

Kenai Peninsula Borough School District  
 Title VI Advisory Committee Meeting  
 February 19, 2020  
 Borough Assembly Building, Soldotna, Alaska

AGENDA

- 1) Welcome and Introductions: Meeting was called to order by the Chair at 2:08 p.m.
- 2) Statement of Title VI Grant Purpose was read by thair: The purpose of the Title VI grant is to provide supplemental supports for Alaska Native and American Indian students for a successful experience throughout K-12 schooling years through prioritized targeted assistance.
- 3) Committee Purpose was read by the chair: The purpose of the Title VI Advisory Committee is to provide guidance to KPBSD regarding Title VI program priorities that translates into the KPBSD Plan of Service for the Title VI program.
- 4) Roll was taken by having each person present introduce him/herself

Parent Representatives:

Seat Held	Name	Present/Absent for Meeting
Seat A—Region 1 (Tyonek, Nikiski, Kenai) Through FY21	Michael Bernard	Present
Seat B- Region 2 (Sterling & Soldotna)	Bonnie Pierce	Present
Seat C- Region 3 (Seward, Moose Pass, Cooper Landing, Hope)	Rebecca Dixon	Absent
Seat D—Region 4 (Ninilchik, Anchor Point, Homer) Through FY20	Danielle Self	Present
Seat E—Region 5 (Seldovia, Nanwalek, Port Graham) Through FY20	Vacant	
Seat F—At-large (any region) Through FY20	Winter Marshall-Allen	Present (by phone)

Student Representatives:

Seat F—At-large, filled annually	Ryann Cannava	Present
Seat G—At-large, filled annually	Alexis Schneider	Absent

Staff Representative:

Seat I—At-large, filled annually	Rachel Pioch	Present
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Board of Education Representative:

Seat I—At-large, filled annually	Rachel Pioch	Present
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Others present: Eric Watson, Grace Foles, Leihla Bock, Cook Inlet Tribal Corporation; Kate Hohman-Billmeier, Seldovia Village Tribe; Jane Beck, ProjectGrad; David Knight, Kenaitze and Native Youth Education Project; Tim Vlasak, KPBSD Schools and Compliance.

5.) Updates on Programs and Partnerships:

- a. Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leaders (Jen Freeman and Ryann Cannava)
  - 306 students are eligible, and currently, 164 students are actively participating in KPNYL. All active members are on track to earn their .5 leadership credit for this year.
  - A collection of student comments about KPNYL were shared in a document titled "Using Your Leadership Voice."
- b. Seldovia Village Tribe (Kate Hohlman)
  - Rooted and Rising is a series of four camps for KPBSD Title VI students. The first two camps will be open to 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders and will occur from May 25-June 7 and June 12- June 27. The second two camps will be 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders and camps 3 and 4 will be one week long and focus on post-secondary activities. Fliers will be sent home through the district and applications will also be posted online at the SVT website.
- c. Project Grad Kenai Peninsula (Jane Beck)

Alaska Native Education Program has recently filled all their staffing needs.

- Nanwalek & Ninilchik Academic Coach: Jackie DeLaCruz
- Port Graham Academic Coach: Anna Meredith
- Tebughna Academic Coach: Kenny Daher
- Postsecondary Support Coach/Coordinator: Kenny Daher
- Social Counselor: Selina Mach

Completed Staff Trainings:

- Restorative Justice (September 27)
- Mandatory Reporting (October and January)
- Integrative Youth Development with Brightways Learning (November 9-10)
- History & Hope (February 7)
- Sources of Strength (February 18)
- Mindfulness, self-regulation, yoga (weekly and ongoing)

Upcoming Events:

Phlight Club (March 6-7) will include students from across the bay and from the head of the bay

Life Enrichment Academy (end of May/early June)

- d. ANSEP (Christine Ermold)
  - 12 Title VI students participated in ANSEP during January. This group attended with a conglomerate of students from southeast Alaska that were sent by tribal corporations,

rather than their school districts. The approach used in other regions to support ANSEP participation is something KPBSD is looking into as a method to help stretch our Title VI budget further.

e. UpStream Academy (Rachel Pioch)

- Recently completed an UpStream MedTech Academy with 29 students- focused on mobility and off road wheelchair needs where students chose the style of wheelchair and then built them, tested them, and analyzed what worked. Students visited Heritage Place as part of their community service project. Heritage is looking for teen volunteers to engage in activities with their residents.
- Partnering with Kenaitze Tribe to hopefully provide a spring UpStream Drone Academy and to provide traditional language lessons for our teachers, which would then be expanded to provide opportunities for students to learn vocabulary and pronunciation, too.
- At the recent Tribal Youth Symposium, a Cultural Handbook was shared that KPBSD is now working to adopt for use with all third graders, districtwide. Additionally, a beautiful publication about the history of our region has also been produced, and the district hopes to obtain five copies for every Alaska Studies History teacher to use in their classroom. The newly created UpStream Code was a huge success. In partnership with CITC and JBER, students discovered how the coding they learned was currently in use for creating video games and ensuring our nation's security.

f. Fab Lab Cook Inlet Tribal Council (Eric Watson)

- Eric expressed gratitude for KPBSD partnership at the Tribal Youth Symposium
- Grace shared that a camp is available outside of Anchorage at the end of July
- ANEP Grant- Innovation Stations are mini fab labs. They're stations with materials that incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> century technology, and they're now partnering outside of the Anchorage area to expose students through culturally based instructional units to STEM.
- Leihla shared that there will be an "Adulting" camp over spring break in March 17 and the week of May 26.
- Next Friday, there will be a conference call with all tribes re: summer camps and KPBSD and PGKP

g. Tribal Consultations (Christine Ermold)

- Christine explained that Tribal Consultation is a [reemphasized](#) requirement under the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and it's the reauthorization that's nicknamed as ESSA, or the Every Student Succeeds Act. Tribal Consultation is a requirement for the *district* as a condition of receiving federal funds. The

Title VI Advisory Committee does not have any requirements related to tribal consultation- the committee's role in providing advisory guidance to the district regarding the Title VI plan of service is separate from the district's **requirement** to consult with the tribes of students served. Since there are at least 114 different tribal affiliations of KPBSD Title VI enrolled students, meaningful consultation with *all* tribes cannot occur. (maybe something about emphasis has occurred with both regional and community) However, the tribes that are representative of groups of students, and that maintain a presence within KPBSD's boundaries, have been identified as the primary targets for consultation. In addition to regular communication with the designated tribal representatives on a variety of education-related activities, the district also engages in personalized consultation with tribes regarding the activities that are in direct relationship to the interests, priorities, and concerns of their tribe's council or membership.

5) FY20 Participation Numbers Update and Certification (Christine Ermold)

- This year's Title VI enrollment report to the Federal Government will reflect 1,081 Title VI students out of the district's total enrollment of 8,783. This does reflect a slight increase in Title VI students, which I attribute in large part to the quality of the UpStream and Native Youth Leadership opportunities the district provides.
- The Title VI enrollment is the first step in next year's Title VI application to the Federal Government. The second step will occur at our next meeting, where we will identify the priorities for next year's Title VI programs. The first meeting of the next school year is where the report on the previous year's activities will be shared, and then the annual cycle will start again with the certification of next year's enrollment numbers in mid-winter, again.

6) Public Comments (any guest may comment with a limit of approximately 3 minutes)

- Bonnie shared an article she encountered through Brightways titled *A Cultural Lens Leads to More Effective Teaching* and shared her concerns about students being connected to an adult and the importance of educating adults to make sure that kids are drawn in and connected to groups and adults. She also referenced the Strengths Alaskan Style pamphlet that was also a high quality resource Her hope is that this information could be helpful in planning for next year's priorities.
- Penny commented that during the annual School Board Association training, Board members are paired up with groups of kids, and they often hear how students feel like no one knows them.
- Winter shared that she taught at a National School of Character before moving to Alaska and each class of students was divided up among the staff so that a particular staff member would work on targeting and getting to know every single one of the kids and no one could be missed.

- Ryann shared that the negative perception surrounding Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leaders at schools like SoHi could be challenged by adults speaking up and giving more attention to increase awareness of the positive impacts of the program.

7) Established the next meeting date as April 13 at 2:00.

8) The meeting was adjourned at 3:30.

My other notes:

9) FY20 Participation Numbers (Christine Ermold)

- *Over 114 Alaska Native Tribal affiliations represented in the approximately 1,064 enrolled in Title VI. There are 20 different Native languages in Alaska (two main ones in KPBSD are Dena'iana and Sugcestun/Sug'sten.) The diversity of such a small area can bring complications when applying for grants because targeting specifics, such as language, narrows the targeted population to be served. Title VI students are identified by the required federal form, not just by demographics marked on the enrollment documents.*
  - KPBSD PROJECTED Graduate statistics for 2018-19 are:
    - Overall Grad Rate 86.40%
    - AKN/AmIn Grad Rate 77.65%
- Title VI funding is based on a ratio, not based on the number of Title VI students
- Last year's budget priorities and participation numbers were:
  - 1) Title VI Site Tutors (54)
  - 2) Project Grad/KPNYL (168)
  - 3) ANSEP & UpStream (12 & 98 = 110)
  - 4) Small amount towards administration.

10) FY20 Title VI Priorities and Budget Update (Christine Ermold)

- As made by the committee in April of last school year, the priorities for this year are:
  - 1) Title VI Site Tutors
  - 2) Project Grad/KPNYL
  - 3) ANSEP & UpStream
  - 4) Program administration- Conrad resigned and his duties have been temporarily absorbed, so that freed up funds.
- The FY20 total allocation is \$444,686, it is currently funding 1 certified teacher and 3.5 tutors, with funds set aside to then support the other priorities.

11) Establish next meeting date

# Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leaders

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2019-2020

12 Schools 9-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Invited to Attend

*PGKP MOA with KPBSD*

+ *Connections – For KPNYL members that started at another school, transferred to connections, and want to continue to participate*

8 = Road Side High School Teams:

Meetings 1-2 times per month – Lunch or *FOL if available*

Seward

Nikiski

Kenai Central

Soldotna

River City Academy

Ninilchik

Homer

Homer Flex

4= Fly in High Schools Teams: 2 Extended Meetings per year: Fall/Spring

Tebughna

Nanwalek

Port Graham

Susan B. English- *In active*

## Fall Semester Totals

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306 All students on KPBSD Title VI list September 2019.

172 All Students who were interested, contacted, attend one meeting, etc

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**164 Students who are active as KPNYL members**

**80 Members that are on the KBPSD Title VI list = 26%**

83 Member not on KBPSD Title VI list

30 *of the 82 Members not on KBPSD Title VI list these students Identify as Native American &/or Native Alaskan*

**110 Members On list + who Identify but not on Title VI list = 36%**

**Members work at a 12<sup>th</sup> grade level = .5 Leadership Elective Credit**

80 hours = Alaska Cultural & KPBSD Leadership Standards

# Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leaders

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2019-2020

## **Google classroom**

Created to share information – Links, You-tubes, documents, pictures, and more on topics for each month

+ *KPBSD Native Education Facebook Page to post pictures*

## **Consensus Talking Stick**

Decision Making/Government –

## **Yearly District Project = Hand-Frame Drums Multi cultural – International**

Fall Making a Drum & Leadership Workshop

Spring On Campus Painting/Decorating = Your Leadership

Qualities That Members have &/or want to obtain

## **Native Youth Olympics**

Events at Kenai, Homer, Seward, Anchorage

Participate &/or Volunteer

## **Cultural Food = Fry Bread – Advisor Assistant**

Members will invite other students to join team

## **Using your Collective Voice**

KPBSD Title VI Advisory Committee – Student Representative

KPBSD Board of Education– District Delegate Presentations

## **KPNYL THEME 2019-2020 = UNITY National Native Youth Leaders**

Wellness Warriors - LIGHTING THE FIRE:

### Bringing Light to Your Community through Advocacy

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is all it forms seeks to ensure that people, particularly those who are most vulnerable in society and able to: Have their voice heard on issues that are important for them. Defend and safeguard their rights. Have their views and wishes genuinely considered when decisions are being made about their lives

What is Policy?

Policy refers to specific rules that govern everything around you. This could be at the federal state or triable level. It could be within your community or within your school.

At some point, it may be become necessary to create new policy or change existing ones. This training is to help you look at issues in your community where policy need to be changed or created to maintain an healthy environment for all.

**UNITY's Mission** is to foster the spiritual, mental, physical, and social development of American Indian and Alaska Native youth and to help build a strong, unified, and self-reliant Native America through greater youth involvement.



# Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leaders

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2019-2020

## Vision

*We Are*  
**Native Youth Leaders**  
*We Believe*  
**In Who We Are & What We Do**  
*We Carry On*  
**Traditions, Knowledge, Culture, & Values**  
*While Working To*  
**Change Our Future**  
*We Are The*  
**Faces of Today & the Changes of Tomorrow**

**Outcome #1** Community Support for Youth  
We envision that each of our communities supports our youth.

**Goal #1 Educate Our Communities**  
We will continue working to define all areas of education needed for community members, to reach our outcome of the community supporting our youth. We also need to educate ourselves to better understand leadership, embracing both the US, state, and municipality legislative and individual tribal decision-making processes. KPNYL youth have requested “A stronger voice in their school, community, and world.”

**Goal #2 Kid’s Choice –Fun Activities**  
KPNYL youth will practice the decision making process through requesting and designing activities/events that will help them grow their leadership traits in their communities. These activities will promote leadership qualities and honor tribal values and the larger community values.

**Goal #3 Family/Community Involvement**  
KPNYL would like activities where adults and youth work together in planning and implementation of the activities.

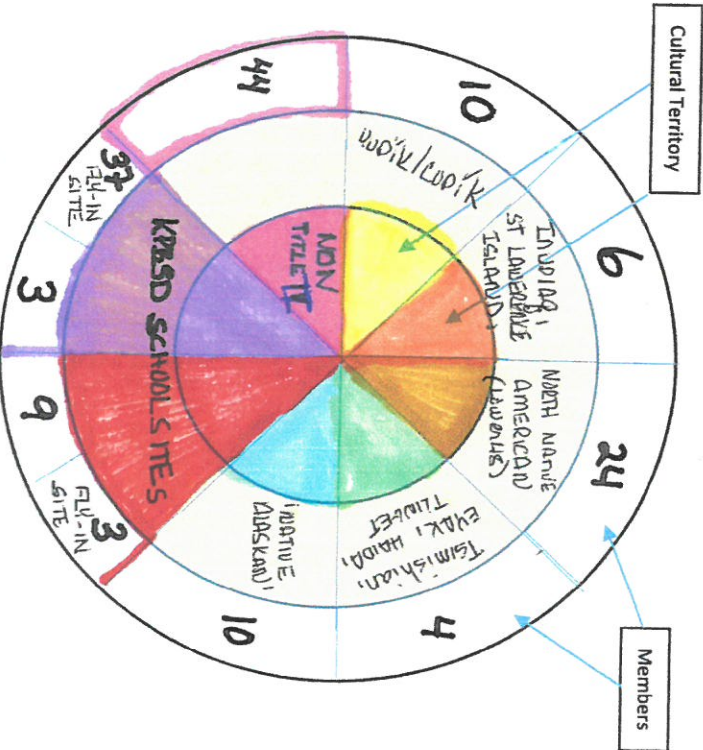
*Created by KPNYL Students 2010*

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Jennifer Freeman	Coordinator & Advisor	= Full Time
Isabelle Wolverton	Advisor Assistant	= 2 hrs./ week
Bonnie Pierce	Administrative Support	= 15 hrs./ week
	+ Volunteer HOURS	

Kenai Peninsula Native/Youth Leadership (KPNYL)-January 2020 School Board Presentation  
 150 Members' Self-Identified Ethnic Cultural Ties in relationship to their Community in which they live? In the school they attend?  
 (Nonwalek, Port Graham, Seldovia, Homer HS, Homer Flex, Kenai Central, Ninilchik, SoHI, RCA, Nikiski HS, Seward, Tyonek School)

Looking at 150 active members who Self-Identified an ethnic culture, the KPNYL team took a look to see if each of the 150 members felt they could connect to their ethnic cultural lead within their community? And/or could they directly explore hands on their SI cultural through Peer share/learning and/or access to local cultural connections within their local school?



Within KPBSD there are 2 Tribal Territory Categories  
 Athabaskan/Dena'ina served by Kenaitze, Tyonek, Salmantoff Tribal Connections  
 Unavgaq/Sugpiaq/Allutiqq/Aleut served by Nonwalek, SVT, Port Graham, Seward's, Quteceak Tribal Connections  
 How Can Youth Connect to the other 6 Cultural Categories?

**KPNYL currently serves 12 High School sites within KPBSD.**

- Title VI in KPBSD serves Native Alaskans within 5 Alaskan Native territory regions + Native American students who (SI) self-identify (via ED 506).

**150 HS NYL team members from 12 HS sites who are active:**

- 52 of 150 members Self Identify (SI) with 2 of the 5 Alaskan Regions within KPBSD. 106 of 150 are covered by Title VI.
- 98 of 150 members SI with 3 Alaskan Native regions outside KPBSD and/or as "Native Alaskan" (in general), and/or Native American (lower 48), and/or Non-Title VI (All other cultures). These 98 feel they DO NOT have
  - A local connection to their SI ethnic cultural lead within their community; and or
  - An easy method to connect/explore (hands on)with a lead/peer about their SI culture on their local school site as easily as they can on their NYL team.

**Why does KPNYL work for it's members?**

KPNYL allows a place for members to Learn leadership thru a Native Cultural lens, while each member choose the cultural lens they would like to explore, share=increased personal pride.

150 HS members are on track to earn .5 Elective Leadership credits, completing both KPBSD Leadership Standards and Alaska Native Student's 27 Cultural Standards by HS graduation.

# Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leaders

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## Using Your Leadership Voice

### Student Representative – Ryann Cannava Title VI Advisory Committee

Please give your opinion, thoughts, comments, wishes, etc.

What you like about KPNYL Team, What you would like more of? What you would like see changed, etc.?

**Fly in Teams = Will collect during spring meeting = 1, 2, 3,**

*(Team 4 SBE not active this year- 2 TVI students on list)*

**Team 5 –**

R.O. 2<sup>nd</sup> year – Grade 10

I think Native youth leadership is important because learning about culture is a major influence in the adult world. I think that it shows a lot about people on the amount they know or want to learn. It teaches leadership

R.H. 3<sup>rd</sup> year – Grade 11

KPNYL team and cultural education is important because with it cultures will not die as fast as they are now. I think KPNYL is essential to keep native cultures alive and enrich students about native cultures.

D.S 1<sup>st</sup> year – Grade 9

I came to the meeting to learn about our community and the others that surround you.

D.H.2<sup>nd</sup> year – Grade 10

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I like these native meetings because they are fun. More people = stronger culture

M.D. 2<sup>nd</sup> year – Grade 10

Native youth leadership is important because it helps educate people on native cultures. This is important because it unites people and teacher people about their heritage and how you fit in.

L.R. 2<sup>nd</sup> year – Grade 10

I came because I enjoy learning about other cultures and it not something that you get to do very often. I think it is important to have cultural connection team because I provided people with the opportunity to learn about their culture and explore their traditions.

C.B. 1<sup>st</sup> year – Grade 9

This is important because it provides leadership.

# Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leaders

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R.O 3<sup>rd</sup> year – Grade 11

I think KPNYL is important because it motivates students to get involve in the community and teachers students' things that should be taught in school. Thinks like leadership and inspiring others.

O.F 2<sup>nd</sup> year – Grade 10

KPNYL gives kids opportunities to experience other cultures

C.A. 1<sup>st</sup> year – Grade 9

Culture is important because it brings people together. I come to native youth leaders because it teacher me about different cultures and it give me a place that I can hang out with my friends and other people. Culture brings people together.

G. N. 2<sup>nd</sup> year – Grade 11

It is important because you get to learn leadership and native cultures and always fun to come together.

L.J 2<sup>nd</sup> year- Grade 12

KPNYL brings diversity and difference between people in one room. It would be nice to be able to take trips to anchorage to the museums where it has loads of history and art.

J.C. 4<sup>th</sup> year – Grade 12

KPNYL is important for schools because it allows for students to connect with their cultural side.

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F. D. 3<sup>rd</sup> year – Grade 11

Culture is unique and should be taught in schools. KPNYL teaches us that. Yay!

D.D 1<sup>st</sup> year – Grade 11

Culture is important to me because I think diversity should be shared with everyone,

J.R 2<sup>nd</sup> year – Grade 11

Culture is important because expressing who you are is very important. Who you are is something you should be able to express.

E.H 3<sup>rd</sup> year – Grade 11

Culture is important because most people want to reach out and achieve their goals.

# Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leaders

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## Team 6

R.C. 3<sup>rd</sup> Year- Grade 12

KPNYL is a program that has helped me learn more about native culture and learn leadership skills to use in the future.

T.D. 1<sup>st</sup> year – Grade 9

I want to learn more about my culture and other people's culture. I enjoy learning more about my culture and traditions. I really like that we can learn about any culture. I want to learn my native language. I enjoy having access to traditions.

C.E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Year- Grade 12

Events like NYO were my favorite part of KPNYL. In addition, the Leadership Institute where we learned to cook Thanksgiving and the real history of the day.

T.L- 2<sup>nd</sup> year- Grade 12

I think the native community is under represented on the Kenai Peninsula and having KPNYL & NYO is a good outlet to learn and celebrate the native community.

I like learning about native culture especially I do not have elders to teach me about it. I also think it is important to have cultural diversity because I think there is not a lot of pride in being Alaskan native. I think in my school there is a lot of ignorance about Alaskan Natives and a lack of respect. I greatly appreciate the hands-on project with the cultural aspect. For example the drum making and dream catcher.

W. J. 2<sup>nd</sup> year – Grade 12

I like getting together with other high schools because it allows us to make new friends and get to know more about things of the other people's native heritage. I think I am a natural learner. KPNYL helps my community know about what is going that we don't see. It would cool to learn survival skills if for some reason you became stranded in the Alaskan wilderness. I've enjoyed the trips outside of the school.

M.P. 6<sup>th</sup> Year – Grade 12

I would change what people think about me. I am ready for a change. I do not have many friend in my old school and I have been there my whole life. It was most comfortable when with PGKP staff and the KPNYL Team. I wish PKGP were in every school. The staff really supported ALL students and I was able to make new friends. I will take what I have learned in KPNYL and teach it to others wherever I go.

J.G. 1<sup>st</sup> year – Grade 9

I like the ½ credit it really helps with graduation. I would like to learn how natives figure out what animal they are connected to.

# Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leaders

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N.P 3<sup>rd</sup> year- Grade 11

I am not native although I still enjoy learning the culture. I think we should do more yearly activities, like cooking or something similar to the thanksgiving dinner (2 years ago) or creating things like tools or jewelry.

E.B 1<sup>st</sup> year – Grade 9

It takes strength and courage to admit the truth

A.P 2<sup>nd</sup> year – Grade 10

I really like that KPNYL allows non-native students to find and make cultural connections. I would like to learn how to bead.

I.D 2<sup>nd</sup> Year – Grade 10

I would like to learn about native languages and foods. I think it is valuable to learn about native cultures because it is good for students to be exposed to different cultures, traditions, and lifestyles. Learning about native cultures can also help us discover tricks that helps us survive if we are lost in the wilderness.

**Team 7 – need to collect from campus River City Academy**

**Team 8**

Z.A. 1<sup>st</sup> Year – Grade 10

I came because of the learning ability and activities. I would like to learn and talk about our culture. I would tell someone that they could earn half a credit for just a little bit of their time.

S.W. 2<sup>nd</sup> year – Grade 1-

To learn more about the culture that you are involved in.

M.K. 1<sup>st</sup> year Grade 9

I think KPNYL is important because they help you with your credits. Never give up working on your own goals not others. Mistakes are proof that you are learning how to stop them.

M.P. 1<sup>st</sup> year – Grade 10

Want to learn different cultures and ways of life.

E.J. 1<sup>st</sup> year – Grade 9

I think KPNYL is important for learning leadership and advocacy for Native youth in schools. It is important to learn there are people who share the same experiences.

# Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leaders

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J.S. 1<sup>st</sup> year – Grade 9

Make KPNYL More known, “put it out there”, advertise like website –slideshow it is great! I want to learn the different cultures that surround out community and the way of life

K.T. 1<sup>st</sup> year – Grade 9

I like coming to this event because I would have stayed in my room with my cats and don't come out for the weekend.

## Team 9

C.W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Year – Grade 12

My favorite thing about being on the team is getting to know your culture and your background.

A.V. 1st year – Grade 1-

It bring back culture. It makes diversity and show different ideas on life.

J.G. 3<sup>rd</sup> year -Grade 12

It can really teach people about tradition.

## Team 10

A.T 3<sup>rd</sup> Year -Grade 12

Being part of KPNYL makes my family feel more comfortable with me being away from my hometown. I really want to travel more.

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T.N. 1<sup>st</sup> year – Grade 11

I want to learn about my culture and reconnect with my native community. It would be cool to go back out to my village and go fishing in the river again. I went all the time in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and I want on a “snow-go” in the winter and saw my mom catch a pike with “manaq” = ice fishing stick.

M.L 2<sup>nd</sup> year - Grade 11

I really like the half credit. I want to learn how to make a traditional hat.

S.H 2<sup>nd</sup> year – Grade 10

I want to learn other cultures and get the half a credit.

# Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leaders

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D.T 1<sup>st</sup> year- Grade 9

One reason why I like KPNYL is because people learn a lot about their ancestors.

A.R. 2<sup>nd</sup> year Grade 10

I think there needs to be a leaders because if not everyone would be doing whatever they want. I would like to learn more about my Hispanic culture.

D.M 2<sup>nd</sup> year – Grade 11

It let you know everything about your cultures and I want to learn more about cultures.

L.J 2<sup>nd</sup> year – Grade 11

I like having half a credit and hearing about my culture and others. I also like the opportunities it give me. I want to learn how to make grass baskets. I want to learn how to speak my language. I want to learn how to make guspaq. I want to learn how to bead.

## Team 11

J.L. 1<sup>st</sup> year – Grade 9

Importance of Cultural Connection, Meet 2x a week, traveling, cultural sense of importance, Food, Traditional Dance

S.P 4<sup>th</sup> year - Grade 12

I like the feeling of a Tribe

M.M 1<sup>st</sup> year- Grade 9

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What I like about KPNYL is that some of the kids can kind of relate more, and we can build cool stuff.

B.T. 1<sup>st</sup> year- Grade 9

I like the food and stories. More cooking Aesthetic posters - well edited, highly quality nice quality videos, quotes, insight cards (to educate our school community)

E.S year – Grade 11

I want to learn more about Native American Culture and get .5 credit.

L.N. – 1<sup>st</sup> year – Grade 11

To learn more about Native Cultures



# Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leaders

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## Team 12

S.C. 2<sup>nd</sup> year – Grade 12

KPNYL teaches us a lot about other people and where everyone comes from. We do so much together and get to meet new people.

C.K 1<sup>st</sup> year –Grade 10

I think KPNYL is important because it helps student learn leadership skills and help get kids of their comfort zone. We get to do so much together and meet new people

J.K. 1<sup>st</sup> year - Grade 9

It was a great opportunity to make drums!

K.C 1<sup>st</sup> year – Grade 10

I think “Native Youth” is good because we get to understand and learn things we didn’t get to in class and we connect.

K.D 1<sup>st</sup> year Grade 10

I think Native youth is a good thing because people can learn about their tribes. I would like more activities like traveling and hands on activities (like the drums)

K.M 1<sup>st</sup> year – Grade 12

It is important to have a culture club because it gives you a community and a program to learn leadership and getting half a credit is awesome.

A.C – Choctaw 2<sup>nd</sup> Year – Grade 12

We need to have this club going because it lets student connect to their roots and learn more about native life.

## Adult Supporters

M.M. –1<sup>st</sup> year Adult - Student Aid

I think the confidence that students gain by being part of the Native Youth Leadership is priceless. Any money allotted to the program would be worthy investment toward the future community when these students are adults. Productive community member because of leadership skills and experience that they have gained by being in the program. KPNYL is needed for the students who need to make the connections, for reasons of feeling like they belong and have confidence. Example is one student who is transitions from the village and it gave him a place to belong.

# Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leaders

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L.W. 3<sup>rd</sup> year – Grade 12 – From a father: “She found her team I haven’t seen her this happy.”

## **Drum making Workshops = Students listed TOP 3 Things they would like more of?**

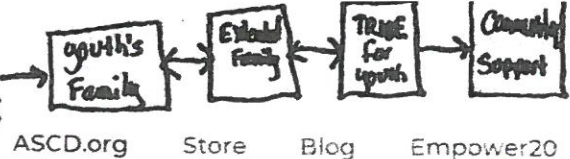
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**Travel & Events** – UNITY, WEIO, Pow Wows, to the villages & reservations, campout, NYO,

**Hands on Projects** – Like the drums, mask, dreamcatchers, foods cooking, smoking fish, Native Ice-cream sewing, beading, Kayaks

**Other Areas of Interest** - Cultural Music, Dancing, Regalia, Customs, Belief, Holidays, Ways of hunting,

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CULTURAL  
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# A Cultural Lens Leads to More Effective Teaching

*Kerrie Carl*

Teachers in training often receive limited introduction to the importance of multicultural education. Many don't learn how to design culturally responsive curricula and instructional strategies. Such was my experience, and as I began my teaching career in a small rural school district in Southeast Alaska, I quickly learned how the layers of a local culture are critical components for effective education.

When considering what "culture" means, people most often examine its surface: the clothing, music, art, dance, and stories. These aspects are the low-hanging fruit. Although representative of students' experiences and important to understand, they do not reach the depths of who students are as people or inform teachers how to teach in culturally responsive ways.

## An Unfamiliar Classroom

In rural Southeast Alaska, where I teach, indigenous people comprise the dominant culture in many schools. Nonnative teachers like me are often out of step with the community's (and therefore the school's) local culture. I had westernized assumptions about how people learn that weren't serving my students well. What I experienced growing up as an American military brat was different from what my students learned and experienced growing up in Tlingit culture. The classroom management strategies I followed (raising your hand if you had a question or adhering to rigid start times) went against local customs. Children are taught to listen and learn through oral histories and not to interrupt, which is seen as disrespectful. Starting right on time didn't make sense to my students' wilderness lifestyle, in which fishing patterns or the weather determine the schedule and demand a slower pace.

These differences manifested not only in the way I taught, but also in school customs. During my first year of teaching in a small village, the community held a welcome dinner for me. I invited my students to serve themselves food first and later learned I had offended one of the elders. It is customary for elders to always eat first, and I, as the rookie, didn't think to ask.

Though I've lived in Alaska for 30 years now and have adopted pieces of that lifestyle into my culture (storing food and firewood for winter, patience while traveling in inclement weather), I recognized long ago that there were parts of my students' experiences I would need to work hard to understand. Because of the internet, my students have a broader view of the world than I ever did, even though they live in a rural place. They connect with and learn from others locally, nationally, and globally on social media. In addition to their generational traditions, these experiences are also a part of their culture. I needed to learn from them to become a better teacher for them. I became the student.

## Relationships First

I began by asking students about more subtle cultural aspects. They taught me about how, in many Alaska Native cultures, direct eye contact is offensive, particularly when young people are talking to adults. They taught me about local foods like fish oil, Indian cheese, and Eskimo ice cream and the techniques for gathering and preserving them. Understanding family relationships was especially crucial. In Tlingit culture, the maternal uncle teaches his sister's sons activities such as hunting and fishing.

Once I understood these dynamics, the level of connection with my students and families grew. I tried to form relationships with all the people who were in my students' lives and was far more respectful of students missing school. If there was a funeral, students would be absent for several days as they observed customary traditions, ceremonies, and feasts. In turn, students and families understood that I cared and wanted to learn.

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## Relevant Lessons

I've also witnessed how teachers in our district have made efforts to learn more about the strong connection between culture and student motivation. Students learn better when their cultural values and practices are reflected and respected in the curriculum. Our collective understanding has led us to create more relevant assignments. Because gathering food is an important part of community life, students write about trapping and fish wheels. We learn about making jam and preserving fish in class. Our writing and math centers around the price of furs and salmon and how much money you can make based on the season.

Singing is a large part of Tlingit culture, so we make room for it when we can. One spring, orcas came into the bay near the school, close to shore—a sign of good luck. One of the school's dance group leaders grabbed her drum and took students to the beach to sing and welcome the orcas. In our middle school, we use Classcraft, a point system with avatars and prizes for class rewards that motivates students interested in gaming. Instead of forcing students who start the school year late

because they fish commercially to comply with a strict schedule, the district makes accommodations through migrant education programs that support their education without limiting their work on the fishing grounds.

## A Page from History

While generations-old traditions serve as a foundation for local lifestyles and cultural development, other influences also leave their mark. I took my 4th and 5th grade class to read the stories they wrote in class to elders at the senior center. Over time, the elders shared their own stories about past injustices that still impact the community. Historical trauma caused by Russian and American policies led to the brutal treatment of Alaska Natives only two generations ago. These elders recall being beaten for speaking their native language, singing songs, or wearing traditional clothes.

By helping students make sense of these histories and experiences in age-appropriate ways, the elders grew students' cultural understanding in ways a nonnative educator like me couldn't. Teachable moments about racism often came out and led to lengthy conversations when we returned to our classrooms.

For a teacher working outside of her or his "cultural zone," understanding different cultures is critical for more effective teaching. Knowing who students are as individuals and meeting their unique needs and interests is the foundation of learning.

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