs they know of in their regions, marking these on sticky notes and placing them on a large map of the *Indigenous Peoples and Languages of Alaska*. Results from this are included here in Appendix E.

The ANLPAC meets regularly via audioconference—typically once a month—in open, public meetings and invites participation and input from the public.

"It's heart wrenching [the loss of our Native languages]. It's an emergency, and we're scrambling to record as much as we can ... there's only six fluent speakers left in Metlakatla.... And they're all senior citizens. So if we don't do something now, if we don't save our language right now, the Tsimshian language is going to die, or go to sleep. And I don't know if we'll be able to revive it again." - Gavin Hudson, Tsimshian



"What I hope to see for the Haida language is to see our young children speaking the language. And when our young children start speaking the language then we know it's going to survive".

- Skíl Jáadei Linda Schrack, Haida advanced learner and teacher, October 12, 2015

5. Information Scarcity

Across Alaska, there generally are only rough approximations of the numbers of fluent speakers and their age ranges for each Alaska Native language. Likewise, there is no central listing of the many, organized opportunities to learn Alaska Native languages across the state. And yet such basic language demographics are necessary if the people of Alaska are to make the best informed decisions about the future of each Alaska Native language.

During 2013 and 2014, ANLPAC contacted school districts across Alaska regarding their Alaska Native language programs. It turns out that many districts are unclear on whether or not they have Native languages in their schools. In some cases, the district office does not know whether a particular class is to teach “language” or “culture” and, if it is a language class, whether the teacher speaks the language with the students or just talks about it in English. In order to know if there are potentially effective language programs in particular schools, such information needs to be gathered.

But information on the status of individual Alaska Native languages is not the goal of the Council. Rather, it is a tool to help Alaska Native communities most effectively in developing their own language plans and setting language policies that will support the continued vitality or revitalization of their languages. Knowing how many fluent speakers there are, their age ranges, and which villages and towns they live in, is important in deciding which steps need to be taken to promote each language.

The ANLPAC staff has been meeting with Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA) Research and Analysis staff and coordinating how ANLPAC may make use of DCRA’s *Community Online Database* to store information on the traditional language(s) of each Alaska Native community. Beginning in January 2016, the Council’s own research analyst will be providing data village-by-village for inclusion into the Community Online Database, indicating names of traditional languages, but also including (if known) the status of the language and which language-learning opportunities exist within the community.

As mentioned above, the Council has been collecting its own data, informally and with no special funding, by inviting members of the public to describe language programs they know of and post these on sticky notes onto a map of Alaska Native Peoples and Languages (see Appendix E). The Council calls on each individual Alaska Native community—each villages, region, and language community—to assess your own community’s state of its language, to share this information with ANLPAC, and to begin using these data to form plans for the future of your language. Please share your findings with ANLPAC at analpac@alaska.gov. The Council aims to continue to collect such data and see that they are compiled into a user-friendly, publically-available electronic data base: the DCRA Community Database Online.

Finding: There is a lack of accurate research data on 1) the status of Alaska Native languages, 2) the availability of programs to learn Alaska Native languages, and 3) the effectiveness of such programs to teach Alaska Native languages. This knowledge gap exists for individuals, families, and language communities; an effort is needed to consolidate information on language-learning opportunities and to make this information widely available to all Alaska Natives.

Recommendation: Alaska Native communities—villages, regions, language communities—are urged to assess your own community’s state of its language, to share this information with ANLPAC, and to begin using these data to form plans for the future of your language.

6. Regional Disparities

All of Alaska’s Native languages have undergone losses and deserve to be put back on their proper footing as authentic ways to express being a modern Alaskan once again. Yet many languages, in many regions of our great state, have very few or no opportunities available for language learners.

Finding: There are huge differences among regions and among Alaska Native language communities in terms of language-learning opportunities and efforts at language policy and planning for Alaska Native language

survival. Communities and organizations within regions, and activities among regions and language communities, need to be coordinated.

Recommendation: Alaska Native communities—villages, regions, language communities—are urged to assess which language-learning opportunities exist locally, to coordinate with other villages and regions who share your language, to share this information with ANLPAC, and to consider language policy and planning steps to increase the opportunities for everyone to learn to speak Alaska Native languages.

“One of the things that we found when we traveled across the state and listened and heard people speak was that, from one region to the next, you might have a load of language programs in one region and then you go to the next and they have next to nothing. And unfortunately those regional disparities exist across our state. And we need to start to even the playing field. We need to begin connecting regions that are building new language programs to those regions that have well-established, long-running programs that have integrated early Head Start, elementary school, and even in secondary.” - Annette Evans Smith

“We need to quit talking about our languages as if they were dying or dead. We need to start talking about the language making a recovery. As long as we speak about it as dying or dead, then we’re losing.” - Delores Churchill, Haida elder and weaver

7. Education

Journal of Loss

I.

It's her first day of school.
She says to the teacher,
*Tlél ax daa yaa kushusgé, Tlél ax daa yaa
kushusgé*

I do not understand, I do not understand
and she keeps repeating the Lingít words
until they slap her hand with a ruler.

She looks down at the sting,
repeats in her language, *I do not understand*,
and she's led away to the closet,
already prepared with a little bed
and thin blanket.

She's shut in tight, door locked;
in the dark she thinks about
darkness,

wonders what bad thing
they thought she had spoken.

Sixty years later, she says
I thought the world had come to an end.

It did,

I think to myself,

It did.

Vivian Faith Prescott, *Hide of My Tongue*,
2012, p. 17

Historical Background

Alaska Native peoples have always had their own systems of education within the residential family, the extended family, and the community. For untold thousands of years, structured play, observation, careful apprenticeships with family members, and careful stories of instruction have educated each generation in what they needed to know in order to survive and thrive.

Schools, by way of contrast, were something different: organized structures in which students are to be educated by strangers. The Russians created some schools in the early 1800s, for children of Alaska Native mothers and Russian fathers. In these schools, children were taught to read and write in Russian as well as in their own, Native languages; the Russians, working with Alaska Natives, developed alphabets for five languages: Unangam Tunuu (Unangan Aleut), Sugt'stun, Central Yup'ik, Dena'ina, and Tlingit (Krauss 1980).

Almost two decades after Russia's sale of their Alaskan claim to the United States, the U.S. federal government became involved in public schooling

in the Territory of Alaska. In this, Sheldon Jackson (below) instituted a formal program aimed to eliminate all Alaska Native languages. Forceful and violent oppression of children speaking their home languages—both in village schools and in boarding schools—took its toll in obvious and subtle ways. Many who experienced this first-hand made the conscious decision to save their own children from such hateful treatment and, therefore, did not pass their own language on. For other parents, it was not so much a conscious decision but the subconscious result of the “brainwashing” provided by non-Native schools that led them to speak only English to their own children. Both of these often had the same result: for many parts of Native Alaska, the violent English-only policies of the schools led to a disconnect between the generations, halting the transmittal of language and depriving further generations of their traditional language.

Official U.S. policies since the 1880s actively worked to destroy Alaska Native languages, along with all other important aspects of Alaska Native life. The missionary, Sheldon Jackson, was appointed federal minister for education in Alaska in 1885 and immediately forbade the use of Alaska Native languages in all schools.

Teachers were instructed to punish students for speaking their own languages in schools and teachers were forbidden to learn their students' languages; additionally, teachers were supposed to convince parents not to speak their own language to their own children! (Krauss 1980).



Archives, University of Alaska, Fairbanks

U.S. Government School, Cape Prince of Wales, 1902-1906. Alaska Digital Archives
vilda.alaska.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/cdmg11/id/1158/rec/2

Additional forces of assimilation were the largely involuntary boarding school programs which removed young Native American children from their homes for months or years at a time. There, not only were their home languages forbidden, but they were largely boarded with students of other Native languages, leaving English as the one, common language. As part of the “kill the Indian, save the man” point of view, English-only schools promoted the concept that “civilized” Natives were those who no longer spoke their own languages, ate their own foods, wore their own clothes, or lived lifestyles of their own choosing (see Hirshberg and Sharp 2005).

Small changes in this English-only policy in Alaskan schools began with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the Lower Kuskokwim region in 1969 when they designed an experimental program of “Yup’ik First Education” for students who spoke only Yup’ik. In the fall of 1970, one kindergarten in Bethel and one each in four Yup’ik villages piloted a program of teaching Yup’ik speaking children in their own language. The results were so profoundly superior to the previous English-only schooling that the BIA quickly expanded it to several other Lower Kuskokwim schools. Also during the early 1970s—partially in response to the 1968 federal Bilingual Education Act, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (which authorized bilingual education in the United States) some public schools in Alaska Native villages began to offer small amounts of instruction in local Native languages. Not all Alaska Native communities have had Native language programs in their local schools and—sadly—almost all such school programs provide only very short amounts of time for instruction in the local language.

Schools in Alaska have historically played a major role in undermining and threatening the survival of Alaska Native languages. Even though school-based programs alone cannot reverse the decline in Alaska Native languages, highly effective programs in schools can increase the number of fluent language speakers. Sadly, most Alaskan schools and school districts do very little or nothing to support Alaska Native languages and several school districts are not in compliance with AS 14.30.420 (see Appendix B).

Indeed, it is unfortunately the case that the number of speakers of Alaska Native languages has continued to decline even *after* the languages were no longer officially forbidden. Part of this is due to continued prejudice against Alaska Native languages in the schools—and generally in public places—in Alaska.

“The kids started telling me, gee we’re not doing a lot of those, we miss Yupik, I wish you were still here. Ever since the school started to become standard [because of education reforms] ... the hours are getting limited, limited, limited. And last time I went, one kid said now when we say things in our language, we get punished, we’re on the gym list. The principal is telling us don’t use your language when I’m hearing you.”

- Elaine Kingeeguk, Savoonga, Alaska Native Language Summit, April 26, 2013

Best Practices for Language Revitalization

Around the world—in other parts of Indigenous North America and the Pacific and beyond—there are success stories of indigenous communities which have stabilized or revitalized their languages. The most powerful successes in creating new speakers are coming from language nests and language immersion schools, from master-apprentice teams, and from fluent speakers who make concerted efforts to speak only their own language to their children, creating a new generation of first-language speakers.



X'unei, Kaalkéís', and Shaawatk'é: fluent second-language speaker of Tlingit raising his daughters as first-language Tlingit speakers.

Critical to recommending best practices for language revitalization is addressing the linguistic demographic status of each language. That is to say, best practices for a language still spoken by almost every one of all ages, or by everyone age 20 and upwards, will be different from best practices for a language that now is spoken only by elders.

"[T]he only solution it seems to me is to generate, to cultivate, a new crop of young, fluent speakers of Sm'algyax, the Tsimshian language. And that's incredibly difficult to do given our circumstances. They're all senior citizens." - Gavin Hudson, Tsimshian

Master-Apprentice Language Teams

Developed by indigenous language workers in California, this approach matches a highly-motivated language learner with a highly-fluent speaker who then spend 10-20 hours per week speaking only their heritage language with each other on a variety of topics. Currently, Sealaska Heritage Institute has a Mentor-Apprentice program going with Tlingit in Yakutat, Juneau, and Sitka, and Chugachmiut has a Master-Apprentice program with Sugt'stun in Tatitlek, Chenega Bay, Nanwalek, and Port Graham.



Master speaker Paul Marks (right) with apprentices Joshua Jackson (seated) and Ishmael Hope

"They're trying to hold our language, but it's very, very weak in our schools. We used to have a multi-cultural room; now it's a[n English] classroom. My wife taught in there for years. We need a linguist in Yupigestun, in our language, and spend, like a teacher, three to four hours a day teaching our language, that would improve, for sure. That way our kids would learn, as soon as they go to school, they will learn our language and they will like it. That's what we need: a linguistic teacher in our language." - Nataay Jerome Apatiki, St. Lawrence Island elder, Gambell

Finding: The importance of Alaska Native languages is inadequately recognized, as is the fact that they are threatened or endangered. Many people do not know of the opportunities that already exist to learn Alaska Native languages, nor do they know how to get new and improved Alaska Native language teaching/learning/speaking opportunities started in their local communities and via the internet.

Recommendation: The ANLPAC urges schools, public offices, businesses, Native corporations, and local leaders to make use of Alaska Native languages in their daily operations.

Support for Alaska Native Language Immersion Schools

Language immersion education is a highly-effective approach to teaching children a second language. Developed first in Quebec in the early 1960s with French for English-speakers, it has since been adapted to use with other languages around the world and with the same successes. Early Total Immersion is the gold standard of language immersion schooling, in which children are taught 100% through the immersion language, kindergarten through second grade; English language arts (reading and writing) are added during third grade, and in fourth and fifth grades additional academic classes are taught in English so that by sixth grade, the students are doing half of their academic subject in English and half in the immersion language.

Alaska Native language immersion schools have been operated in Bethel (Ayaprun Elitnaurvik, Central Yup'ik, 1995-to present, K-6th charter school), Kotzebue (Nikaitchuat Ilisagviat, Iñupiaq, 1998-present, private pre-school); Barrow (Iñupiaq, 1995? – early 2000s); K-4 partial immersion program in Mekoryuk (Cup'ig, 1999 to present); and Nanwalek (Sugt'stun, 1999-2002?, pre-school, Nanwalek IRA Council). The Yup'ik immersion program in particular has had great success in teaching young people to be conversationally fluent and academically competent in Yup'ik alongside with English.

Finding: The Council finds that language immersion programs in schools and language nests for infants and young children are important means for stabilizing the loss and revitalizing our languages, but there are many challenges to implementing these successful programs. The Council supports the implementation of language immersion schools in general, and public charter schools and tribal schools in particular. These require that effective programs of training be made available to the potential language teachers, especially in effective immersion teaching strategies. The Council strongly supports local and tribal autonomy in setting teacher certification standards for language immersion teaches. The Council also supports language nests.

Recommendation: The ANLPAC strongly urges the Legislature to adopt HB 157 in support of language immersion schools and for training for Alaska Native language teachers in a framework that leads to teacher certification.

Recommendation: The Council urges Alaskans to avail themselves of new amendments to Sec. 6004, Alaska Native Educational Equity Program (ANEP) and Sec. 6133, Native American and Alaska Native Language Immersion Schools and Programs, in the recently signed-into-law Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), to locate funding opportunities for Alaska Native language immersion programs.

"I am a Haida language learner, a very enthusiastic one. But I'm a beginning Haida language learner. My struggle as a Haida language learner is that there's not enough teachers."

- Susie Lee Edwardson, Haida, October 12, 2015

The University of Alaska and the Teaching of Alaska Native Languages

Finding: The *University of Alaska* should take more seriously its *responsibility* to provide instruction in each Alaska Native language that is within a campus' service region and that such instruction include coursework designed to lead to conversational fluency in each language.

Each campus of the University of Alaska should offer instruction in the traditional Alaska Native language or languages of its service area. Such programs may include additional goals but should always include the aim of allowing students to achieve *conversational fluency* in Alaska Native languages.

In some cases, distance-delivered language instruction may be the most appropriate means to achieve this, although face-to-face language learning opportunities generally are more powerfully effective at leading to *conversational fluency*.

In order to have highly qualified teachers of Alaska Native languages, the University of Alaska should expand its offerings of training to all speakers who would like to teach their Alaska Native languages.

The University of Alaska's *Shaping Alaska's Future* (n.d.,page 13) recognizes that

Issue B: Some Alaska Native languages and cultural traditions are endangered. Many communities do not have sufficient resources to safeguard and nurture culture and the arts, so UA plays a vital role in preserving and advancing this knowledge and these traditions.

Effect: UA is a major center of culture and the arts in Alaska and is a center of excellence for Alaska Native and indigenous research and scholarship.

Recommendation: The University of Alaska shall offer instruction in Alaska Native languages, including the traditional language of each campus, in programs designed to lead to conversational fluency. The University should offer such courses with free tuition to all Alaskans and not cancel classes because of pre-determined minimum enrollment levels. Furthermore, the University should insure that it offers comprehensive instruction in the most effective teaching methods and curriculum design for Alaska Native language instruction.

"My concern is the cost of how much it takes to get in the (Native language) class because I think that there's a lot of eager young people who may be Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, a combination of all of them, that want to learn.... And the [cost of] tuition is very high for these classes."

- Susie Lee Edwardson, Haida language learner and activist

Alaskan School Districts and their local Native language curriculum advisory boards: Clarification and/or strengthening of AS 14.30.420

Finding: Section (a) currently reads in part:

(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.

Recommendation: AS 14.30.420 (a) should be amended to read:

A school board shall establish a local Native language curriculum board for each school 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 board for each school with Alaska Native students in their district. If the local Native language curriculum board recommends the establishment of a Native language education curriculum for a school, the school board shall initiate and conduct a Native language education curriculum within grades K through 12 at that school.

Finding: Although Alaska Native languages have been recognized as official languages of the State of Alaska, Alaska's indigenous languages have not received the educational recognition that they need and deserve. Alaska Native languages are (among other things) a *powerful resource* for academic success in Alaskan schools.

Recommendation: Within the Department of Education and Early Development, create a Division of Indigenous Languages that supports Alaska Native language teachers, programs, and schools and teachers.



School in Nondalton

8. Reconciliation

“Even as a Yup’ik speaker, and a teacher of Yup’ik at a university, one time one of my students said ‘Well, what would happen to the stream where the blackfish swim in the wintertime if it ever does freeze [solid]?’ It’s just one of those things that just kind of pops out as a question with nothing that we were covering, she just out of the blue asked and caught me by surprise. And I just got filled with emotion and I said ‘I don’t know because during the time that I should have known, I was taken away to boarding school.’” - Walkie Charles, University of Alaska Professor, Yup’ik

The ANLPAC recognizes that four generations of Alaska Native children being punished for speaking their languages created huge problems for those generations, part of a larger, longer history of damage inflicted upon them. Additionally, the children and grandchildren of those punished for speaking their language have inherited their own trauma and grief in being denied what is their birthright—the ability to speak their heritage language. While some might feel that language loss and its associated suffering is in the past, many who spoke out in public testimony to the Council expressed ongoing trauma as a result of language suppression and the continued erosion of Alaska Native languages and cultures. While this finding may be surprising or discomfoting to many, it was clear from public testimony collected by the Council that historic wounds run deep and are exacerbated by the continued struggles of individuals and communities to retain their languages. This intergenerational trauma will continue to shadow Alaska Native communities unless widespread reconciliation is achieved. In order to transcend these traumas, Alaska Native peoples need to re-frame our ideology, to decolonize our minds.

“I had to go to Wrangell [Institute] and when we did talk our language they washed our mouth out with soap. Some of them, I don’t know what they had but it made their mouth foam. When I went home that summer I didn’t want to talk [my language] anymore and it’s still hard for me to talk about it.”

- Gloria Danson, Alaska Native Studies Conference, April 5, 2013

“At the core of many problems in the Alaska Native community are unhealed psychological and spiritual wounds and unresolved grief brought on by a century-long history of deaths by epidemics and cultural and political deprivation at others’ hands; some of the more tragic consequences include the erosion of Native languages in which are couched the full cultural understanding, and the erosion of cultural values.”- Alaska Natives Commission Final Report, 1999.

“We come from a place of strength as indigenous peoples...The practices of colonization, take those things out of us, still exists...it’s not past tense. Our kids aren’t learning their languages in our public school system...Whatever we can do to support your work, let us know. Gunalchéesh, Háw’aa.”

- Liz Medicine Crow, First Alaskans Institute, April 5, 2013

Alaska Native Place Names

Finding: The Council encourages the reclamation of Alaska Native place names throughout the state, including local, state, and federal usage in signage and maps. Some progress is being made. The U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewel, in September, 2015, ordered that North America’s highest mountain have its traditional Koyukon Athabascan name, Denali, recognized—in lieu of the former name for Ohio’s 1896 presidential candidate, McKinley.

Three rivers in Gwich’in country have had their traditional Gwich’in names recognized in 2015 for use on federal maps, replacing English or French language names given in the late 19th century: Ch’idriinjik River, Teedriinjik River, and K’iidootinjik River.

Recommendation: The Council calls on all state, borough, city, and other regional groups to consider using traditional, Alaska Native place names when the local community desires and, to the degree possible, to recognize these names formally with the state and federal governments and to use these names in maps, signage, publications, and school curricula.

State Holiday for Native Languages

Finding: The Council encourages public discourse about language loss and the many benefits of language revitalization. Bringing Alaska Native languages to the forefront of people’s awareness is critical.

Recommendation: The ANLPAC recommends the creation of an annual State holiday, *Alaska Native Languages Day*, to celebrate and recognize Alaska Native languages, on April 21, the anniversary of the passage of Alaska HB 216.

Healing Art

Finding: The Council finds that art can be an incredible change-agent in our communities, helping people to re-frame how they experience inter-generational trauma and grief; art can become a catalyst for transformation and healing. Alaska Native playwrights such as Ishmael Angaaluk Hope (*The Reincarnation of Stories*) and Jack Dalton (*Assimilation*) have given all Alaskans new ways to experience and think about those aspects of Alaskan history that, while negative and unfortunate, can help us all grow, transcend, and heal. Visual arts, spoken arts, and other art forms are to be encouraged and explored.

Recommendation: The Council urges the artist community to express Alaska Native Languages as both critical to our daily lives and to use artistic expression to create healing moments that promote our languages and cultures.



"Amouluq Walking" (Great-grandfather) by Aakatchaq Schaeffer (Iñupiaq, Kotzebue) Shaman with Raven in a Dream State.

Honoring Loss, Promoting Healing

Finding: Generations of physical and psychological punishments in local schools and in boarding schools for speaking their own languages not only traumatized those who received the punishments directly but have created additional problems for the generations who have been unjustly denied the heritage languages that are their due inheritance. The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs in 2000 formally apologized for its role in the destruction of Native American peoples, cultures, and languages. The U.S. Congress in 2009 formally apologized in Public Law 111-118, Section 8113, stating that

“the United States, acting through Congress—

- Recognizes that there have been years of official depredations, ill-conceived policies, and the breaking of covenants by the Federal Government regarding Indian tribes;
- Apologizes on behalf of the people of the United States to all Native Peoples for the many instances of violence, maltreatment, and neglect inflicted on Native Peoples by the citizens of the United States; and
- Urges the President to acknowledge the wrongs of the United States against Indian tribes in the history of the United States in order to bring healing to this land....”

“We need to apologize to our young people and children that we didn’t speak to them like our grandparents and parents did for us. Since we haven’t spoken to them in our Native language some unspoken rules or protocols are forgotten. We need to reconcile our intergenerational grief of losing our languages. On behalf of the King Island Native Community elders committee, I apologized to the young shareholders of King Island Native Corporation. I had to think of a way to honor every generation because the letter dealt with sensitive issues around Native dancing.

I said in Inupiaq, “Inupiuraaqtauin, kaniqsilaguin, nugupitin”. All who could understand looked at each other, so I repeated, Inupiuraaqtauin, kaniqsilaguin, nugupitin. All who could understand me stood up. I said, “Quyaana agupitisi”. They sat down. I then said, “For those of you that didn’t understand me, stand up. All the young people and those were unsure of what I said in Inupiaq, stood up. I asked them to stay standing and said: “On behalf of the Elders committee, we are so sorry that we didn’t speak to you in Inupiaq so you can know what we know. We apologize we didn’t talk to you like our grandparents and parents did. Because of this, our cultural protocols and rules are getting lost. From there, I read Elder’s letter.”

- Bernadette Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle, ANLPAC member

“People in the audience that don’t carry that language, they cry, because it’s a healing moment when they are finally apologized to.” - Annette Evans Smith, ANLPAC Chair

“There was even a young man who was watching AFN on TV and saw that we were going to break into those groups. He ran over to the Dena’ina Center and joined that group. He realized that his grandfather was the one that was traumatized and that’s the reason that he can’t speak his language.” - Bernadette Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle, ANLPAC member

The ANLPAC has repeated this process of public apology several times. When they do so, only about one quarter of the room stands up as speakers; three-quarters stand up as non-speakers. The Council has found that this helps people heal and realize that they can move on, ready for language acquisition of their heritage languages.

Recommendation: In order to localize these apologies from the federal government to Alaska, the ANLPAC calls on the Alaskan legislature to provide a formal apology, on behalf of all Alaskans, to the generations of Alaska Natives who were involuntarily separated from their families and home communities and sent away to boarding schools. The Council realizes that this Governor and Legislature had nothing to do with creating this problem themselves but they can have a very constructive role in healing through the public acknowledgement and apology to Alaska Native people.

"Preserving our language is one of my passions. And one of the struggles that we have is a lack of speakers that are available to teach us. All the fluent speakers are elderly... and we're trying to figure out innovative ways to get younger people to learn the language."

- Skil Jáadei Linda Schrack, Haida language advanced student and teacher. October 12, 2015

9. Technology

Finding: All people in Alaska, but particularly the young people, are involved in electronic technology as a key component of our lives. In Alaska and around the world, people are developing means of using new technology to teach traditional languages. On-line communities of language learners and language speakers are an important vehicle for the survival of Alaska Native languages.

Recommendation: The Council encourages the creation of electronic means to promote the learning and the everyday use of Alaska Native languages. The Council further encourages individuals to make use of electronic resources to learn their heritage languages and to participate in on-line forums where individual Alaska Native languages are the preferred languages for everyday communication.

- ◆ The University of Alaska Fairbanks, in partnership with its Kuskokwim Campus, is going on-line with a Bachelor of Arts degree program in Yup'ik language and culture, as the first bachelor's degree program on-line for any Alaska Native language.
- ◆ Northwest Arctic Native Association (NANA), and then the North Slope Borough, have each partnered with Rosetta Stone and produced Level One (Kotzebue Iñupiaq) and Levels One through Three (Barrow Iñupiaq) language learning materials available for independent language-learning via the computer. These can be useful tools for getting students through the "Novice High" level and ready to begin "Intermediate" conversations with other language learners.
- ◆ A 2008-2010 project of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe created Dena'ina language self-study videos. Two central ideas were key to the project: 1) to embed study of verb conjugations into useable formats so that learners could model how to have simple conversations, and 2) to make these lessons available 24 hours a day, anywhere there was internet access. With only about 15 highly fluent speakers (the youngest in her late 60s), Dena'ina is a highly endangered language. Dena'ina lessons are on youtube.com and at <http://www.languageinsights.net/> where additional Dena'ina language-learning resources can be found.

- ◆ X'unei Lance Twitchell has a channel on YouTube, called *X'unei Lance Twitchell*, on which he posts recordings of his Intermediate Tlingit classes which he distance-delivers from Juneau for the University of Alaska Southeast.
- ◆ Byron Nicholai of Toksook Bay is creating music videos that use Yup'ik language in ways that appeal to and inspire young people, combining old styles of music with new ones, such as beat-boxing. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0MQ9IFiucI>
- ◆ Ishmael Angaaluk Hope led in the creation of an Iñupiaq language video game, *Never Alone: Kisima Injitchuna*, which has become internationally popular.
- ◆ Stepahnie Gilardi has created an ongoing, interactive art project online called "Adopt" Tlingit which encourages people to use Tlingit language in their everyday lives: <http://adopt-tingit.squarespace.com/>
- ◆ Susie Lee Edwardson and the Juneau-based group, Haida Language Learners, maintain a channel on YouTube, also called *Haida Language Learners*, emphasizing words and phrases for beginners.
- ◆ Julien Jacobs is working on his Qenik Media effort to make computer-interactive, virtual reality interfaces that potentially can be used with Yup'ik and other languages. He hopes to help make mobile phone apps available in all Alaska Native languages.
- ◆ Several Alaska Native languages have active pages on Facebook, where learners and fluent speakers not only can ask questions about their languages, but where long, involved conversations *are taking place in the Native language*. This is particularly true so far for Yup'ik and Tlingit.

"I would like to see a priority established on getting endangered languages recorded. My dialect (Holikachuk) has only a couple of speakers left. It was my first language until age 14. When I was sent outside I lost the use of most of it. I now only know words and phrases. Some churches established there and ordered the people not to speak or do their songs and dances, telling them it was against God. So they have lost all of their songs and ceremonies and language. Now they would like to learn to speak, but there are not many speakers left. I've been trying to teach them what I know. I would like to record the few speakers left remaining. When a language dies, almost all of the rich culture that gives much meaning to life dies, also. It is a great loss." - Elizabeth Keating, Holikachuk elder, November 23, 2015

10. Native Language Council Funding

Finding: As created by the Alaska State Legislature, the Alaska Native Language Preservation & Advisory Council—and the ANLPAC Section within the Division of Community and Regional Affairs—are tasked with several important and necessary tasks. Although initially funded with a staff of two within DCRA, it would take four, full-time employees for the Alaska Native Language section to fulfill its legislative mandate. As it stands, the budget has recently (June 2015) been reduced to support only one staff position.

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

"For a long time, I have been reflecting on some of the issues Alaska Native people have been facing. Alcoholism. Substance abuse. Domestic violence. Depression. Suicide. I have come to believe that many of these maladies stem from a systemic loss of identity for Alaska Native peoples. Entire generations had been forbidden to practice their culture and speak their language. Those young students who did were ridiculed, punished, and shamed until they conformed to their teachers' standards. Alaska Natives were taught that everything Native about their families and themselves were wrong. In the oft-quoted words of Richard Pratt, "Kill the Indian, save the man." If we seek to address those psycho-social maladies afflicting our people, we must recreate our identities as Native people."
- Eric Somerville, Yup'ik

"I see Language as being one of these great pillars upon which we can rebuild our identity. By learning and using our heritage languages, we recreate critical connections with our ancestors. That is not to say we must reject all influences of Western contact and strive to return ourselves to our original state. Rather, we must find ways of recognizing and understanding how our daily lives belong – and contribute – to our Alaska Native cultures. Much of the health of the Alaska Native people relies on repairing our cultural narratives. Using heritage languages in our day-to-day life is one way we can make our identities whole again." - Eric Somerville, Yup'ik

11. CONCLUSION

"Kiarqurarraarluni yuk, niicugniurturarraarluni-llu tuani taugaam qanemcikangqerciquq. When we've taken the opportunity to observe and taken the opportunity to listen, then we too, might have a story to tell." - John B. Charles (1930-1995)

While Alaska Native languages are declining at an alarming rate, it is the Council's firmly-held belief that well-planned and well-implemented language programs can reverse the trend. This report highlights important issues that the ANLPAC wishes to bring to prominence among Alaska's policy makers. This parallels the expectations of many Alaskans who testified and shared recommendations through the statewide survey. It is clear to the Council that it has tremendous statewide support for the work ahead. It is through these partnerships and collaborations that the Council hopes to achieve ambitious goals.

[O]ur languages went to sleep. It takes every single one of us to wake it back up."

- Walkie Charles, ANLPAC member

This challenge is both daunting and hopeful—and is a role that the ANLPAC members are grateful to have. The Council has the support of 10,000 years of history and looks forward to a future with healthy and sustainable communities with revitalized linguistic heritage. There is much to be done, and many other potential actions that will help the survival of Alaska Native languages. Reversing language loss in Alaska will require allies and collaborators from all regions and communities, along with government and policy makers—people who aspire to strengthen communities through living language and culture.

“Some of them always say: Alutiit awa’i qikiyut (“Alutiiq people now are shy”) to speak our language... But you know, that’s how we grew up. We have to outgrow it.” - Anonymous Elder, Kodiak Island

The Council’s recommendations, if enacted, are a collection of strategies that would improve the feasibility of future efforts for language revitalization in our state. This will be achieved by fostering an environment conducive to language use and revitalization throughout communities (Fishman, 1991, 2000; Paulston, 1994). Languages cannot be saved by affecting only one aspect of society—it will take partnerships between governments and individuals, between schools and tribes. While none of the recommendations in this report is directly tied to the survival of any specific language, we believe that these recommendations will aid policy makers, regions, communities, and families in their interconnected efforts to leave a healthy linguistic legacy for future generations.



Chevak drummers, photo courtesy DCRA

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Native woman, photo courtesy Adams/ANHC

Appendix A – Council Members and Staff



Senator Donald Olson - *Inupiaq*

From Golovin, lifelong Alaskan, Senator Olson was born in Nome and is a doctor, pilot, reindeer herder, businessman and Legislator. He and wife Willow have four children: Colby, Martin, Donald Jr., and Maggie Rae.



Representative Benjamin Nageak - *Īñupiaq*

From Barrow, Representative Nageak was the North Slope Borough Mayor in the mid-1990s and is a fluent, first-language speaker of Īñupiaq.



Annette Evans Smith (Chair) - *Koyukon Athabascan, Alutiiq and Yup'ik*

Evans Smith, of Anchorage, is the Alaska Native Heritage Center President and CEO, where she has worked in several roles since 2003. Under her leadership, the center has 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 involves 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.



April Gale Laktonen Counciller, Ph.D. (Vice-Chair) - *Alutiiq*

Counciller, of Kodiak, is the director of the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak and adjunct professor of Alutiiq language and culture at Kodiak College where she established the Alaska Native Studies program. She is an advanced student of the Sugt'stun language and is active in language preservation efforts, serving as a member of the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Language Advisory Committee, the Alaska Native Studies Council, and the Alutiiq New Words Council. She has also received the Harry S. Truman Scholar, Leadership and Public Service Award from the Truman Foundation. Counciller holds a bachelor's degree in anthropology and American civilization from Brown University, a master's degree in rural development from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and a Ph.D. in language planning and Indigenous knowledge systems from UAF.



Delores Churchill - Haida

Delores Churchill is a fluent, first-language speaker of Haida and a renowned master weaver of baskets, hats, robes, and other regalia. Using such materials as spruce root, cedar bark, wool, and natural dyes, she creates utilitarian and ceremonial objects of unmatched beauty and cultural significance. Churchill learned these skills from her mother, Selina Peratrovich, at a time when there were just three active Alaskan Haida weavers. Peratrovich asked her daughter to burn her baskets for the first five years of the apprenticeship because "I am well known for my baskets. If you say you learned from me, you better be good." Churchill has lectured, demonstrated, exhibited and published her art of basketry throughout the world. She continues to teach young people the knowledge and skills related to the weaving tradition, observing: "As long as Native art remains in museums, it will be thought of in the past tense." To speak to this point, she recently helped the people of Klukwan village replicate a 500-year-old spruce root hat found frozen in a glacier on the Yukon-Alaska border.



Bernadette Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle - Inupiaq

Alvanna-Stimpfle, of Nome is a fluent, first-language speaker of Inupiaq and is the director of the Kawerak, Inc. Eskimo Heritage Program. 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 also taught Inupiaq at the Northwest Campus in Nome. 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 to develop 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 Eskimo language from UAF.



Walkie Charles, Ph.D. - Yup'ik

Charles, of Fairbanks, a fluent, first-language speaker of Yu'pik, is an assistant professor of Yup'ik Eskimo at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). He grew up in Emmonak speaking Yup'ik. He has 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 is maintaining his language through teaching it at all educational levels. Charles was the Inaugural Chair of ANLPAC from 2012 to 2013.

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 Eskimo language from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and is all-but-dissertation on the Ph.D. in 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, 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 Alaskan 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.

Barrow, Alaska, photo courtesy DCRA



Appendix B: Alaskan laws related to Alaska Native languages

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

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.

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.

AS 44.33.520. Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council

(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 nonvoting members. In appointing the nonvoting 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 the 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.

Appendix C: References

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Appendix D: Alaska's Official Indigenous Languages and the Emotions Of Revitalization



X'unei Lance A. Twitchell

April 23, 2014, Commentary in Alaska Dispatch News.

In the long hours of waiting for the state of Alaska to recognize Alaska Native languages as equals to English, the group of advocates for the bill laughed as hard as we ever had. It is a coping mechanism. It's medicine. When I was retelling some of the jokes that we were telling then, which were already more funny in Tlingit than they were in English, the jokes fell flat. There is something about standing there, feeling powerless and knowing your bill could be killed off at any time, that leads you to search for reasons to laugh. Earlier in the day, some of our elders who stood with us in protest said they hated that they had to beg for recognition, but they also said several times that they would do anything to make life better for future generations and to help ease the pain of current generations.

We began arriving around noon on Easter Sunday, and shortly after 3 a.m. HB 216 passed, making an incredible statement for the state of Alaska. If you have never been a second-class citizen in the only place where you can live, then the gravity of it can be hard to explain. As this process has unfolded over the past several months, and I recounted some of the stories that our elders have been telling us about the torture they went through as children, I often wondered if the stories seemed unbelievable because of their intensity. Who would grab a child by the hair and shake her violently in front of a class for speaking her language? Who would force a child to go outside in the freezing cold and put his tongue on a metal flagpole? Our elders have lived these stories, and we keep them alive so we remember what they went through so we can have all that we do of our languages and cultures. We are forever grateful.

One of the biggest problems in language revitalization work is the idea that it is someone else's problem. Within our communities this can be found in thoughts like these ones: I'm glad someone is doing this, because I don't have time to. I don't have to speak Tlingit to be Tlingit. Those guys are taking care of it, so we are safe. This bill has passed, so we are safe. A preservation council was formed, so the languages are preserved. I wasn't even born then, so why is it my problem? Why can't you just get over it?

When we are talking about language revitalization, it is important to get some terms clearly understood. When we are talking about revitalization, we mean reversing language shift. Language shift means the movement from speaking one language to speaking two languages to speaking one language. For example, at one point all Tlingit people could speak Tlingit, and then they became bilingual in English, and now hardly anyone can speak Tlingit. Language revitalization means we want to create more speakers than we lose. It does not mean we acknowledge that our languages are dead or dying, but instead states that we intend to keep them from doing so.

Throughout this process, I have been thinking about the emotions of fighting for your languages. When the bill was first put on the floor, we had been in survival mode all day. We felt that the bill to make Alaska Native languages the co-official languages of Alaska could be killed at any time, which is way too familiar for us. In the past week, we have lost three birth speakers of the Tlingit language, and that puts incredible strain on us as learners and defenders of our language. Because of this, we kept looking to each other for hope, laughter, strength. We kept convincing each other that we could do it.

And even though we often felt powerless, we saw allies emerging throughout the legislature and across Alaska. We transformed into one of the most powerful political groups in state, for just a moment, because we stood together for a single cause and that cause could be broadcast through all media possible. No one

was looking for cutbacks or tax breaks. No one was being paid to be there. We were standing up for our future grandchildren so they would not have to endure what we collectively went through.

One of the most alarming things I heard, from several sources, was that making languages (and therefore cultures) equal would create more racial division. That is such a stock answer that it conjures up the exact same type of arguments that were made against the anti-discrimination act. I tried to find the logic in that argument and failed, because it is rooted in a paranoia of losing privilege and not in protecting diversity. It is an argument to keep inequality intact. The reality is that our group of advocates on the hill and statewide were a culturally diverse group of people of all different backgrounds. We had, in fact, racial unity for a single cause: equality and justice.

That might be the most powerful part of all of this for me: This is a cause that everyone can stand behind, unless they believe in some sort of linguistic, racial or cultural superiority. Racism is much harder to make a case for than it was 70 years ago, when civil rights leaders were advocating for the passage of the anti-discrimination act. If we look back through the history of Alaska Natives and American laws, this might be the first time that something comes right out and recognizes us at our core and says, "We are of equal value. We are of equal importance."

This statement moves mountains, but it does not in itself create revitalization of languages. We need to celebrate this incredible moment and progress. We need the governor to sign the bill into law. And then we need to dive into the deep pool of our languages and live them every single day of our lives. And that means everyone who wants to be a part of the movement, to feel the overwhelming joy of overcoming generations of oppression, should grab a hand and jump in with us.

In our first Tlingit language class since the bill's passage an elder stood up and addressed the students who were not born Tlingit. He said that he does not see them as non-Native. He recognized them for standing with us and pointed out that they know more Tlingit than 95 percent of the Tlingit people in the world today. He said they are one of us, and that we are all in this together. There are no racial divisions when we stand together like this and succeed in the way we did the other night.

When the bill was first read all I could hear was my heart pounding in my head. Those of us who stayed there to support it stood up, and many of us instantly began to feel the tears coming. We thought of all those who were there throughout the day and could not stay the whole time. We thought about our elders who were living long enough to see this amazing change. We thought about hours upon hours of advocacy, planning, writing and speaking that kept us from our families, work and sleep.

There is not a better moment than when the vote came through. When this idea was being discussed months ago, I never imagined that it would have passed through the Legislature by a total count of 56-2. Alaska now stands as the only other state in America to recognize Alaska Native languages, standing next to Hawaii as leaders in the language revitalization movement. We know the all the hard work we still have to do, but now there is another thing that we know: We can win. We can succeed, and this is not just a Native problem. This is not a thing that small crowds of people talk about and work themselves to death trying to solve. The day is coming when we are not revitalizing Alaska Native languages any more, but we are instead just living them and keeping them safe.

We will never be in a state of dying languages like we are now again. The call has collectively gone out, across our state, to make all of our languages protected, sacred, official. This is a wonderful day, and I had to tell my students something Kingheesti David Katzeek taught me: *Tlél ghidaleet* -- don't quit. I said it to my class over and over and over. I know that there are so many things that can make us give up. Standing so close to the edge, sometimes it is easy to just jump.

But it is so much more fulfilling to push back, to stand up, to unite in a cause that makes the world a better and safer place for future generations. If you have not felt the joy and unity in it yet, then you should know that the invitation is there for you to stand with us. Thank you Jonathan Kreiss-Tompkins. What you initiated has changed things for us all, in ways I think we are only beginning to imagine. Thank you to those who joined in, especially the bill sponsors: Reps. Millet, Edgmon, Nageak, Herron, Gara, Guttenberg, Foster, Drummond, LeDoux, Kito III, Kawasaki, Munoz, Josephson, Gruenberg, Isaacson, Tuck, Holmes, Seaton, Tarr, Olson, Costello, and Feige. And Sens. Egan, Dyson, Olson, French, Stevens, Ellis, Wielechowski, Micciche, Dunleavy, McGuire, Gardner, Bishop, Fairclough, Hoffman, Meyer, Stedman.

This commentary is dedicated to the memory of my buddy Cyril George, who lives in my heart forever, and to Miriah Twitchell, who stood with us by taking care of our babies while the movement kept calling.

Lance A. Twitchell carries the Tlingit names *X'unei* & *Du Aani Kawdinook*, and the Haida name *K'eijáakw*. He is from the Tlingit, Haida, and Yup'ik Native nations, and speaks and studies the Tlingit language. He is an assistant professor of Alaska Native Languages at the University of Alaska Southeast, and lives in Juneau with his wife, son, and daughters. Beginning in the spring of 2013 he worked with Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tompkins, Liz Medicine Crow, and a team of language advocates across the state to create and pass a bill that made Alaska Native languages the co-official languages of the state of Alaska.

<http://www.adn.com/article/20140423/alaskas-official-indigenous-languages-and-emotions-revitalization>



Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tompkins (in suit coat and blue shirt) and supporters of House Bill 216 gather in a Capitol hallway for a group photo to celebrate passage of the bill through the House State Affairs Committee. The bill would symbolically make 20 Alaska Native languages official state languages alongside English. (Photo by Skip Gray/Gavel Alaska)

<http://www.ktoo.org/2014/04/01/alaska-native-languages-bill-clears-final-house-committee/>

Appendix E: Alaska Native Language Programs

REPORTED ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE PROGRAMS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Information collected from participants at ANLPAC sessions.

First Alaskans Institute, Elders and Youth Conference, October 12, 2015, and Alaska Federation of Natives, October 15, 2015, in Anchorage.



Ahtna Country:

- 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, taught by Sondra Shaginoff & Jeannie Maxim



Anchorage Area:

- Iñupiaaraagvik Isagviñmi, Anchorage Inupiaq Language Circle
- Iñupiaq Phrase of the Day
- Ahtna language lessons weekly, at Ahtna, Inc. in Anchorage: Grant Rebne, teacher
- Alaska Native Charter School
- Alaska Native Heritage Center: Urban Eskimo Revitalization Project
- UAA Tlingit Language Circle [Kyle Demienteff-Worl]
- Qenik Media, Julien Jacobs. Qenik_Media@gmail.com; Jacobs.Julien@gmail.com



Arctic Slope Region:

- Arctic language website assessment & teaching & learning policy
- Rosetta Stone North Slope
- Uqautebim Ugma [sic] Iñupiaq Language Net (Barrow)
- ICC-Alaska Education Steering Committee includes starting Iñupiaq / Yup'ik immersion
- Rosetta Stone Northwest (Arctic Native Association version)



Bering Straits region:

- BSSD Bilingual Bicultural Dept. Program
- Kawerak – Eskimo Heritage Program language project



Central Yup'ik Country:

- Ayaprun Immersion Charter School, Bethel (1995 to present)
- Manokotak: Yup'ik language, SWRSD



Chugachmiut Country:

- Chugachmiut Language Program



Dena'ina language videos:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=moVZ94hNsk8



Fairbanks area:

- UAF: ANLC; ANLP; ANLA
- B.A. in Yup'ik language
- B.A. in Inupiaq language



Gwich'in Country:

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



Holikachuk Country:

- Elizabeth Keating, from Holikachuk/Grayling, Athabascan 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]



Koniag Country

- 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
- Port Lions School: Outreach through WVOPL
- Native Village of Afognak: Language Materials & Curriculum
- Old Harbor: Preschool language lessons



Northwest Arctic Native Association (NANA) region:

- Nikaitchuat Iliisaġviat Iñupiaq Immersion School N.V.K.



Southeastern Alaska:

- UAS Language Program and Classes
- Tlingitlanguage.com
- Juneau Tlingit Language Learners
- Juneau – Tlingit classes, free: SHI on Wednesdays, GHI on Saturdays; Juneau Library private circles on Mondays.
- Juneau – Tlingit: K-5, Tlingit Culture and Literacy [spelling]. 6-8, Tlingit language at DZ Middle School, teacher Lyal James. 9-12, not sure.
- Juneau – upcoming Tlingit language immersion school
- Juneau – Tsimshian/Shmalgax. Private language circle (sporadic) David Boxley holds intense classes sporadically.
- Juneau dance groups: Wooch.een; Juneau Haida Dancers
- Juneau – Xaad Kil (Haida) family circle Sundays
- Juneau – UAS: Tlingit, Haida language classes; degrees or concentration areas. Professor of Alaska Native Languages, Lance Twitchell.
- Tlingit Language at UAS
- Haida Language at UAS
- Tlingitlanguage.org
- Juneau – Goldbelt Tlingit language projects
- Juneau – Sealaska Heritage Institute language projects, especially for Tlingit
- Southeast Alaska Native Consortium. Not active? But information on-line.
- Ketchikian: Haida and Tsimshian
- Haida Language Learners Facebook page with over 2,000 likes.
- Metlakatla: Gavin Hudson, Councilman, Metlakatla Indian Community; Chairman, Haayk Foundation



Upper Kuskokwim Country:

- Upper Kuskokwim Language Revitalization Website



Unangax Country:

- Unangax WAYK [*Where Are Your Keys*]



Out-of-State:

- Maggie Jennell, Gig Harbor, Washington: Emaan Unglua, a Sugt'stun (Alutiiq) program. www.nativebridge.org

General / Cross-Regional:

- Alaska Native Languages on Facebook
- Alaska Humanities Forum: akstudies.akhf.org/native-languages [Page not Found, but google search revealed
 - akstudies.akhf.org/repository/1377/preview
 - akhf.org/content/alaska-humanities-forum-joins-statewide-efforts-revitalize-alaska-native-languages
- Suggested: Awareness day for alcohol and other drug abuse, for all Alaskans

Appendix F: Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale

Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale

Level	Label	Description
0	International	The language is widely used between nations in trade, knowledge exchange, and international policy.
1	National	The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government at the national level.
2	Provincial	The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government within major administrative subdivisions of a nation.
3	Wider Communication	The language is used in work and mass media without official status to transcend language differences across a region.
4	Educational	The language is in vigorous use, with standardization and literature being sustained through a widespread system of institutionally supported education.
5	Developing	The language is in vigorous use, with literature in a standardized form being used by some though this is not yet widespread or sustainable.
6a	Vigorous	The language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and the situation is sustainable.
6b	Threatened	The language is used for face-to-face communication within all generations, but it is losing users.
7	Shifting	The child-bearing generation can use the language among themselves, but it is not being transmitted to children.
8a	Moribund	The only remaining active users of the language are members of the grandparent generation and older.
8b	Nearly Extinct	The only remaining users of the language are members of the grandparent generation or older who have little opportunity to use the language.
9	Dormant	The language serves as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community, but no one has more than symbolic proficiency.
10	Extinct	The language is no longer used and no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language.

Back cover: Indigenous Peoples and Languages of Alaska map. Alaska Native Language Center, 2011; Michael E. Krauss, Gary Holton, Jim Kerr, and Colin T. West. <http://www.uaf.edu/anla/collections/search/resultDetail.xml?id=G961K2010>

