

Anchorage School District Indigenous Education Department

Annual Report to Tribes

School Year 2025–2026



2025-2026 Native Advisory Committee Members

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Introduction

Dear Tribal Leaders, Community Partners, Elders, Families, and Stakeholders,

The Anchorage School District Indigenous Education Department is pleased to share this annual report highlighting our work, accomplishments, partnerships, and ongoing efforts to support Alaska Native and American Indian students. This report reflects our commitment to strengthening educational outcomes, honoring Indigenous cultures and languages, and maintaining meaningful collaboration with surrounding Tribes and community partners.

We are grateful for the continued guidance, support, and partnership provided by Tribal leaders, organizations, families, and community members. Together, we strive to create educational environments where Indigenous students feel valued, represented, and empowered to succeed.

Anchorage School District Goals

The percentage of grade 3 students proficient in English Language Arts (ELA) on the state summative assessment (currently AK Star) will increase from 32.4% in May 2023 to 46.4% in May 2028.	The percentage of grade 8 students proficient in Mathematics on the state summative assessment (currently AK STAR) will increase from 34.5% in May 2023 to 41.5% in May 2028.	The percentage of students graduating College, Career, and Life Ready as measured by four-year graduation rates, will increase from 81% in June 2023 to 90% in June 2028.
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The Indigenous Education Program Overview and Mission

The Indigenous Education Program is dedicated to transforming schools into culturally enriching spaces where students feel valued, connected, and empowered. Through a multi-faceted approach, we address the diverse needs of Indigenous students while promoting understanding and appreciation among all members of the school community.

Through collaboration with stakeholders, community partners, and Indigenous leaders, we are committed to creating inclusive learning environments that honor and celebrate the diverse cultural identities of our students, while equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to thrive academically and beyond.

Program Overview

- Our department serves eligible students who identify as Alaska Native or American Indian
 - We receive a bulk of our funding from the Office of Indian Education
 - Core services and supports
 - Cultural and educational programming
 - Family and community engagement efforts
 - Student advocacy and support services
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Key Goals and Objectives

1. Enhance Cultural Identity and Awareness: We strive to deepen students' connection to their cultural heritage by integrating Indigenous perspectives, traditions, and histories into the curriculum and school environment.
 2. Improve Attendance and Graduation Rates: By fostering a sense of belonging and purpose, we aim to increase student engagement and commitment to academic success, ultimately leading to higher attendance and graduation rates.
 3. Expand Native American Language Instruction Programs: Recognizing the importance of language revitalization, we work to expand and strengthen Native American language instruction programs, preserving linguistic heritage and promoting cultural continuity.
 4. Provide Support for At-Risk Students: We prioritize the well-being of at-risk students by building relationships and strengthening connections, offering targeted interventions, and providing access to resources that address their academic, social, and emotional needs.
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Indigenous Education at a Glance

Student & Family Impact

- Total Students Enrolled in Indigenous Education: **6056**
- Number of Schools Supported: **33 Anchorage School District Schools**
- Number of Family Engagement, Cultural, and Community Events:
 - **HUGGS Distribution**
 - **Eklutna Back to School Event**
 - **Fairview Back to School Health & Safety Fair**
 - **CITC Back to School Ice Cream Social**
 - **Chugiak Back to School Ice Cream Social**
 - **ANCCS Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration**
 - **Orange Shirt Day Maker's Space**
 - **Elders & Youth**
 - **Rock Your Mocs Week**
 - **Indigenous People's Day Celebration**
 - **Regalia Making Nights**
 - **Begich Honor Roll Ceremonies**
 - **Derrick Moore-Pushing Purpose Motivational Speaker**
 - **Chester Valley Multicultural Night**
 - **Chester Valley Family Night**

- **Indigenous Education Fashion Show**
- **Choice Schools and Programs EXPO**
- **Springing into Summer Resource Fair**
- **ANCCS Culture Week**
- **I.E. Public Forum**
- **8 Week Gui Kima Cultural Identity Project**
- **Secondary Transition Expo**
- **ASD/CITC End of Year Celebration**
- **MMIW Screen Printing Event**
- **Barnes & Noble Bookfair**
- **LKSD Graduation**
- **West High School & Bartlett High School NYO Invitational**
- **Summer Backpack Giveaway**
- **Ts'ilq'u**
- **Summer Enrichment Program**
- **Cody Blackbird Musician**
- **Gui Kima Summer Intensive**
- **Number of Professional Learning Opportunities:**
 - **Multicultural course**
 - **AK Studies Perspectives**
 - **5x Sessions Transportation Dept on Culturally Sustaining Practices**
 - **In Real Life (ASD Talent Management New Supervisor training)**
 - **BOY Resilience Training**
 - **New Educator Symposium Culturally Sustaining Practices**
 - **Professional Learning Communities Showcase**
 - **Data Meetings**
 - **Indigenous Education Staff Training PD Day**
 - **Zero Suicide Initiative**
 - **Summer Enrichment Program Instructor Training**
 - **Mental Health Student Supports Professional Development Day- Culturally Sustaining Classrooms**
 - **Smithsonian Arctic Studies- Culturally Sustaining Place Based Learning**
 - **Alaska Blanket Exercise @ Bartlett High School & Hanshew Middle School**
- **Number of Student Leadership Opportunities:**
 - **Native Advisory Committee**
 - **National Indian Education Association Student Presenters**
 - **School Based Leadership Groups**
 - **Student Interns**
 - **Indigenous Fashion Show Leaders**

Department Staffing

Position

Program Director:

Jaime Galvan

Program Supervisor:

Emily Baker

Program Manager:

Kerri Wood

Indigenous Education Teacher

Expert:

Alexis Griffie

Cultural Enrichment Specialist:

Cheryl Sherman

Indigenous Education Coordinators:

Annette Donaldson

Diana Boggess

Academic Support Staff: Student

Support Specialists

22 School based staff

Administrative Support:

Melonie-Anne Kastens

Sara Michelle Baker

Current Accomplishments

This year, the Indigenous Education Department achieved several important milestones, including:

Academic Successes

- Piloted an online Alaska Studies credit-recovery class for IE high school students (graduation requirement)
- Indigenous Education Professional Learning Community participated in targeted academic interventions
- Credit By Choice Pathways for eligible Indigenous Education students
- Wednesday Night Class in partnership with Migrant Education
- Saturday Blitz in partnership with Migrant Education

- Summer School Credit Recovery

Cultural Programming

- Summer Enrichment Program
 - Partnership with CITC for Middle School students

Family Engagement

- Successful Partnership with Cook Inlet Tribal Council End of Year Celebration
- Launch of Tsi'lq'u grant
- Quarterly Family Newsletters
- Additional Events are listed above

Professional Development

- Attended the National Indian Education Association to present on behalf of ASD's Indigenous Education Program - Integrating **Alaska Traditional Games for Whole Child Wellness and Prevention**
- Professional learning opportunities are listed above as well.

Student Leadership

- 2 Native Advisory Committee Student Members Graduated
- 6 Total Interns for our Summer Enrichment Program
- Begich Honor Roll Ceremony - Led by SSS at Begich
- Individual School - Based Leadership groups

Grant-Funded Programs

Title VI Indian Education Formula Grant

Purpose: The Title VI Indian Education Formula Grant supports the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of Alaska Native and American Indian students. The grant is designed to help ensure students have access to culturally sustaining educational opportunities, increase academic achievement, strengthen cultural identity, improve attendance and graduation outcomes, and promote meaningful family and tribal engagement in the educational process.

Activities: Through the Title VI Indian Education Formula Grant, the Anchorage School District Indigenous Education Department provides a variety of services and opportunities for students and families, including:

- Student Support Specialists serving schools across the district.
- Academic support, mentoring, advocacy, and attendance interventions.
- Cultural enrichment activities
- Native Youth Olympics coaching and student engagement opportunities.
- Family engagement events and educational workshops.
- Tribal consultation and collaboration with Alaska Native organizations and community partners.
- Support for Native language instruction and culturally responsive educational practices.
- Leadership development opportunities for Indigenous students.
- Summer enrichment programming focused on academic success and cultural identity.

Impact: The Title VI Indian Education Formula Grant positively impacts thousands of Alaska Native and American Indian students throughout the district by providing culturally responsive support systems that foster belonging, engagement, and academic success. Through individualized student support, cultural programming, and family partnerships, students are strengthened in both their educational journey and cultural identity.

A central goal of our work is to ensure that families know Indigenous Education is a resource and partner in supporting their students. We strive to help students and families feel connected to their schools and empowered to engage in their educational experience. Through advocacy, relationship-building, and culturally responsive practices, we work to create environments where students are seen, valued, and celebrated for who they are. By raising awareness of Indigenous cultures, histories, and contributions, we help foster a greater sense of belonging and understanding throughout the district.

Total Allocation: \$2,329,233.00

Alaska Native Education Program (ANEP) Project Gui Kima

Purpose: Project Gui Kima is designed to increase engagement among Indigenous high school students within their schools and Native communities by strengthening Indigenous identity and cultural connectedness. The program will utilize culturally relevant programming to support college & career ready students, especially students who are interested in becoming certified teachers.

Activities: Annual APU Summer Intensive in July, Native Youth Olympic demonstrations, Exposure to Yup'ik and Sugpiaq language spoken by Elder storytellers, Cultural skills workshops: beading graduation caps, contemporary moccasin workshop, two 8-week Cultural Identity Projects where students complete one cultural project

Impact: Students who participate in the program will progress towards improvements in the mainstream educational setting, especially in areas of college, career, and life readiness.

Total Allocation: \$478,248.00

Tsi'qł'u Healthy Marriages & Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF)

Purpose: The purpose of this grant partnership is to work together with adult caregivers of students within the Anchorage School District to strengthen school/family partnerships through cultural workshops. The program offers evening and weekend gatherings (and occasional field trips) that combine hands-on cultural activities with supportive conversations about parenting/co-parenting, Alaska Native values, and helping your child succeed in school.

Activities:

- Hosted evening and weekend cultural workshops for parents, guardians, and caregivers.
- Facilitated the **Ts'ilq'u (Thrive Together)** pilot cohort, providing culturally responsive family engagement opportunities.
- Offered hands-on workshops focused on traditional Alaska Native plant knowledge and Indigenous ways of knowing.
- Guided participants in creating traditional plant-based products, including stinkweed salve, lip balm, spruce tip salt, clove-infused honey, and herbal teas using locally harvested plants.
- Organized an educational visit to the Alaska Botanical Garden to deepen participants' understanding of native plants and their traditional uses.
- Fostered conversations around parenting, cultural identity, family wellness, and strategies for supporting children's educational success.
- Strengthened partnerships between families, Indigenous Education staff, Elders, and community organizations.

Impact:

The Ts'ilq'u (Thrive Together) pilot cohort successfully engaged families in culturally meaningful experiences that strengthened both cultural identity and family-school connections.

During the reporting period:

- 15 caregivers enrolled in the pilot cohort.
- 8 participants completed the initial 18-hour program, with additional participants scheduled to complete the remaining hours.
- Participants gained knowledge of traditional Alaska Native plant uses and learned practical skills by creating culturally significant herbal products.
- Families reported stronger connections to their culture through hands-on learning and sharing traditional knowledge.
- The program created opportunities for caregivers to build supportive relationships with one another, increasing their sense of community and belonging.
- Participants developed greater confidence in supporting their children's educational journey while reinforcing cultural values at home.
- The pilot cohort established a strong foundation for expanding culturally responsive family engagement opportunities in future years.

Total Allocation for year 1: \$422,197.00

***Please note, this grant was awarded to us in January of 2026 and will conclude in September of 2031**

Partnerships and Collaborations

The Indigenous Education Department works closely with community organizations, higher education institutions, and district departments.

Community Organizations

- Ts'itq'u- AWAIC Shelter

Educational Institutions

- Alaska Pacific University

District Collaborations

- World Languages
 - Assessment & Evaluation
 - Secondary Education
 - Teaching and Learning
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Native Advisory Committee

The Native Advisory Committee serves as an important voice in supporting Indigenous student success and advising the Anchorage School District on Indigenous Education initiatives.

Committee Purpose

Advise the Superintendent and School Board on shaping policies and curriculum within the Anchorage School District.

Committee Highlights

- Continued reviewing and updating the Native Advisory Committee By-Laws to strengthen committee governance and clarify member roles and responsibilities.
- Welcomed Jason Hlasny, who met with the committee to share his goal of becoming a superintendent in Western Alaska. Committee members provided thoughtful feedback and perspectives to support his Superintendent Certification process and to emphasize the importance of Indigenous leadership and community engagement in public education.
- Hosted a presentation from Yani Morley of Southcentral Foundation on the Teal Cord initiative, recognizing Alaska Native students during 8th grade promotion ceremonies and highlighting opportunities to celebrate Indigenous student achievement.
- Continued to provide a forum for committee members to discuss Indigenous Education initiatives, share community perspectives, and offer recommendations that support the success and well-being of Alaska Native and American Indian students.

Meeting Summary

Throughout the reporting period, the Native Advisory Committee met regularly to provide guidance on Indigenous Education initiatives and district efforts impacting Alaska Native and American Indian students. The committee focused on strengthening its governance through by-law revisions, engaged with educational and community leaders, and discussed opportunities to recognize and support Native students through culturally meaningful initiatives. Members continued to serve as advocates for Indigenous students and families by providing valuable feedback, fostering collaboration between the district and community partners, and helping ensure that Indigenous perspectives remain central to educational planning and decision-making. The committee will be voting on parent seats at the August 26, 2026 meeting.

How to Join the Native Advisory Committee

Community members interested in serving on the Native Advisory Committee are encouraged to participate.

Eligibility

Eligibility. A member is eligible to serve on the Committee if:

1. the parent Committee member's child is enrolled in the District;
2. the teacher Committee member is employed by the District; or
3. the student Committee member is enrolled in the District

Tribal Consultation Summary

Meaningful Tribal consultation remains a cornerstone of the Indigenous Education Department's work.

Consultation Overview

Date: March 24, 2026

Location: Anchorage School District Education Center – Board Room

Participating Tribes: Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Native Village of Eklutna, Chickaloon Village Traditional Council, Knik Tribe

Participants: Tribal leaders and representatives, Anchorage School District leadership, Indigenous Education Department staff, and Native Advisory Committee members invited

Key Discussion Topics

- Strengthening Indigenous student identity, belonging, and leadership opportunities.
- Expanding culturally responsive practices and professional learning for district staff.
- Supporting and enhancing the Alaska Studies curriculum through Indigenous perspectives.
- Increasing student engagement through culturally relevant programming, including Junior Native Youth Olympics (JNYO) and other leadership opportunities.
- Building stronger partnerships and creating a more consistent process for Tribal consultation and collaboration.
- Indigenous Education students sat on a panel discussion around students feeling connected to their school, how the district could best support Indigenous Students, and challenges our Indigenous students face while attending ASD schools.

Feedback Received

Tribal representatives valued the conversational format of the consultation and appreciated the opportunity to openly share perspectives with district leadership. Participants emphasized the importance of continuing to strengthen Indigenous students' sense of identity and belonging, increasing culturally responsive professional development for educators, and ensuring Alaska Native perspectives remain embedded throughout educational experiences. There was also a strong desire for more frequent collaboration with Tribes, expanded partnerships, and additional opportunities for educators to engage in cultural learning experiences. Participants suggested exploring ways to make future consultations more accessible, including meeting within Tribal communities and improving opportunities for in-person engagement.

Actions Taken

The Indigenous Education Department is committed to strengthening Tribal partnerships by establishing a more consistent, ongoing consultation process rather than limiting engagement to an annual meeting. Feedback from the consultation will inform future professional learning opportunities focused on culturally responsive practices, continued enhancement of Indigenous student leadership and engagement initiatives, and exploration of additional partnerships that support Alaska Native and American Indian students. The department will also evaluate ways to improve participation in future consultations, including increasing accessibility and identifying opportunities to meet with Tribal partners in their own communities.

Indigenous Education Public Forum Summary

Forum Overview

Date: March 25, 2026

Location: Anchorage School District Education Center (or update if different)

Attendance: Two parents attended.

Discussion Topics

- Overview of the Indigenous Education Program and available student and family supports.
- Questions about student eligibility, services, and how families can become more involved.
- Discussion regarding one family's child's educational experience and available supports within the school system.

Community Feedback

The parents expressed interest in learning more about the Indigenous Education Program and the resources available to support Alaska Native and American Indian students. One parent shared concerns and experiences related to their child's education, creating an opportunity for meaningful conversation about school-based supports and advocacy.

Department Response and Next Steps

Indigenous Education staff provided information about program services, answered questions regarding eligibility and available supports, and discussed ways the department can partner with families to support student success. Staff encouraged continued communication and engagement with the department and shared information about future opportunities for family involvement.

Looking Ahead

As we prepare for the upcoming school year, the Indigenous Education Department remains committed to:

- Strengthening academic outcomes for Indigenous students.
- Expanding culturally responsive educational opportunities.
- Increasing family and community engagement.
- Enhancing Tribal partnerships and consultation efforts.
- Supporting student leadership and advocacy.
- Continuing to elevate Indigenous voices throughout the district.

We look forward to continuing this important work in partnership with Tribal partners, families, students, and community stakeholders.

Contact Information

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Indigenous Education Department

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For questions regarding this report or Indigenous Education services, please contact the department using the information above.