

Annual Report to Tribes & Community

May 2023



Students in the Eneput Club at Hanshaw Middle School created chin'an (gratitude) blankets to recognize the Dena'ina homeland on which all our schools are built, and all our students learn.

Authors of this report:

Helena Batman, Director of Indigenous & Migrant Education

Paul McDonogh, Supervisor of Indigenous Education

Email us: IndigenousEd@asdk12.org

Call us: (907) 742-4445

Contents

Anchorage School District’s Goals through 2026:..... 4

The Indigenous Education Program Overview & Mission: 4

Introduction to this report..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

At a Glance: the Indigenous Education Department..... 4

The Native Advisory Committee..... 5

 Join us as a Native Advisory Committee member!..... 5

 Current accomplishments of the Native Advisory Committee:..... 5

The Title VI Indian Education Program 6

 Objectives of the Title VI program: 6

 Current accomplishments..... 6

Current data case..... 8

ASD Equity Dashboard Results..... 9

Our Other Indigenous Education Programs 9

 Alaska Strong 9

 Gui Kima 9

Our partnerships 10

 Tribal Relationships 10

 Community partnerships..... 10

 Summary of March 2023 tribal consultation 10

Appendix A: Tribal Consultation Feedback and Notes 11

 Questions from our Tribal Partners 12

Appendix B: Indigenous Education Public Forum 15

Introduction to this report

Indigenous students across the country are facing an education crisis, and in the Anchorage School District we have been administering programs that will help close the gaps in Indigenous student achievement. This crisis is manifesting in urban cities throughout the United States due to cultural invisibility, migratory circumstances, and lack of access to mainstream school resources.¹

This report summarizes the Indigenous Education programs at the Anchorage School District and is intended to further partnerships and dialogues about how to serve Indigenous students. We have a unique and critical challenge of providing the educational needs for thousands of Urban Indigenous students, and this report will discuss the proposals and dialogues that have been utilized in developing the next year's program outcomes.

The first sections discuss the programs that are offered, including their funding and objectives. The sections also discuss some key educational data that shows the slipping achievement of both Indigenous students and all students. These sections provide the objectives and proposed outcomes that they should meet.

The latter sections summarize the consultation efforts with Anchorage's nearby tribes and with the community in Anchorage. We know that your feedback is critical to discussing what, why, and how the program should develop its focus for serving Indigenous students. We have shown the full extent of the feedback and dialogues in this report, and we hope this will continue as a rich discussion about how we as a community can stop the Native Education crisis.

¹ See this 2017 report on the invisibility crisis by the National Urban Indigenous Family Coalition by Dr. Joe Hobot: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b985402e17ba31b72a52f90/t/5ba95aaab208fc1d5ae3d3ca/1537825463899/nuifc-resurgence-report-nov2017.pdf>

Anchorage School District's Goals through 2026:

Beginning September 2020, the percentage of third grade students proficient in reading on the state summative test will increase from 40% to 80% by May 2026.

Beginning September 2020, the percentage of students in grades 3-9 proficient in mathematics on the state summative assessment will increase from 40% to 55% by May 2026.

Beginning with the Freshman Class in September 2020, the percentage of high school students graduating Life Ready as well as College and/or Career Ready will increase from a baseline of TBA% in Spring 2022 to 90% in Spring 2026.

The Indigenous Education Program Overview & Mission:

The Indigenous Education Program provides the backbone of support for Indigenous students and/or descendants of tribal members. We are vigilant to the issues that affect Indigenous students, including migration into Anchorage from villages, and the loss of Indigenous culture and language.

Our primary mission is to create a support structure that inspires schools as culturally responsive places for learning and building community. Our program uses federal Department of Education funds, ASD general funds, and partnerships to build this community support. Our teams provide cultural enrichment, academic engagement, and professional development for the Anchorage School District.

At a Glance: the Indigenous Education Department

<p>U.S. Department of Education Office of Indian Education Formula Grant "Title VI"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •6642 students enrolled in Spring 2022 •\$2,653,308 •27 FTE staffing 	<p>Anchorage School District Native Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Supplemental matching funds to the Title VI program •\$701,295 •7 FTE staffing
<p>ED Native Youth Community Programs "Gui Kima"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •200 high school students •\$336,523 •2 FTE staffing 	<p>Association of Alaska School Boards "Alaska Strong"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •100 co-parent couples •\$331,298 •3 FTE staffing

The Native Advisory Committee

Our programs are guided by the oversight of the Native Advisory Committee, which consists of volunteer members who are parents, teachers, and students. We meet monthly to discuss the spiritual, mental, and educational needs of Indigenous families at ASD. Our goal is to improve the quality of life for Native students at ASD that provides them with culturally enriched experiences in our community.






Students in the Indigenous Education Program at William Tyson Elementary created a button blanket display in the hallway.

Join us as a Native Advisory Committee member!

We are always looking for parents and teachers of Native students, who can serve two-year terms. We also recruit Native students in grades 6 through 12, who can serve one-year terms. Additionally, advisory nonvoting seats are guaranteed to all tribes within the Anchorage area. For more information, contact IndigenousEd@asdk12.org.

Current accomplishments of the Native Advisory Committee:

		
Native languages resolution	Policy advisory	Curriculum development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ASD should commit to eliminating the erasure of Native languages• More program support and intentional planning is needed to develop language resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oversight of the multi-year development of ASD regalia policy• Guidance of a land acknowledgement policy• Consultancy with ASD Administrative Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continued oversight and guidance on developing a new Alaska Studies curriculum• Provided oversight of K-3 English Language Arts and secondary math curriculum

The Title VI Indian Education Program

The “Title VI” program under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act guarantees education funding for tribal students and tribally affiliated students. At ASD in 2022-23, our program had 6642 students enrolled to receive services. We have two main programs to support these students:

- A team of 29 student support specialists spread out across Anchorage’s schools. These staff build communities in their schools and ensure that Native students are seen, heard, and that their culture is valued by the school activities. They also support the school academic teams with more understanding about Native issues.
- We host many district events for Native families, including our Summer Enrichment Program which serves 400 students in grades K-8. This is an 8-day summer intensive with grade-level activities designed for cultural identity and Native language instruction.

Objectives of the Title VI program:

Increase knowledge of cultural identity and awareness

- Promote a school climate that is inclusive of and celebrates Indigenous identity

Increased school attendance rate & increased graduation rate

- Improve understanding barriers for attendance and how to support them

Increase support for at-risk students

- Reduce the number of students with chronic absences, failing grades, and dropouts
- Coordinate district-wide efforts in Tier 2 and Tier 3 MTSS interventions using cultural supports as well

Improve Native American Language instruction

- Support ASD's Yup'ik Immersion program with family engagement
- Promote Indigenous language learning at Title VI facilitated events



A student at the Alaska Native Cultural Charter makes Sugpiaq style fish pie during a family engagement workshop as his proud mother takes a screenshot for the family photo album.

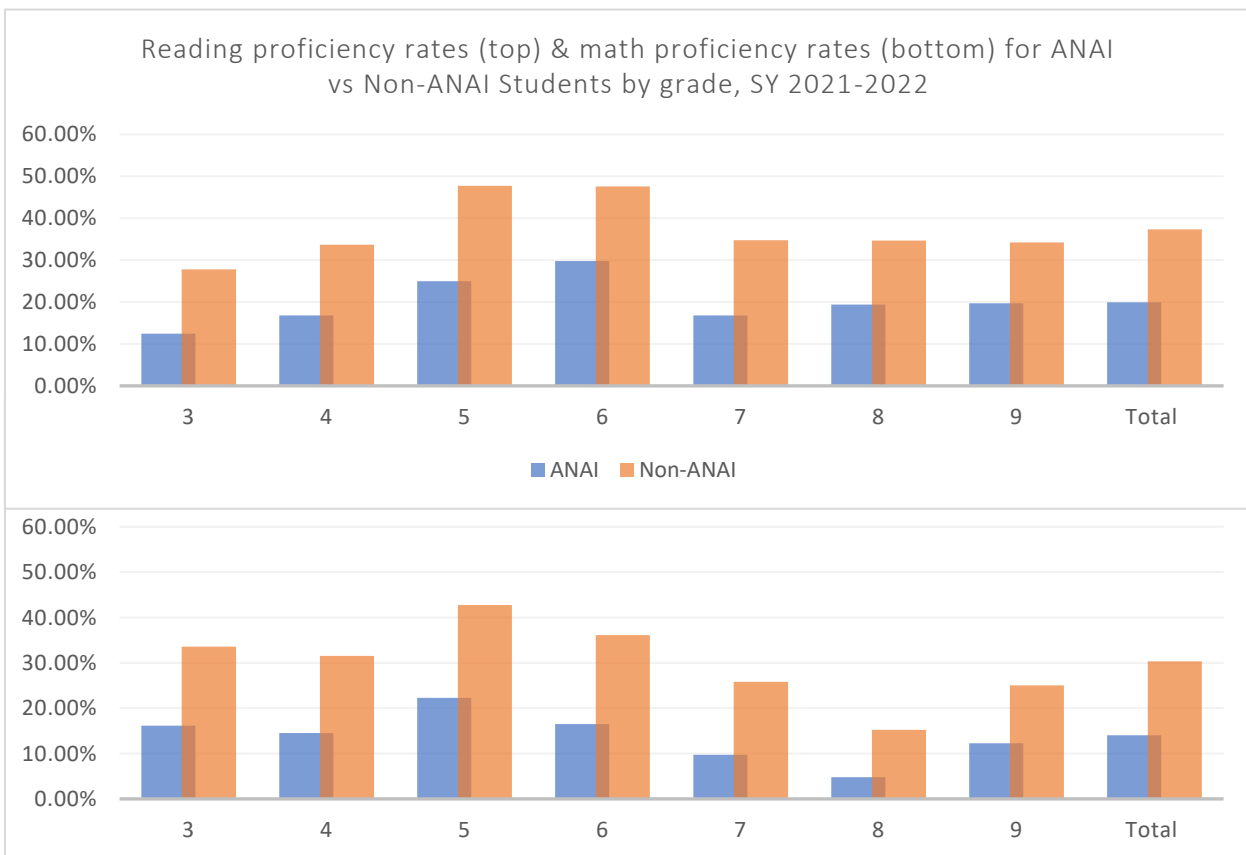
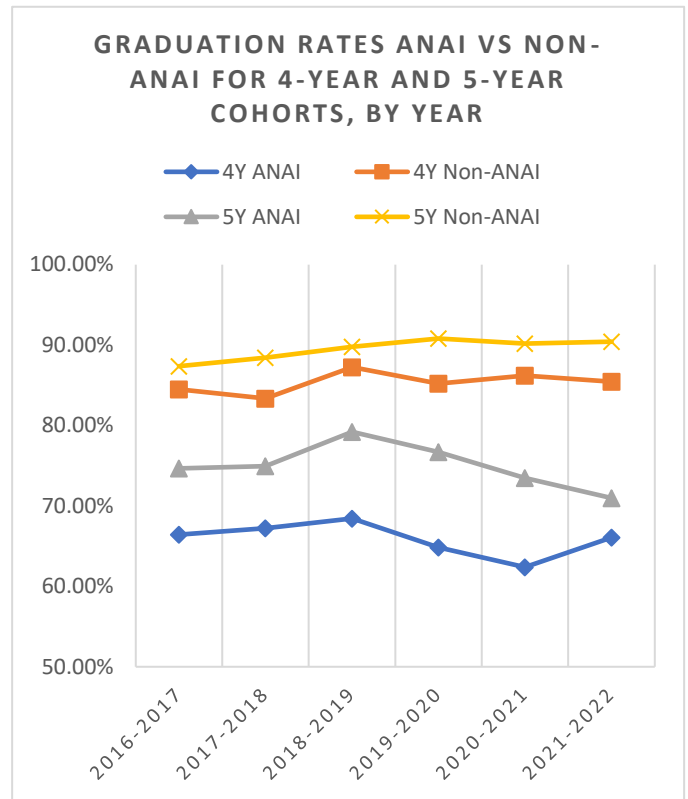
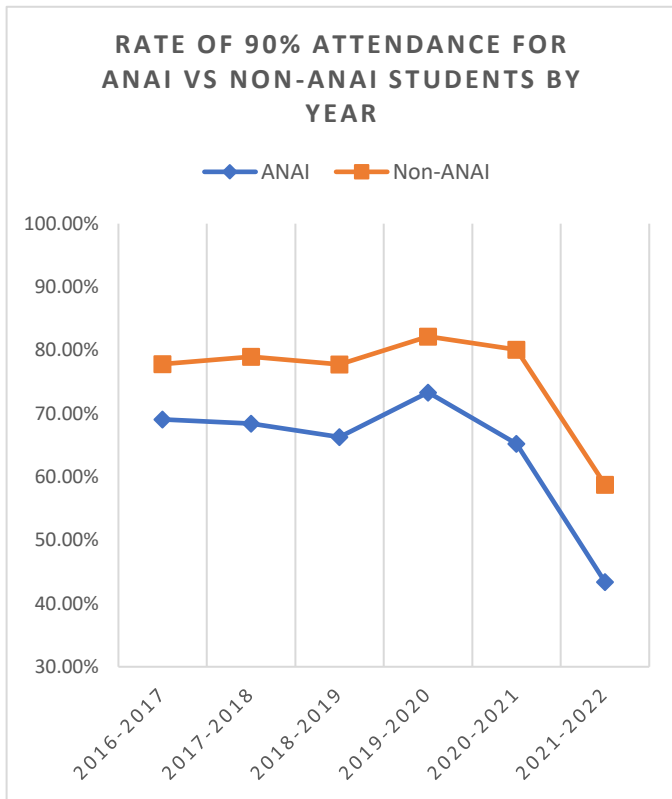
Current accomplishments

- Supporting school-based Native student outcomes in attendance, culture identity, and providing school resources for at-risk students
- Providing districtwide advisory for equity issues for Native American students
- Designing a professional development course for teachers about Alaska Native pedagogy
- Supporting the Native Youth Olympics, Alaska Native Book Fair, APU Indigenous Peoples' Day, and other community-sponsored Indigenous events
- Facilitating districtwide events like Indigenous Fashion Show, Native American Heritage Month and other Indigenous cultural dates of significance, Summer Enrichment Program, Indigenous author book drive
- Hosting school-based events like literacy nights, culture nights, potlucks, and dance ceremonies
- Collaborating with the College Gate Yup'ik Immersion program for developing an Indigenous Revitalization Initiative
- Sponsoring more than 20 ASD staff to attend national NIEA, NYCP, OIE, NASAI conferences



(left) Tsimshian and Pawnee storyteller engages with students at Chugiak High School. (right) Two students in the Indigenous Education Program at Romig pose during the Indigenous Fashion Show for quick selfie before going to showcase their regalia.

Current data case



ASD Equity Dashboard Results

The ASD Equity Dashboard, a collaboration with Hanover Research², allows the public to see the state of our equity work through quantitative data, trends, and recommendations. It highlights our academic progress, discipline evolution, and program opportunities including Advanced Placement courses, Gifted Education access, and Special Education services. Please see the Equity Dashboard at <https://www.asdk12.org/Page/16808>.

Below summarizes the highlighted areas that are important for Indigenous student equity:

Key findings:

- Many groups of students were “persistently underrepresented” and there was a large “opportunity gap” between 2015-2022, especially in many cases Alaska Native students

Higher rates of discipline incidents

- 19 percent of Native students in incidents (2015-2020)

Chronic absenteeism

- Native students experienced “by far the greatest increase”

Disproportionate representation of race with teacher staff

- Native students were 23 times less likely to learn from a Native teacher

Our Other Indigenous Education Programs

Alaska Strong

The Alaska Strong program is facilitated through a partnership with the Association of Alaska School Boards to provide parent engagement support for Indigenous families at ASD. Hosted at Chugiak High School for the Eagle River/Chugiak area and at the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School, this program brings family engagement sessions for 100 families throughout the year. Families work in cohorts to complete the Stronger Together framework for parenting and family engagement.

Gui Kima

The Gui Kima project is funded by the U.S. Department of Education under the Native Youth Community Programs funding. The students work through a Master Artist workshop series in school clubs to learn about Indigenous Identity. The partnership is developing with the Cook Inlet Tribal Council Youth Empowerment Services, the Alaska Pacific University, and the Alaska Humanities Forum Thrive program. Students will have the opportunity to work in summer workshops about

²Hanover Research is a national firm works with school districts across the country to provide data analysis, surveys, qualitative research, program evaluation and benchmarking & best practices aimed at increasing student outcomes.

Indigenous identity, and the outcomes for the grant aim to improve academic outcomes and career preparation for future Indigenous educators.

Our partnerships

Tribal Relationships

- Cook Inlet Tribal Council: We share a comprehensive Memorandum of Agreement with almost 20 specific agreements for school-based tribal programs. These include the Native Youth Olympics, Clare Swan, school-within-a-school models, APEX and credit recovery, NYCP grant partnerships, fab lab and super fab lab, school yard, and professional development.
- Eklutna: We are very grateful for the Eklutna tribe's consultation to develop a new ASD land acknowledgement this year. This land acknowledgement was adopted by the ASD school board in April 2023 and will be used at public convenings of events, concerts, sports, and graduation ceremonies.
- Knik: We have had the delightful chance to tour the new Knik Cultural Charter School and the feedback throughout the year, and we look forward to more collaboration in the coming years! We also wish the new Charter school a wonderful future serving the students in the central Mat-Su area!
- Chickaloon & Tyonek: We are grateful for the comments and involvement during tribal consultation this year.

Community partnerships

- Association of Alaska School Boards
- Alaska Humanities Forum (Thrive Program)
- Alaska Pacific University

Summary of March 2023 tribal consultation

ASD met with 7 representatives from tribal groups in March 2023 to discuss comprehensive districtwide programming that supports Native students. Representatives from tribes shared feedback in the following areas:

- Promoting professional development, especially principal development, on critical issues for Native families
- Teaching more accurate and more deliberately about Alaska Native history
- Improving access to and intentional development of Alaska Native language curriculum
- Improved partnership and accountability from tribal groups, especially in improving access to tribal-sponsored activities such as Native Youth Olympics, the Fab Lab, APEX credit recovery

Appendix A: Tribal Consultation Feedback and Notes

Recommendations from our Tribal Partners:

Recommendation from tribes: ASD should improve visibility for Native issues.

Our tribal partners provided several suggestions to improve visibility, which included appropriate class size, access to Alaska Native academic staff, support for tribally sponsored events like Native Youth Olympics, and tribally sponsored school-within-a-school models.

ASD's response:

The Teaching & Learning Department at ASD continually works to make curriculum culturally responsive. For example, we include Alaska Native culture and art in our Fine Arts program, we incorporate stories in our ELA program, and we work to utilize culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy.

Our Gui Kima project has a primary objective for teacher development. We expect to see this program succeed as it develops more opportunities to inspire a future generation of Indigenous educators.

Lastly, the district's new Senior Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will be developing hiring initiatives for underrepresented populations, including Alaska Native educators in schools. We will keep the Native Advisory Committee and tribal groups informed to ensure



This is a chart from the Teaching & Learning department that promotes the process of a culturally responsive pedagogy.



that this new direction for hiring underrepresented populations will reflect Indigenous values from our community.

Recommendation: ASD should involve tribal feedback given to DEED to improve culturally responsive schools.

CITC was actively involved in developing a Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEED) report that discusses statewide issues for Alaska Native children. ASD should proactively be ready to engage in the June 2023 report from DEED to incorporate all relevant recommendations in their leadership, teacher, and staff approach to better serve tribal students.

ASD's Response:

We look forward to reading the report!

Recommendation: ASD should become familiar with CITC developed curriculum such as the programming at Clare Swan Early Learning Center

CITC's Clare Swan Early Learning Center teaches students with pre-school development skills, and it also has a Yup'ik Immersion program from birth until kindergarten. CITC has developed many culturally relevant resources for preschool that should be considered for use by ASD's preschool and language immersion programs.

ASD's response:

We have a close partnership between the ASD World Languages program, the Indigenous Education program, and CITC's Clare Swan Early Learning Center to coordinate resources on the elementary Yup'ik Immersion program at College Gate Elementary school. We hope to encourage more community engagement and opportunities for collaboration!

Recommendation: ASD should improve support for students needing accommodations

Our tribal partners emphasized the need for a qualified expert to assess trauma in IEP and 504 developments. This qualification will ensure that appropriate supports are assigned to the students, especially given the predominant cultural needs and impact of intergenerational trauma on Indigenous families.

ASD's response:

We have federal guidelines that we follow through the assessment process in areas agreed upon by the team. Assessments are completed by certified employees of the areas being assessed.

Questions from our Tribal Partners

Question: How is ASD considering engaging all students in deliberately teaching Alaska Native history, art, and culture in all areas of instruction (not just in specific courses)?

While we do teach curriculum on Alaska Native People in 3rd grade and Alaska's History in 9th grade, we know there is room to improve in expanding the education to all grades.

Please let us know: What do you think we should do to improve teaching these subjects in all areas?



Indigenous student art was featured at the Anchorage Museum this spring!

Teaching & Learning: The Teaching & Learning Department uses a curriculum adoption process that includes the Native Advisory Committee and the Indigenous Education leadership in deciding what new curriculum to adopt. We were involved in consulting with the K-3 English Language Arts, secondary math, and 9th grade Alaska Studies adoptions. This consultation allows us to review new materials and to provide recommendations to the teacher leadership adoption committee before they make their decisions.

Question: Could ASD please provide an update on how it has utilized input from tribal consultation to influence its program and policy decisions?

Developing capacity: With a new leadership landscape at ASD, we know there are many more steps needed to ensure a meaningful partnership that promotes our Native students. We hope to hear more feedback and insight about how our programs are affecting tribal students in this next generation of culturally responsive ASD leadership.

Promoting NYO: We received feedback early spring 2023 that the NYO athletes needed a higher priority in secondary ASD schools. We honor this feedback and plan to improve NYO with these concerns in mind. We will stay in touch with CITC to make sure our new plan to build out NYO next year aligns with their coordination for our athletes!

Tribes-first outreach: When the Anchorage School Board developed an initial draft of a Land Acknowledgement Development resolution in October 2022, CITC urged the Board to first invite collaboration with the Eklutna tribe. This was a very important reminder to utilize tribal voice whenever possible, especially when speaking about tribal land. On April 18, 2023, a Land Acknowledgement that was written in collaboration with Eklutna was passed by the Board. We continue to use this model as an example of how to provide access for our tribes to leadership decisions.

Question: Can ASD offer suggestions for streamlining its referral process to tribal opportunities and other organizations?

Regular communication: The authors of this report (Helena & Paul) hold regular meetings with the CITC Youth Empowerment Services director and Chief Operating Officer. We know that program streamlining requires high-priority, regular communication to continue, and we appreciate the time that CITC has provided in coordinating services with us.

Data-sharing agreement: We are also launching a streamlined data-sharing platform between ASD and CITC for all tribally enrolled families who consent to their data being shared. This will help CITC develop programs that are tied to ASD student data and the community needs.

Join our advisory: One way to engage and streamline referral is for tribal partners to join our advisory committee. You can stay informed about what is going on at ASD, but more importantly, we need regular communication between our planning groups to ensure that all Native students have access to the services that we are organizing.

Question: Could ASD address how it ensures Native students are appropriately screened for special education in a manner that is not over-representing and ensures that IEPs are honored?

We have federal guidelines that we follow under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). There are procedural safeguards that outline the process and protections for families of students suspected of having a disability. The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development resource page that includes the Parent Rights for Special Education (Procedural Safeguards) is <https://education.alaska.gov/sped>. Please note that all students assessed for special education services are conducted individually by a certified practitioner. There is not a separate process for any race, ethnicity, etc.

Question: Could ASD address how it ensures Native students are not overrepresented in suspensions and disciplinary actions?

ASD is piloting a new system called Positive Behavior Intervention Systems, a research-based methodology on school discipline that is intended to support students with equitable approaches to behavior and disciplinary actions. The PBIS implementation plan is a multi-year transition, and next year the system will be piloted by selected elementary, middle, and high schools.

Question: Could ASD describe whether or how it refers ASD students to community organizations for trauma screening?

This is currently not a part of the district's providing of trauma or counseling services. Although we do have many school partnerships that integrate mental health services, these are all family-choice programs, and ASD does not share confidential information beyond the scope within these individual partnerships.

Question: Could ASD discuss how it ensures Native students engage in and receive the benefits of all federal programs available to them?

Screening for federal ESSA services like Title I, Title VI, Migrant Education, English Language Learner, and Gifted (with many others) is overseen by those specific program directors. Our students are identified through many means based on the individual criteria of these programs, such as the registration process, assessment services, and teacher/staff referrals. Students are not currently screened for any external federal benefits, although the Indigenous Education leadership provides regular sharing to and outreach on behalf of the Johnson O'Malley program that is supervised by CITC.

Appendix B: Indigenous Education Public Forum

On April 6, 2023, the Indigenous Education met with an open forum of parents and community members. We discussed our goals and held an open Q&A which consisted of the following questions:

Q: What are we doing to eliminate bias for students who transfer to ASD from the village?

We teach the 29 student support specialists in our programs about transitions – not only between schools, but between the village and Anchorage and how to support their new life in the big city. One goal in the future is to provide professional development to new teachers in ASD about the differences between village schools and ASD’s big schools.

Q: What are some of the Indigenous Identity projects that you do in the program?

The students in Gui Kima learn from Master Artists in a program that is coordinated with multiple layers of community involvement. For another example, we invited a Tsimshian and Choctaw storyteller to share his Indigenous culture with 10 schools during Native American Heritage Month. We know this was a great engagement because we heard from Native and non-Native students who told us that it was the best inspirational speaking engagement they had ever attended!

Q: Where is ASD with Native Regalia at graduation?

See www.asdk12.org/regalia. We are confident that this update to the policy is the one that will last for our grandchildren to celebrate their Indigenous heritage, generations from now.

ASD is openly inviting all families to wear any regalia that is cultural and ceremonial. School administrators are trained in the new plan, and ASD leadership will be at each ceremony to help the principals express the intention behind this policy – to celebrate cultural identity!

Q: How can I find all the resources and opportunities that are available to my students?

We have been developing many of these, but it is a notable challenge because Anchorage’s Native community is so vast. Our webpage www.asdk12.org/TitleVI has a community calendar with events that we see popping up in our feed or events that our community partners involve us in. We also keep newsletters to our school staff, who send newsletters to their communities. You can also always call us to see what’s coming up. (Also, *do* call us to let us know what’s going on! We’d love to feature your event.)

Q: Will there be any Indigenous languages offered?

We do have the Yup’ik Immersion program at ASD, which we support with family engagement. We also have a Dena’ina enrichment speaker who will teach 400 students in the Summer Enrichment Program about the foundations of her language.

Help us! We are always looking for someone who can teach our students about Alaska Native or any Native American language. If you know a speaker or want to be involved, let us know.

Q: Who receives Indigenous cultural services at schools?

We teach about Indigenous culture to different groups. Some activities are designed for a Native student to learn more about their own cultural heritage, but other activities are designed where Native culture should be shared with everyone. We want the Indigenous

students to feel more connected to their elders, and we want the entire school to embrace Indigenous cultures as well.

Q: How many teachers in ASD are Native?

Not enough! The recent equity dashboard that was released on asdk12.org/Page/16808 shows that an Alaska Native student at ASD was 23 times less likely to have a teacher who came from their culture. We delivered a report to Senator Lisa Murkowski and Representative Mary Peltola in February 2023 with one of the top two priorities being the need for continued investment in Native teacher development. The problem is high on our radar, and one primary objective of our new projects (like Gui Kima) will be to build this further.

Q: How does ASD teach about historical trauma to our children?

We don't actively teach about historical trauma to our students, but it's on our radar. We understand how necessary it is for students to learn about intergenerational factors, and the first step is to have our teachers understand more about Alaska's history of trauma for Native people. We are releasing a new ASD Summer Academy course for teachers that brings the Alaska Blanket Exercise, a training developed by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. We hope more teachers engage with this and begin to incorporate this understanding into their classrooms.

Q: What should every teacher know about Native students?

Build relationships. Learn about the family. Grow a better understanding about Native history. Every teacher needs to know that Native families come from a rich culture and that they should learn how to connect Native families with their classrooms.

Q: How is ASD developing more about Alaska Native history?

We are developing a new 9th grade Alaska Studies history course that will include history of Alaska Native people. This course's new outcomes will be designed around the Alaska Culture Standards as well as direction from the Native Advisory Committee. We are building this course in collaboration with the Anchorage Museum and professors from UAA, as well as a consultancy team of Alaska Native cultural and historical experts. We are planning to develop this text and release it for a winter 2024 release.