

ALASKA LEGISLATURE SPECIAL COMMITTEE / SUBJECT FILE 8672
1774.18 SCOMM 71: SEN. SPEC. COMM. / JNT. COMM. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 1988-90

Kodiak Area Native Association



402 Center Avenue
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
Phone (907) 486-5725

Senator Fred Zharoff
P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

3/18/91

Dear Senator Zharoff:

The Kodiak Area Native Association is developing an *Alutiiq Studies* curriculum for use in Kodiak's public high schools. We hope to see the curriculum piloted as an elective social studies course next year. Our *Alutiiq Studies* course is patterned after such courses as *Russian Language, History and Culture*, and *Japanese Language, History and Culture*. It includes components on: the prehistory and history of Kodiak's Alutiiq people; their cultural adaptations to life in a subarctic maritime environment; Alutiiq art history; contemporary legal and social issues which confront the Alutiiq people and the Alutiiq language.

Since a course of this nature has never been offered before, KANA will need to train District social studies teachers in the use of the curriculum, and also train Native speakers to serve as Alutiiq language instructors. Accordingly, KANA was pleased to learn that the Federal Government had passed the ***Native American Language Act*** last November. Under the terms of this act, state governments are urged to make exceptions in teacher certification requirements so that individuals who lack formal educational degrees but who are proficient in a Native American language might be employed to teach.

KANA is following the progress of comparable state-level legislation with a great deal of interest. I refer to ***HB203***, which was introduced in the 16th legislative session by Representative Eileen MacLean. This bill provides for certification in certain specialized fields of study where formal baccalaureate training is not generally available. Representative MacLean's bill would bring Alaska into compliance with Federal policy on this matter, and would also bring our school system into line with mainstream educational trends such as, alternative teaching certificate programs. (see President Bush's *Education Initiative*). Eighteen states currently have alternative teaching certificate programs in place.

It would not be difficult to set up a teacher certification program in Alutiiq. The *Alaska Native Language Center* has developed a proficiency test in the Central Yupik language, and this test could

readily be adapted for Alutiiq. The Alutiiq language curriculum which is being developed at KANA emphasizes the use of an immersion teaching method which is known as *Total Physical Response (TPR)*. *TPR* classes place the student in an environment where all communication is carried out in the target language. Knowledge of grammar is acquired passively, and in the context of real communication, not by the standard question-answer method of repetitive drill or through translation exercises. In order to deliver this type of language course, teachers would have to possess a high degree of oral fluency, but they would not necessarily need to be literate in the language.

Speakers who were judged to be proficient in spoken Alutiiq by the *Alaska Native Language Center* could proceed to receive training in immersion teaching methodology and in the use of the Alutiiq alphabet. KANA could work with *Kodiak College* to set up appropriate training courses in these areas. Indeed, one such training workshop in the Alutiiq alphabet was offered last summer (see attached workshop notice). Speakers who could complete this type of special training program should be certified as introductory level Alutiiq language instructors. After a certain grace period, teachers should also be expected to demonstrate basic literacy in the language. The *Alaska Native Language Center* could design a test for Alutiiq literacy, and such a test could serve as a basis for awarding continuing certification e.g., for intermediate level Alutiiq instructors.

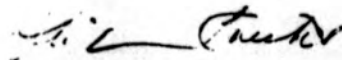
Clearly, it would not be in the best interests of students to do away with teacher certification requirements. Yet, at some point, educators are going to have to recognize that Alutiiq is not a regular course offering even at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. The most fluent speakers are elders, and they are unlikely to enroll in a degree-seeking program off-island. That, however, should not preclude them from sharing their very specialized expertise with students in an immersion language setting. We believe that the *Alaska Native Language Center* could help define a realistic set of academic standards for Alutiiq language instructors, and that passage of Representative MacLean's bill would ensure that such standards are recognized by our school district.

Along these same lines, we feel that it is important to support an ***Alaska Studies Program bill*** so as to ensure that all Alaskan students be geographically and culturally literate. Linguistic experts predict that Central Yupik (the language which is most closely related to Alutiiq, which is also known as Pacific Gulf Yupik) and Siberian Yupik will survive into the 21st century as major arctic languages. Given a strong bilingual base in the Central Yupik and Siberian Yupik areas, and the steady growth of these populations, Yupik peoples can be expected to exert a major force on the Alaskan political and economic scene. Yet, Kodiak Island students, whether Native or non-Native,

are not given any formal exposure to Yupik cultures. The *Joint Committee on School Performance* recommended that an *Alaska Studies Program* be established as part of the state-wide curriculum (see report of 1/25/91, pp. 104-108). We understand that Senator Lloyd Jones is drafting a bill on Alaska Studies curricula, and we are eager to see such a bill enacted so that courses such as *Alutiiq Studies* can become a regular component of secondary school curricula.

Sincerely,

KODIAK AREA NATIVE ASSOCIATION
KELLY SIMEONOFF JR., PRESIDENT



Philomena Knecht, Alutiiq Program

Kodiak Area Native Association



402 Center Avenue
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
Phone (907) 486-5725

Representative Cliff Davidson
P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

3/18/91

Dear Representative Davidson:

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Since a course of this nature has never been offered before, KANA will need to train District social studies teachers in the use of the curriculum, and also train Native speakers to serve as Alutiiq language instructors. Accordingly, KANA was pleased to learn that the Federal Government had passed the ***Native American Language Act*** last November. Under the terms of this act, state governments are urged to make exceptions in teacher certification requirements so that individuals who lack formal educational degrees but who are proficient in a Native American language might be employed to teach.

KANA is following the progress of comparable state-level legislation with a great deal of interest. I refer to ***HB203***, which was introduced in the 16th legislative session by Representative Eileen MacLean. This bill provides for certification in certain specialized fields of study where formal baccalaureate training is not generally available. Representative MacLean's bill would bring Alaska into compliance with Federal policy on this matter, and would also bring our school system into line with mainstream educational trends such as, alternative teaching certificate programs. (see President Bush's *Education Initiative*). Eighteen states currently have alternative teaching certificate programs in place.

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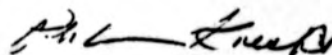
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