

Review of Alaska Native Education Services In the Anchorage School District

Prepared for:

**Cook Inlet Tribal Council
and
Anchorage School District**

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Overview

It will not surprise knowledgeable readers that the programs of the Anchorage School District (ASD), Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC), and others reviewed here represent significant breadth and complexity. They encompass direct and indirect services aimed at both social and emotional learning (SEL) and academic performance, plus a wide variety of cultural and family initiatives. Add to this mix approaches based on gender and grade level, activities in part determined by funder requirements, ongoing input from the School Board and the Native Advisory Committee, as well as resource allocation changes made in response to budget fluctuations. Finally, consider differences in school cultures and student demographics, and, even without considering programs that target non-Natives as well as Alaska Natives, the landscape of ASD Alaska Native services can be confusing.

Nevertheless, more than a decade of CITC and other programming at ASD has developed relationships and a substantial track record. This joint assessment is the first step in a process to move from that foundation toward a program model with broad bi-partisan support and financial commitment.

ASD/CITC Working Relationship

By design, this paper focuses on challenges. When reading about these challenges it is important to keep in mind that the vast majority of those interviewed characterize the working relationship between CITC programs and ASD as highly positive, with good (or much improved) communications and mutual cooperation developed over years of services.

Service Gaps and Program Challenges

- **Nearly all staff and many administrators say the biggest program challenge is unstable and short-term funding.** Financial uncertainty makes planning, evaluating and building programs extremely difficult. This includes funding for student transportation.
- **Some of those interviewed believe that ASD has not made a real commitment, backed by dollars, to AN/AI programs.** For example, students at some schools have significantly less access to comprehensive services than students in some other locations.
- **Program staff say they need more positions to serve the student population, especially in schools where Indian Education positions have been reduced or eliminated** to avoid the appearance of overlap in federally funded programs. ASD and CITC representatives say the two programs have worked to ensure

they don't overlap services. CITC staff say their programs especially need more teachers and counselors. Title VII programs need tutors as well as counselors and afterschool staff.

- **The biggest program implementation challenges are promoting attendance and connecting with parents.** Program staff say the workload of school counselors limits ability to follow up as readily or thoroughly as many Alaska Native and American Indian (AN/AI) students require. This is especially true of outreach to parents, which can be critical for students in transition. One interviewee said the school/family liaison function built into Project Puqigtut (and other Title VII-funded programs) should be a component of all CITC programs. Staff see an important part of their role as advocating for students whose families, for various reasons, do not.
- **Transportation to and from program services is often a barrier, especially for low-income students.** Lack of transportation has limited the ability of programs to expand to meet student demand, according to program staff.
- **Demographic service gaps include:**
 - **Moderate and high-performing students get few services from AN/AI programs.** Of the programs examined for this study, ANSEP is the only one that does not focus mainly on at-risk and failing students.
 - **Middle school students get less attention than other grades.** Programs tend to emphasize services to elementary students (to have the most impact on future academic performance) and high school students (to have immediate impact on graduation rates).
 - **Girls get somewhat less attention than boys.** This is because Project Ki'L targets only boys on the theory that middle school boys need a gender-specific approach.
 - **AN/AI students at schools with smaller AN/AI populations typically get fewer services.**
- **The focus of Project Ki'L on professional development and of Project Puqigtut on online coursework makes them unique services for AN/AI students.**
- **Programs at the Alaska Native Heritage Center are the most purely "cultural" (as opposed to academic) of those reviewed.** The fact that approximately 85 percent of ANHC high school participants graduate suggests that promoting cultural awareness and confidence to address student behavior and attitude has a role in a comprehensive approach to AN/AI support.
- **Specific overlaps in services are difficult to identify with the information available.** The best way to identify overlaps, if they exist, would likely be a detailed analysis of grant applications or annual performance reports for all programs.

Major Findings

There is no overarching strategy for how the various AN/AI programs fit with each other and within the district as a whole. While many AN/AI services are complementary, there is no strategy for how the ten or more different program approaches addressed for this review are intended to combine to accomplish common goals. More importantly, ASD has not defined its own role in supporting, leveraging, or incorporating some or all the programs into a consistent, integral, educational framework.

Lack of a cohesive strategy leaves program personnel with a general impression that ASD is amenable to additional services to the extent those services do not impose significant financial or other demands on district schools. Lack of strategic guidance means individual administrators and staff members at ASD and CITC must determine, largely on a school-by-school basis, the answers to critical and demanding questions such as:

- What is the right balance of academic, cultural, and family intervention needed to address academic fragility among AN/AI students? And which entity (ASD or CITC) is best equipped to focus on which interventions?
- How critical is it to provide “safe spaces” within schools, for example those at East and South High, where AN/AI or other students from minority cultures can work and socialize away from the challenges of fitting into the larger institutional culture?
- How do the needs of students (and families) who are long-time urban residents differ from those who are newly arrived from rural areas?
- Since many target students are English Language Learners (ELL), do quantitative subjects, such as math and science, call for different approaches than subjects that are more language-dependent?

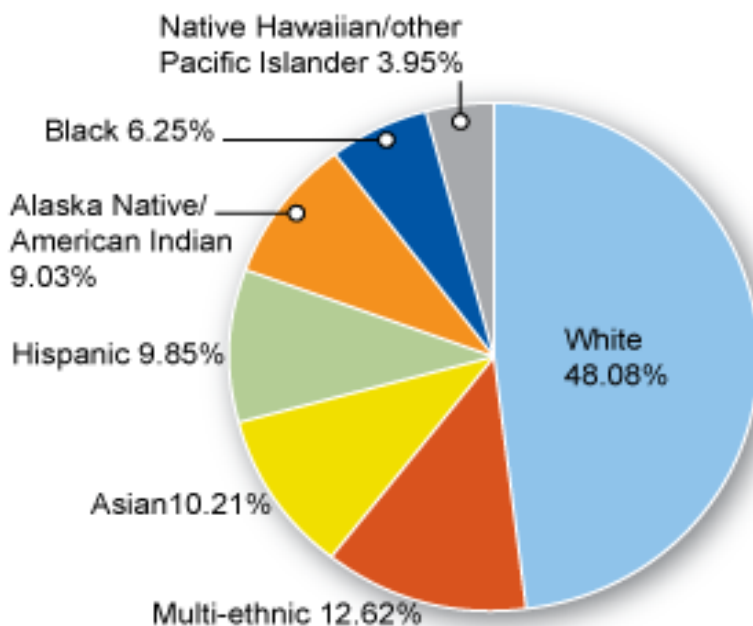
The fact that decisions about the relationship between ASD and CITC services are made school-by-school prevents both organizations from having the greatest possible impact. Good communication cannot substitute for a common vision and goals, and program staff say working with a principal who is not fully committed is frustrating and less productive. At the same time principals who are, or would like to be, fully supportive may hesitate if they don’t perceive broad district commitment or feel they don’t understand district priorities. Finally, some principals see the fact that they are not formally involved in staffing decisions as a barrier to coordinating AN/AI program and school priorities.

Lack of a cohesive strategy also means at-risk students who have similar needs but attend different schools do not have access to the same level of support. The amount of assistance available to AN/AI students varies widely by school. In some places it is provided by CITC, in others by Indian Education. Some schools have no dedicated AN/AI programs. For example, South High, which is 6 percent AN/AI but has 120 ethnic students identified as at-risk in grades 9 and 10, has a single multicultural position. While different school demographics may dictate different program components, interviewees say lack of common

understanding about the basic level of support that should be available to at-risk AN/AI students (including transportation) guarantees that a portion of that population will be under-served.

A critical unanswered question is the extent to which addressing the needs of AN/AI students warrants changes in the internal culture of a school versus programs that operate outside the school (and district) culture. It is easy to agree that school cultures should make all students feel welcome. At the same time, however, many experts believe services to address the unique legal and cultural status of AN/AI students can work best in an all-Native classroom setting or, in some cases, outside the school environment entirely. The problem for the school is how to encompass philosophies of inclusion and differentiation simultaneously, especially when the differentiation is defined by culture, a characteristic historically associated with conflict and stress. Similarly, students must wrestle with the implications of fitting in versus being labeled as different.

The problem of differentiation and inclusion is even harder because ASD is multicultural by any definition, as the graph of student ethnicity shows. While being AN/AI is associated with lower academic achievement (on average), a more consistent predictor of academic fragility is Limited English Proficiency (LEP). This is just one indication that, however critical AN/AI services are, they are part of a larger challenge that affects students of many cultures.



To what extent is it important for the needs of AN/AI or other ethnically identified students to be addressed in a culturally specific way? And how are the answers affected by the fact that AN/AI students have a special legal status as tribal members and a history of discrimination?

Without an overall strategic framework, it is hard to assess even ostensibly straightforward questions about gaps and overlaps in services without stumbling over these larger issues.

Any genuine effort to improve academic outcomes for AN/AI students needs to be long term. This is true at the level of the individual student. Everyone interviewed agrees that the best way to help an at-risk student graduate from high school is to intervene during elementary school (or even earlier). It is also true at the generational level. One of the optimistic signs reported by practitioners in AN/AI education is a shift in family

attitudes toward school and education that is occurring as victims of the most widespread discrimination age, and younger parents bring a different world-view to their children.

The challenge for programs is to operate reliably and consistently while this transformation takes root so that yet another generation does not become discouraged and disenfranchised.

Because ASD and CITC have not developed a common vision, priorities that should be determined by the service providers are, to an extent, shaped by funding agencies far removed from local needs. The strongest approach to funding sources typically results from having a clear strategy and locally committed resources in place before the funding request is made.

Program staff say they have difficulty getting access to ASD student performance data needed to address individual student needs and to adapt program practices for greatest effectiveness. It is unclear whether this is an information management problem or a confidentiality issue or both.

Evaluating multi-faceted programs operating in complex environments is tremendously challenging, but all the more important because of that complexity. A partial review of recent AN/AI program evaluation processes suggests possible improvements. For example, the Partners Longitudinal Evaluation (conducted for CITC in 2011) focuses mainly on quantitative measures, but does not draw strategic conclusions from them. Throughout, the evaluation compares CITC student performance to ASD AN/AI averages but does not establish baseline expectations or the extent to which the two groups are academically or socioeconomically similar. Neither does it examine issues such as student turnover within programs, which could obscure academic trends among long-term participants.

Even when carefully analyzed, however, quantitative data often can't tell the whole story of education programs. In McDowell Group's experience—for example with evaluations of Alaska's GEAR UP and 21st Century Learning Centers programs—current academic data is important to program staff for tracking individual student needs and progress, but can be of limited use when aggregated over many students and schools to judge overall impacts. This is especially true over relatively short periods of time such as a semester or school year and when trying to assess a goal that is subject to many different influences, such as “high school graduation”.

The Longitudinal report's “applied anthropological” perspective is more informative and suggests that the CITC programs are well designed. However, a more complete discussion of best practices would be useful. Given the evaluator's experience with culturally based education, site observations also might have provided additional insights.

Finally, McDowell Group reviewed descriptions of evaluation plans and approaches for Title VII programs. These seem concise, targeted and well conceived. The study team did not review actual evaluation reports (a labor intensive process) other than a summary for Project Ki'L and the information in the District Improvement Plan Submission Packets.

This study examines programs delivered within the Anchorage School District (ASD) that specifically target the needs of Alaska Native/American Indian (AN/AI) students, including:

- Core classes through the Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) Education Department
- Title VII counseling and tutoring services and online courses, including Project Puqigtut and Project Ki'L, and Elitnaurvik-within-East High School
- Alaska Native Cultural Charter School, K-7
- Alaska Native Heritage Center education services
- The Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP)
- Migrant education programs as they relate specifically to the Alaska Native student body

McDowell Group completed the following research and analysis:

Task 1. Collect and review publicly available data on each program/service (printed and web-based materials).

Task 2. Request and review information from program staff about the goals, targets, participants and typical outcomes for each program or service.

Task 3. Conduct 25 to 30 executive interviews with representatives of Alaska Native programs and outside stakeholders, including program managers/coordinators and a selection of key teachers, school principals, and other service providers.

Task 4. Develop a spreadsheet that organizes the program information by type, location, grade and other relevant factors.

Task 5. Present findings in a brief report.

This research is designed to help address the Anchorage School Board's 2011-2012 initiatives, which include reviewing and prioritizing Native education services. Although not a formal evaluation or assessment, this review addresses program challenges, gaps and overlaps as viewed primarily by program and school staff and administrators or represented in existing program documents.

Summary of Interview Results

The information below was compiled from 31 interviews with program managers, CITC and ASD staff, principals, and other stakeholders (see Appendix 2).

Program Managers and Staff

Program managers and site staff of the programs were interviewed to get more information about the activities of each program and to identify challenges or gaps that affect services. Information below was provided by the interviewees.

Target Groups and Participation

Initially, CITC offered only high school courses. However, program managers believed they would see improved results by bringing students into the program earlier and now offer classes in eight schools from elementary through high school. The schools are divided into two “pipelines” designed to follow students from elementary to middle to high schools as they progress toward graduation. The program targets Alaska Native students who are struggling academically and who are not already receiving services from Indian Education or other programs, such as Special Education. Participation increases with the length of time CITC services are offered in a particular school due to word of mouth and the program’s reputation.

Title VII Indian Education and Native Education staff offers tutoring and counseling services at elementary, middle, and high schools that have high percentages of Native students with academic need. While participation rates have increased over time, recently numbers have remained stagnant due to lack of resources for expansion.

Project Ki’L and Project Puqigtut are unique in that they focus on more specific needs. Project Ki’L offers support for pre-k to grade 5 boys. Statistically, this group has performed significantly below both their Caucasian as well as their female counterparts, according to program staff. Project Puqigtut offers online coursework to high school students.

Project Ki’L staff reports that participation is on the rise since a recent push to increase community awareness. Project Puqigtut staff, on the other hand, say they have the capacity to increase enrollment but that community awareness is lacking.

Program Goals and Measuring Outcomes

Those interviewed articulated nearly identical goals for these Alaska Native education programs, namely to help Alaska Native students achieve academic success and to increase graduation rates. Similarly, the outcomes staff looks for are improved grades and test scores, lower dropout rates and higher graduation rates, as well as an overall narrowing of the achievement gap between Alaska Natives and their peers.

Staff said another underlying goal of most AN/AI programs is to help students who have relocated from rural communities. These students often have difficulty adjusting to large schools and class sizes. CITC offers smaller classes to accommodate these students, while Title VII programs provide them with tutors and counseling for still more one-on-one attention. Migrant Education offers students of any ethnicity who meet eligibility standards an almost unlimited array support (see Appendix 1, page 19).

Overall Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement

Managers and staff of each program were asked about the main challenges they face and to identify any areas for improvement.

All said funding is the primary challenge. The vast majority of funding goes towards teacher salaries, which limits the ability to provide other services such as field trips or new technology equipment for students.

Funding imposes limits on the amount of staff and activities they can bring to bear, of course, but that is compounded by the uncertainty of year-to-year funding. One staff member also said it is difficult, and possibly unrealistic, to demonstrate tangible academic improvement within a single grant year. Funding is also needed to upgrade technology and to expand outreach to parents.

Project managers said challenges include more professional development for culturally responsive staff and the number of students who feel disconnected from their community.

Title VII staff echoed others' concern about lack of staff to serve all the students in need and lack of awareness among students and families of what is available. They also noted difficulty getting students to attend even once they are in a program, a lack of parent engagement, and a lack of uniform policies between schools. Finally, they, too, said short grant cycles are a problem.

Title VII staff said the improvement they would most like to make, if funds were available, is to provide more staff support to follow up with students and to provide services to more kids. Like other program staff, Title VII staff would like more professional development and more recognition by ASD of the importance of their program.

Partnering

Program managers were asked what programs are similar to the one that they offer and if they have any partnerships with these programs. CITC and Title VII staff noted similarities in some services and said they communicate to ensure there is no overlap. However, the programs do not appear to have formally documented partnerships.

Program staff were asked about how well they partner with the school they work in or with ASD. Most said they work with administration and staff at the school they are placed in, but communicate most often with their program's head office. All program staff said the relationship and communications between school and program were very positive. One staff member said it was difficult having more than one boss (CITC and the

school principal) to report to, and another said they felt ASD staff didn't know or understand the purpose of his/her position and that better awareness would be helpful.

Gaps or Overlaps in Services

The managers and staff were asked if there are gaps in services to AN/AI students within the district, and whether another program provides similar services to their own.

Managers reiterated a need for more professional development among teachers to broaden cultural awareness and also said there is a need to analyze students' academic performance in more detail to provide services that address specific needs rather than general services.

Nearly all program staff said it is important for more staff to follow up with students who have attendance issues and appear to be at risk of dropping out. One reason for the staff shortage is that CITC and Indian Education have a policy that they won't overlap services, and this has meant that, where CITC counselors are on staff, Indian Ed counselors are withdrawn. Staff said many schools need counselors from both programs due to the high number of students at risk.

Other gaps mentioned were a need to provide all students – not just Alaska Natives – with cultural education, a need to serve talented students with AP classes rather than simply focusing on those who fall behind, and a need for leadership training for students.

Principals and Other Stakeholders

In addition to program employees, other interview participants include principals of schools where Alaska Native education services are present and other Anchorage School District administrators.

Overall Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement

Most principals said the inability to plan ahead due to uncertain funding is the most challenging aspect of these programs. Two-thirds said lack of stable funding threatens their existence. One respondent mentioned a lack of communication about staffing issues between the program and the school and said the school should have a voice in both hiring and firing procedures. Another principal said high mobility of students from rural villages is a primary issue in keeping these students enrolled and on track with credits. The remaining three participants listed student attendance as the biggest challenge and emphasized the need to connect with these students and their families.

Seven of nine administrators said the programs could be improved by adding more staff, tutors or counselors, to allow follow up with more students. The remaining two administrators said that communication between the school and the program regarding staffing, and the need for stable funding for long term planning, are needed improvements.

Partnering

All school principals interviewed said the relationships between their schools and the Alaska Native education programs are very positive and that communication lines are open. They said they coordinate mainly with the staff that is placed in their schools (i.e. teachers, counselors, coordinators) but that they readily contact program administrators when necessary. The only communication issue mentioned was lack of input on staffing decisions. One administrator said past communications had sometimes been a struggle, but now they feel they can call (CITC and Indian Ed administrators) any time they need support or information.

Gaps in Services

Three school administrators did not identify any gaps in services to Alaska Native students. Of those who did, two noted the number of students not receiving services due to lack of staffing as a major gap. Others noted the need to focus on students moving from rural communities, the need to more closely analyze academic levels of incoming students, the need for leadership and mentorship programs, and the need for more Alaska or cultural studies.

Appendix 1: Overview of Programs

CITC Education

The Cook Inlet Tribal Council Education Program offers core classes to AN/AI students in eight ASD schools. The eight schools are divided into two “pipelines” that serve targeted students from kindergarten to middle school and through high school. Core classes offered by CITC teachers include English, history, math, science, language arts, and other subjects. CITC counselors and social workers provide additional social and emotional support. The purpose of the program is to help students improve performance and increase graduation rates as well as to increase the number of those planning for college.

FUNDING

Funding comes from U.S. Department of Education grants and is limited to services for the target population. Additionally, CITC must ensure their education programs do not overlap with other Indian Education programs, as federal rules prohibit duplicative, federally funded services. CITC must regularly update grant applications, comply with grant guidelines, and provide reports regarding program performance.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Participation averages around 700 students. The program targets AN/AI students from kindergarten through grade 12 who are under-performing academically.

The two pipelines are:

- Susitna Elementary and Scenic Park Elementary → Begich Middle → Bartlett High
- Willow Crest Elementary and Lake Hood Elementary → Romig Middle → West High

STAFFING

CITC employs teachers, counselors, and social workers to work directly with the students within each pipeline. CITC teachers are required to meet the same certification requirements as ASD teaching staff and are provided regular training to update qualifications as needed.

MEASURING OUTCOMES

In order to measure program success, CITC looks at academic performance and graduation-rate data provided by ASD, as well as teacher/student contact hours.

Title VII Indian Education

Within Title VII Indian Education services are four major programs:

- Title VII Indian Education provides supplemental support to AN/AI students from kindergarten to grade 12 in the form of academic tutoring, social and emotional support, cultural enrichment programs, language training, professional development, and other resources.
- Native Education uses additional funding from ASD to provide supplemental support to AN/AI students from kindergarten to grade 12 in the form of youth development tutors for academic, social and emotional issues.
- Project Ki'L provides academic, social, emotional, and cultural support to AN/AI boys from pre-kindergarten to grade 5.
- Project Puqigtut is a professional development program for grade 9 to 12 AN/AI students at any ASD high school. It offers online courses and face-to-face time with teachers and social coordinators. This program helps students to recover needed credits, improve grades, and to work ahead.

Title VII Indian Education and Native Education

FUNDING

Title VII Indian Education is a federal grant specifically designated for AN/AI students. Native Education is a smaller program for Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native education funded by the Anchorage School District.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Both programs target AN/AI students from kindergarten to grade 12 at qualifying schools. Qualification is based on the percentage of AN/AI students enrolled in the school and their academic performance record. In the last academic year, Title VII served 3,378 students and ASD Native Education, 597. Participation has remained level the past few years. Prior to that, numbers were on the rise. Qualification for participation in Title VII Indian Education programs requires completion of a federal 506 form. Native Education qualifications are less stringent, with Alaska Native/American Indian status the primary requirement.

ASD Schools with Title VII Indian Education and ASD Native Education Staff

Title VII Indian Education	ASD Native Education
Elementary Schools	
Abbott Loop	Baxter
Airport Heights	Bowman
Alaska Native Charter School	Campbell
Chinook	Denali
College Gate	Fairview
Eagle River	Gladys Wood
Gladys Wood	Lake Otis
Kincaid	Rogers Park
Klatt	Spring Hill
Mt. View	Trailside
Muldoon	Wonder Park
North Star	
Northwood	
Nunaka Valley	
Ocean View	
Ptarmigan	
Russian Jack	
Sand Lake	
Taku	
Tudor	
Turnagain	
William Tyson	
Williwaw	
Middle Schools	
Central	Goldenview
Clark	
Hanshew	
Wendler	
High Schools	
Dimond	Chugiak
East	East
Service	
West	

Source: Title VII Indian Education Staff 2011-2012

STAFFING

Title VII Indian Education and ASD Native Education programs are staffed by paraprofessionals because their programs are supplemental in nature. They occasionally contract with certified staff for further tutoring services.

MEASURING OUTCOMES

Title VII Indian Education and ASD Native Education programs report on academic data provided by the state as well as their own language and technology testing data. Working with the paraprofessionals, they also look at grade level expectations each quarter and compare them to actual performance. These programs also utilize district data to look at attendance, dropout rates, graduation rates, suspension rates, and grades.

Project Ki'L

FUNDING

Funding for Project Ki'L comes from a three year federal grant that goes through the Title VII Indian Education office.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

This project is designed to offer out-of-class support for pre-kindergarten to grade 5 boys in order to engage them and their families in cultural activities and help them work towards academic success. However, the primary thrust of this program is directed at teachers. Professional development is provided to teachers to build awareness of both cultural and gender learning differences.

Participating schools:

- Alaska Native Head Start
- Alaska Native Charter School
- Airport Heights Elementary
- Mountain View Elementary
- North Star Elementary
- Susitna Elementary
- Tyson Elementary
- Wonder Park Elementary

STAFFING

Full time staff consists of coordinators and administrators. Teachers that participate in the program are paid through the district on addendum.

MEASURING OUTCOMES

Project Ki'L generally relies on standardized test scores and teacher and parent surveys to assess impacts.

Project Puqigtut

FUNDING

Similar to Project Ki'L, Project Puqigtut is on a three year federal grant through the Indian Education office.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Project Puqigtut offers online classes to high school students. Most need credit recovery in order to graduate. However, some students take the classes to get ahead or to improve their GPAs. Participation varies greatly from semester to semester.

STAFFING

Teachers and coordinators work with the students directly. Teachers not only teach class but also meet with students regularly to assist them with issues or to answer questions about the course content. Coordinators are available to help students plan their coursework and for general counseling.

MEASURING OUTCOMES

The goal of the program is to increase graduation rates among high school students and to improve proficiency in reading, writing, and math. In order to track progress staff examines the percentage of students enrolled in courses that are meeting ASD standards in reading and writing.

Alaska Native Cultural Charter School (ANCCS)

Description of Program

The Alaska Native Cultural Charter School (ANCCS) is a public charter school within the Anchorage School District (ASD) that opened in the fall of 2007. Upon opening, attendance at the school was offered to students in kindergarten through 6th grade, in the fall of 2009 a preschool was added, and 7th grade was added in the fall of 2010. Students are selected from a lottery system run by the ASD, and any family is allowed to apply, regardless of background. The school focuses on combining traditional education with traditional Alaska Native cultural learning.

Funding

The school is funded like any other Anchorage school. It has a general budget, which pays for teachers and staff including their benefits, the lease for the school building, insurance, supplies, etc. The school also has Title I funding, which pays for academic support and community engagement activities.

Program Participants

There are 221 students for the 2011-2012 school year (205 kindergarten through 7th grade and 16 preschool students). The school is capped at 200 students in kindergarten through 7th grade and 16 preschool students, but is allowed to go ten percent over its 200 cap. As mentioned before, any child can attend the school, though roughly 90 percent of the students identify as Alaska Native. The school is capped to encourage the small community feel, similar to a village community, in order to promote the cultural learning.

Staffing

Approximately 30 staff members are associated with the school, one teacher per grade with the exception of 1st grade, which has two. In addition, the school has a Title I reading specialist, a part-time nurse; a special education teacher; a PE/health teacher; a cultural, social, emotional learning specialist; two teaching assistants; an Indian education specialist; and a Yupik cultural liaison. ANCCS also brings in elders to help with the traditional cultural education.

Program Goals and Measuring Outcomes

The school's mission is to build student excellence through traditional cultural learning. ANCCS works to balance academic and cultural strength. In addition, as with any school within the ASD, students' academic success and completing the grades offered by ANCCS is used to measure the outcome of the school. The staff watches for growth through State of Alaska assessments, and tracks individual student growth in academic as well as social learning, as any school does.

Further, ANCCS provides a smaller learning environment, and with a focus on balancing education and Alaska Native culture, the school offers family and community support. It is linked in multiple ways to community organizations, and to the families attending the school. Both families and other organizations provide a great deal of help and support.

Target Groups and Participation

ANCCS is a combined elementary and middle school with preschool to grade 7 classes. While the school is considered to be at capacity (in terms of enrollment figures), several interviewees noted they would encourage a similar set up for students in grades 8 through 12, though not at the same building, as they would like to preserve the small community feel.

Overall Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement

One of the main challenges facing ANCCS is location. The building is leased and was not originally built as a school facility. As a result, the school does not have a regular library, gym, playground, or other regular school amenities. Additionally, while funding remains stagnant due to the overall economy, the expenses for rent, heat, and electricity continue to rise. In addition to working toward a new building, the school plans to increase its staffing.

Partnering, Gaps or Overlaps in Services

ANCCS partners with many of the other programs that offer services to Alaska Natives including CITC, South Central Foundation, Cook Inlet Housing Authority, Alaska Native Heritage Center, and Title VII. Communication. Working relationships were reported as excellent by those interviewed.

Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP)

Description of Program

The Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP), founded in 1995, helps Alaska Native students interested in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) from middle school through doctorate-level work. The following components of the program are available to ASD students:

- **Middle School Academy** (5th, 6th, and 7th grades) – A two-week science camp for students with a “B” average or above in math and science, where the students move into UAA dorms. They participate in hands on activities involving science (biology, chemistry, and physics), engineering, and math (algebra and trigonometry). The program is supervised by engineers, biologists, and other scientists. The program has a limitation of 54 students due to funding.
- **Computer Assembly** (high school students) – Started in 2002, the program allows students the opportunity to build a high-end computer. Upon graduation, and the completion of chemistry, physics, and trigonometry, the students are able to keep the computer. As of 2011, they have built over 1,200 computers, and more than 60 percent of students have completed the classes and kept the computer.
- **Acceleration Academy** (10th and 11th grades) – A six-week long summer program, started in 2008, in which students take two college classes for credit (one math and one science). The classes can be chosen from geology, biology, chemistry, engineering, and other STEM classes. It is “summer school on steroids,” and “the kids are put through the ringer.” Students also participate in team building activities and take field trips to various locations such as the Alaska Native Heritage Center, to help keep the kids from getting too homesick or overwhelmed with schoolwork. The program seems to be best when there are plus or minus 50 students participating, though there are no limitations on the number of students.
- **Summer Bridge Program** (current high school seniors) – A nine-week paid internships with one of the sponsors/partners of ANSEP (ADF&G, BP, BLM, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobile, NANA, NOAA, USFS, USGS, etc.). The program started in 1998 with eight students, and in the summer of 2011 there were 25 students. They are placed in either an engineering or biological science field, depending on what the student is interested in studying. During this time, the students also take a university-level math class.

- **Engineering Jump Start** (12th grade) – The program started in the spring of 2007. During the senior year of high school, a student who has completed the ANSEP computer build and/or Acceleration Academy takes math and science classes part-time at UAA.

Funding

Nearly all funding for ANSEP is soft-funding through contributions, donations, internships, and advocacy by sponsors. The organization requires a five-year commitment to contributions, allowing steady funding throughout any economic occurrences. Currently the program has 86 sponsors. A complete list is available at <http://www.ansep.net/our-sponsors.html>. Since funding is through private sources, there are few limitations on how it can be used.

Program Participants

Currently, there are approximately 700 students in ANSEP. There are 400 students enrolled in 6th through 12th grade, and 300 students at the university level. Any student, regardless of background, is allowed to apply. Determining factors for acceptance into the various components of the program are academic performance (normally a B average or above in STEM classes), low tardiness and absences, little to no disciplinary action in the student's record, and on track to graduate high school.

Staffing

The program has three full-time staff members who work with the programs associated with ASD students. These staff members hire UAA faculty and students as needed to help run the programs mentioned above as they occur.

Program Goals and Measuring Outcomes

The goal of the program is to get more Alaska Native students into STEM professions. However, the interviewees noted it is hard to determine what would be considered a good outcome and how to even measure it. While the goal is for students to continue in the STEM fields, they consider the program successful if students graduate from high school and go to college in any field.

Target Population

The ANSEP program targets mostly middle school and high school students, and does not accept students below the 6th grade level. However, the ANSEP program as a whole addresses middle-school through Ph.D.-level students. The program originated to encourage Alaska Natives to pursue STEM studies at the undergraduate and graduate level, and this remains its primary goal. It has only recently expanded to include high school, and, even more recently, middle school students. The program does not try to target younger children and is not limited to Alaska Natives. Nevertheless, the majority of the program participants are Alaska Native.

Overall Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement

The main challenge noted by interviewees is the stereotype that Alaska Natives do not want to, or cannot do, higher level math or science. ANSEP allows students to see role models who are proving that stereotype wrong, but it is still a challenging stereotype to overcome.

Partnering

While ANSEP does not partner directly with other programs, they do work with CITC, ASD, and the ANHC. Communication was positive in all work relationships.

Alaska Native Heritage Center

Description of Program

The Alaska Native Heritage Center (ANHC) was created in 1987 when the Alaska Federation of Natives declared an Alaska Native culture center was needed. After ten years of fundraising and construction, the ANHC opened its doors in May 1999. Its core purpose is to “provide intergenerational learning opportunities for Native youth, students and the general public in Anchorage to inspire a commitment to continue the culture and identity of Alaska Native people.”

ANHC has several programs for ASD students. All are free, and any Alaska Native student can participate. Programs include the following:

- **School Field Trips:** Teachers can arrange class field trips based on one of several themes: Native Dance and Drumming, Native Games, Natives Stories and String Stories, Collections. The teacher may also customize a visit. Typical trips are two hours long and include a film, a walk through five recreated villages, and an art project.
- **“Shavila” Assembly:** A 45-minute structured assembly for elementary schools where students are shown the diversity of Alaska Native cultures through storytelling, dancing, and athletics. One type of performance is geared for Kindergarten to Grade 3, and the other for Grades 4 to 6.
- **Alaska Native Studies Program:** Students enrolled in 11th grade in Alaska Native studies through the ASD are allowed one free admission to complete a study guide (provided by the teacher), and a free admission for an adult chaperone.
- **High School Programs:** Offered during the school year as an after-school program, ASD students are allowed to have a safe place to complete homework, interact with students from other schools, and to have positive role models in the form of guest instructors and mentors. Students have the ability to earn 0.5 credits if they complete 120 hours and a project, but they do not have to. Classes to take include Alaska Native dance classes, Alaska Native art classes, “Encourage Leadership” class, Communication: Media Arts, Alaska Native Games/Native Youth Olympics, and Performing Arts

(storytelling, acting, improvisation, and playwriting). Courses are designed to meet state and federal curriculum standards using a culturally appropriate approach. Transportation is provided from each of the high schools after school, and students can be transported home at the end of the day. Approximately 100 students are currently enrolled in this program; on average, 40 to 50 students attend daily (Monday through Friday). While no student has been turned away, potential further growth of the program is limited by available space and transportation resources.

- **Summer High School Program:** Summer school where high school students, including those entering 9th grade and those who have just graduated, can take classes on beading, kayak construction, processing subsistence foods, dance, and media. Classes are taught at the ANHC, and transportation is provided to and from the center for any student to anywhere in Anchorage.
- **“Walking in Two Worlds” Middle School Program:** This new program is designed for “at risk” middle school Alaska Native students (high absenteeism, behavior problems, expulsion) (Grades 6 through 8). Services include counseling, tutoring, mental health and social services where needed. The goal of the program is to connect these students to their cultural roots through Alaska Native games, arts, and dance. Staff also seeks to improve a student’s social-emotional skills, personal responsibility, and positive cultural identity. In addition to working with students (and their families) during school hours, the program also offers an afterschool program that offers homework time, cultural activities, group discussions, and socialization. Transportation is provided from each of the participating middle schools (Begich, Clark, and Alaska Native Charter School) after school, and students can be transported home at the end of the day. This program reaches about 700 middle school students; however, 50 to 100 students receive more targeted, focused services.
- **Summer Internship Program:** Alaska Natives, age 14 to 25, are eligible to become an intern at the center. An Individual Plan is developed for each intern, noting their progress and mastery of several job skills including collections management, retail sales, marketing, public relations, performer, docent/tour guide, performer, and other aspects of cultural tourism. Approximately 30 to 50 internships are awarded each year.

Funding

Most of the center’s education programs are supported by federal grants, including funding through the U.S. Department of Education’s Alaska Native Education Equity Act. Currently, the center is in Year 3 of the 3-year grant cycle. The center will apply for a new round of funding; however, there are concerns funding designated specially for Alaska is in jeopardy, even though it is intended to replicate BIA funding available in other states. ASD does not pay for any ANHC services.

Migrant Education

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

The Migrant Education program is a federally funded program for migrant students, defined as children between the ages of three and 20 who have not graduated high school or received their GED, and who “accompany their parents or guardians outside the Anchorage School District boundaries for seasonal fishing, farming, agricultural activities or logging.” Seasonal fishing also includes “personal subsistence fishing (salt and freshwater), clamming, crabbing, shrimping, commercial fishing, fish processing.” The program provides activities, services, and resources for program students and their families. Services available include preschool, literacy activities (free books and book bags with activities), free lunch program, credit recovery for high school classes, test preparation for the HSGQE, summer school, swimming lessons, life jacket program, camps and recreational opportunities, and help directly from staff members for social services (advocacy, attendance, housing, transportation, food, clothing, childcare, health, counseling, legal aid), and referrals to other community services available to the families.

Funding

The program operates statewide and is federally funded.

Program Participants and Target Population

For the 2011-2012 school year, there are approximately 3,461 students being served in the ASD, and 1,637 of these students identify as Alaska Native (roughly 47 percent). These numbers can vary widely depending on the school year and the fishing season as families move around. However, there has been an increase in the number of students the past few years. The program is not based on race, and is not specifically designed for Alaska Native students. The target population is students who are at risk of not receiving their public education because of seasonal work. The program is present in nearly all of the schools within the ASD.

Staffing

Migrant Education has 18 full-time staff members spread throughout the school district, and plans to hire more staff. In addition to the full-time staff, there are numerous part-time staff members and volunteers who are often ASD employees.

Program Goals and Objectives

The goal of the program is to help migrant students develop their fullest social and academic potential, and to provide learning opportunities for success in life. The program has four objectives it list on its website: 1) integrate and support existing educational services; 2) identify and assess individual family needs and assist in development of an appropriate action plan; 3) provide opportunities for reading readiness for pre-school through grade 3; and 4) provide opportunities for developing family literacy.

Overall Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement

As for other programs, staff sees the threat of decreased or interrupted funding as one of the biggest challenges they face.

Migrant Education strives to improve by monitoring students' family life and academic assessments. The program focuses on the overall picture of how the student is doing, not just test scores.

Partnering

Migrant Education partners at times with the ANCCS, CITC, and Indian Education. Staff often recommends the services of other programs to both families and students. Interview participants described communication with other programs as positive.

Appendix 2: List of Interviews

The study team completed 30 interviews, including the following:

CITC Staff:

- Steve Geidosh, CITC Education Program Manager and two other staff

Title VII Staff:

- Doreen Brown, Title VII Education Programs Supervisor; DeWayne Ingram, Project Kí'L Manager; Karen Philip, Project Puqigtut Manager and eight other counselors, tutors and teachers representing East High School, North Star Elementary, Clark Middle School, and South Anchorage High School

ASD Staff:

- Mike Henry, Executive Director, High School Education; Leah Hathaway, Migrant Education Program Supervisor, and twelve principals or other staff representing five high schools, three elementary schools, and two middle schools

Other:

- Pat Parlow, Independent Program Evaluator for Project Kí'L and Project Puqigtut
- Mike Nabers, Regional Director Computer Assembly and Recruitment, Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program
- Annette Evans Smith, President and CEO, Alaska Native Heritage Center

Appendix 3: Documents Reviewed

Cook Inlet Tribal Council

- Cook Inlet Tribal Council Educational Services System, 2009-2010 Johnson O'Malley/477 Report
- CITC Alaska Native Education Programs, CITC Brief Number 09.12-5
- The Crisis in Alaska Native Education, CITC Brief Number 09.12-3
- External Program Evaluation, Partners Longitudinal Quantitative and Qualitative Report 2005-2011
- Executive Summary CITC Core Education Program, Partners for Success

Alaska School District

- Title VII Indian Education Summary (describes services, target populations, goals, and evaluative processes and measures)
- ASD Memorandum #267, April 25, 2011, Prior approval of grant award: Title VII Indian Education
- Title VII Indian Education Organizational Chart and Staff Lists
- Title VII Objectives, 2011-2012 School Year
- Summary of Services Offered/Utilized with ASD for Native Students, 2010-2011
- ASD 2011-2012 District Improvement Plan Submission Packet
- ASD 2010-2011 District Improvement Plan Submission Packet
- Indian Education Program Six-Year Instructional Plan, June 9, 2008
- Anchorage School Board Initiatives, 2011-2012

Other

- Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools
- Changing Predictable Practices: Models of Success for Alaska Native Students, FNSBSD Action Research Project
- Learning Styles of American Indian/Alaska Native Students: A Review of the Literature and Implications for Practice, Journal of American Indian Education, Vol 41, Number 3, 2002
- Various ASD and program web pages