

TO IDENTIFY AND ELEVATE THE CONCERNS OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AT ASD

DULY PASSED UNANIMOUSLY ON AUGUST 17, 2022

Resolution to Reaffirm

WHEREAS the first goal of this resolution is to provide administrative policy that will allow students to learn Alaska Native languages without any barrier and fully support the ASD.

WHEREAS it is the board's responsibility to identify issues or inequity and to responsibly provide learning opportunities for each of its students. It is part of the board's strategic plans to elevate 3rd grade reading, 8th grade math and high school college, career and life readiness. Furthermore the board's responsibility to oversee all programs and ensure that equity is administered at a high standard.

WHEREAS current data in ASD shows that the Alaska Native/Denizhan and Shup'ina Athabaskan populations among the lowest performing ethnic group on the grade 3 English proficiency tests and grade 8 math proficiency tests. The data

on the ethnic

WHEREAS Anchorage School District has an Indigenous population of around 8000 students and a unique historical context for Indigenous families in Alaska. The history of colonialism and education in Alaska has caused significant damage to Indigenous languages. In 1975, Alaska Native Education Act was passed. Indigenous leaders and modern scholars agree that Indigenous languages are a positive outcome for school success. Currently, in the ASD, Indigenous languages represented:

WHEREAS The discussion on Native language development is now on a federal level. Testimony from the Federal Indian Education Commission on the National Language Acquisition and Teaching the English Language Act. Testimony from the National Commission on Native Language Education: "We are elevating this issue to the crisis level that it is."

WHEREAS Anchorage School District only has one Indigenous language program. Testimony from NAC member, an Indigenous ASD teacher, and former teacher of the Bethel Yup'ik Immersion School, Georgina Steyer expressed:

At the Anchorage School District Alaska Native cultural program, we provide for an elementary school program. When they leave the program, what is the next step? The Yup'ik Immersion language program doesn't go to the middle or high school.

Historically, Native languages were not valued. Look at the languages that the Alaska Native/Denizhan and Shup'ina Athabaskan populations speak. They

Resolution to Create and Support Fully Immersion Language Instruction Programs at ASD

...a necessary step for Alaskan Native languages to be offered for many years...
We do not offer these classes from middle and secondary, there is no combination
of our children's education.

WHEREAS ASD's support for other languages is valued by other indigenous stakeholders as well, as evidenced by students' testimony from the 10th grade student Suella Wendell expressed:

"I am in the Spanish Immersion Program. I would have loved to learn my Yup'ik language. You can learn Spanish anywhere. It would be cool to talk with my classmate who learned in Yup'ik. He was one of the Boarding School Survivors who was allowed to speak Yup'ik."

WHEREAS many Native families in Alaska are now connecting and learning with elders over Zoom, including the University of Alaska Anchorage and Alaska Pacific University. Many of these classes occur during school hours.

WHEREAS ASD can provide healing and hope for students and families across the State of Alaska. Few other states have made headway in providing long standing role models for Indigenous healing. Hawaii has emerged as a worldwide leader in Indigenous Language Education. The remarkable success of their haole has led to immersion with parents.

WHEREAS The Hawaiian Language Immersion Program that has led to unprecedented outcomes. All families in Hawaii are presented the opportunity to enroll in the program. This program has led to higher graduation rates as well as stronger connections to their culture. Virtually all students in five Hawaiian schools may graduate from high school.

WHEREAS Other Indigenous languages like the Navajo programs are also being taught in English.

FURTHER RESOLVED that ASD elevates Indigenous Language education as a part of its strategic plan and formal Goals & Objectives outline through 2026.

FURTHER RESOLVED that ASD shall update its policies and regulations to become familiar with the processes and support all students who enroll in a language program. Support Native Language Education in our schools. This AB shall include statements such as:

1. The student needs a space to learn (corner in same room, separate room, etc.)
2. The student needs internet accessibility provided by the Anchorage School District
3. The student needs a quiet space to learn

The student needs to be reasonably accommodated in the extra-curricular activities program.

Signed on this 11 the day of November, 2022

Sueella Vendeel
Sueella Vendeel, NAC Chair

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