

# The Alaska Native Language Preservation & Advisory Council's 2020 Biennial Report to the Governor and Legislature



Deg Xinag elder, Edna Deacon, teaching children at Holy Cross



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

*Appointed members:*

April G.L. Counciller, Ph.D., Chair  
Annette Evans Smith, Vice-Chair  
Bernadette Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle  
Walkie Charles, Ph.D.  
X'unei Lance Twitchell, Ph.D.

*Legislative members:*

Senator Donald Olson  
Representative Andi Story

## LETTER FROM THE COUNCIL

January 1, 2020

Dear Governor Michael J. Dunleavy, Alaskan State Legislators, and People of Alaska:

As members of the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council (ANLPAC), we present the 2020 report to the Governor, the Alaska State Legislature, and the people of Alaska. The Council was created in 2012 “for the purpose of recommending the establishment or reorganization of programs to support the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages” Alaska Statute 44.33.520.

The theme for this, the fourth report, is strategic language policy & planning, and focuses on Indigenous peoples taking an active role in the survival of Alaska’s languages. Through collaboration and engagement with policymakers and other language practitioners, Alaska Native language communities will find greater success, and more Alaskans will have access to learning their heritage language. Indigenous languages thrive in Indigenous communities, cultures thrive, children excel in school, and rates of social disruption drop.

Although we have made some progress since the Council was formed in 2012, there is a sense of urgency in strengthening the work in support of all Alaska Native languages. The number of speakers continues to decline among each language. It is imperative that greater efforts be made now to strengthen the work by Alaska Natives at revitalizing all our languages.

Despite many powerful challenges, we have reasons for optimism. Across our great land, local groups of youth, the middle-aged, and elders have increased their efforts at increasing the use of most Alaska Native languages in public and private settings, have established an ever-greater number of language learning opportunities for people of all ages, and involvement in local, regional, and statewide institutions to make changes which support all our Indigenous languages.

Sincerely,

April G.L. Counciller, Ph.D., Chair  
Annette Evans Smith, Vice-Chair  
Bernadette Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle  
Walkie Charles, Ph.D.  
X’unei Lance Twitchell, Ph.D



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council continues to investigate ways in which all Alaska Native languages can have a future in their homelands as vibrant, spoken languages. Specific recommendations inform the Governor of Alaska and the executive branch, and the Legislature of Alaska, with specific steps that can be taken to improve the status of Alaska Native languages, and to make the learning of Alaska Native languages accessible to Alaskan peoples.

We are working to build a language movement that is strategic, and directional. To these ends, these are policy steps that we recommend moving forward, including\*:

1. Normalizing the daily use of Alaska Native languages across our state so that Alaskans hear them spoken more and see them in writing more, including recognition of traditional place names; **GOV**<sup>1, 2, 5</sup>; **LEG**<sup>1, 2, 8</sup>; **PUB**<sup>1, 2</sup>;
2. Encouraging language policy and planning that increases the strength of Alaska Native languages as the living, cultural treasures of Alaska Natives and all Alaskans; **GOV**<sup>6</sup>; **LEG**<sup>4, 6</sup>;
3. Promoting more Alaska Native language programs, including language immersion education, language medium education, and other language courses from infancy to adulthood; **GOV**<sup>3</sup>; **LEG**<sup>3, 9</sup>; **PUB**<sup>3</sup>;
4. Creating an Alaska Native Language Schools Consortium by including provisions within the Bylaws of the State Board of Education & Early Development.; **GOV**<sup>4</sup>;
5. Leading the way in counting the numbers of highly-proficient speakers and of students who have reached conversational ability in each Alaska Native language; **LEG**<sup>7</sup>; and
6. Decolonizing minds, communities, and institutions so that past injustices no longer determine the future for language survival, by treating inter-generational trauma caused by language loss and other social problems, removing barriers in order to allow people to acquire proficiency in Alaska Native languages; **LEG**<sup>10, 11</sup>; **PUB**<sup>4</sup>;

\* Color-coded and numbered **GOV**, **LEG**, and **PUB** reference the specific findings and policy recommendations in this *2020 Report*. For further details on each of these recommendations, please refer to section Six.

This report and the included findings and recommendations are from the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council (ANLPAC), and does not necessarily reflect the perspective or recommendations of the Division, Department, or Administration.

# Table of Contents

---

## CONTENTS

Letter from the Council .....	i
Executive Summary .....	ii
1. About the Council .....	1
2. Methodology .....	1
3. Alaska Native Languages .....	2
3.1 Languages and language families. ....	2
3.2 Languages and their dialects. ....	3
3.3 Acts of the Alaska Legislature .....	3
4. The Status of Alaska Native Languages .....	4
4.1 Language loss on a global scale .....	7
4.2 Promoting multilingualism and multidialectalism.....	8
5. Language Policy & Planning.....	10
5.1 Best practices in language revitalization.....	10
5.2 Status planning.....	12
5.3 Language-learning opportunities: individual classes .....	13
5.4 Master-apprentice programs.....	13
5.5 Language-learning opportunities: language immersion programs.....	14
5.6 Which language programs are appropriate for our community?.....	15
6. Findings and Recommendations of the Council.....	18
#1 Make Alaska Native Language Survival An Official Goal Of The State Of Alaska.....	18
#2 Promote Language Normalization .....	18
#3 Promote More Alaska Native Language Immersion Programs .....	20
#4 Fund An Annual, State-Wide Meeting For Alaska Native Language Teachers.....	21
#5 Establish An Alaska Native Language Schools Consortium .....	21
#6 Clarify And Strengthen Alaska Statute 14.30.420.....	22
#7 Utilize Alaska Native Place Names .....	22
#8 Restore Funding For Administrative Assistant Position And For Council Travel .....	23
#9 Survey The Numbers Of Alaska Native Language Speakers .....	23
#10 Declare Alaska Native Languages Day .....	24
#11 Increase Instruction In Local Alaska Native Languages By The University Of Alaska.....	24

---

---

#12	Inspire Decolonization And Healing Inter-Generational Trauma .....	24
#13	Offer An Apology For Historical Language Suppression .....	25
Appendices A-H .....		27
Appendix A: References .....		28
Appendix B: Council Members and Staff .....		30
Appendix C: Alaskan laws related to Alaska Native languages .....		33
Appendix D: 2018 Recommendations and Updates .....		35
Appendix E: Alaska Native Language Programs .....		36
Appendix F: Language Needs Assessments (LNA) For use by Alaska Native Communities .....		43
Appendix G: UNESCO Scale of Language Endangerment .....		47
Appendix H: Extended Quotes .....		48

---

# 1. ABOUT THE COUNCIL

The Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council (ANLPAC) was created by the State Legislature in 2012. The Council is charged with recommending programs which support the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages. The voting members of the Council are language professionals who work with their Alaska Native languages to see that all our languages continue and flourish as living languages.

Among other tasks, the Council must meet at least twice annually and produce a biennial report by January 1st of each even-numbered year. This 2020 Report is the fourth such from the Council, following upon the 2014, 2016, and 2018 Reports. Photographs and short biographies of each Council member appear in Appendix A.

# 2. METHODOLOGY

Four methods were used to determine the findings and recommendations: 1) building partnerships, 2) hearing public testimony, 3) collecting data from across the state and from other Indigenous regions in other countries, 4) and strategic planning and work sessions.

The ANLPAC meets regularly via audioconference—typically once a month—in open, public meetings and invites participation and input from the public. The Council has worked since late 2012 to meet with Alaska Native language stakeholders and gather information critical for:

- Understanding which events have led us to the dire situation we are in now, with every Alaska Native language either vulnerable to becoming endangered;
- Discovering which Alaska Native language learning opportunities exist across the state; and
- Planning how to strengthen the status of Alaska Native languages as living, vibrant treasures used in everyday life.

The ANLPAC meets 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

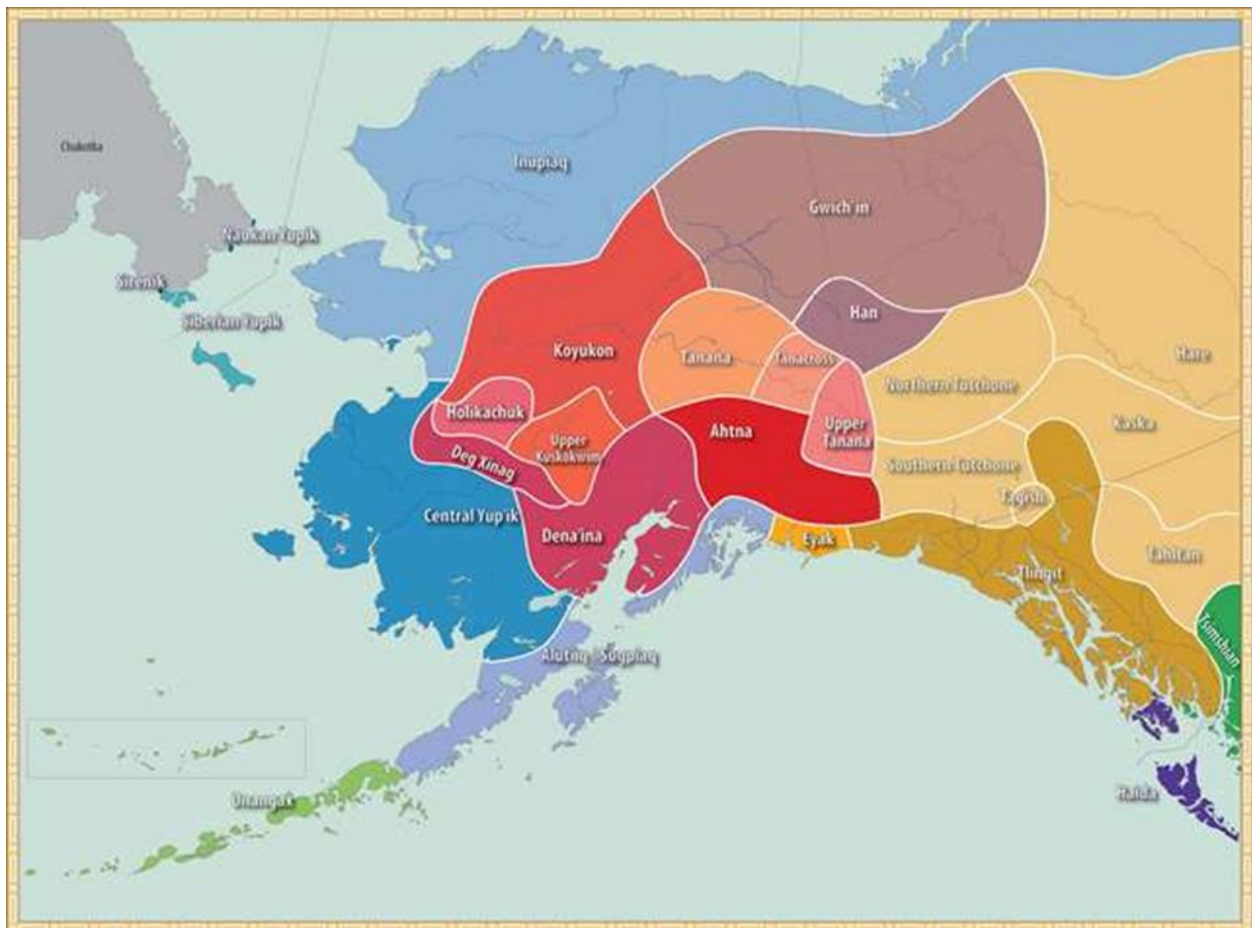
### 3. ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES

The land we call Alaska is home to around two dozen Native languages, spoken in and near Alaska for many thousands of years. Each Alaska Native language is a treasure beyond value, holding cultural knowledge of a unique people, a unique history, and a unique way of viewing life.

Every Indigenous language in Alaska faces threats from colonial English-only practices, and nearly all of them are critically endangered.

“Waten cali man’a Cugtun qaneryararput pirpaunruluni, wangkuta cuuciryararput egelraqurallra. Waten qaneryaraunata wangkuta im’ Cup’igtun wangkuta igtelriatun ayuqeciqukut.” **Nuyarralek, Cev’armiu**

<And our Cup’ik language is most important, to continue living our way of life. If we don’t have the Cup’ik language, it will be as though we have fallen> **Richard Slats, Cup’ik, from Chevak**



#### 3.1 Languages and language families.

Linguists group Alaska Native languages into four *language families*, sets of languages which appear to be related to each other, descendants of a common, ancestral language in the ancient past. The two large language families in Alaska are the Inuit-Unangan language family (also called the

Eskimo-Aleut language family, with ten or twelve languages across much of the Arctic) and the Na-Dene language family (also called the Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit language family, with about 40 or 50 languages across western North America). The other two are the Tsimshianic language family (four languages) and the Haida language, a ‘language isolate,’ that is, a family of one.

### 3.2 Languages and their dialects.

For linguists, a *dialect* is a specific, regional or social variety of a language. All living languages have multiple dialects—and every time someone speaks, they are speaking in a dialect of a language. If two ways of speaking are similar, the linguists’ rule of thumb to decide if they are speaking two, distinct language—or speaking two dialects of the same language—is to ask a speaker of each variety (ideally who are not previously familiar with each other’s way of speaking) to have a conversation with each other, each speaking their own language variety. If they can readily carry on a conversation on their first attempt, then linguists would count the varieties as being two dialects of the same language. If they can communicate but misunderstand each other frequently, then linguists may count the varieties as being two, closely related languages. There is a large “grey area” in which two speakers understand each other fairly well but not very well the first time they attempt to converse with each other; because of this, there can be disagreement on how many “languages” there are in a particular language family. This is true of Alaska Native languages as well and this is the larger reason why some people will come up with different numbers of languages.

The most important factor is that Alaska Native people’s social identity is powerfully linked to their traditional dialects, which generally correlated with which traditional nation or society they were members of. For this reason, individuals tend to strongly identify with the particular type of speech from their home community, or that of their family. Issues of dialect differences often arise in language revitalization contexts, because with the development of learning materials, groups often must determine which version of a word will be used. If the differences in the language are not captured sensitively, speakers and learners of certain styles may be affronted.

### 3.3 Acts of the Alaska Legislature

Acts of the Alaska Legislature, and subsequent Alaska Statutes, affect policies regarding Alaska Native languages. Please see Appendix B for full texts of the following statutes:

- 1972, Establishment of the Alaska Native Language Center, AS 14.40.117
- 1995, Native Language Education, AS 14.30.420
- 2012, Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council, AS 44.33.520
- 2014, Official Languages Act (revising the 1998 English-only version), AS 44.12.310

The Official Languages Act, updated by our State Legislature in 2014, 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, Han, 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.





*Students with the Tlingit Culture Language & Literacy program at Harborview Elementary School dance during the 5th Grade Promotion ceremony held in the clan house at the Walter Soboleff Center on Wednesday, May 22, 2019. (Michael Penn | Juneau Empire)*

## 4. THE STATUS OF ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES

Measuring the health of a language can be difficult. There are many challenges to counting who is a “speaker” of a language and there always will be. The numbers presented in the following table, if the number is fewer than 100, come from community members who tell us that they have sat down with other language community members and written down lists of who all they can name who is a strong speaker. Sadly, those numbers are easier to come by as the number of speakers becomes quite small.

Surveys that simply ask, “Do you (or does that person) speak the language?” result in poor data. One person who speaks the language quite well, but knows that they are far from being a “perfect” speaker, may modestly reply “no” whereas someone else, who knows a couple hundred words and a few dozen phrases, may reply “yes.” Neither one is wrong as such but it illustrates how a simple “yes/no” question about speaking does not provide useful information.

With declines in the number of speakers of Alaska Native languages over the last several generations, the Council is very interested in learning how many speakers (at different levels) there are of each language and how many teachers there are of each language and how quickly new teachers are being developed, but also what the social situations are—in the home and in the broader community—in which Alaska Native languages are being used today. Having detailed information on how many people can speak, how many do speak, how many are learning, and how

and where our languages are spoken will be of great benefit in planning for the continued survival of all Alaska Native languages.

In order to have a more valuable, more detailed understanding of what successes are happening with Alaska Native languages, it is important to learn the health of each language, considering how and when the languages are spoken in the house and community as well as the overall numbers of speakers by language in four categories. These categories are based in large part upon the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (<https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>), with our “highly proficient” corresponding to their “superior” and our “conversational” speakers corresponding with “intermediate” speaker.

1. Those who learned the language as children and speak the language well: highly proficient speakers
2. Those who learned their language as children but, due to childhood trauma associated with physical and psychological punishments for speaking their language, became “dormant speakers” who understand but now cannot converse
3. Second-language learners who speak the language well: highly proficient speakers
4. Second-language learners who can carry on short conversations (five or ten minutes)—more than simply using memorized dialog: intermediate speakers

As noted above, there never has been a systematic study of the number of language teachers available, nor an actual count of language speakers. Research indicates that it is vital to understand the status of a spoken language in order best to develop plans, policies, and materials for revitalizing that language. For Alaska, information is very limited. The information, below, is a listing of the best data available based upon a variety of sources including language workers in the communities, linguists who work with particular languages, and sometimes late 20<sup>th</sup> century estimates on the Alaska Native Language Center that we suspect are overly optimistic. If you have more up-to-date or more accurate information on numbers of speakers in your community, please email [anlpac@alaska.gov](mailto:anlpac@alaska.gov) or phone (907) 269-3646 (see also Appendix F).

## Language Family      Language and estimated number of highly proficient speakers in Alaska

Inuit-Unangan	<p>Inupiatun (Inupiaq language):            &lt;2,500 highly proficient speakers in Alaska</p> <p>Yupigestun / Akuzipigestun (St. Lawrence Island Yupik language):            &lt;1,000 highly proficient speakers</p> <p>Yugtun / Cugtun (Central Alaskan Yup'ik / Cup'ik language):            &lt;10,000 highly proficient speakers</p> <p>Cup'ig: ??</p> <p>Sugt'stun / Alutiit'stun (Sugpiaq / Alutiiq language):            ~80 highly proficient speakers</p> <p>Unangam Tunuu (Unanga Aleut language):            ~150 highly proficient speakers</p>
Na-Dene	<p>Dena'ina Qenaga (Dena'ina language):            5 highly proficient speakers</p> <p>Kenaakk'enaage (Koyukon language):            &lt;150 highly proficient speakers</p> <p><b>Doogh Qinag (Holikachuk language):</b>  <b>0 highly proficient speakers</b></p> <p>Deg Xinag (Deg Hit'an language):            2 highly proficient speakers</p> <p>Denak'i (Upper Kuskokwim language):            &lt;5 highly proficient speakers—maybe one or zero</p> <p>Benhti Kokhwt'ana Kenaga' (Lower Tanana language):            1 highly proficient speaker</p> <p><b>Sahcheeg Xut'een Xneege' (Middle Tanana language):</b>  <b>0 highly proficient speakers</b></p> <p>Dinjii Zhuh K'yaa (Gwich'in language):            &lt; 250 highly proficient speakers in Alaska</p> <p>Häl Gołan (Hän language):            2 highly proficient speakers in Alaska</p> <p>Dihthaad Xt'een Iin Aandëeg' (Tanacross language):            &lt;10 highly proficient speakers</p> <p>Nee'aanëegn' (Upper Tanana language): ??</p> <p>Koht'aene Kenaege' / Atnakenaege' (Ahtna language):            ~15 highly proficient speakers</p> <p><b>Wetał (Tseta'ut language):</b>  <b>0 speakers</b></p> <p><b>dAkhunhyuuga' (Eyak language):</b>  <b>0 highly proficient speakers</b></p> <p>Lingít Yoo X'atángi (Tlingit language):            ~50 highly proficient, first-language speakers in Alaska            + 10 highly proficient, second language speakers in Alaska</p>
Tsimshianic	<p>Sm'algyax / Shm'algyack (Coast Tsimshian language):            4 highly proficient speakers in Alaska</p>
Haida	<p>Xaad Kíl (Haida language):            3 highly proficient speakers in Alaska</p>

## 4.1 Language loss on a global scale

In 1992, the linguist Michael Krauss (who started the Alaska Native Language Center) published an article on “The World’s languages in crisis,” saying that by the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century—if current trends were to continue—about 50% of the world’s languages would be endangered and another 40% threatened with loss. Sadly, it appears that his dire warnings 28 years ago were too optimistic. Today, most languages of the world are under threat of imminent loss. Even languages with millions of speakers (such as Igbo, one of the largest African languages in Nigeria with 27 million speakers) are now endangered because very few young people speak them, speaking instead one of only a few, world languages, primarily English, Spanish, Hindi, Russian, Mandarin Chinese, German, French, and Arabic (it is English in Nigeria). Most of the other 7,000 modern human languages now are losing ground at an alarming rate.

The problems that face Alaskans with our languages are the same problems that exist around the world; the political, economic, and military hegemony of a few language communities are driving the others into decline. As the power and influence of these small number of languages has increased drastically across the 20<sup>th</sup> century—and even more so in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the urgency of the loss of almost *all* human languages is paramount (Wiecha 2013).

What is lost when a language is lost? Each human language encodes a unique view of the world, including our understanding of how people are to treat each other, how we are to live in this world and interact with it. As a language is lost, these subtleties are lost.

Loss can include environmental and ecological knowledge, vitally important especially in times of environmental change and changes in population number and migratory pathways; this is often called TEK (traditional ecological knowledge) or simply TK (traditional knowledge) (Maffi and Dilts 2014)

Loss of language can include traditional ways of relating with one’s relatives, as kinship terms vary from language to language. Kinship roles are not interchangeable across languages; indeed, the very categories of kin do not necessarily align among different languages. Much of traditional, indigenous society relies upon traditional kinship ties and, without the language that holds these kin terms and their expected rights and obligations, traditional societies may become less resilient, resulting in increases in social disruption.

Other losses that accompany language decline are potential declines in social and cultural identity. More than simply the name that people call themselves, social and cultural identity includes the day-to-day realization in people’s lives of their group history as a *living* tradition. Indigenous communities function best with their traditional languages in place as living language of the home and community. Research shows that indigenous communities with strong languages and strong social and cultural identity have lower rates of social disruption, including lower suicide rates (Hallett, Chandler and Lalonde 2007).



“I am a speaker of my language and one of the younger birth speakers. Alaska Native languages are very important to me because it is the indigenous people right to have access to their language. Learning about indigenous history and learning who we are helps us to be connected to the lands and our ancestors who have lived and roamed these lands from time immemorial. Even for visitors to see and hear the indigenous languages and cultures would make their visit to the northwestern section of The United States. Alaskan Native Language’s is not just important to me as a speaker but even to the rest of the world.” **Marsha Guneiwí Hotch, Tlingit Language and Culture Bearer**

“[I]n Southeast, there's a Native proverb that... translates into...: ‘If you do not know the names, your way of life will drift away forever.’ And there was a Tlingit woman that once told me—a very knowledgeable woman—said: ‘The land yearns to hear the Tlingit language spoken.’ **Mario Fullmer, Tlingit, Juneau**

## 4.2 Promoting multilingualism and multidialectalism

As has been common through Alaska Native nations since time immemorial, most Alaska Natives up into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century spoke two, three, four, or more varieties of Alaska Native languages (Mitchell 2008). For many, this was because they had relatives who had married into their community from another Native nation where a different dialect or language was spoken. Furthermore, additional dialects and languages were learned to interact with individual’s trading partners whom they would meet at least annually to exchange valuables that were rare in their partners’ homelands.

The widespread use of English has undercut this traditional feature of Alaska Native life. Learning and using the Alaska Native languages and dialects of our neighbors helps reinforce the vitality of all Alaska Native languages. It is important that we support each other and all Alaska Native languages as we work to create an Alaska where all Alaska Native languages can thrive. Take a look at language-learning resources (Appendix E) for languages of your neighbors or relatives and consider learning at least a few common phrases to use with people of other languages and dialects that people have a family or community connection with.

“And that extends into other dialects or who represents that area, that we could coincide and learn how to say thank you, you know, through Tlingit..., Haida..., or Tsimshian. And just being able to show relevancy of our progress of working not just within the English language but together as linguists.

“And since we’re facing the same battle, maybe it can help our advancements towards a more positive of how we coincide as community members throughout the state of Alaska and how we involve ourselves indigenously....

“So I hope however that starts and continues our conversations, we all keep on track and focus on what is needed to keep our languages immersed within the society and public, and let alone within our households.” **Shane Brown, Tlingit, Yakutat and Juneau**



*Gwich'in Language Nest: Jessica Black & Aurora, Princess Daazhrai Johnson & K'edzaaye, Charlene Stern & Grayson, Alisha Gilbert & Ryler, Shelby Fisher Salmon & Hunter.*



*Denaakk'e language workers: Eliza Jones, Doris Miller, and Marie Yaska*

## 5. LANGUAGE POLICY & PLANNING

One important step that can help in holding on to a traditional language—and increasing its vitality—is to be strategic in understanding language revitalization work as conducting language policy and planning. Language planning is when a group gets together and decides how they want their language(s) to be used now and into the future and which steps they believe will bring about those results (Cooper 1989). Language policy in Alaska is when a family, a town, a language region, or the whole state gets together and takes steps to implement these plans.

Where should a community start on language policy and planning for maintaining a Native language? People might begin by hosting community meetings to talk about what people want for the future of your language, or bring this up as a topic during times for public comment at existing meetings. This information can be compiled into a local or regional language strategic plan. This plan can be circulated among the individuals and groups who incorporate language in their work so that different entities can take responsibility for different parts of the plan.

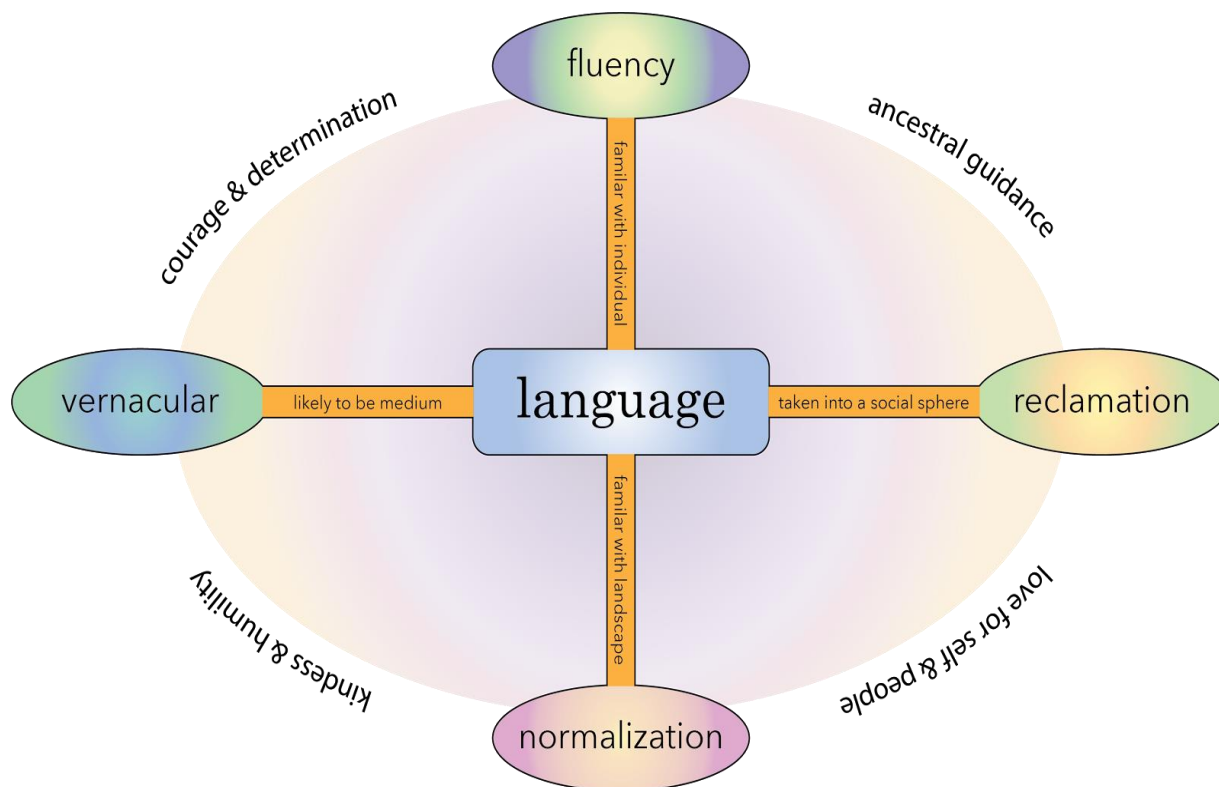
More information on language policy and language planning can be found at the Council’s website: <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra/AKNativeLanguagePreservationAdvisoryCouncil.aspx>

### 5.1 Best practices in language revitalization

Language revitalization—which involves bringing a language back to stability—and language maintenance—which is keeping a language from becoming endangered—are theoretically straightforward processes, but not as simple in real life as language communities struggle to turn back the tide of language loss.

Dr. William “Pila” Wilson, a leader in Hawaii’s language revitalization efforts for three decades, has said that language revitalization is about two things: 1) protecting the speakers you have while making new ones, and 2) making sure your language is the language of power and use. To put it plainly, the primary goals are to make sure there is a stable population of speakers—which most often means creating more speakers than are lost—and making sure the language is used in as many places as possible to communicate about as many things as possible. For languages to regain their place in populations that reside on that languages’ ancestral territory; language planning efforts should be specific, decisive, and informed by local, regional, statewide, and national power structures and social tendencies.

The situation of Alaska Native languages and their health and stability is complicated by colonialism, oppression, value shift, fragmentation, and systemic racism – all issues which are complex and interconnected. Stabilizing Indigenous languages is never about the language in isolation, because language stability requires dramatic social shift in the face of historical and ongoing marginalization and hierarchies of racial and therefore linguistic superiority. As linguist Margaret Noor states in her article on language activities in the language of Anishinaabemowin, “Ultimately, saving a language that is endangered as a result of racism is in fact a battle with racism itself. Families and communities can come together or disassemble as a result of making a commitment to face and change racism” (137). As we begin to examine best practices and explore methods of replicating them in Alaska, care should be taken to consider the ways that colonialism has impacted communities and the ways that colonialism creates ongoing oppressions for Indigenous languages and their speaking communities.



A Matrix of Language Health (X'unei Lance Twitchell, 2018)

While the social dynamics and stability of all languages vary dramatically, the path to language stability can be represented by Matrix of Language Health. A living language can be analyzed in the following areas:

**fluency** is how familiar the language is to its population; how likely is a person in the language community to understand what is being said or to communicate what they would like to say?

**normalization** is how familiar the language is with the landscape; how likely is a person to encounter the language in written and spoken forms in various places, and what expectations are placed upon people to know the language?

**reclamation** is the strategic identification of domains, which are places where the language should be taken; does the population know how to talk in detail about subjects (registers) in all the social and physical areas where it could be spoken (domains)?

**vernacular** is the likelihood that the language is the language choice in given situations—the day to day common language; how likely are speakers to use the language and stay in it regardless of domain or register?

All of Alaska's Native languages are now endangered and a few no longer have any proficient speakers. There are things that individuals, families, villages and towns, whole regions, and the State of Alaska can do to help revitalize Alaska Native languages.





*Rose Ayagina'ar Schneideron and Liam Canaar Charette, Cook Inlet Native Head Start's Start's Yup'ik Immersion preschool; photo Anchorage Daily News, April 21, 2018*

## 5.2 Status planning

The first step in an organized program to improve the status of a language is to develop awareness that the language needs attention and work to improve its status. Talk with your family and neighbors, organize get-togethers to talk about what has happened with your language and which goals your community shares for your language's future. Find more opportunities to use your language—in speaking, in signage—to increase community awareness of your language. Community members do not have to be proficient speakers to support other speakers and learners and to increase the level of language awareness in your community. Be supportive of everyone who is learning and speaking any amount of your language. Remember: People do not have to be fluent to be speakers; people simply have to start speaking their language as they are able!

“[T]he few speakers that are scattered throughout the region, if there was a way for them to meet face to face and do comparative work so that their descendants will know that we're all interrelated linguistically and that we have a lot to bring together even though we're from different dialects....

“But we'd like to see more—possibly our own radio station where we have our boive broadcasted for people who want to tune and and... communicate across the airwaves... throughout the week. I don't know what other regions... might have... already but in this area where it's not in place..., it could be utilized for fluent speakers.”

**Ggwitka Sperry Ash, Sugpiaq, Nanwalek**

### 5.3 Language-learning opportunities: individual classes

If people want to learn to speak more of an Alaska Native language, there may already be resources in their town or region. Look at the Appendix to this report and check for the latest information at: <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra/AKNativeLanguagePreservationAdvisoryCouncil/LanguagePrograms.aspx> to see known programs for language learning. But what if there is not one already? People may want to organize an informal language circle once a week, for speakers and learners at any level to meet and use the language. Informal language circles can be a great way to start. People may want to talk others in their community who want to see their Alaska Native language taught in the local schools and then, with them, go to their next school board meeting and tell them why they would like to see Alaska Native language classes offered. If people live in a community without any language speakers, there may be audio-video recordings available via the internet; gather a friend or two to watch these together and practice.

One of the shining lights in language-learning opportunities is the *Ilisaqativut* movement in the three regions where Inupiaq is spoken. Led by young people in their 20s and 30s who are serious students of the language, they are working actively to transcend the ANCSA-based division of Inupiaq country into three areas, are offering intensive, two-week, language learning opportunities in the regional hub towns of Utqiagvik, Kotzebue, and Nome, and shorter sessions in Anchorage, and all Inupiaq dialects are welcome. These young people find funding, recruit fluent speakers to teach, solicit input from the broader Inupiat community—all led by the emerging Inupiaq speakers.

“I guess my suggestion to the council would be maybe doing some research about how long it takes a person to learn a language, and then do a comparison of how many hours language teachers are in the school. And then we won't be in the dark of what the school needs to allocate for the language teachers.” **Joseph Marks, Tlingit, Juneau**

### 5.4 Master-apprentice programs

A Master-Apprentice arrangement pairs an adult learner with an advanced speaker – usually an Elder. These programs are designed for languages with very few fluent speakers remaining, pairing them with speakers whose job is to spend at least ten or twenty hours a week, living completely in the language. The most successful examples have come out of California where the approach was designed by Julian Lang (Karuk) and UC Berkeley linguist, Leanne Hinton, in 1992. When master-speaker and apprentice-speaker are able to stick with this, the apprentice can develop advanced levels of conversational proficiency in two or three years.



*Gwich'in elders Mary Gilbert, Trimble Gilbert, Birkman Silas*

## 5.5 Language-learning opportunities: language immersion programs

Language nests (for young children) and language immersion schools are the most powerful institutional means of teaching a language. Children (sometimes as young as a few weeks old, in the case of language nests) spend the day interacting with adults who speak to them only in the language. Language immersion schools have a fifty-five-year track record in North America for helping young children develop high conversational and academic fluency in an additional language while also developing academic fluency in a national language.

One reason for the small number of these programs are because language nests and language immersion schools require that there be highly proficient speakers, with training and experience for teaching children.

“One of the repercussions of having a lot of grant-funded projects is that... it's difficult to attract people if they know they only have a couple of years of funding or, in the best case, maybe five.” **Isiik April Counciller, Alutiiq, Kodiak**

Language schools are an area that are highly dependent on local support and control. The Council strongly supports the right of local communities to participate in deciding training and credentialing standards for language nest and language immersion teachers.

“One thing that I’ve thought about a lot is how teachers become certified. And maybe we need to be looking at how can we get more of our Alaska Natives certified as teachers, and not just a Type M Limited Certificate but full teachers that have all of the authority that all the other teachers have, to bring that into classrooms.” **Erin Monteith, Juneau**

Alaska Native language immersion schools have been operated in Bethel (Ayaprun Elitnaurvik, Central Yup’ik, 1995 to present, K-6th charter school); Hooper Bay (Central Yup’ik/Cup’ik); Kotzebue (Nikaitchuat Iḷisaḡviat, Iñupiaq, 1998 to present, private pre-school); Utqiagvik (Iñupiaq, 1995 – early 2000s); K-4 partial immersion program in Mekoryuk (Cup’ig, 1999 to present); Nanwalek (Alutiiq/Sugt’stun, 1999-2002, pre-school, Nanwalek IRA Council); and at College Gate Elementary (Central Yup’ik) starting in 2019. Bethel’s Yup’ik immersion program has had great success in teaching young people to be conversationally fluent and academically competent in Yup’ik alongside with English. **For more information on specific Native language programs, see Appendix E.**

“A lot of the teachers—the youngest teacher has been going on 30 years teaching the language.... It makes a difference in their lives in the pursuit of education or employment or their careers to have those positive connections to their culture and their family and their history, their place. And that would be my wish is to see our education system support our languages.” **Allan Hayton, Gwich’in, Fort Yukon**

## 5.6 Which language programs are appropriate for our community?

The answer to this question depends upon the current status of your language, that is, which generations speak the language largely determine what your options are. A common problem, with only a few elders as fluent speakers, is thinking that first priority is putting the elders into elementary classrooms for several minutes a day in each class. This cannot lead to fluency for learners quickly enough. Rather, master-apprentice language teams are the best practice when the only fluent speakers are 70+ years old; make new, fluent, L2 speakers ages 20-60 as quickly as possible! The new, fluent speakers can then effectively 1) train their own apprentices and 2) teach children and families in organized classes. So which generations speak your language in your community?

- Language is still spoken by almost everyone of all ages
- Language still spoken by about half of the children
- Language is still spoken only by those over the age of 20
- Language is still spoken by all generations over the age of 40
- Language is still spoken by all generations over the age of 60
- Language is spoken only by those over 75-80
- Language no longer has fluent speakers



**For languages that are still spoken in their community by almost everyone of all ages**, the best support for the continued vitality of the language starts with language policy and planning to increase the public and private use of the language in the community and use the language as the primary language of instruction, pre-school through at least third grade (perhaps through high school), with formal instruction in the national language starting in upper elementary grades.

**For languages still spoken in their community by about half the children as their first language**, language policy and planning toward increasing the normalization and use of the language and toward either an early total immersion program in the Native language or a *dual language immersion program* may be the most appropriate first steps. Dual language immersion programs aim for 50% first-language-speakers of each language and match up students into pairs (with adjacent seats or desks), so that each student is receiving one half of their day's instruction in their own, first language, and half of the day in their second language; student partners help each other out. Both immersion school models require that teachers 1) be highly fluent in the immersion language, 2) be highly trained and certificated teachers, 3) ideally be very experienced teachers, and 4) receive specialized pre-service and in-service training in how to teach students effectively in a language that the students do not yet speak well.

**For languages still spoken in their community by all generations over the age of 20**, language policy and planning provide assistance to young and middle-aged adults in earning their teaching credentials and becoming language nest and language immersion teachers is an excellent option. This, along with increasing public use of the local language, so that young people can see its value in the daily life of their community, will reinforce the overall use of the language and its acquisition by children.

**For languages still spoken in their community by all generations over the age of 40**, language policy and planning should be directed toward normalizing the use of the language in the community and assisting middle-aged adults in earning their teaching credentials and becoming language nest and language immersion teacher. If possible, establishing Master-Apprentice partnerships for highly-motivated young adults will help increase the number of speakers, increase inter-generational use of the language in your community, and potentially add to the pool of future language immersion teachers. Holding regular "language circles" where language learners can practice with each other can be very useful.

**For languages still spoken only by those over the age of 60**, language policy and planning should be directed at increasing the presence of the language in the community, hosting language circles where adult learners can practice speaking in the language with highly proficient speakers, and the establishment of Master-Apprentice partnerships for the highly-motivated language learners. Once some of these apprentices having become highly-proficient speakers themselves, they potentially can step into the roles of language immersion teachers.

**For languages that are still spoken only by a very small number of elders over the age of 75** or so, the most urgent need is to match up highly-motivated language learners as apprentices with the elder speakers. Other language options can be helpful but, unless the community can create new, highly-effective speakers of the language in very short order, it becomes very difficult to have any effective language programs in schools. With success by apprentice speakers, who then train other apprentice speakers, these communities can aim to start language nests and language immersion programs in the future.

“I’d like to see grassroots ideas that really foster what people are passionate about, specifically Inupiaq language. And because I think what we all know in each of our communities, each of our regions, the fluent speakers are passing a lot quicker than we are learning and preserving our languages. So, we’re at the crossroads where we need to promote grassroots efforts, which require very little budget; you just have a place and you do it.” **Josie Bourdon, Inupiaq, Nome**

“There is trauma connected to language loss, and healing associated with language revitalization. This historical trauma was passed from one generation to the next. The first generations of language speakers were punished for speaking in their first language. In turn, they spoke to their children in English.” **Yaayuk Bernadette Alvanna-Stimpfle, Inupiaq, Nome**



*Tlingit language gathering, ANB Hall, Yakutat, Alaska*

## 6. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL

When the Council has made formal recommendations to an intended audience; the following is used, for example, “recommendation **GOV**<sup>1</sup> promotes the development of State policies that can help with Alaska Native social and educational issues.”

### AUDIENCE CATEGORIES:

**GOV**: Policy-making recommendations to the Governor and the Executive Branch

**LEG**: Recommendations to the Legislative Branch

**PUB**: Recommendations to individuals and communities of the Public Community

### #1 Make Alaska Native Language Survival an Official Goal of The State of Alaska

**GOV**<sup>1</sup>: to the Governor and the Executive Branch

**LEG**<sup>1</sup>: to the Legislative Branch

**Finding**: Following almost a century and a half of direct, intentional efforts to extinguish Alaska Native languages, all are now endangered.

**Policy Recommendation**: The Council calls on the Executive branch and the Legislative branch to clearly indicate that it is the policy of the State of Alaska to promote the survival and efflorescence of Alaska Native languages wherever possible.

### #2 Promote Language Normalization

**GOV**<sup>2</sup>: to the Governor and the Executive Branch

**LEG**<sup>2</sup>: to the Legislative Branch

**PUB**<sup>1</sup>: to the Public Community

**Finding**: Language normalization—making sure that the language is spoken in public and in homes—is a powerful way to bring new vitality back to our traditional languages. There is a need for some speakers to become highly fluent and become teachers of others. But for those who have no intention of becoming fluent, language normalization helps support those in the community who are learning the language.

**Policy Recommendation**: The Council strongly urges individual people, Native communities, regional corporations, institutions, radio and television stations, and all branches of the State of Alaska to find ways of using Alaska Native languages in their daily operations.

One of the goals throughout Alaska should be working towards the normalization of its Indigenous languages. Normalization means that it is common to hear and see a language. One of the challenges that Alaska Native languages face is a reduction in the places that it is spoken and the subjects that the language discusses. It is important for Alaskans to understand that this did not occur through any sort of natural process, but is the result of generations of cultural oppression and discrimination. Language communities can strategize on places they want to take their language

and then collect or develop the vocabulary needed to take the language into that domain. For example, if a community would like to play basketball in the language, then work needs to be done to gather or create all of the things that players might want to say in that realm and then make sure there are ways to teach and have it available. Once that is done, then the language can be taken into that domain.

On a larger level, language normalization can be viewed as a series of interlocking components. The level of work and focus needed in each of these areas to create normalization will vary within languages and communities.

When academics talk about language revitalization, the overall goal is to increase the number of people who speak a language conversationally at a highly proficient level, of course. And to revitalize a language as a living language, language supporters want to see highly proficient speakers using that language to raise a new generation of first-language speakers by speaking that language on a daily basis with their children.

But what about those who will not become highly fluent, either because they do not have the time to, the resources to, or even the personal desire to devote so much of their life to learning an Alaska Native language? *Everyone* can support the revitalization of Alaska Native languages by starting to use even a few phrases on a daily basis. Answering the phone? People can give an Alaska Native language greeting, followed if necessary by an English one. Checking out from a store? Thank the clerk in a local, Alaska Native language.

People can also support local Alaska Native languages by talking with their tribal or city council, their school board, their State of Alaska representatives in the legislature, and let them know how much the languages are valued and that your community would like to see them used more and in more ways. Answer the phone with a locally-appropriate, Alaska Native greeting. Say “thank you” in an Alaska Native language when interacting in an office, a store, and with a person in line with you. Ask your local radio station if they would host a call-in discussion show, using a host who can speak an Alaska Native language and invite callers to speak their own language. Libraries, museums, and other cultural centers should showcase books in Alaska Native languages and highlight Alaska Native phrases in their exhibits.

“People can make small, daily changes in the way they speak or feel about Alaska Native languages. By changing the way you greet someone or choosing an activity to do entirely in the language is a great way to learn and retain the language. If the survival of the language is important to a person, that person must actively participate in ensuring its survival. That could look like the small, daily changes or it could mean testifying or lobbying to decision makers.” **Anonymous Inupiaq woman**



### #3 Promote More Alaska Native Language Immersion Programs

**GOV<sup>3</sup>:** to the Governor and the Executive Branch

**LEG<sup>3</sup>:** to the Legislative Branch

**Finding:** Language immersion schools are one of the most powerful ways of revitalizing indigenous languages while, at the same time, encouraging students to excel in English, math, science, and social studies. The Council supports the implementation of language immersion schools in general and public charter schools and tribal schools. 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 teachers. The Council also supports language nests.

**Policy Recommendation:** The Legislature and the Department of Education and Early Development clearly indicate that it is the policy of the State of Alaska to promote the establishment and functioning of Alaska Native language immersion schools wherever possible.

Early, total immersion schools elementary school programs in which students who already speak a national language (such as English) receive all their K-2 schooling entirely in a new language; by grade three, English language arts are added. Additional academic topics are switched to English so that by sixth grade, students typically receive half of the instruction in each language. Such immersion schools have a 50-year track record of proven success across Canada and the U.S.A. in producing elementary school graduates who are highly fluent in both languages and who are superior in the performance in English, science, mathematics, and social studies when compared with English-only elementary school graduates.

We in Alaska have had formal programs in *some* schools since the early 1970s, attempting to teach Alaska Native languages and yet we have not had much success with these programs, other than those that are built upon early total immersion education. There are many reasons why the more common language programs in schools have not led to conversational ability. One reason is that such classes are often limited to an hour or less per week; no language can be taught to the level of conversational ability at that rate. Another reason is that school districts generally have provided no training at all to Alaska Native language teachers in how to effectively teach students to learn to speak a language. While not as effective as total immersion programs, language classes can help students begin to converse in the language if students have at least 45 minutes or more a day and the classes are taught communicatively, directly in the language.

#### #4 Fund an Annual, State-Wide Meeting for Alaska Native Language Teachers

**LEG<sup>4</sup>:** to the Legislative Branch

**Finding:** The Council has determined that it is important for Alaska Native language teachers and others across the widely dispersed state of Alaska to have an opportunity to get together share information about successful methods in language revitalization and Indigenous language instruction.

**Policy Recommendation:** The Council calls upon the Legislature to provide \$35,000 funding annually to hold an annual conference for Alaska Native language teachers, coordinators, and administrators, and other language advocates in Anchorage.

“I was thinking about how there's a group that meets every year called Alaskans for Language Acquisition. And I spoke as a keynote speaker one time for them when I presented on my paper that I did for my master's degree. And I really like how they—the language teachers from ... the cities, ... from the world languages, like Spanish teachers, German teachers, you know how they get together and share their ideas. And my big vision is for some kind of big meeting like that, and just really focus on Alaska Native languages would seem to -- I think that would really motivate more others -- more school districts to work in that direction.” **Abbie Augustine, Central Yup'ik, Bethel and Anchorage**

#### #5 Establish an Alaska Native Language Schools Consortium

**GOV<sup>4</sup>:** to the Governor and the Executive Branch

**LEG<sup>5</sup>:** to the Legislative Branch

**Finding:** Programs for Alaska Native languages in Alaskan schools, especially total immersion and partial immersion programs, often receive disproportionately less support from Alaskan school districts than do other academic programs.

**Policy Recommendation:** The Council calls on the Governor, the Department of Education and Early Development, and the Legislature to authorize the creation of an Alaska Native School Board that would represent and promote Alaska Native tribal and charter schools across Alaska and would work with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development to establish provisions for a College of Alaska Native Languages that produces certification of teachers of Alaska Native languages.

## #6 Clarify and Strengthen Alaska Statute 14.30.420

**LEG<sup>6</sup>:** to the Legislative Branch

**Finding:** AS 14.30.420 has the potential to better support language survival in Alaska by strengthening its wording about language advisory boards. As it is (see AS 14.30.420 in Appendix B), the statute is not sufficiently strong in support of Alaska Native languages in schools because it only requires Native language advisory councils only if the entire school district has a majority of Alaska Native students. Thus, many Native communities—in regions with a majority of non-Natives in the hub town—are left out of the requirement.

**Policy Recommendation:** Clarify and strengthen the wording in AS 14.30.420 to 1) make it clear that the statute applies to *every* school which has a majority of students who are Alaska Natives and that 2) school districts *shall* offer instruction in the local Alaska Native language(s) if their local Native language curriculum advisory board directs them to.

{ Language should be implemented into all school grades and after school programs that are provided in the communities. They should be encouraged by all staff; not just indigenous peoples. **Kayla; Tlingit, Paiute, and Shoshone** }

{ [Alaska Native languages should be] taught in schools throughout kindergarten to 12th grade throughout the school year. Not just a few grades a small part of the year. **Anonymous Alaska Native woman** }

## #7 Utilize Alaska Native Place Names

**GOV<sup>5</sup>:** to the Governor and the Executive Branch

**PUB<sup>2</sup>:** to the Public Community

**Finding:** With millennia of residence on the land in Alaska, Native place names not only are part of the language and culture of Alaska Native peoples but are a daily reminder of who the traditional owners of the land are. Using traditional place names more. The Council encourages the reclamation of Alaska Native place names throughout the state, including local, state, and federal usage in naming facilities, public signage, and maps.

**Policy 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. 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 Denaakke' / Koyukon name, Denali (*Deenaalee*), recognized, in lieu of the former name for Ohio's 1896 presidential candidate, McKinley.

**How to propose official recognition of Alaska Native place names:** Official recognition of a place name in Alaska operates at two levels: with the State of Alaska and with the U.S. federal government. Generally, it is easiest to start at the State level with the *Alaska Historical Commission* and, if successful at getting recognition here, your proposal will also be forwarded to the U.S. Board

of Geographic Place Names. To have the best chances of having your proposal be successful, it will be important for the community to document that the Alaska Native place name is traditional in their area and that there is extensive, local support for reclaiming the traditional name. If the place already has an official English name, “[c]hanging an official name is only done when a current name is derogatory, causing confusion, or there is evidence of extensive local support by authorities and residents” says the State website <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha/designations/geonames.htm>

## #8 Restore Funding for Administrative Assistant Position and for Council Travel

**GOV<sup>6</sup>:** to the Governor and the Executive Branch

**Finding:** The Council finds that its ability to initiate and maintain contact with Alaska Native language stakeholders across Alaska is hindered by the reduced funding which no longer covers an administrative assistant position to assist in communication with tribes, school districts, colleges, and non-profit organizations around the state, as well as by the Council members lack of funding to participate directly with AFN and other language professionals at language revitalization workshops.

**Policy Recommendation:** The Council asks the Governor to restore funding for the 2012-2015 position of Administrative Assistant to the ANLPAC section within the Division of Community and Regional Affairs and to restore funding for each Council member to travel twice during the year to attend the Alaska Federation of Natives meeting and one other language revitalization meeting.

## #9 Survey the Numbers of Alaska Native Language Speakers

**LEG<sup>7</sup>:** to the Legislative Branch

**Finding:** There is a scarcity of accurate data on the numbers of speakers of Alaska Native languages. Effective language policy and planning for successful language revitalization requires that decisions and programs be aligned to the needs of each language’s sociolinguistic and demographic condition.

**Policy Recommendation:** The Council calls on the Legislature to provide funding for the Alaska Native Language Center to conduct a comprehensive survey on numbers of speakers of each Alaska Native language including numbers of highly proficient first-language speakers, dormant first-language speakers, and highly-proficient and intermediate level second-language speakers.

The Council further urges Alaska Native communities—villages, regions, language communities—to assess your own state of its language, to share this information with ANLPAC, and to begin using these data to form plans for the future of our languages. Highly proficient first-language speakers, dormant first-language speakers, and highly proficient and intermediate conversational second-language speakers should be counted.



## #10 Declare Alaska Native Languages Day

**LEG<sup>8</sup>:** to the Legislative Branch

**Finding:** Alaska Native languages are an invaluable treasure for Alaska Natives and all Alaskans. Increasing the public recognition of our uniquely Alaskan languages supports the continued vitality of our languages.

**Policy Recommendation:** The Council calls on the Legislature to declare an annual State holiday, Alaska Native Languages Day, on April 21<sup>st</sup>, to celebrate and recognize Alaska Native Languages. April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014, is that day that HB 216 was passed, recognizing that *all* Alaska Native languages are official languages in Alaska, along with English.

## #11 Increase Instruction in Local Alaska Native Languages by the University of Alaska

**LEG<sup>9</sup>:** to the Legislative Branch

**PUB<sup>3</sup>:** to the Public Community

**Finding:** This is a very high demand from people statewide to receive instruction in the Native languages of their region; this, however, is not always available.

**Policy Recommendation:** The Council supports the University of Alaska in its efforts to offer Alaska Native language classes and calls on the University Board of Regents to direct all branches of the University of Alaska to provide high-quality instruction, leading to fluency, in the Alaska Native language(s) Indigenous to the region of each of its campuses, and to partner with other Alaskan organizations to underwrite tuition costs for all students for their Alaska Native language coursework. The Council also urges the Legislature to provide appropriations to the University to support them in meeting these unmet needs.

## #12 Inspire Decolonization and Healing Inter-Generational Trauma

**LEG<sup>10</sup>:** to the Legislative Branch

**PUB<sup>4</sup>:** to the Public Community

**Finding:** Decolonization is a powerful way to heal inter-generational trauma. Significant inter-generational trauma has resulted from the complex history of language loss; these traumas reverberate through subsequent generations and create blockages to language revitalization and continue to disrupt lives. When people start practicing their cultural ways, including gathering and storing foods, speaking their languages, and participating in traditional ceremonies and festivals,

**Policy Recommendation:** The Council urges the Legislature sponsor a series of listening sessions around Alaska, to allow people to come together and talk about what they went through, what their ancestors may have gone through, and encourage partnering with communities and Indigenous organizations to hold healing ceremonies. These instances of inter-generational trauma need to be documented, publicly recognized, and survivors need to be provided with options for healing. Inter-

generational trauma associated with language loss can be a factor in adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). These historical forces contributed to the original decline in numbers of speakers through direct force in schools, in the economic system, and through institutional racism.

The Council further urges the Legislature to provide funding to tribes and non-profit organizations to host community-based healing sessions, along the lines of *Calricaraq*, the “Healthy Living” program created by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation’s Behavioral Health Department. <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/PublicHealth/research/centers/CHWE/Documents/CALRICARAO-%20A%20Culture%20Based%20System%20of%20Care.pdf>

The Council further urges Alaska Native groups and organizations to hold decolonization sessions with facilitators who are familiar with this type of work. This is where people can brainstorm and strategize how to best teach Indigenous peoples to reclaim their languages through cultural activities.

Decolonization for Indigenous peoples is a way of exploring how learning takes place from their own worldview in their Native language. Since colonization took place for Alaska Natives, many young Natives were sent away to boarding schools, thus losing a critical part of learning to become parents to the next generations. Education was taught only in English, where the Native language was not tolerated. In this way, Native peoples became “brainwashed” or colonized to teach using English only and using typical English ways of teaching instead of using their cultural ways.

Decolonization is a process of establishing resiliency by building on a community’s own strengths and protective factors. It is a process of facilitated consciousness-raising and awareness-building for Indigenous communities to reverse the negative effects of historical trauma that result from generations of colonization from a dominant culture.

### #13 Offer an Apology for Historical Language Suppression

**LEG<sup>11</sup>:** to the Legislative Branch

**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. A formal apology is a symbolic act that opens up the door for deeper discussion and engagement between the Native community and the governing body.

**Policy Recommendation:** The Council calls on the 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 and the policies that specifically forbade the use of Alaska Native languages in all schools from 1885 until the 1970s. The Council recognizes that these past abuses of Alaska Native peoples have not come at the hands of people currently in positions of authority in our State and also recognizes that the current Alaskan leadership nonetheless can positively contribute to Alaska Native self-healing and language revival through this powerful, symbolic act.

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, “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...”

The ANLPAC has repeated a process of public apology several times, across generations, inviting first fluent speakers to stand, and then inviting non-speakers to stand. 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.

“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 latter dealt with sensitive issues around Native dancing.” **Yaayuk Bernadette Alvanna-Stimpfle, Inupiaq, Nome**



*Tlingit language speakers and learners*

## APPENDICES A-H

Appendix A: References ..... 28

Appendix B: Council Members and Staff..... 30

Appendix C: Alaskan laws related to Alaska Native languages ..... 33

Appendix D: 2018 Recommendations and Updates..... 35

Appendix E: Alaska Native Language Programs..... 36

Appendix F: Language Needs Assessments (LNA)..... 43

Appendix G: UNESCO Scale of Language Endangerment ..... 47

Appendix H: Extended Quotes ..... 48





## Appendix A: References

### Recommended books on reversing language shift for Indigenous language communities

Cooper, Robert L. 1989. *Language Planning and Social Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fishman, Joshua A. 1991. *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Fishman, Joshua A. (Ed). 2000. *Can threatened languages be saved? Reversing Language Shift, Revisited: A 21st Century Perspective*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, Ltd.

Hallet, Darcy, Michael J. Chandler, and Christopher E. Lalonde. 2007. "Aboriginal language knowledge and youth suicide." *Cognitive Development* 22:392–399.

Hinton, Leanne. 2002. *How to Keep Your Language Alive: A Commonsense Approach to One-on-One Language Learning*. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Press.

Hinton, Leanne, editor. 2013. *Bringing Our Languages Home: Language Revitalization for Families*. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Press.

Hinton, Leanne and Ken Hale. 2008. *Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*. BRILL.

Noori, Margaret. "Language, Family, and Community." In *Bringing Our Languages Home: Language Revitalization for Families*. Leanne Hinton (Ed.). Berkeley: Heyday, 2013, 118–140.

Reyhner, Jon and Louise Lockard (Eds). 2009. *Indigenous Language Revitalization: Encouragement, Guidance & Lessons Learned*. Flagstaff: Northern Arizona University.

Spolsky, Bernard (2012). *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### Other References Cited

Alaska Natives Commission staff. *Alaska Natives Commission Final Report*, 1999.

Charles, W. (2011). *Dynamic Assessment in a Yugtun L2 Intermediate Adult Classroom*. Ph.D. dissertation. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Counciller, April Gale Laktonen. 2010. *Niugnelyukut (We Are Making New Words): A Community Philosophy of Language Revitalization*. Ph.D. dissertation. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Dulay, Heidi C and Marina K. Burt (1977) Remarks on creativity in language acquisition. In M. Burt, H. Dulay and M. Finnochiaro (Eds.) *Viewpoints on English as a Second Language*. New York: Regents. pp. 95-126.

Hirshberg, Diane and Suzanne Sharp. 2005. *Thirty Years Later: The Long-Term Effect of Boarding Schools on Alaska Natives and Their Communities*. University of Alaska Anchorage: Institute of Social and Economic Research. [www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu/Publications/boardingschoolfinal.pdf](http://www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu/Publications/boardingschoolfinal.pdf)

Endangered Languages. Ethnologue. [www.ethnologue.com/endangered-languages](http://www.ethnologue.com/endangered-languages)

Krashen, Stephen D. *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Prentice-Hall International, 1987.

Krauss, Michael E. 1980. *Alaska Native Languages: Past, Present, and Future*. Alaska Native Language Center, Research Papers #4. University of Alaska Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center.

Krauss, Michael. 1992. The world's languages in crisis. *Language* 68: 4-10.

Krauss, Michael. *Status of Native American Language Endangerment*. In *Stabilizing Indigenous Languages*. Gina Cantoni (ed.). Flagstaff: Northern Arizona University, 1996.

Krauss, Michael. *The Condition of Native North American Languages: The Need for Realistic Assessment and Action*. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. 132.1 (2009), 9–22.

Krauss, Michael, Gary Holton, Jim Kerr, and Colin T. West. 2011. *Indigenous peoples and Languages of Alaska* (map). Fairbanks and Anchorage: Alaska Native Language Center and UAA Institute of Social and Economic Research.

Maffi, Luisa and Ortixia Dilts. 2014. *Biodiversity Toolkit: An Introduction to Biocultural Diversity*. Terralingua. [https://terralingua.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Biocultural-Diversity-Toolkit\\_vol-1.pdf](https://terralingua.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Biocultural-Diversity-Toolkit_vol-1.pdf)

Mitchell IV, D. Roy. 2008. "Shifting Ethnicities and Shifting Languages among Alaska Native Peoples in the 19th Century." Presented at the 35th Annual Meeting of the Alaska Anthropological Association, Anchorage.

Paulston, Christina Bratt. 1994. *Linguistic Minorities in Multilingual Settings*. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Twitchell, X'unei Lance. (2018). *Ha dachxánx'i sáni kagéiyi yís: haa yoo x'atángi kei naltseen / For our little grandchildren: Language revitalization among the Tlingit*. Ph.D. dissertation. Hilo, Hawaii; University of Hawai'i.

Weicha, Karin. 2013. "New Estimates on the Rate of Global Language Loss." The Rosetta Project. <https://rosettaproject.org/blog/02013/mar/28/new-estimates-on-rate-of-language-loss/>

## Appendix B: 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 six children: Colby, Martin, Donald Jr., Maggie Rae, and David and Elise.



### **Representative Andi Story**

Andi Story has lived in Juneau for over 30 years, raising her three children Ellen, Mallory and Ryan while her husband Mike ran a small engineering firm. She served on the Juneau School Board for 15 years and served as president of the Alaska Association of School Boards. She also served on the Indian Studies Parent Advisory Board, and University of Alaska Southeast Advisory Council. Andi has a Masters in Social Work from San Diego State University. She was elected to the Alaska House of Representatives in 2018. Andi is currently the co-chair of the House Education Committee, and serves on the Transportation, State Affairs, and Labor & Commerce committees.



### **April Gale Laktonen Counciller, Ph.D. (Chair) – *Alutiiq (Sun’aq Tribe of Kodiak, Native Village of Larsen Bay)***

Dr. Counciller, of Kodiak, is the Executive Director of the Alutiiq Heritage Foundation (Alutiiq Museum) in Kodiak. Isiik, as she is known in her language, is a former professor of Alaska Native studies at Kodiak College (UAA), initiating the Alutiiq Studies program and Alutiiq Language Occupational Endorsement Certificate (OEC). She is an advanced student and teacher of the Alutiiq language and an organizer of the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Language Advisory Committee and Alutiiq Language club. 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. Counciller lives with her husband and two daughters in Kodiak.



### **Annette Evans Smith (Vice-Chair) - *Koyukon Athabascan, Alutiiq and Yup’ik***

Ms. Evans Smith, of Anchorage, is the former President and CEO of the Alaska Native Heritage Center. Under her leadership, the center 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 involved 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.



**Bernadette Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle - *Inupiaq***

Ms. Alvanna-Stimpfle, of Nome is a fluent, first-language speaker of Inupiaq and is the director of the Kawerak, Inc. Eskimo Heritage Program, and a doctoral student at Ka Haka 'Ula o Ke'elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. 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 taught Inupiaq at the Northwest Campus of the University of Alaska 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***

Dr. Charles, of Fairbanks, a fluent, first-language speaker of Yup'ik, is an associate professor of Yup'ik Eskimo at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). The Yup'ik language is one of two Alaska Native languages with bachelor' degree programs; the other being Inupiaq. He grew up in Emmonak speaking Norton Sound Kotlik and lower Yukon Yup'ik dialects. 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 his is maintaining his language through teaching it at all educational levels. Charles also heads the Yup'ik Program at UAF. Dr. Charles was the Inaugural Chair of ANLPAC from 2012 to 2013.



**X'unei Lance Twitchell, Ph.D. - *Tlingit, Haida, Yup'ik, Sami***

Dr. Twitchell carries the Tlingit names X'unei, Du Aaní Kawdinook, and the Haida name K'eijáakw. He lives in Juneau with his wife and bilingual children and is from the Tlingit, Haida, and Yup'ik native nations of Alaska and the Sami of Norway. He speaks and studies the Tlingit language and advocates for Indigenous language revitalization. Twitchell is a Northwest Coast Artist and instructor of formline design. He is an Associate Professor of Alaska Native Languages at the University of Alaska Southeast, earned his doctoral degree at Ka Haka 'Ula o Ke'elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, and is a published poet, filmmaker, and musician.



**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.

## Appendix C: Alaskan laws related to Alaska Native languages

### 1972 - 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

### 1995 - 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.

**2012 - AS 44.33.520. Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council**

The legislature finds that the preservation of Alaska Native languages is a critical component in the sustenance of cultural identity. The legislature further finds that Alaska Native languages are the foundation of cultures and are vital in maintaining traditional knowledge and understanding.

(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 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.

**2015 - 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.

## Appendix D: 2018 Recommendations and Updates

The items below include only those recommendations to the Governor or to the Legislature; recommendations to the general public are difficult to assess in a brief fashion.

**Recommendation:** Calling on the Governor to issue an administrative order, declaring a state of emergency for Alaska Native languages.

Update: On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, Gov. Walker signed A.O. 300 which did recognize the Council's call for to recognize that there is a linguistic emergency. This A.O. did promote increased attention to Alaska Native languages in education, Alaska Native place names in road signage, but did not address AS 14.30.420 directly.

**Recommendation:** Calling on the State of Alaska to hold listening sessions across Alaska, as with Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Update: No action to date.

**Recommendation:** Calling for a formal apology from the Alaskan Legislature, on behalf of past actions by the government in Alaska, to the generations of Alaska Natives who were involuntarily separated from their families and home communities and sent away to boarding schools.

Update: There has been no official action by the Legislature, however, Gov. Bill Walker did make a verbal apology on behalf of the State at the Alaska Federation of Natives on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

**Recommendation:** Calling on the Legislature to adopt legislation in support of language immersion schools and for training for Alaska Native language teachers in a framework that leads to teacher certification.

Update: No action to date.

**Recommendation:** Calling on the University of Alaska to offer instruction in Alaska Native languages, including the traditional language of each campus, in programs designed to lead to conversational fluency. The University should not cancel classes because of pre-determined minimum enrollment levels and should creatively partner with other Alaskan organizations to underwrite tuition costs of all Alaska Native language learners. Furthermore, the University should insure that it offers comprehensive instruction in the most effective teaching methods and curriculum design for Alaska Native language instruction.

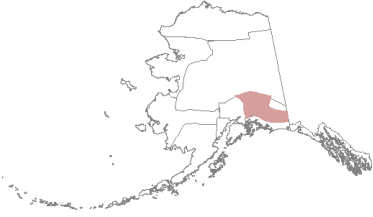
Update: No specific action to date.

**Recommendation:** Calling on the Legislature to restore funding for the Administrative Assistant position within the ANLPAC section of the Division of Community and Regional Affairs.

Update: No action to date.



## Appendix E: Alaska Native Language Programs



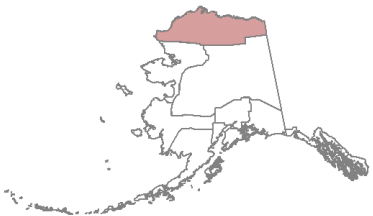
### Ahtna Country:

- 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



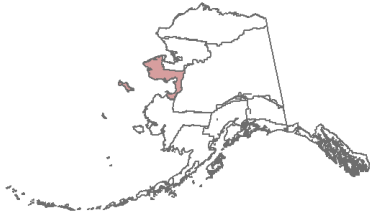
### Anchorage Area:

- Ahtna language lessons weekly, at Ahtna, Inc. in Anchorage
- AlaskaNativeLanguages.org
- Alaska Native Charter School
- Alaska Native Heritage Center: Urban Eskimo Revitalization Project: Teacher training and instruction in Central Yup'ik and Iñupiaq languages
- College Gate Elementary, Yup'ik Immersion, Anchorage School District
- Cook Inlet Native Headstart, Yup'ik immersion program
- Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Clare Swan Headstart, Yup'ik immersion
- Ilisaqativut, Inupiaq language intensives
- Iñupiaaraagvik Isagviñmi, Anchorage Inupiaq Language Circle
- Iñupiaq Phrase of the Day
- Unanam Tunuu (Aleut) Wednesday noons and Thursday evenings, Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association



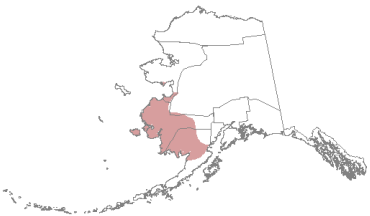
### Arctic Slope Region:

- Arctic language website assessment & teaching & learning policy
- Rosetta Stone, North Slope Iñupiaq, levels 1-3
- ICC-Alaska Education Steering Committee includes starting Iñupiaq / Yup'ik immersion
- Ilisaqativut, Iñupiaq language intensives



### Bering Straits Region:

- Aniguiin School, Elim, BSSD, Inupiaq and Yup'ik languages
- Brevig Mission School, BSSD, Inupiaq language
- Ilisaqativut, Inupiaq language intensives
- Koyuk-Malimiut School, Koyuk, BSSD, Inupiaq and Yup'ik languages
- Nome, Kawerak – Eskimo Heritage Program language project: Inupiaq, Central Yup'ik, and St. Lawrence Island Yupik languages
- Nome, Inupiaq language pre-school scheduled for fall, 2018; Kawerak and Nome Public Schools
- Nome, Norton Sound Education Working Group (Language & Culture)
- Nome, Strategic Planning Committee for Bering Straits languages
- Nome Elementary School, Nome Public Schools, Inupiaq language
- Shishmaref School, BSSD, Inupiaq language
- Shishmaref School, upcoming Inupiaq language nest, fall 2018, Kawerak
- Anthony A. Andrews School, Saint Michael, BSSD, Yup'ik language
- Tukurngailnguq School, Stebbins, BSSD, Yup'ik language
- James C. Isabell School, Teller, BSSD, Inupiaq language
- Unalakleet: BSSD Bilingual Bicultural Dept. Program



### Central Yup'ik / Yugtun Country:

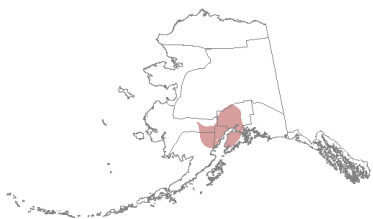
- Akiachak, Yupiit School District, Yup'ik language
- Aleknagik School, SWRSD, Yup'ik language
- Atmautluak, Joann A. Alexie Memorial School, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Bethel, Ayaprun Immersion Charter School, LKSD (1995 to present), Yup'ik language
- Chevak School, Kashunamiut School District, Cup'ik language
- Ekwok, William "Sonny" Nelson School, SWRSD, Yup'ik language
- Hooper Bay School, LYSD, K-3 Yup'ik Early Total Immersion program
- Igiugig Yup'ik language program, ANA Language Preservation grant

- Kasigluk, Akiuk Memorial School, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Kasigluk-Akula, Akula Elitnaurvik, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Koliganek School, SWRSD, Yup'ik language
- Kongiganak, Ayagina'ar Elitnaurvik, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Kwigillingok School, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Manokotak, SWRSD, Yup'ik language
- Mekoryak, Nuniwarmiut School, LKSD, Cup'ig language
- Napaskiak, ZJ Williams Memorial School, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- New Stuyahok Chief Ivan Blunka School, SWRSD, Yup'ik language
- Newtok, Newtok Ayaprun School, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Nightmute, Negtemiut Elitnaurviat, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Nunapitchuk, Anna Tobeluk Memorial School, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Oscarville, Qugcuun Memorial School, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- Quinhagak, Kuinerrarmiut Elitnaurviat, LKSD, Yup'ik language
- St. Mary's School, St. Mary's, Yup'ik language
- Togiak School, SWRSD, Yup'ik language
- Twin Hills School, SWRSD, Yup'ik language



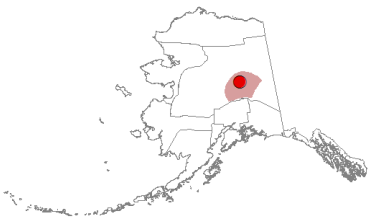
#### Chugachmiut Country:

- Chugachmiut Language Program: Master-Apprentice Teams, Sugt'stun language
- Port Graham School, KPBSD, Sugt'stun language
- Nanwalek Preschool, IRA Council, Sugt'stun language
- Nanwalek Elementary/High School, KPBSD, Sugt'stun language



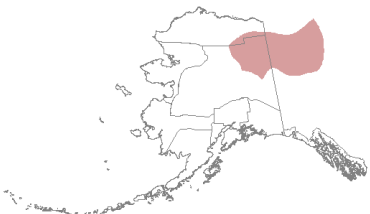
#### Dena'ina - Language Videos:

- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=moVZ94hNsK8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moVZ94hNsK8)
- UAA Dena'ina language classes: Anchorage and Kenai



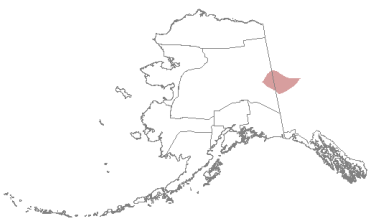
#### Fairbanks:

- Doyon Heritage Foundation: Nine Dene languages plus Iñupiaq
- UAF: ANLC; ANLP; ANLA
- B.A. in Yup'ik language
- B.A. in Iñupiaq language



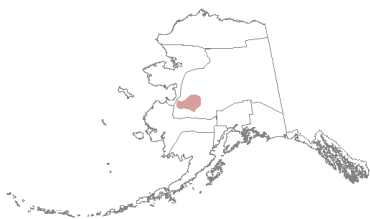
#### Gwich'in Country:

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



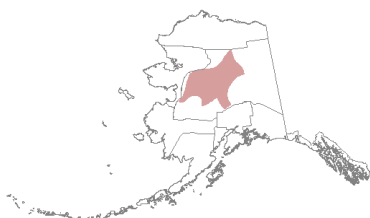
#### Hän Country:

- Eagle, Eagle Community School, AGSD, Hän language



#### Holikachuk Country:

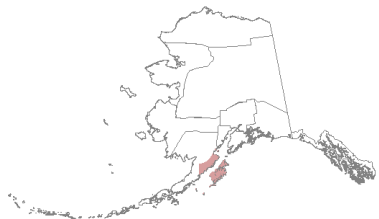
- Elizabeth Keating, from Holikachuk/Grayling, Athabascan on FB word exchange; wants to record and have teleconference capabilities. 10-20 people speak [some of the language? Dr. Beth Leonard knows of two elders who are fluent speakers of Holikachuk]



#### Koyukon / Denaakk'e Country:

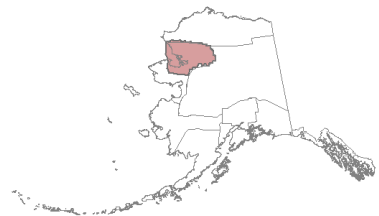
- Allakaket School, YKSD, Denaakk'e language
- Hughes, Johnny Oldman School, YKSD, Denaakk'e language
- Kaltag School, YKSD, Denaakk'e language
- Koyukuk School, Ella B. Vernetti School, YKSD, Denaakk'e language
- Manley School, YKSD, Denaakk'e language
- Minto School, YKSD, Denaakk'e language
- Nulato, Andrew K. Demoski School, YKSD, Denaakk'e language
- Rampart School, YKSD, Denaakk'e language





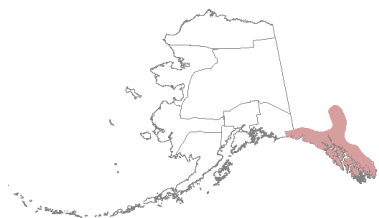
### Koniag Country:

- 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
- Kodiak High School, Alutiiq language class
- Port Lions School: Outreach through Native Village of Port Lions
- Native Village of Afognak: Language Materials & Curriculum
- Old Harbor: Preschool language lessons



### Northwest Arctic Native Association (NANA) region:

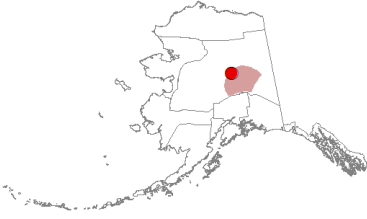
- Aqqaluk Trust –language project – Iñupiaq Rosetta Stone CD, Level One
- Chukchi Campus, UAF, Iñupiaq language classes
- Iliisaqativut, Iñupiaq language intensives
- Nikaitchuat Iliisaqviat Iñupiaq Immersion School, N.V.K.
- NWABSD Bilingual Bicultural Dept. Program
- Rosetta Stone, Kotzebue Sound Iñupiaq, level 1



### Southeastern Alaska:

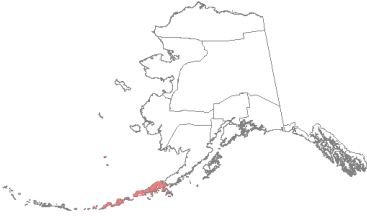
- Southeastern Alaska:
- UAS Language Program and Classes
- Tlingitlanguage.com
- Angoon, Angoon School, Chatham School District, Tlingit language
- Hoonah, Hoonah City School District, Tlingit language
- Hydaburg School, Hydaburg School District, Haida language
- Juneau Tlingit Language Learners
- Juneau – Tlingit classes, free: SHI on Wednesdays, GHI on Saturdays; Juneau Library private circles on Mondays.
- Juneau, Harborview Elementary, Tlingit Culture and Literacy
- Juneau, Dzantik'i Héeni Middle School, Tlingit language
- Juneau, Mendenhall River Community School, Tlingit language

- Juneau, Floyd Drydan Middle School, Tlingit language
- Juneau, Juneau-Douglas High School, Tlingit language
- Juneau, Yaakoosge Daakahidi High School, Tlingit language
- Juneau, Thunder Mountain High School, Tlingit language
- Juneau – upcoming Tlingit language immersion school
- Juneau dance groups: Wooch.een; Juneau Haida Dancers
- Juneau – Xaad Kil (Haida) language learners group
- Juneau – Sm’algyax Learners Group
- Juneau – UAS: Tlingit, Haida language classes; degrees or concentration areas.
- Tlingitlanguage.org
- Juneau – Goldbelt Tlingit language projects
- Juneau – Sealaska Heritage Institute language projects, especially for Tlingit
- Kake, Kake City School, Tlingit language
- Sitka, Baronoff Elementary School, Tlingit language program
- Sitka, Blatchley Middle School, Tlingit language program
- Sitka, Sitka High School, Tlingit language program
- Ketchikan: Haida and Tsimshian languages
- Haida Language Learners Facebook page with over 2,000 likes.
- Metlakatla: Gavin Hudson, Councilman, Metlakatla Indian Community; Chairman, Haayk Foundation
- Wrangell Public School, Tlingit language
- Yakutat, master-apprentice program, Tlingit language
- Yakutat School, Tlingit language
- Yakutat, language nest starting in January, 2018, Tlingit language



#### **Tanana Benhti Kokhut'ana Kenaga' Country:**

- Minto, Minto School, YKSD, Lower Tanana language class



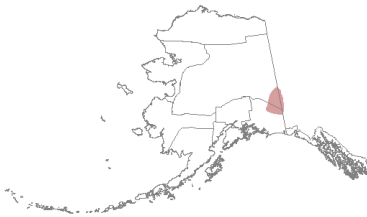
#### **Unangax Country:**

- St. George, Summer Unangam Tunuu workshop, WAYK [Where Are Your Keys]
- St. Paul School, Pribilof School District, Unangax Aleut language
- Unalaska City School, Unangax Aleut language



#### **Upper Kuskokwim / Dinak'i Country:**

- Upper Kuskokwim Language Revitalization Website  
<http://ukpreservation.com/>



#### **Upper Tanana / Nee'aanèegn' Country:**

- Northway, Walter Northway School, Upper Tanana Athabascan language

## Appendix F: Language Needs Assessments (LNA)

### For use by Alaska Native Communities

Adapted from *British Columbia Report on the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages, 2010*

Assessing the status of a language within a community is an important step in language revitalization planning and goal-setting. By completing LNAs, communities assess the status of their language by identifying resources, resource people, support and projects in their communities and by identifying gaps in these areas. Based on these gaps, communities can decide on their priorities and set goals accordingly. In addition, LNAs help build a strong case for grant proposals. This also helps how much we as a people ought to think seriously about our roles in order to maintain our heritage languages.

#### 1) Language Information

Language:	Language Dialect(s):
-----------	----------------------

#### 2) Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges to implementing language and cultural projects:
Opportunities for implementing language and cultural projects:

#### 3) Community Population

Date of your community's most recent population poll:	
Month:	Year:
Population living in your village or region:	Population outside of your region:
Total population:	Information source:
Additional population information:	



**4) Community language fluency\* information: Number of Speakers**

\* “Highly proficient” is defined as the ability to converse in the language on almost any topic that the speaker knows about. L1 = people who learned the language by age three; L2 = people who learned the language after that.

\* “Conversational” is defined as the ability to keep a conversation going in the language for at least five minutes although the speaker may soon reach limits of what they can talk about.

**If you have more up-to-date or more accurate information on numbers of speakers in your community, please email [anlpac@alaska.gov](mailto:anlpac@alaska.gov) or phone (907) 269-3646.**

	# of L1 highly-proficient speakers	# of L1 dormant speakers	# of L2 conversational speakers	# who are learning the language
Total #				
Age 0-4				
5-15				
15-19				
20-24				
25-44				
45-54				
55-64				
65-74				
75-84				
85+				

**5) How many certified language teachers are in the community? \_\_\_\_\_**

**6) Do you have a tribally-operated school? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No / If “yes,” complete the following:**

	School 1	School 2	School 3
Total #			
Ages 0-4			
5-14			
15-19			
20-24			
25-44			
45-54			
55-64			
65-74			
75-84			
85+			
Hours per week spent on languages			

**7) Immersion Class: Do you have immersion classes with more than 20 hours per week taught?**  
 \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No / If “yes,” complete the following:

<b>Immersion Program</b>	
Name:	
Location:	
Total # of participants:	
<b>Age Range:</b>	<b>Number of Students in age group:</b>
Students aged 0-4	
5-14	
15-19	
20-24	
25-44	
45-54	
55-64	
65-74	
75-84	
85 and over	
<b>Average hours per day</b>	
<b>Average days per week</b>	
<b>Average weeks per year</b>	

**8) Do you have a Head Start Program? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No / If “yes,” complete the following:**

<b>Head Start Program</b>
Name:
Location:
Total numbers of participants:
Number of hours per week spent on language instruction:
How is the program connected to the other languages programming in the community?

**9) Curriculum and Resource Assessment: Resources**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Language recordings/oral history archived (multimedia)		
Finalized writing system		
Curriculum materials developed		






**10) Curriculum and Resources Assessment: Multi-media**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Access to a cultural language center		
Access to the internet		
Access to Alaska Native Language Archive		

**11) Community-developed Language and Cultural Resources**

<b>Resource Title</b>	<b>Target Group (children, youth, adults, etc.)</b>	<b>How is the resource used (i.e., in school, Head Start, adult language classes, etc.)?</b>

## Appendix G: UNESCO Scale of Language Endangerment

<b>Degree of endangerment</b>	<b>Intergenerational Language Transmission</b>
safe	language is spoken by all generations; intergenerational transmission is uninterrupted
 vulnerable	most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., home)
 definitely endangered	children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home
 severely endangered	language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves
 critically endangered	the youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently
 extinct	there are no speakers left

*ALTERNATIVE SCALE: From UNESCO Atlas of Languages in Danger*

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/endangered-languages/atlas-of-languages-in-danger/>

## Appendix H: Extended Quotes

From page 2:

“Waten cali man’a Cugtun qaneryararput pirpaunruluni, wangkuta cuuciryararput egelraqurallra. Waten qaneryaraunata wangkuta im’ Cup’igtun wangkuta igtelriatun ayuqeciqukut. Cali wangkuta maani maa-i-rpak ayagyuat, ayagyuat irniateng Kass’atun civukluki qaneryaurcilluki. Uagg’uq-qaa wanigga elitnauquneng puqiisqumaluki. Taugaam Cup’igtun qanellri, Cup’igtun qanellrin, irniarit tamaa-I tamakut (?angliyuggaameng) maa-I ayagyugaurrluteng irniangequluteng, waten-llu tua-i maa-I Cugtun taringyuirulluteng.” Nuyarralek, Cev’armiu

*<And our Cup’ik language is most important, to continue living our way of life. If we don’t have the Cup’ik language, it will be as though we have fallen. Also, these days, young people, the young people have been teaching their children to speak in English first. It’s because they say they want them to be smart [knowledgeable] when they attend school. But those who had been speaking Cup’ik, now that their children have grown and become young adults and they are now having children, these days they no longer understand Cup’ik.>* Richard Slats, Cup’ik, from Chevak

From page 8:

“I am a speaker of my language and one of the younger birth speakers. Alaska Native languages are very important to me because it is the indigenous people right to have access to their language. Learning about indigenous history and learning who we are helps us to be connected to the lands and our ancestors who have lived and roamed these lands from time immemorial. Even for visitors to see and hear the indigenous languages and cultures would make their visit to the northwestern section of The United States. Alaskan Native Language’s is not just important to me as a speaker but even to the rest of the world.” Marsha Guneiwti Hotch, Tlingit Language and Culture Bearer

From page 8

“[I]n Southeast, there’s a Native proverb that... translates into...: ‘If you do not know the names, your way of life will drift away forever.’ And there was a Tlingit woman that once told me—a very knowledgeable woman—said: ‘The land yearns to hear the Tlingit language spoken.’

“And I think that is applicable to all our indigenous languages that we all come from, that knowing the language of the land is very, very important. And... my children go to a program, the Tlingit Culture, Language, and Literacy Program here in Juneau. And it always seems to be in high demand, but there’s not a lot of spots. So, there’s a lot more demand than there are places and spots for children to go. And some of these—my children come home and, you know, they have opportunities that I didn’t have as a child learning language and culture within the school system.

“And they come home and they teach me a lot and... pass things on to me as well. And, you know, I think that there is a lot of value in teaching children.... I know there’s a lot of studies on brain development from zero to six years of age. And this particular program, it starts in kindergarten right after you’re six years old roughly.

“So, there’s a segment that is missed. And there’s not a lot of funding that I can see around for some of these pop-up immersions, you know, preschools and things like that that I’ve seen that have tried to get off the ground a little bit.” Mario Fullmer, Tlingit, Juneau



From 8

“And that extends into other dialects or who represents that area, that we could coincide and learn how to say thank you, you know, through Tlingit..., Haida..., or Tsimshian. And just being able to show relevancy of our progress of working not just within the English language but together as linguists.

“And since we're facing the same battle, maybe it can help our advancements towards a more positive of how we coincide as community members throughout the state of Alaska and how we involve ourselves indigenously.

“I hope that gives words of encouragement and support. I really am thankful to have the staff backing me to be able to address this. This is an emotional subject. So I hope however that starts and continues our conversations, we all keep on track and focus on what is needed to keep our languages immersed within the society and public, and let alone within our households.” Shane Brown, Tlingit, Yakutat and Juneau

From page 12:

“Speaking from Nanwalek on behalf of Nanwalek. I think for our region, where I have the most concentration of fluent speakers, that group [of highly proficient speakers] is getting smaller. And I think we're looking at... a lot more documentation. And ... as technology is advancing, we need a repository that is accessible to us as well as others who want to learn our language or compare it. Our region is very divided geographically by the water. There's Prince William Sound, Lower Kenai Peninsula, Kodiak Island, and Alaska Peninsula. And a lot of the work is coming from the Chugach group in Anchorage, trying to represent Chugach dialect -- between two dialects, and then Kodiak Island. But... there's so much to be done, and some of that work is for learners. And... we're not finding ways to work with our fluent speakers and kind of giving them a more stronger voice and finding more authentic language versus learner language documentation. I also feel that Alaska Peninsula is not heard. And that's kind of where we're at....

“I would like to also add that the few speakers that are scattered throughout the region, if there was a way for them to meet face to face and do comparative work so that their descendants will know that we're all interrelated linguistically and that we have a lot to bring together even though we're from different dialects....

“But we'd like to see more—possibly our own radio station where we have our boive broadcasted for people who want to tune and and... communicate across the airwaves... throughout the week. I don't know what other regions... might have... already but in this area where it's not in place..., it could be utilized for fluent speakers.” Ggwitka Sperry Ash, Sugpiaq, Nanwalek

From page 13:

“I guess my suggestion to the council would be maybe doing some research about how long it takes a person to learn a language, and then do a comparison of how many hours language teachers are in the school. And then we won't be in the dark of what the school needs to allocate for the language teachers. And then so we have adequate time to teach the language at a high level for the students.... So a lot of the language programs -- a lot of the teachers are only in maybe once a week for 45 minutes. And this is not an adequate amount of time to learn anything. By the time the teacher comes back the next week, they have to reteach absolutely everything. So we're going one step forward, two steps back, and it's really difficult. So maybe this would be a way for us to find a place in the school systems permanently by the use of this research for advocating our languages and cultures in the school system.” Joseph Marks, Tlingit, Juneau

From page 15

“A lot of the teachers -- the youngest teacher has been going on 30 years teaching the language. But it would be wonderful to have young people learning and teaching as they learn. I think that's one of the best ways to learn the language is to teach it. There's questions that come up when you're teaching that, 'Oh, I never thought about that.' And you'll have to really learn the subject in order to teach it.

“So I think the more we can see of that, that would be such a huge support that can make a difference in our languages, and also just in our young people's lives, that they have that connection. It makes a difference in their lives in the pursuit of education or employment or their careers to have those positive connections to their culture and their family and their history, their place. And that would be my wish is to see our education system support our languages.” Allan Hayton, Gwich'in, Fort Yukon

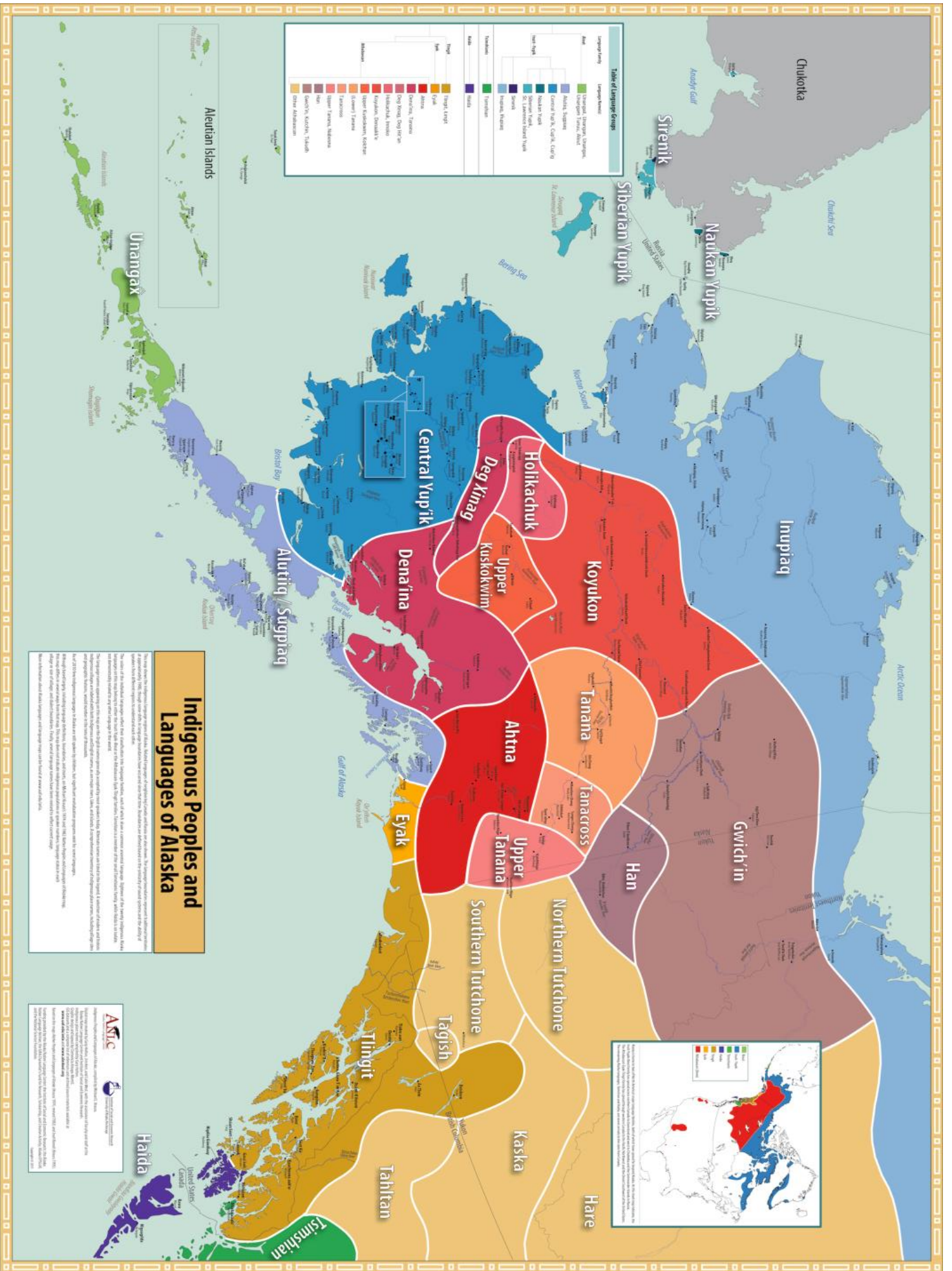
From page 17:

“I would like to see whether at Kawerak, our nonprofit, or Sitnasuak Native Corporation, the village corporation, or even Nome Eskimo Community, I would like to approach them, whether it's the president or the vice president of these entities, to give a room that is open to the community for community members to learn to speak Inupiaq. And there's a multitude of ways that this could be done, from the old fashioned you put that little reader magnetic strip and it has the language coming out. And there's technology..., podcasts that... people could use headphones. So I would like to see that happen within our community. We don't have like a language resource room for people to come in at their convenience to go and learn and listen. Because we all know we're all very busy in our towns and seasons come and go and we're hunting, fishing, gathering. But just an open room for people to maybe put on headsets, and at their time they could come and listen to Inupiaq language or Siberian Yupik language or Central Yup'ik language, whatever language it is they want to learn. I think that would be a great way to involve people in our community, and very reflective of our towns and our regions because they're all very different. I liked the idea of the person who mentioned local radio as a way to put Inupiaq language, or whatever indigenous language you're speaking, on the local radio. So those are just some of the ideas I had. I'd like to see grassroots ideas that really foster what people are passionate about, specifically Inupiaq language. And because I think what we all know in each of our communities, each of our regions, the fluent speakers are passing a lot quicker than we are learning and preserving our languages. So, we're at the crossroads where we need to promote grassroots efforts, which require very little budget; you just have a place and you do it.” Josie Bourdon, Inupiaq, Nome

From page 21:

“I've been approached by one of the board of directors from the rural school districts about... assisting them with their language programs. I feel like that there's a need for some kind of direction for the school districts to go to. I know some school districts ... have their language programs in place, like [Lower Kuskokwim School District]. There's others that are interested in wanting to continue -- or wanting to begin to start their language preservation efforts in their schools. And I think even ... something like we used to have a bilingual conference years ago. But I know money is an issue. But seems like that would be something that the school districts -- especially the ones that are really interested in getting their language programs going..., get their heads together with ... people that are professionals in language, like the Alaska Native Language Center people or ... even other school districts that can be there to ... help or even network with other school districts that are just starting.

“I was thinking about how there's a group that meets every year called Alaskans for Language Acquisition. And I spoke as a keynote speaker one time for them when I presented on my paper that I did for my master's degree. And I really like how they -- the language teachers from ... the cities, ... from the world languages, like Spanish teachers, German teachers, you know how they get together and share their ideas. And my big vision is for some kind of big meeting like that, and just really focus on Alaska Native languages would seem to -- I think that would really motivate more others -- more school districts to work in that direction.” Abbie Augustine, Central Yup'ik, Bethel and Anchorage



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/amlc/collections/search/resultDetail.xml?id=6961K2010>