



Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE)

Office of Indian Education

TRIBAL LEADERS CONSULTATION

PUBLIC MEETING

The above-entitled matter commenced at 8:30 a.m. in the Rasmuson Conference Center, 3600 San Jeronimo Court, Anchorage, Alaska; with Joyce Silverthorne, Director, Office of Indian Education; Sedelta Oosahwee, Associate Director, White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education; with Gloria O'Neil, CEO/President, CITC and Amy Fredeen, Chief Operating Officer, CITC moderating.

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

MS. O'NEILL: Good morning everyone. How are you? Good. I'm not sure how many of you traveled into Anchorage for this meeting, but I hope you didn't get caught up in that wind storm. But it's nice to have you here on a Monday morning.

My name is Gloria O'Neill, and I serve as president and CEO of Cook Inlet Tribal Council.

And we're going to go ahead and get started today. So I will ask that we post the colors and I want to thank the Army National Guard, the honor guard who's with us today. And then I've asked one of our elders, Mark Hiratsuka to begin with a prayer after the posting of the colors.

(Posting of the Colors)

MR. HIRATSUKA: Our Heavenly Father, I do thank You for the opportunity to render service when asked to do so by having had the opportunity to be a 34-year education

veteran. I know how important it is when people gather together to talk about the issues relevant to education all across our state. We have very important people here today, Lord, those who are in the higher places and those who are in the trenches, and those who are rendering service wherever they might be called upon.

And so whatever outcome that is established for this gathering today, I thank you, Lord, that You were able to bring them here to Anchorage to our building from all points of the state and country to meet with everyone, and that were safe from the ravages of this last storm that we had.

And I pray, God, that today whatever the business that's laid before these good people, that the objective of where it's going to make good for our children and all those who are involved in education.

I pray that you'll bless the outcome of all the dialogue and all the actions that this body takes today. Thank You that we have the opportunity to meet with all these people and that some good will come out of this. And I pray that you'll bless each one of them.

In Jesus' special name, amen.

Thank you.

MS. O'NEILL: Okay. So again welcome. We have to hold the button down. Can you hear me now? You could probably hear me without a microphone.

I don't know if that's -- are you going to rock and roll us on Monday morning?

(Laughter.)

MS. O'NEILL: All right. So as with proper protocol, I am grateful that we have one of our tribal leaders here today from our region, Lee Stephan, who serves as president of the Native Village of Eklutna, and we've asked Lee to give us a few words, and to welcome you all here to do the work that we need to do together. Lee.

MR. STEPHAN: Is it working?

MS. O'NEILL: Good.

MR. STEPHAN: Good. Hello to everybody. I don't know about these modern convenience.

I'll give you a little education. Dena'ina in south central Alaska used to be over five million acres, or this area. MacKenzie Point down to Portage, Talkeetna Mountains, Lake George encompassed where we live. In education, you know, how to live, how to survive here. Smart enough to use all the waterways. Easier to travel that way. And if we look at the woods nowadays, you can't get through hardly.

As I welcome, I take advantage of these kind of opportunities to give Eklutna's two cents. We have about 270 tribal members. In the village have maybe 50. ANCSA, lands claims, did that to us. We can't build homes. We've got to divide up the land and allot it and plot it and all that good stuff, and property tax. And so all our people had to go away some place.

They learn from everybody else. That gives you kind of a bad connotation of who you are. I noticed when I come in today, all the skins, they sit in the back. That's what the white man education teach us. You sit in the back.

Now I understand we've got Indian education money. I see gatherings like this, the room we sit, the Dena'ina Center, and it was just packed. When we talk about Indian education, we have a few people and we're in a little, tiny room. You know, what do we want to do? Do we want to educate?

And then when I was going to school, what for? It was predetermined that you're going to be a janitor anyway. What do you need education for?

So in your development here, our people, we know stuff. I see where home school, only one person at home and their mother teaching them. To teach Indians, you've got to have a Ph.D. doctorate come up, go to a place like Bethel, Nome, smaller villages. You've got to have all this education and yet got the people living there aren't good enough to teach their own. So hopefully you'll work on that part. We know stuff. And if you act, what are you getting that education for?

I seen something on Channel 2 the other day which really knocked me over. They were teaching the kids about the permanent fund. This is what math is for. And I think they figured out what I'm going to get here a couple months from now. That's pretty good. But that's the kind of education I think is necessary to move everybody along and assimilate them or whatever, if you want to do that.

And on behalf of the Native people of Eklutna, 270, this is the first, I guess we're going to do it many time at home. I welcome all of you and I appreciate you coming into our land, and, you know, what God's gift things like this happen and they happen to all. And we can provide two cents.

Thank you.

MS. O'NEILL: Thank you, Lee. I really appreciate your being here today, your comments.

So before I get started, can we just take a few minutes and have folks go around the room and state your name and what tribe or organization you're representing today. And can we start with you? I don't know your name.

MS. ROMER: Jennifer. Jennifer, yeah. My name is Jennifer Romer and I'm currently working with Anchorage School District in Title IV, Indian Education.

MR. LECORNU: Adrian Lecornu with AFN. I work with the trustee committee.

MS. ROMNEY: I'm Nicole Romney, and I'm also with AFN. I am Athabascan from McGrath originally, and we are just here to listen today. Thanks.

MS. WATERSON: McKenna Waterson (phonetic).

MS. SHAHA: Hi I'm Patsy Shaha. I am the principal of the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School. I am Alutiiq from the Native Village of Perryville.

MS. GARRICK: I'm Betsy Garrick, and I'm a teacher with the Anchorage School District, and I serve on the Advisory Committee.

MS. BURNETT: I'm Kim Burnett. I serve as director of Cook Inlet Native Head Start. I'm originally from northern Minnesota, the Chippewa reservation. My daughter is from Chenega in Prince William Sound, Alaska, and I also serve as chair of the Native Advisory Committee to the Anchorage School District.

MR. KADINGER: Lee Kadinger with Sealaska Heritage Institute.

MR. LAMONT: John Lamont, parent of Native student. I have three, four children in school here in the Mat-Su Borough, and I'm Yup'ik from the Yukon.

MS. LAMONT: And I'm Yula Lamont (phonetic), John's wife.

MS. O'NEILL: Good.

MR. JONES: Laird Jones, Tlingit and Haida Central Council in Juneau.

MS. FREDEEN: Amy Fredeen, chief financial officer of Cook Inlet Tribal Council.

MS. RIEGER: Lisa Rieger, Cook Inlet Tribal Council.

MS. LANSY: Gail Lansy (phonetic), Cook Inlet Tribal Council.

MS. CALDWELL: Loretta Caldwell, I'm with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. I'm also with the University of Alaska-Anchorage College of Education, associate dean's office.

MS. ORTEGA: Irasema Ortega. I'm with the University of Alaska, College of Education. I'm Assistant Professor of Elementary Education.

MR. PETTICREW: Good morning. Ethan Petticrew. Unangax from Aleutian Islands. I am working for the Alaska Native Heritage Center as the vice president for cultural and educational services.

MS. LACARN: Misty Lacarn (phonetic). I'm working at Thunderbird Early College Charter School. I'm also at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks.

MS. EVANS: Yatibaey Evans. I'm from Mentasta, Alaska. We're Copper River people. And I'm representing Alaska Native Education, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District.

(Off-mic introduction.)

MS. DUCHARME: Hi. I'm Jo Ann Ducharme, Tlingit. I don't know if Joyce remembers me or not from a million years ago. I've been in Alaska for almost 40 years now, and I'm assistant professor at UAF, University of Alaska-Fairbanks, Department of Alaska Native Studies and Rural Development.

MR. INGRAM: My name is DeWayne Ingram, and I'm also with Title IV, Native Education at the Anchorage School District..

MS. McCARTHY-GRANT: Megan McCarthy-Grant. Excuse me. Mat-Su Borough School District.

MS. ORK: My name is Darcy Ork (phonetic). I'm Alutiiq from Port Lions.

MS. WILLCOX: (Speaking Native language) My name is Josi Willcox from the Chickaloon Village Ya Ne Dah Ah School.

MS. HERBERT: Fran Herbert, Colorado Department of Education. I work with the Ute and our job in Colorado is to see how we can decrease the achievement gap, excuse me, of Native American students.

(Off-mic introduction.)

MS. TREECE: Debbie Treece, special education director for the Chugach School District.

MS. SAMUEL: I'm Julianna Samuel. I'm Dena'ina Athabascan from Tyonek.

MR. ROLLAND: I'm Robert Rolland, Dena'ina Athabascan from here in Anchorage. I'm with the Southcentral Foundation.

MS. O'NEILL: Great. Annette?

MS. EVANS: Annette Evans Smith, Yup'ik, Suq'piaq, Athabascan. I am from the Village of South Naknek on my mom's side, Rampart on my dad's side, and I represent the Alaska Native Heritage Center.

MS. ANDERSON: I'm Susan Anderson, and I'm Tlingit. My family is originally from Wrangell and Juneau, and thank you all for coming. I know that some of you had to come through the wind storm, so I'm glad you made it here in one piece.

MS. BROWN: Good morning. I'm Doreen Brown. I'm the supervisor for Title IV Indian Education in Anchorage School District. My family is from the Kuskokwim region, specifically Napaniak, which is near Aniak, and also from Seattle. Thank you for coming today.

MR. HANLEY: Mike Hanley. I'm the Commissioner for the Department of Education.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: Joyce Silverthorne, Office of Indian Education, director.

MS. OOSAHWEE: Sedelta Oosahwee, associate director of the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education.

MS. O'NEILL: Would you like to I don't know if court reporter?

COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry.

MS. O'NEILL: She's recording.

COURT REPORTER: I'm busy writing down names. Meredith Downing with Computer Matrix Court Reporters.

MS. O'NEILL: And your names?

MR. ROTAGER: David Rotager (phonetic).

MS. OKOROAFOR: My name's Amara Okoroafor.

MS. O'NEILL: Great. Thank you for all your support. Well, thank you.

Yeah, I was thinking about the comments that I wanted to put into the room this morning. And just recently I arrived back from Washington, D.C., had a chance to meet with Joyce last week, and we talked a bit about the meeting and wanting to make sure that we good participation, but also, you know, good conversation and could inform the U.S. Department of Education of not only the status of Alaska Native and American Indian education in our state, but what we can do by working together.

And what came to my mind as I sit in the room and see you all today, some of you I don't know, some of you I do know, but especially the people sitting here around me is what comes to my mind is the value of partnership. And I think that, you know, that's the value of partnership is so important in education and how we collectively come together to have a solution to really help our kids, as Lee was saying, get through the system. And not only get

through the education system, but to thrive and, you know, become people who have great opportunity in the world, but also know who they are and where they come from. And that's really been very difficult for us in our state, and I'm sure across the nation, and it's been challenging. And we know that.

You'll hear from Susan Anderson a little bit later who will give an overview of Alaska Native Education, and where we are today. The statistics are appalling. And, you know, I have really made it a focus and a passion to figure out how we work across the state with many different people to respond to what's happening with our kids. And I know this is not going to be a systems fix. I know this is not all the solutions and answers will come from Washington, D.C. Not all the solutions and answers will come from the state. But it's really the solutions and answers will come from our partnership and will come from our parents, our students, and our communities.

So as I look around the room today, I see people who represent those cross-sector groups that I think will be very helpful as we intentionally have dialogue and discussions and lay out what I think, and others around the room I know I've talked to Commissioner Hanley a lot about this, where we need to go and where we need to be so that we can support our students in the education system.

I want to thank Commissioner Hanley for being here today. He said he's going to be here until about 2:00 or 3:00, and it's great that we have the Commissioner of our state show up and to be thoughtful and to be a part of the dialogue. Thank you. I really appreciate your leadership.

I also want to thank Annette Evans Smith for being here. She's been a great partner in trying to push this conversation of education ahead and really think about the balance between culture and western education. And also one I can't see down there on the end is Doreen Brown who I really think is an unsung hero, and she fights in the system every day. She's our Title IV director. She is every time I see Doreen, she's trying to figure out how to move the needle and to support our kids in the system. And I just want to publicly thank you, Doreen, for all of your leadership.

And, Joyce, thank you for being here. We really appreciate you coming up and listening.

And, Sedelta, it's nice to meet you, and I appreciate you being here as well.

So, unfortunately, like Lee is going to have to leave us. I'm going to have to leave as well, but I wanted to acknowledge Amy Fredeen. Amy will she's going to work on her facilitation skills today, and so she's going to step into my place and she's going to help facilitate the conversation. I hope that we all put on our listening caps and we think really deeply about what we're hearing, and that we're respectful, but also courageous in what we need to the message that we need to give to the Department of Education.

Of course, I wanted to tell you about my big dream of education, but I'm going to like leave that for Commissioner Hanley, because he knows that we are working on trying to develop a framework in which we can, as I said earlier, better support our kids, not only on a statewide basis, but we are very intentional of how we want to move ahead here in our local school district.

So, again, it's really about partnership. We don't do this alone and we don't do this in isolation. So thank you all for being here.

So, Joyce, welcome.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: Do we keep our finger down? Okay. Okay.

MS. O'NEILL: It's multi-challenging.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: I'll have to be able to do two things at once. This will be interesting.

Good morning, everybody. And it's a pleasure to be able to join you here. I first of all want to extend my appreciation for your willingness to attend the postponed date of this. We for most of you, I assume that you have been aware that we were attempting to have this held at the end of August, and it didn't work out very well for your schedules, and so we decided that we needed the people here more than we needed to just be here. And so I hope that this is has worked out better for some of you to be able to attend today and for us to be able to hear more about what you have to tell us.

The Department of Education is a different place than where I have first been introduced to education, and it has been an interesting first year of a career change. I am from Flathead reservation. I am Salish. My mother was from Kansas and she was a full-blood Chippewa, Kickapoo, Patawatami and Mohawk. So I'm Heinz 57 according to Mom.

And we have a lot of history with education. My mother was a successful boarding school graduate from Haskell who went to work with the Depart with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C. in 193 with the New Deal. My father is a very successful

boarding school runaway from a number of boarding schools in the Northwest. And eventually they just quit looking for him.

So with that kind of a history, as you can imagine, there were many discussions about the value of education in our home, and who we are and what we represent.

We have an interesting opportunity and an interesting time to work with the Department of Education. We have a number of settlements across the country that have been unprecedented. The Cabela case, the water rights that are going on, a number of the areas and people are impacted across the country.

At the same time, we still have an achievement gap. The NIES study that was released in July said that our children had not moved. Whether that study is an accurate representation of our children or not is certainly open for debate. But it at least is one of the indicators that's out there and well publicized. It is sponsored by our office, and we are having conversations about how we can make it better, how we can make it more accurate, not just a better test.

The opportunity to look at where we are going, there have been three White House conferences with tribal leaders across the country. In my 30-plus years of working in education, I have seen the President address tribal leaders. I have seen the Secretary of Interior, the Secretary of Education, Secretary of Health and Human Services. That's unprecedented for us when we go to Washington, D.C. That isn't usually who we see. We see an aide. We see a representative but we don't usually get to see those leaders. And they have made time in their schedules to be able to meet with Indian people.

When I applied for the job that I am in, I have watched this job be advertised for a number of times. And have seen a high turnover in the position. In the past eight years, there has only been acting directors. And so hopefully we're turning a corner and I have a commitment of being there at least five years. As you may have guessed, this is not exactly the beginning of my career, and so this will be where I will end my career.

So at any rate, we're really looking forward to being able to take tribal consultation, tribal listening and learning sessions, whether it's called urban or not, please don't let that dissuade you. We have discovered that there are a lot of conversations and the title gets in the way of what we really want to do, and that's hear from people. And so please feel free to share. It certainly is not restricted to urban representation.

The idea of being able to support children learning who they are from the people who know them best is something that Title IV does have in its statute. And although it has gotten away from that somewhat in the past, we hope that and believe that this Administration at least supports bringing that back together. And so we're working on trying to stabilize the office, bring things together so that they can support the education that is needed in the field. And we're shifting some of our contracts about to be able to do that.

So with that, I'll hold any other remarks until closing, and I am glad to see you here. I'm glad that all of us were not caught up in the wind storms. As I was leaving D.C. and I was hearing about them, it made me a little bit uneasy. I'm glad that we're all here. Thank you.

MS. OOSAHWEE: Good morning. My name is Sedelta Oosahwee. I'm going to get my title right this time. I'm the associate director for the White House Initiative on American

Indian and Alaska Native Education. I'm very new to the job. I think this is my sixth week, so thank you guys for welcoming us here.

I think I got distracted when I heard all the names and all the different titles, and it's really great to see everybody from different areas of education, from parents to administrators, and so we're very happy you're here.

I want to let you guys know that at the White House Initiative we're working very hard for you guys.

Wait. Did I tell you what tribe I am? I didn't, did I. I got too far, I started talking business. I'm an enrolled member of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation of Fort Berthold, North Dakota. I actually grew up in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and I'm half Cherokee as well.

Like Joyce, I'm from a family of educators. My dad is a language instructor at the local university in Tahlequah. My mom is a retired counselor from Northeastern State University, which is in Tahlequah as well. She started as a BIAE counselor or a BIA counselor in the late 70s I think, and then transitioned over and worked for the university for about 30 years. So I have cousins who are teachers and Title IV coordinators, and we just kind of I avoided education as long as I could, quite frankly, and tried to stay away from that, because I felt like it was the family business, but lo and behold I ended up getting a master's degree in it, got a job right after college working at Northeastern State University for the Native students there, and loved it. Left that job for a couple years and went away from education. And then when this opportunity came up to apply for this job, I took that, because I missed it, and I'm very happy to be working back in education. It's when your heart's in it, I guess you can't really get

away from it. And when it's a calling, you really can't leave that behind. So I'm very happy to be working with this.

And this is my first time to Alaska. I look forward to hearing what everyone has to say.

At the initiative we're working very hard, working on the MOU. I think you guys have a copy of that in your folder. We're going to have that finalized hopefully in the next six weeks. We're also working very hard on our interagency working group, and that should be convening around six weeks as well. But I just want to let you guys know about that, what we're doing over at the initiative.

And again thank you guys for welcoming us here, and look forward to hearing your comments.

MS. O'NEILL: Next we have a presentation from Susan Anderson who serves as the president and CEO of the CIRI Foundation, and I appreciate you, Susan, doing this for us. Are you going to have slides back here?

MS. ANDERSON: I think someone yeah, I think --

MS. O'NEILL: Okay.

MS. ANDERSON: Do you want me to move over there?

MS. O'NEILL: Oh, no, no, no, no. What I'm going to do is just move out of the way then so people can see. Can everyone see the screen? Okay.

MS. ANDERSON: She doesn't have my pictures up there, so that's good.

They're also on that drive, so --

(Laughter)

MS. ANDERSON: So as you heard earlier, I'm Susan Anderson and I am honored to serve as the CIRI Foundation's president and CEO.

Noble people of this land, gunalcheesh ax x'eit yisa aaxi. Thank you for allowing me to speak today.

And I was asked to give an overview of Alaska Native education, which is a bit of a daunting task, because I think most of you in here could probably do it yourselves, but I'm going to try and do it today, and if I miss anything, please feel free to fill in the blanks.

So Gloria was talking about working in partnership, and that's why I'm honored to give this presentation today, because the CIRI Foundation is a partner with Cook Inlet Tribal Council working on education and cultural issues. And we work with the Alaska Native Heritage Center. We work with villages. We work with the school districts. We work with the state. We work with everyone, trying to focus on improving education and preserving and perpetuating culture and heritage. And we were started by CIRI, the for profit, 30 years ago.

The primary focus of what we've been doing for the last 30 years is offering scholarships and grants for Alaska Native people to go to school, and I'm actually one of the first scholarship recipients. But don't do the math, okay?

(Laughter)

MS. ANDERSON: In those 30 years more than 12,000 awards have been given out, and almost \$22 million for people to go to school. And we literally have doctors and teachers and attorneys and carpenters and architects, and it's an amazing thing to think about. And it is about education and it is about obtaining knowledge for yourself, and for you and your family, because it does change your life as we know, and not just yours.

As you know, the early education policy in Alaska wasn't so hot let's just say. And as we talk about things today, I mean, I'm going to be pretty frank. You know, being a Tlingit person, as some of you know, we can be pretty frank and candid, but we need to be and we need to be courageous as what Gloria was saying.

So as we know, in school and out of school boarding schools were prevalent in Alaska Native education history, and literally they were trying to assimilate, you know, kids, force the Nativeness out of us literally. There were deliberate attempts to wipe out students' Native heritage by outlawing cultural practices, spiritual rituals, tribal songs, dances, prayers, as we know. And students were punished for speaking their Native language or expressing their cultural heritage.

As you can tell from my greeting, I'm attempting to learn Tlingit as a woman of a certain age, because my father wasn't allowed to in Wrangell and Juneau. He had his mouth washed out with soap, and he told me about that numerous times, but it wasn't until I was in my 20s that he told me these stories. And when I grew up, I knew I was Alaska Native, but that mostly came from my mom, who was not Tlingit, because my dad's history was really a challenging time. His childhood was full of, you know, early death of his mom, alcoholism of

his father, the numerous children's homes where he was, you know, put in, the tearing apart of his family by those who knew better, you know, and they split up his siblings.

So some of this, as we know, still continues today. Not as much, but some. But this careless unraveling of the cultural, physical and emotional threads of my family that's not up there. We'll get there. We'll get there.

MS. OKOROAFOR: Okay.

MS. ANDERSON: That's next, we'll get there.

You know, but I'm trying to make this personal, because it is personal to us. It's personal to who we are and who we are as people who live here, and people who raise children here. And so I think that's the thing that people need to remember.

So as difficult as this was for my father, he was resilient as many Native people are. He forged on. He served in the U.S. Navy, and through the G.I. bill he was able to go to college, and, of course, his route there was a little circuitous. He basically heard there girls and parties, and how bad could that be? So he headed down. But eventually he became a teacher, and he had a family. He became a carver, an artist, and he knew that his daughters' lives were better than his. But we paid a price, and after he'd already paid a huge price when it came to cultural loss, that's still being healed for me and for my family.

All of these experiences and more, you know, happened in the BIA and missionary schools, which really provided education here in Alaska until 1958, which is really not that long ago if you think about it. And I'm not saying they were all bad, because they weren't. But the reality is they weren't run by us. So that's something to think about.

And obviously some changes have come with Johnson-O'Malley Act, which provides funds for Alaska Native people, communities, and state-run schools. And the act gives the Secretary of the Interior as we know the authority to contract not only with state and local agencies, but with corporations for the education of our kids. Contracts under the act provide funds for districts, for schools operated by the state in Alaska and elsewhere as we know, and with the involvement of Alaska Native parents. The involvement of Alaska Native parents, so thank you for being here, parents. Tribes and tribal organizations also use Johnson-O'Malley funding for a variety of education purposes.

So as you know, though, with the exception of Johnson-O'Malley funds, the Alaska tribes and tribal organizations receive zero federal Bureau of Indian Education money for the education of Alaska Native children. And that happened in 1983 with legislation prohibiting the Bureau funding for Alaska schools. The state of Alaska bears the responsibility for education Native children and ensuring that they have access to the same educational opportunities as their non-Native peers. And this is primarily achieved through state funding of school districts and foundation funding.

So, you know, the state has responsibility, and it's not been an easy path as we might imagine. You know, they've we've had to litigate, and the state is forced to comply with the constitution.

In *Hooch versus Alaska State Operated School System* from 1975, the Alaska supreme court ruled that each school-aged child must have access to school. And then later in the *Kasayulie versus state* in 1999, the court found that the state system for funding school facilities violated the equal protection and education clauses of the state constitution, and the

legislature responded by allocating major increases in school facilities funding. And then just recently the ruling came down from the 2009 Moore versus state case. The superior court found that a lack of state oversight and remedial efforts in school districts with weak outcomes violated the state's constitutional duty to provide an adequate education.

And I know that the commissioner is working very hard to make these changes in the states, so I want to say thank you for that. I know it's not easy, and again partnership is really key to making these changes, because as we know, the educational disparities as have been talked about and will be talked about more, you know, the state's been responsible for the education of Native children for more than two decades, including the establishment of high schools in most villages.

You know, the result is still a great disparity in the quality of education for Alaska Native children, and a continuing gap in their educational achievements. I mean, as we know, many rural villages don't even have any schools, and families are then forced with the terrible choice, you know, between sending their kids away still, relocating their families to a whole other place of urban or developed area or completing neglecting their children's education.

So the story, as Gloria was saying is not too pretty at this point. As we basically all know, Alaska Native kids tend to be at the top of all the bad lists and the bottom of all the good lists at this particular point. They trail in nearly every achievement measurement. On a statewide level, we have lower proficiency ratings across the board in reading, only 32 percent of our students in grade 12 are proficient compared to their Caucasian counterparts. In writing, only 36 percent in grade 12 are proficient compared to 62 percent. In math, Alaska Native students in grade 12 have only a 23 percent proficiency rate as compared to their peers.

So and then this number absolutely gets me every time. Within the Anchorage School District, Alaska Native students have the lowest graduation rate, it's below 50 percent, and nearly twice the drop-out rate of the school district as a whole. So literally, if we had you're the incoming freshman class here, by the end of your senior year, half of you would be dropped out. Half of you would be gone.

So there's obviously some work going on this, and there have been some improvements in some places. But the reality is the funding components are such that it's a challenge. I mean, it's a challenge for consistent and reliable funding. Federal funds in the Department of Education do support efforts for Alaska Native education through the Alaska Native Educational Equity Act, both in Anchorage and across Alaska, but they don't suffice to make the systemic change necessary to set the stage for Alaska Native students to achieve high performance.

The ANEP grants, they do help address Alaska Native Education disparities, but again consistent, reliable funding remains inadequate or absent altogether. And as I said before, I mean, to be frank, we're establishing or reestablishing working partnerships with institutions that have had other motives for many years. You know, forward momentum is happening in these areas, but the majority of these grants have been awarded to universities and to school districts, the very institutions that have failed our students for a long time. And then the three-year granting cycle, that's pretty short. Nothing happens well, some things happen in three years, but long-term change usually takes a little longer than that, since it took a long time to get there. So the reality is, partnerships are being built or reestablished, so things are improving on one level, but there's a lot more that we need to do.

And some of the examples of the things that are innovative and different, we have demonstration grants for Indian children. And we have the Bering Straits School District who's in Unalakleet, and they're working with the Bering Straits School District or, excuse me, they are the school district, working to provide preschool services for three and four-year-old Native children in their three very isolated communities. And as we know, setting our kids up for success early on is critical to their long-term success. And then they're also working with going to work with high school students in the Bering Straits school district to ensure their successful transition to post-secondary education.

And then obviously we have Cook Inlet Tribal Council, and this is their building where you are right now, and they are building on their partners for success program which they worked with the Anchorage School District for many years. And with their project, they're going to prepare Alaska Native high school students for careers in the fields of STEM, science, technology, engineering, and math, through research, and it builds on the successful strategies and content for educating Alaska Native youth.

And then the other one is Goldbelt Heritage Foundation, and they're working with students down in Juneau with a culturally responsive mathematics and science curriculum, and they're looking at using solutions-based learning to meet and/or exceed their grade-level expectations.

So here's some three different kinds of groups in three different parts of the state working on some different and exciting things. But the thing is, is we need more new models and different models, and working together. We need to make a shift. And obviously our common goal and our greatest responsibility is the education of our young people. That's what

we need to focus on. Everything leads from that in life in my view. I come from a family of educators, so, you know, it's very important to me.

But, you know, the legal history of Native education in Alaska demonstrates that, you know, we've had our lumps and bumps. We need new initiatives and policies to change the course of education for Alaska Native students. And we need to be courageous, and we need to have those conversations, and we need to just do it.

A history of relying on state constitutional protections and implementation and the federal government, you know, they really haven't provided the culturally competent and academically rigorous opportunities and services necessary to allow our students to fulfill their potential. And the Alaska Native organizations, you know, we're in a place now where many of us, the organizations, are willing and able to ignite a powerful new synergy between communities, corporations, tribes, the university system, because we need to work together to equip our children with the tools that they need to thrive in the villages and the global market place. I mean, we're all connected.

They're not up there.

So, in closing, I want to say, as we move through the 21st Century, we as Native people know what our friends at the Harvard study have shown, that self-determination matters, institutions matter, our institutions matter, culture matters, and leadership matters. And we as Alaskans and Native people know what is best for us, and it is up to us to take responsibility for making those things happen that we know are right for our people. And by collaborating among ourselves, tribal, non-profit, for-profit, state, you know, our friends, there's a powerful energy

that can be harnessed for our children. And we as Native people need to use these institutions or we have to create new ones to help the dreams of our people come true. We need to focus on what we can agree on and pull together in the longboat to that distant future to the distant shore which is called the future. I mean, we have to remember and honor the past, but we have to row to the future together. And we as Native people must know that we are able, capable, willing, you know, we want to preserve and pass on our knowledge to the next generations, and we use the ancient ways, but we also can use the new ways of education and teaching. We are a living people with living traditions that honor our ancestors as we incorporate them into today's world.

My family's story, your story, it's why education is so important for our people. And as we move through the 21st century, you know, who's willing to climb into that canoe with me, grab the paddles and pull together toward the future of what matters for our people.

Gunalcheesh.

(Applause)

MS. O'NEILL: Thank you, Susan.

Well, we're way ahead of schedule. I think it's, what, 9:30, and we were going to take a break at 10:15, so we're being efficient on a Monday morning.

I just want to say as I leave you and Amy takes my place to help facilitate today, that I appreciate your comments, Susan. I appreciate your passion, and, you know, I appreciate that you had courage to say what needed to be said in your presentation, and to know that we're we are all valued in this room. We're valued from the universities, from the school districts, from the tribes, from the tribal organizations, because truly, and mainly I'm really just grateful

that we have parents here today, and we have members of our own parent committee here today. I really appreciate the participation, because it's through all of us that we will be able to develop a solution to help our students. And it's about partnership, so thank you again.

We'll go ahead and take a 15, 20 minute break?

MS. SILVERTHORNE: Let's do 15, 20, get an opportunity to meet.

MS. O'NEILL: Okay. Yeah. We'll do a networking break and reconvene at 9:50 and then Amy will help set up the public comment period for you all and also give a little overview of CITC's investment in the school district.

So thank you.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: And there is a sign-up sheet for anybody who would like to be able to do public comment so that we get your names correctly into the record. With the court recorder, we really are trying to make an especial effort to be sure that we get the spellings and the information and all that to the court recorder. So please register for us.

Thank you.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record for a brief recess.)

MS. FREDEEN: Hello, everyone. I see some really great connections being made. I just want to give everyone a little fair warning about starting up again. I'd like to remind everyone that there's a table back there for those of you who are interested in signing up for the comments. There's also in your packets cards for you to use to make written comments. Encourage you to do both or one. We'd love to hear from you.

Again I want to thank the parents who are here, those from our Johnson-O'Malley program, this is going to be a really great conversation session, and I encourage you guys to participate.

I thought what I'd do is start off with a little bit about what CITC's been doing in working with our partners, both locally and at the state, and I want to acknowledge that this isn't about CITC, but I think it gives a really good framework about, you know, the challenges we're facing, what we need to do as a people to come together and help our youth.

For the past 10 years CITC has been involved in partnership with the Anchorage School District, having our own teachers and counselors placed in those schools to make an impact. And this is made possible by core funding from the Alaska Native Education Equity Program, and through that we're able to do kind of a first of its kind partnership with the Anchorage School District, which allows us to have our own teachers and our counselors teaching curriculum in a way that we see fit, and it's relevant for our students.

And what this has really meant for our people and our students is that, for instance, at Bartlett, and we have Gail from Bartlett, for the last two years we've had 100 percent graduation rate for our students engaged at Bartlett. And that is just something very phenomenal, especially when you think about across the Anchorage School District that less than half of our kids are making it to graduation. And that's why we're here and we're here to talk about how we can make that happen for all of our students.

So the way this program is structured, it was kind of a pipeline from elementary school to high school that allowed us to follow our students from grade school as they entered in through college. And so this program, you know, was very important and continues to be a very

important part of what we do. This year we're in two high schools engaging students with core curriculum and with our counselors.

Recent changes have really changed how the funding was put in is put out there, and so the ANEET money, or the Alaska Native Education Act and forgive me if I speak in acronyms. Feel free to raise your hand and ask me to explain, because I tend to default to that. You know, really the funding is really at the discretion of the U.S. Department of Education, and recently CITC collaborated with Sealaska to review and analyze the history of funding of the ANEET program, and what this really showed was that over 70 percent of that funding went to school districts and universities. And so it wasn't necessarily placed in organizations that have a strong history and or track record of helping our students be successful.

So one of the things I think that's really important to note is what's going on at the statewide level. Given the history of education in Alaska, it's important to note that the funding needs to go to organizations that can prove they can have a positive impact on our students and their achievements in closing that gap. At the statewide level we are seeking opportunity to develop cross sector alliances with the state of Alaska, which will allow Alaska Native people to have a greater role when systems change. This cross sector work will has the possibility of increasing success for Alaska Native students and is an important part of what we're doing here today.

CITC is also exploring new ways to partner with the state of Alaska and the Anchorage School District. CITC is part of an initiative and an effort to create a comprehensive vision of improving the educational experience of our Alaska Native young people. We're

establishing in partnership with many entities priorities that determine the success of how our success of our students will be defined and how they will achieve it. This includes collaboration with Alaska Native Heritage Center, with the superintendent, Jim Browder, the school district board, our partners within the school district, the teachers, the principals, and Doreen here, we appreciate your participation, and the CIRI Foundation, among many others. And United Way is really helping us bring a voice to that whole process. Our key focus will be to increase the Alaska Native education or graduation rates. As we noted, there is a huge achievement gap there. Another thing for you guys to be aware of is that there is a collaboration with the Citizens for the Education Advancement of Alaska's Children, or CEAC, to develop a study for a subsequent statewide policy proposal required to look at the regional residential facilities and to address those education gaps. So at the local level there are conversations about what we can do to scaffold our children in the Anchorage School District, but also at the regional and statewide level we're really looking at regional solutions to close those gaps.

And really encourage you guys to use your voice. Go to that back table and sign in. One thing to note as you come up to give your talk on the microphone is you don't have to be really close, because it gives a little feedback. Likewise with the table, we should be able to sit back and they should be able to hear us fine. Any time you can't hear us, please just wave your hand and we'll acknowledge that.

Right now to kind of help frame a little bit about the Department of Education's role, I'd like to invite Joyce to give a little information about her office in particular.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: Is it on?

MS. FREDEEN: Yes.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: As we're looking at all of the different programs that are providing information to Alaska, the Department of Education is a huge organization. There are many different programs, over 144 different grants that are offered through the Office of Elementary, Secondary Education. And our program within that structure is the Title IV formula programs, and we offer Title IV formula grants to 50 different school districts within the state of Alaska. And those are based on the student counts and the completion of an EASIE, E-A-S-I-E application. I don't think it's so easy, but it's a cute acronym.

And, believe me, the Department of Education lives by acronyms. I was given a handout of a flash drive that has 75 pages of acronyms. I have not mastered them all. I doubt that I'll need to. They're changes as soon as you master them.

In addition to our formula program, which goes out to over 1300 schools across the country, we have discretionary programs. And our discretionary programs are competitive application grants, and demonstration, and you saw several that were listed in the presentation that Susan did. And we also have with the demonstration, they are early childhood education and transition to college. Those are the two priority areas. Within the professional development discretionary program, we have teacher training and professional development. University of Fairbanks is one of the recipients for the professional development.

In addition to that, we are also a new provider for a pilot project that was funded for the first time last year, the state/tribal education partnership. And this is a grant that will be there have been none yet, there will be before the end of September. They will be provided to the tribal education agencies who have completed applications and been successful through a peer review process. And those are going to fund the tribal education agency to begin a

partnership with their state to work on assuming some of the responsibilities of the state office for schools within a reservation community.

As I'm outlining this, I'm sure people are checking off problems with that, and I agree. It's a pilot. It's only a beginning. We are vested in trying to make this the best possible opportunity it can be, but for Alaska it has a lot of pitfalls. Reservation. Public schools. Tribal education agencies. All challenges. So we really need to hear from you how that same opportunity might look different were it done here. We understand the difference between the corporations and the village communities, but we are challenged at how we make that work in the language of our statutes. And so we need your input to be able to help clarify a lot of those next steps for us. So as you're thinking about things to say the presentation this morning, please consider that.

Another program within our office administers the ANEET program, the AITQ and AITQ is a teacher quality. They have a number of other grants, but ANEET is one of theirs and teacher quality is their primary focus.

There is a need within our department to share information across programs. We had an opportunity last week to do a presentation in Nevada where we were we had impact aid and Title IV doing break-out sessions. And instead of having separate break-out sessions, we did them together. And it was the first time from our staff to be able to do that, and it was a good opportunity, and the discussion was great. And those kind of things need to be brought out more.

I don't know enough about your situation with impact aid, so I would encourage information that is related to impact aid as well.

So with that, Sedelta, would you like to?

MS. OOSAHWEE: No.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: So please, if you haven't signed up for public comment, please do so. All comments are welcome. Thank you.

MS. FREDEEN: I know we had several people sign up, so for those you who signed up, please come up to the mic, and for those of you who are interested, please go to the back. It would be really helpful for those of you as you come up to the microphone to let us know who you are, where you're from, and what you're here for. So I'll go ahead and start down with the list of the individuals who signed up.

So Jo Ann from the University of Fairbanks, could you please come up and introduce yourself and share your comments?

MS. DUCHARME: Is there a time limit?

MS. FREDEEN: Well, I think originally we had kind of framed for about three to five minutes. We aren't going to be very strict on that, but --

MS. DUCHARME: Thanks. I want to pay attention to protocol.

My name is Jo Ann Ducharme, and I teach at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. And I've been doing that pretty much for almost 20-plus years.

And one of the courses that I teach and have been teaching for about 15 years is Alaska Native Education. This is one of the courses -- well, before I begin, I want to tell you thank you. Again following protocols. Thank you for listening to me and thank you for being here.

One of the courses that I teach, Alaska Native education, is one of the multi-cultural requirements for teachers for recertification coming into the state. And I'm hoping that I'll be able to make connections not only between students and teachers, but between Lower 48 Native education programs and Alaska Native education programs for you.

So I wanted to just briefly tell you a little story about a student that I had a few years ago in Fairbanks. One of the textbooks that I used to use was rethinking our schools. If you've never heard or seen that textbook, I'd highly recommend that. The articles in the book are usually written by teachers and educators of color.

One of the articles was regarding Indian boarding schools, Native boarding schools in the country. And as we've heard today just in the introductions, all boarding schools have had a significant impact on all of us. My parents, my grandparents, my great grandmother, all products of Indian boarding schools in the Lower 48.

This student was required to read an article in rethinking our schools about a Ph.D. student, a Native student I believe at Stanford, who had been in a children's bookstore and picked up a book about Indian boarding schools. And it was a very romanticized version of boarding schools, almost like the education of Little Tree, a very erroneous story of Indian boarding schools. And she couldn't believe that this type of literature was still being propagated and being sold in today's bookstores. So she got on line to all of her fellow Ph.D. students, Native Ph.D. students throughout the country, and they started this event to really bring attention to the type of material, literature that's out there today that young children are reading, and this was one of the articles that they or books that they brought to the attention of people around the country.

Well, the student I had in class read this story and she was asked to write a reaction paper on it. And I remember sitting in my office reading this paper, and I couldn't believe what I was reading. She had been a certified teacher in another state coming to Alaska, and as you know, the teacher turn-over rate in Alaska, especially rural Alaska, is I think maybe the highest in the country. She was a transplanted educator, I don't remember what state, but she had been a certified teacher for at least five years. And she was going to be a new teacher in Alaska. She was convinced that the editors of Rethinking Our Skill Rethinking Our Schools were propagating this kind of information. She said in all of my years of education, and I she had finished her bachelor's degree, she had never heard of Indian boarding schools. She had never heard of this kind of situation. And she said, surely if this had happened in this country, we would know about this. So she blamed the editors of Rethinking Our Schools for trying to plant a very negative image. And I remember being totally surprised.

Since that time, I have met other certified teachers from other states who do not know the history of Indian boarding schools in this country. I would say that probably every state in this country, this is where I'm trying to make the connection, has instances of boarding school stories much like what we've heard today, and that we now know, just listening just from the introductions of you on the panel, this is a very generational kind of issue that we faced as Native people for many, many generations. And as teachers in this country, I would hope whether you're going to teach in Alaska or whether you're going to teach in the Lower 48 that somehow there is attention paid to this very real part, very real ugly part of the U.S. educational system in this country, because I feel that it's been a neglected part.

Here in Alaska we have fought many battles just to get Alaska history taught in the school, to be part of the curriculum. That battle has been fought by just a handful of individuals, both Native and non-Native.

So really think the understanding of who we are as Native people, a component that can be built into an educational system, teacher preparation program should definitely include a very strong component related to Indian boarding schools, because they're still very much alive, and we as Native people are still feeling the impact of what that system did to us. So it might not be a most positive thing to say that you want to infuse, but most definitely it I think helps to understand where some of the children in the classrooms are coming from with their parents or grandparents having been products of that Indian boarding school system.

So thank you again.

MS. FREDEEN: And, Jo Ann, I really appreciate you being the first one to come up and give us such an important message about understanding our history as it relates to, you know, the Indian boarding schools, and, you know, kind of the multi-generational effect they're still having on our people.

I don't know if anyone has any questions or follow-up they would like to do with Jo Ann?

If not, I'd go ahead and like to invite our next comment. And please forgive me if I get your name wrong. Please come up to the mic and correct me by all means. I'd like to invite Yatibaey Evans from the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District.

MS. EVANS: Good morning. It's pronounced Yatibaey, and it means northern lights in the Mentasta dialect Athabascan language.

So I am the Title IV director for the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. I've wrote down a whole card full of comments that have just kind of been on my mind. I've been with the program for about a year. I also observed it as a student coming through the Fairbanks School District myself. And I'm really making a big effort on improving I guess the ideas and concepts around Indian education, and what we're all about to people that are outside of our program, and just some of the things that I am concerned about that I don't think get quite a bit of attention or maybe they do get attention personally by individuals, but maybe it's not discussed.

One of the things that really is something that I've seen is that the school district, people that work in there like to placate people that are involved in Indian education or Native tribes in general, and I feel as though we're a name to check off, or a box to check off as completing our Native requirements in certain aspects of what we apply for in the different programs that are offered. And as an advocate for our Native students, I really try to, you know, be in those meetings and present our needs and concerns and what we're doing as a program, and try to bring that across in a way that they'll receive it and be excited about it and, you know, utilize that information.

So I think that collaborating more with the state and bringing that state support in would definitely help from another avenue, rather than, you know, our seemingly and I know this is kind of a difficult word, but we are kind of seen as a step child in school districts, and it should not be that way, because we are in our tribal traditional lands and we have been here for

thousands of years, and we should be the ones that are embracing and welcoming the school districts and the outside entities into our places and where we've been, you know, teaching and educating our people for eons. And so that step child, you know, I guess attitude could be disintegrated by your support and by the feds' support through the Office of Indian Education.

So, you know, here I am, you know, one person, the Native representative in an entire school district saying, hey, help our Native kids, whoo-who-who. But then here you guys are saying, hey, you know, make sure you're providing that financial support, make sure you're looking out for the Title IV program, make sure that, you know, all of the teachers are getting the cultural, you know, state standards taught to them when they're going through either the teacher preparation program, or when they've already been hired. And then when we have this collective circle of support, then I believe that we can see our students being more successful, because then more attention is being placed on them.

And clearly the statistics support our focus needs to be on our American Indian/Alaska Native students, because as we have heard, you know, we're seeing 50 percent graduation rates, which is, you know, appalling, and it's one of the big reasons why I'm in this position that I'm in, because I want to see our kids succeed.

And I think we often also talk a lot about education and supporting academics and that's why we're here. Like that's our whole big issue, like why get into education, we're not about it. But we also need to examine the fact that we're raising human beings, and these human beings have whole breadth of life going on in their lives that area attributing to their success or failure, and if we aren't paying attention to the struggles at home, and we aren't looking at the social/ emotional side of life, that it won't translate into education, and we won't see the

improvements that we all desire to see. And so I think that more emphasis should be placed on, you know, family advocacy and including social you know, social behavior interventions.

People that are supporting that home connection and really advocating for the families and helping these kids that are coming, you know, from, you know, a home where perhaps their mom isn't waking them up and they have to look out for their own brothers and sisters. And why should education be number 1 priority on their list, when it's really about surviving for that day.

But if we are the ones that are, you know, providing that support and really helping out the family, and I know that's one of our school district goals is family involvement, but really what is that going to look like in Alaska Native families and American Indian families? What does that really take on? And I think more conversation just about how we can help that, assist that would be greatly beneficial to our kids, and then we'll see the numbers change, and we'll see more graduations, we'll see less dropouts. We'll see more people going into college. We'll see them developing into their careers.

And so just some examples that I'm doing that in the school district in Fairbanks is I'm personally offering mentoring programs and so I go into middle schools and go through a quarter process with the kids. And we examine, you know, where we're from, and we do this with Alaska Natives as well as kids from all over, from many different cultures. I really try to make it so that it's not just, you know, one race, and we're just pulling out for one race of people, because when we pull out as I stated before, I was somebody that observed the program as a student. The attitude that comes with it when you see these kids being pulled out for help is something's wrong. Something's wrong with those children. What's going on with them? Why are they getting help? Why do they need the help? And then it presents it transforms into a stereotype, and then, you know, it goes on from there. So another avenue that I'm doing in this

well-rounded approach is investigating those stereotypes and preconceived ideas with all peoples, including K through 12 students as well as staff and new employees that are hired in our school district.

So I would encourage everyone in the room to have these types of conversations with the people that you work with about, you know, what is it that what we are doing you know, why are we here and how we should really, you know, just not only help our own kids, but educate those are that are that we are involved with. And so on and so forth.

And another way is that we have a family advocate. We have one family advocate to serve our entire school district. And she has a big job. She is, you know, attending IEP meetings. She is going for support meetings when parents aren't feeling like their needs are being represented, and she's, you know, helping approximately 2,000 people. One person. And it just I think it's, you know, insane that we ask her to do that. And so I think that, you know, kind of shifting the focus into the social/emotional would again be greatly helpful.

So I really appreciate you all coming all the way to Anchorage, traveling in the midst of the storm. And thank you for this opportunity and I look forward to working with you all in the future.

MS. FREDEEN: I'd just like to take a quick moment to thank you, Yatibaey. I think you did an amazing job reminding us that education, while it is an important part of our children's life, it is one of the cores, of course. And I really like the term you used, collective circle of support, reminding us that while teachers can't be everything, they are certainly part of the support network with the counselors, with the family, advocates with their parents, with their

neighbors. That is part of what we need to do as a people to help our youth be successful, not only in education, but as they progress through life.

Next on the list we have Marilyn from the Anchorage School District, Title VII.

MS. BALLUTA: Marilyn Balluta (speaking Native language). I am Marilyn Balluta. I am Dena'ina Athabascan. My clan is Ggahyi, Raven. I'm originally from Nondalton, Alaska, but I reside here in Anchorage, Alaska. Nondalton is where my mom raised me. My parents are Andrew Balluta, Shi-tu-dah Dolly Parker Balluta, Shon-tah (phonetic), my mom.

(Speaking native language) for being here with us and giving us this opportunity.

First of all, my number 1 role here is as a parent and a grandparent. I have three daughters here. Well, two that live here. And one older daughter that has two kids here in Anchorage School District, and the other daughter has preschool age. And then my other daughter that lives out in Nondalton, in the village, with her two kids. And so I have, you know, different perspectives, one from the Anchorage area and one from Nondalton, the village, where my daughter lives.

And the other part is I've been working with the Anchorage School District Title VII program for the past 30 years, so I have lots of knowledge and history of Title VII within the Anchorage School District. And I'm really proud that, you know, I've been working for the Title VII program, because it's given me the opportunity to you know, to involved in the Native community here in Anchorage.

And the services that we provide, even though I work in the office, the service that I provide indirectly affects the Native students out there in the Anchorage School District.

The third aspect is I'm a Dena'ina language instructor. I've taught in the Title VII evening programs, in the summer enrichment program, and currently teaching at UAA here in Anchorage. That's the first Dena'ina class that has been taught at UAA. And it's kind of ironic, because Anchorage is Dena'ina country. So first of all, as a parent and a grandparent, I've had three daughters that went through the school system, and it wasn't easy for them, even though they were born and raised here in Anchorage, but within the Anchorage School District it was very difficult for them, because of the differences in how they taught how they teach our children. And the difficulties that my daughter went through where, you know, discrimination and racism, which is still alive and well here in the Anchorage School District and Anchorage alone, you know. I would have to go like maybe every two weeks to visit my daughter's school to meet with the principal, meet with the nurse, and meet with my child, with all three of them, and, you know, talk about, you know, it's not a nice thing to call my daughter Pocahontas or anything like that. Because my daughter is tall and beautiful, and long hair below her waistline, and she was teased a lot, and she doesn't like that. She didn't like Pocahontas, because she knew where that movie came from.

And so this continued on throughout, you know, my daughters' careers, and, you know, the Anchorage School District, and, you know, me being, you know, within the Anchorage School District, I have learned how to advocate for my own children, you know, to go out there and, you know, to be supportive and all that, and but still it was a difficult education for them within the Anchorage School District. But we made it.

And what I'm trying to get at is that there are many, many Native parents here in the Anchorage School District that are unheard voices, trying to get their kids to school, trying to meet their basic family needs of our Native students here in the district. If you can't meet the

basic needs of a family, then education is secondary, because they're more worried about where their next meal is going to come from, whether it's in the school or whether it's, you know, going to a pantry to get their food. You know, if their basic needs are not met, then their education is going to become secondary.

And there are a lot of parents out there that, you know, need the assistance and need the help to advocate for their children when there are problems in school. They need that advocacy. And they need strong advocacy for their children.

The Anchorage School District alone has I think 99 or 100 different spoken languages in the district alone, and Yup'ik is like the fifth most spoken language in the Anchorage School District. And so, you know, we not only need, you know, parents, we also need advocacy that are bilingual, you know, to help these parents advocate for their children. I think that's the biggest thing right there is advocacy for our parents. And in the Anchorage School District, there are many families that are coming in from the rural areas.

One of my experience, because my daughter lives in the village with her two kids and her fiance, so I know first hand what it's like to live in the village, what it takes, and the I should say endurance, because it is so difficult I mean, they are both working, but it's seasonal jobs. And so, you know, paying 8 to \$10 a gallon for oil, gas, over \$200 in electricity, and groceries are just outrageous. and even if you bought it here, you know, you ship it out, you're paying between 75 cents and a dollar per pound for freight, so you're actually paying like twice as much.

And so, you know, with that thought in mind, you know, my daughter has lived out there for six years, and this year is the first year that she mentioned that, you know, I need to

make a move, because, you know, I cannot afford to live out in the village, because it is so expensive. And the education that they are receiving out there is secondary to what they're teaching here in Anchorage or, you know, other urban centers. They just don't have the stability of teachers that come into the village. They teach one year and then they're gone. So there's no consistency there.

And so, you know, this is the like I said, the first year she had told me that she's going to make a move and wants to move here in Anchorage, because of the difficulties of living out there, the prices of oil and gas and groceries alone, not to mention, you know, having to pay for your utilities and stuff like that to live out there. It's just outrageous, you know. And I you know, I'm just, you know, so proud of her for, you know, taking that step and moving out there, because she was born and raised here in Anchorage, you know, until she was old enough to move, and she moved.

So with that in mind, you know, keep that in mind when you're thinking about, you know, how difficult it is for parents coming in to urban centers, whether it's here in Anchorage or other urban centers around the state, you know, why are they coming here? And what difficulties are they having with adjusting to the school districts here in the urban centers?

The third part of my being here is personal. I'm a Dena'ina language instructor, and I've been involved with instruction since about 2000 with the Dena'ina language revitalization that started back in 2000. I graduated from here, from East High, but back then it was a boarding we were in boarding homes, so we were living with strangers. But in the end, you know, I did graduate. But I was spoken to in my language, but not spoken to, but I was around Dena'ina language where I could hear it, you know, and understand it, but I was never

spoken to it directly from my parents or grandparents, because back then they thought that English was a better thing for us, because we needed our education. And so they never spoke directly to us. They spoke in English to us, but around them, amongst themselves, they spoke Dena'ina, which I could understand. And then so that makes me a second language learner of Dena'ina. That's how they put it now. You have to be a second language learner of your language. It sounds kind of funny.

But I think having indigenous languages to be offered in the schools or elsewhere, there's a need to help Native language instructors to have those resources to teach their language, or to have someone to be able to come in and to be able to learn how to teach their language. You can be fluent in your language, but teaching is another thing. You have to have those resources to learn how to teach it.

And it's to me it's very important, because once you learn about a language, whether it's your own language, indigenous language, or someone else's indigenous language, you're not only learning about your language, but you're learning about the culture, the history, and the values. That's what language is. And when kids start to understand that, they feel better about themselves, because they're looking, you know, not only learning the language, but they're also looking at, well, wow, I didn't know my mom was, you know, or my grandparents were from the Koyukon. Oh, I didn't know they were from Barrow, you know, my grandparents are from Barrow. So that all involves, you know, knowing about your family history and your culture, your values, and that's how kids learn.

And so having indigenous languages and having those resources available, I know that there's the Martinez Act, and recently the state of Alaska passed SB 130, the Alaska Native

Languages Act. We just recently had a panel discussion on that last Thursday at UAA, and it was a good discussion. They're looking at ways to what direction do we want to go as far as indigenous languages here in the state of Alaska. But again, you know, Anchorage is the population here for Native is like 12 to 14 percent, somewhere around there. And so the question is, you know, do we just pick one language, or do we have the resources to be able to have other native language instructors to teach their language. And so that's the direction that I'm hoping that, you know, the state of Alaska can, you know, pick up on that and, you know, that that in that type of direction, and also the feds, you know, to be able to provide those resources so that we can, you know, continue in that direction for indigenous languages.

MS. FREDEEN: Marilyn, thank you so much for your comments. I think it was really important for you to talk about individuals moving in from rural Alaska and, you know, the daunting costs of living in rural Alaska, and what that means for our students.

I think one of the things that I think we've touched on in the last two comments is really that there is a support network there, and in particular when there's students moving in from rural Alaska into Anchorage, their traditional support network isn't there, and I like to hear from you and I appreciate that you're there in the school district helping our students.

The next person I remember and know personally. Shirley Tuzroyluk. So happy to see her smiling face. She used to work with Cook Inlet Tribal Council, and I always loved coming in and seeing her face, because she has one of the best smiles I've ever seen.

MS. TUZROYLUK: Thank you so very much. My name is Shirley Tuzroyluk. I'm a Tlingit and Nisga'a heritage, and, yes, I really feel like I'm at home here. You know, I

worked in this building, I actually was the second I had the second longest tenure of any employee in Cook Inlet Tribal Council when I transferred over to South Central's, so it's like this building, I have a lot of heart for being in this environment.

And I just really want to thank everyone for the distance you travelled to come here. You know, we really do in Alaska we do wonder, you know, does the distance separate our voice. Where is our voice? And so this is very profound for us to have you physically here and listening to our many voices as a people.

There's a couple of things I would like to, you know, address. I do have a suggestion for the tribal education departments. But I would like to, you know, address the partnerships. I'm just so, so very grateful that that came up as a thematic. Given the environment that we live in in this day and age, and Alaska is not foreign to what's happening in education. Nationwide we can see the budgets are diminishing, in some places diminishing just really at an alarming rate. In the Anchorage School District, I looked at the 213 budget for Anchorage, and there was an identified \$22 million, \$22.5 million deficit. So I really think that we're all addressing the issue of excellent education with Alaska Native students with diminishing resources.

And so therefore, you know, really one of my points that I would like to make is the partnerships. What exists out there in the Native community? What are the strengths that are out there and how can we work together? NIA years ago had proposed something called the Native Children's Agenda. And the Native Children's Agenda pulled in the many agencies that served Alaska's Native American children, including the health, the Indian Child Welfare Act. You know, there's many, many agencies nationwide and statewide and locally that serve the

needs of Alaska Native Children. How can we pool our resources, and how can we make coordinated plans so we're not on individual tracks, we're working together and the many pieces. We're in an age now where innovation is very much needed to really address the increasing needs.

And I hear the statistics. I hear them, and as Native people we hear them right here, because we know what the lack of a high school diploma means. We can see it. We can just walk out on the street and we see. We know what it means. We can walk right over here and walk down the street in Mountain View and we know what the lack of a high school diploma is.

I'd like to you know, my latest adventure I guess is what I'd like to call it, is, you know, I work for a health organization, a tribal health organization, Southcentral Foundation. And, you know, we are very, very fortunate. You know, sometimes in the journeys of our life, we're very fortunate to kind of become a part of something bigger, and that's what we always strive for, is to become part of something larger than ourselves. Southcentral Foundation was recently a Baldrige Award winner for innovation, customer care, what we call the NUCA model, which is integrated care teams.

So I manage an internship program that serves 14 to 19 year olds in three program cycles. and in looking at structures, you know, how our program's structured, and how can they really be structured in a way that really promotes success. We do in our internship program, we maintain a ratio of 1 to 10. In our largest program, it's a summer program, we serve 60 youth. It's between 60 and 65, introducing to health careers in health careers.

So we about four years ago we really took you know, we looked at what the organization wanted the brain power. How do we get the brain power of our youth, and we want that brain power within our organization. So we started looking at the transcripts of the interns as we're doing our screening for those in the program, and we noted there's a gigantic gap in credit accumulation, competitiveness for scholarships, the passing the three, it was the qualifying exams, reading, math, writing. So we found there was a large gap there.

So we started enrolling our youth in our summer program, we worked with the Anchorage School District in enrolling them in classes for credit. And we found through demand, and this was demand of our customers, it grew by three times in three sessions. And the results started coming in. We thought we'd see it in five years. We saw it in three years. So we started seeing students graduating, competing, being competitive for our scholarships.

And looking at the track, you know, we have four curriculum tracks, cultural curriculum, you know, we serve a diverse population. So, you know, what would really help us a lot in making sure we have a consistent message? It was natural for us to honor the people of the land, the Dena'ina people, and that became our best sense, because every the resources. The people came to us. They had the knowledge, the traditional knowledge right here in this area. Work force development. Life skills development. Because we are within a health corporation, the resources that we have available just right on our campus include behavioral health services, dental services, optometry, things we have traditional healing, which is a nationally-recognized, internationally now, service that's available to Alaska Native people. So we find, you know, the partnerships from within and from without are just really vital to our success.

This last summer, kind of looking at our outcomes for this summer, we did a in preparing for this summer, we approached the Anchorage School District, and this is kind of going with partnerships, we asked that our program be accredited. And we wanted the it's called a credit by choice option within the Anchorage School District. And because we have a very structured track, we asked for graded credit, because we do evaluations, and we also integrate a program called Step up to Writing within our program. And this is our we completed our second year of this program. One of our students this last year applied for the Native Writers Contest that's hosted by the Museum of the American Indian, and was one of four national winners of that.

You can hear me? Hope that's not symbolic.

(Laughter)

MS. SILVERTHORNE: You have a good voice with or without the microphone.

MS. TUZROYLUK: Okay. So he's one of five national winners. So we're finding having a focus area is directing having a focus area, it works. And we decided that, you know, there's we don't have to look far for the deficits. There's not far to look. We can see them. We know them. Homelessness. Dropout. Juvenile delinquency. You know, we know all of those things.

What we decided to do as a program was to do strength based. What do we have? We have a lot of strengths as a people, and how can we recognize those strengths and how can we bring them to the table? And one of the things that we do is a traditional leadership track, and kind of looking at what do we have, what is our what resides within us already? We don't

have to there's a lot of things we don't have to give to our Alaska Native youths, because they already have it within them. We just have to help them see it and realize it.

And this is just one example of I don't want to go on too long, but one of the things that we do as an example, within our traditional leadership, is active listening. Active listening. Active listening is something we do as a people, and those who interact with our elders know that. When we're talking with our elders and our people, they're not just sitting there. They're saying, oh, uh-huh, yeah, you know, it's they're very active listeners. So how do we really make that bringing our strength to the table?

This last summer with 59 youths, our youths earned a total of 36.5 high school credits. 91 percent of those credits were A and B grades. And that's a combo with the Anchorage School District courses and the Credit by Choice with our program.

We looked at the amount of hours cumulatively. Our youth worked almost 8,000 hours cumulatively. So they do come you know, they come when, you know, when it means something to their future.

So, you know, and really looking at structurally nationwide, you know, there's regulations that are built over, you know, the granting of scholarships. And I did hear you know, I do hear really a lot, and I don't want to denigrate universities, because universities do a lot of good work, but the resources available doesn't become available to the agencies that need them and that actually have the very real connection with the people that they serve, and do follow the Self-Determination Act, which is the hiring of Alaska Native and Native American people. And it's our we challenge. We challenge these systems, U.S., the state, the city, that Alaska Native people, we can do world class work. And we if, you know, a very strong

recommendation within these granting of educational funds, that that's recognized. You know, bring the strength of our people to the table, you know, the ones that are serving and really, you know, making the day-to-day decisions about the lives of our youth.

And I would like to address the tribal education departments. As you're probably aware, Alaska's about 590,000 square miles with many, you know, diverse cultures. And we're all strong people within this state. And I do recommend that there be a meaningful discussion, preplanning. So this is really, in our state, that is very thoughtfully done, and it's really widely advertised so we do have the diversity of our people recognized and brought to the table.

Thank you.

MS. FREDEEN: Thank you so much, Shirley. It's always inspiring to hear about some of those amazing programs we have, and they really are world class. And it reminds us that, you know, as a people we aren't really looking for handouts. We have our hands full and we're bringing them to our partners, whether that's the federal government or the state or the Anchorage School District. And it's a really important part of what we do as a people is sharing our wealth, whether that wealth be in the areas of education or in support.

Our next person who's going to be giving us comments is Rebecca, and she is with the Native Advisory Committee for the school district.

MS. GERIK: Hello. My name is Rebecca Gerik, and thank you for this opportunity to speak. I'm a classroom teacher in a room full of community leaders, so this is kind of daunting.

So I serve on the Native Advisory Committee in Anchorage, and on that committee I have heard lots of statistics about low attendance for our Native Alaskan students and low test scores. And I have noticed that the attendance is lower than the test scores. So when these kids are showing up, they're doing some amazing work and they're learning a lot.

On that committee I have heard lots about the importance of community decisions and parent involvement and having the school district not make decisions about what Native students need. The Native student's families need to make those decisions.

I've worked with a program called Project Buheetoo (phonetic), which is on-line courses for credit recovery for kids who have failed, and I specifically teach English, so those are the courses I've worked on. And again I've noticed that these kids are in these courses because they've failed their classes, but that their skills are usually very impressive. So somewhere along the way when they do go to school, they're picking up a lot of good stuff.

The courses have been particularly successful, because it's a very personalized education. We meet with the kids face-to-face every couple weeks, and I think that personalized education is probably what these students are missing in the first place. And so the opportunity to actually have teachers that can spend time with them and get to know them and remember what they said from one week to the next is probably really important.

The curriculum for those courses was a culturally-responsive curriculum. We actually went back and added Native Alaskan authors and American Indian authors. I teach American literature in the Anchorage School District, and there's not a single book in that course that is American Indian or Native Alaskan. And we are just now redoing our curriculum, and

that really needs to change. That doesn't make any sense to have American literature without American Indians in it.

And so in those Project Buheetoo course also we have people called transition coordinators, and their job is specifically to work with the families, and they're constantly contacting families, contacting kids. The parents show up at the face-to-face sessions, and they see us and they see the transition coordinators, and they see us with their kids, and I think that makes an enormous difference. I've been to other programs. For instance, there was a college preparation day at the admin building, and that was well-attended by lots of Native families. That seemed to be important. There's a Project Kallo (phonetic) here that's run by DeWayne and I've been to one of those family nights, and it was very heavily attended with lots of activities going on with lots of teachers in the district. And again it was that personal involvement that I think is really important.

So as a classroom teacher, what I see is that education is becoming more standardized with the idea that everyone's going to get the same education. But I think as it becomes more standardized, it loses any personal appeal. And I think for Native Alaskan kids and American Indian kids, and probably actually for any kids, that personal appeal is really important, that the curriculum probably needs to change somewhat for different kids in the room. It needs to serve who is actually attending.

So I hope that in the future when you guys are looking at what education for Native students should look like, that there is some component of a personal connection to kids, and it doesn't become so standardized that there that connection is lost. And I think that the

more personal connection there is, it will increase attendance, which increases test scores, and definitely increases graduation rates.

Thank you.

MS. FREDEEN: Thanks, Rebecca. It's always great to hear from a teacher on the front lines what they're seeing in the classroom and what's relevant or maybe not relevant for our students.

And up next to give comments is Annette Evans Smith with the Alaska Native Heritage Center.

MS. EVANS SMITH: Can I just?

MS. FREDEEN: Please do.

MS. EVANS SMITH: (Speaking Native language) I introduced myself in Yup'ik and in Athabascan. And I'm Yup'ik, Suq'piaq and Athabascan on my mom's side. I come from the Village of South Naknek. I grew up mainly in Bristol Bay. Now I live here in Anchorage, and I run the Alaska Native Heritage Center.

And I'd like to start off by introducing myself with three hats today. I'm going to have an Alaska Native education program hat on, I'm going to have an Alaska Native organization hat on, and then I'm also going to have a mommy hat that I'm going to speak to as well.

Studies have shown that when Native youth are connected to their culture, when they have a strong background in their language, when they know who they are and when they know where they're from, they make better life choices, they do better academically.

The reverse of this is also true. For students, for young people who feel negatively about who they are, when they feel negatively about their background and where they're from and their history, they make poor choices. They're at higher risk for very at-risk behavior.

And so the math is very simple here. With regard to connecting with and teaching and guiding Native youth, cultural relevance is absolutely critical to the success of our young people. We've seen it at the Heritage Center in our after-school high school program, in our middle school program for at-risk youth, and we've seen it with stories of biology teachers that have come to us and said, thank you. Our young man in our class, because he's in your drumming program, he did his science fair project on what kind of drum makes the best sound. Well, this young man had completely totally disengaged from the educational system before that. He had come from a very abusive background, but he got involved because of drumming.

I think there is incredible innovation in bridging the gap between traditional knowledge and western science and western math. We could approach education through teaching math through building a kayak. Why not? I mean, there are incredibly innovative there's incredible potential there, and I don't think we're mining it.

And I would also like to say that I think there's also a lot of opportunity with regard to immersion programs within our school system, and the ability for our young people to be instructed in their language. There are studies that show when you learn multiple languages, you open multiple parts of your brain. You just think differently. And that's I think one key to success.

And then I want to kind of if this is the span of our time in Alaska, say my arm length, 10,000 years of occupation of our state, and contact is really like 250 years, then that's

about this. We have the rest of this distance of strength, ability, history, innovation, knowledge, science that we can pull from to make those changes and make that difference. And I'm incredibly hopeful when I think about this distance, when I know that I have that many years of history behind me, and that much innovation behind me.

I'm going to put on the ANEP hat now, and with regard to the Alaska Native Education Program, I want to say that it was written its intent was to maximize Alaska Native participation in the educational process. And the way it is operated now, it does not. The majority or three-quarters of the grants that are awarded go to non-Alaska Native organizations. And so that takes that Alaska Native ability, knowledge, science, innovation out of the equation when the majority of awards go to non-Alaska Native organizations. The U.S. Department of Education has the ability and the complete discretion regarding how ANEP money will be used through the competitive grant process. Okay. So then you have the complete discretion to do it right, to involve Alaska Native organizations and those who know best in the educational process to make decisions for our young people, to make decisions for our kids, because I think we have incredible ability there. So you have the discretion to do it right. Please do so.

With regard to timing of ANEP, this I'm going to put on my Alaska Native organization hat. The ANEP grants in theory might have been awarded in July, and so organizations receiving those funding funds might have been able to start programming in July; however, it is now mid September and we still have not heard, and we may not hear I think until the very end of this month. School started in mid August. We are we will be nearly two months into the process before we hear if our funding is there for an after-school program that we have been operating for over nine years.

So that is a timing thing. That's probably not a good timing thing. I think maybe we could relook at that picture so that perhaps funds are awarded in springtime so you have summer to implement and plan, you're not implementing two months after school has started.

I'd like to also make a personal Alaska Native organization comment with regard to the Race to the Top Initiative, the competitive points that are awarded to grants and how they're applied to Department of Education. I was appalled to see this year, and I think it was last year as well, that five competitive points are awarded, the five, that's the most in this competitive point process, that advantage points that you can get, if you're a novice organization. So if you have no Department of Education track record, you have no track record of success, no history of success, you get five extra points. And organizations like us that have nine years of success, have graduation rates 20 and 30 percent higher than the Anchorage School District average, aren't eligible for those. And I thought that was rather troubling.

And then finally I want to put on the mommy hat. And the mommy hat is that I have two young sons being raised in Anchorage, you know, 400 miles from where we're from. And the mommy hat is that I don't have a Yup'ik or Suq'piaq or Athabascan immersion program to put my sons into. And because I'm so committed to language, I have put my son in Japanese immersion, because Mommy knows that when you learn a second language, you can learn a third much easier, and so I'm indoctrinating my sons with the belief that you are learning Japanese now, but this is Mommy's intent, you are going to learn either Yup'ik or you're going to learn Athabascan. And they say, okay, Mommy, we get it.

But Anchorage has a growing population of Alaska Natives moving into Anchorage every year. I think there's a 500 positive net change every year if you look at the

census data. So we have this growing captive population. Many people look at that as though it's a drain on the resources in Anchorage. I see it as potential, incredible potential being added to Anchorage. I see probably language instructors are moving to town. I think basket weavers are moving to town. Baleen basket makers. Carvers are moving to town. If we capture that potential, I think we can much better utilize it for our young people, and incorporating that into the schools.

A few years ago the Heritage Center taught Dena'ina Athabascan at Chugiak Middle School. Highest attended class in that middle school. Unfortunately we weren't able to continue that, because it's just not a, it wasn't a priority within the district to continue Native language instruction. But, again, highest attended class.

And finally, this is the other piece that I would like to add when looking at the Anchorage School District. When we look at the migration into Anchorage from rural Alaska, if you look at the numbers, half of those students moving in from rural Alaska are moving into town without their family and they're living with relatives. They're moving in without their parents. That's huge. That's something we need to look at if we are to change the educational system, because those kids are moving in without the family structure of support behind them.

And with that I'll close. I think I hit all three of the mommy, Alaska Native organization, and ANEP hats, but those, that's what I would add to this testimony.

Thank you.

MS. FREDEEN: Annette, I really appreciate you speaking to how, you know, even though we don't like to necessarily talk about how funding impacts our youth, but really

how our funding is funnel and how it's utilized and leveraged in our community, whether it's here in Anchorage or statewide really does make a difference for our students on an individual basis.

And I think part of what we're doing to make sure that we're moving ahead is keeping our parents involved. And with that I would like to invite John Lamont. It says he's parents, Lamont Consulting. So very excited to hear about what you're going to share with us today.

MR. LAMONT: All right. First off I want to apologize to the audience behind me. I do not like having my back to the audience. And thank you, the department, state and federal, Commissioner Hanley and Ms. Silverthorne.

My kids just enrolled August 16th in the second largest urban school district in the state after coming from a small school district in rural Alaska.

And some background, myself, I went to Wrangell Institute as a seven-year-old, and then the Anchorage boarding home program for my high school years here in Anchorage, and graduated from a private school, because I felt myself failing as a public school student, and worked two jobs and paid my own way through my senior year at a private school here. But anyway that's some background information.

I grew up in the village and I have quite a, I worked for a school district both as a certified and as a classified person for a number of years since '85.

If I say anything wrong, my wife will hit me on the shoulder.

But the reason I -- and I'm glad, you know, I was hoping more of the leaders would testify and I'd sit back and listen and then testify, but as a parent, you know, 72 percent of

our children are in urban school districts in this state. 28 percent are in rural Alaska. And it's so important. We both have these challenges, in rural Alaska raising my kids out there, my children attending school, and now in urban Alaska. Two of my older children attend some school here in the Mat-Su Borough School District.

But the challenges that we as educators have, as you educators and educational leaders here have, not only with funding, but with some of the other real important issues. If we have 80 percent of our teachers coming to Alaska from Outside with no knowledge of our history, no knowledge of our ability, how we are as aboriginal people. And, excuse me, I don't like using the term Native. We are aboriginal people whether we're in the Lower 48 or in Alaska. And western educators, Caucasians especially, coming up to a small rural community and trying to be successful, trying to help our children be successful without that background knowledge and history of our people, and the U.S. Department of Education with the demands and the requirements, you know, for educators and for students, you know, our kids, our children don't fail. Our children aren't failing. It's we as parents and adults who are failing our children, and as education leaders.

So there's a lot of factors involved in education. Not only you know, I've heard it, and I couldn't quite say it as eloquently as Ms. Smith did about how we as leaders, we as parents, we as parents who participate in the schools, we as aboriginal people raising our children, getting a good education, without the western education.

My mother spoke , we you know, I'm going to go, I'm going to step back. I'm going to kind of jump around here. Going back to when my mother would speak to her friends in Yup'ik, when I was young, I used to call it Eskimo. How come you speak Eskimo with your

friend and not to us? Well, you need English to be successful in school. And we've heard it earlier from other people testifying, how important English is and was for our people to be successful in education and in the world, in the western world, because we cannot go back to oaring our kayaks or running our dog teams. You know, we, it's difficult.

And then from then, tying in language to the learning process, how important is it that a child knows, is grounded in one language before they can be successful in education. Very important. A lot of our children genetically know the Yup'ik language. I'm going to speak on my, you know, for my aboriginal people, we're Yup'ik. And that's how it's been translated genetically through our brain and our learning process, even though it hasn't been researched, it's so much easier once we know it, we're grounded in it, to be successful in other languages or in education or in achievement. And without that, it's so, we're lost. We have no language.

We have I mean, I can, you know, I just came from three months at fish camp, so excuse my English. I'm going to try to use my most appropriate educational language here.

But anyway, it's so important that children, we as educators and the departments and in the state and D.C., understand this when there are grants going out to fund not only Alaska Native education programs, but all the other programs out there dealing with education achievement. It's so important to understand the whole background of where we're going with this. We want our, all of us in here, I don't think there's a soul in here who doesn't want a child to be successful. These are all our children, and we want them successful whether they're Caucasians here in Anchorage or whether they're Inupiat in Anaktuvuk Pass or, you know, it's just, it's so important.

When I was in Alaganuk the other day, or about, I don't know, three weeks ago, and I stopped a couple of little kids who got into my cabin, in to my fishing boat and took my life jackets and they went up and they got into some mischief, and the police called me up, said, I found your life jackets by the warehouse. Talking to these two kids, why did you do it? We were cold and we wanted some place to go. That's the same issues we're having in Anchorage and Mat-Su and big cities that we're having in rural Alaska. And I want, I mean, school wasn't even on this when that happened. I mean, school hadn't even started. And yet we've got issues like that, how to help our children be successful, how to help them graduate from high school and get through 13 years of western education. Yet we need that basis, we need that grounded home. We as parents, you know, really need and schools, leaders need to help us as parents to feel comfortable when we walk into a school. If a child is comfortable, he or she will learn. If the teacher makes learning fun, he or she will learn. And they'll be involved.

But going back to depth of this, you know, why are these requirements so up here for our children? I mean, you know, if we had the curriculum based on survival on the water, survival on the tundra, knowing direction, know how to succeed with we're so rich up there with food from the water, from the land, from the sea, with energy, with logs to build our shelters and to heat our homes. You know, we have that. But we had another entity coming in and tell us back in the 60s that, no, you guys were living in poverty. What kind of confusion did that bring in, besides the language, into the education system for our children? And then, you know, how our aboriginal peoples were raised.

We, am I going on too long? I just want to how our aboriginal people, our children we, our ancestors were raised. When they were no longer needed, they were too old, they'd take care of that. Where if I had I'm a young parent and I had a child that was born that

wasn't going to be helpful to the community, I'd have to take care of that, too, without and we've got this mixed in with high suicide rates with our aboriginal peoples in the whole, I mean, is it up to us as educators, as the leaders here, as education leaders to solve these problems? No, it's up to me as a parent and it's up to the education system to help us be successful and guide our children. And the U.S. Department of education is so important, the state Department of Education is so important, but there's all these other issues that we have to deal with.

And I just want to, I guess, say that the most important thing are our future resources, who are our children. We want them successful, and we will do anything to help them be successful and graduate from school whether it's in Alaganuk or Emmonak or Anchorage or Wasilla High School. So, you know, like I said in the beginning, my children are in the middle school, in the high school, and here at the university system, and I want them successful, because I didn't have someone telling me, I lost my parents at a young age, someone telling me that, you know, you're a salmon cruncher, you're, you know, you can be the, I've mopped floors before. I've washed dishes. I'm proud of that. But I also led school districts, and I've led, you know, run my own business as a commercial fisherman. And I'm proud of that, too. But we're not here for that. We're here for our children and all education is here for our children so they can have a better way of life than we've had.

So thank you very much again the departments, state and feds, for coming up and listening to us. And in the audience my apologies for having my back to you, but thank you.

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: John, thank you so much for sharing and giving us that really important perspective on, you know, each of our roles as parents and as leaders and as educators

and the success of our children in grounding them in our cultures and our values and language. I think it was a very powerful comment.

I'd like to invite Ethan Petticrew up from the Alaska Native Heritage Center.

MR. PETTICREW: (Speaking Native language) My name is Ethan Petticrew, that's my English name. My Unangax name or Unangax you probably know as Aleut. Traditionally we call ourselves Unangax. My name is Konglangik (phonetic), and I am, I work at the Alaska Native Heritage Center. I have ties to three communities actually. My mother's family is from the oldest continuously inhabited community in all of North America. It's Nikolski on Umnak Island. And my father's family is from Wrangell, where Susan's family is from. His family came up during the Civil War, so I'm a mixed ancestry. And then I have a close tie to Atka, which is where I chose to raise my family, my children, because of the rich Unangax culture that still exists there today.

I was born and raised in Alaska and educated in the schools in Alaska, public schools in the villages or rural communities. I then went to college at the University of Alaska-Southeast, which was the University of Alaska-Juneau then, so I'm kind of dating myself, and graduated with a bachelor's in elementary education. But as you have heard other people talk about, Alaska Native people, those of us that were educators often weren't hired. In fact, I was told by a superintendent, you were born and raised and educated in Alaska. We're looking for teachers with a more well-rounded education. And I asked, exactly what does that mean? And he goes, well, go out and teach Outside, meaning in Alaska Outside means the Lower 48, for a couple of years, and then return and I'll give you a job. And I thought that was ridiculous. I didn't want to go outside. I love Alaska.

I decided in the sixth grade to become a teacher, because of an I call them an immigrant teacher, an American teacher, who came to our community and told us one day that we should be ashamed of our parents for sending us to school in the clothes we had. We were fishing families. We had a bad fishing season. We had jeans with some holes in them, work shirts. They were all clean, maybe a few stains, but our parents couldn't afford anything. And so I stood up to him at that point, and I said, you're wrong. I got kicked out of class for two weeks, and I sat two weeks in the library contemplating what to do with my life, and I said I'm going to be a teacher so this doesn't happen to our kids again.

Then I because of the difficulty to get a job as a teacher in Alaska, I furthered my education. I actually went to I did the Outside thing. I went to Ball State and got my master's in curriculum and instruction. And so I spent 22 years in public education, and now I work at the Alaska Native Heritage Center with Annette Evans Smith.

I am also a parent of two children. Well, they're not children any more, they're young adults. They were educated in Atka, which was a wonderful environment for them, and a school that actually had done some amazing things with the reform in education. They flourished in that system. I moved out while they were still in school, my son was in high school, my daughter in middle school, moved out and we got here to Anchorage and immediately things went downhill for them in the Anchorage School District. It was a tremendous struggle for them. And I'll talk more about that in a few minutes.

And I just want to add to Susan's Native education in Alaska. I want to go a little bit before American education, and that is we had traditional systems of education for thousands of years here. We all know that. And as Native people we've all had those things. Those were

devalued by the American system later on. And even during our Russian Colonial period, it was a time for, in the latter years, a time for Unangak and Suqpiaq Alutiiq people to excel. We had started schools, and they were bilingual schools. These schools were producing young people who would then go on to Sitka for their education, and then later to Irkutsk or St. Petersburg. They then returned to Alaska.

In 1867, by the time they sold Alaska, there were very few Russians here. It was mostly Unangax and Suqpiaq people who were running the colony. We were the ship's navigators. We were the admirals on the ships. We were the priests. We were the teachers in the schools. And we were the northwest coast of America was Kaveen (phonetic) was Unangax who had was a cartographer and mapped the entire coast.

So we had made some advance, we were and people talk about resiliency, and that as Native people we are resilient. And in the north especially adaptability is key for survival. And I think we learned that long before westerners came to our shores. You needed to adapt to the climate. And that was applied later to other cultures that came here.

So had adapted and created an education system during the later part of the Russian years where our people excelled in. They were producing young people who were bilingual in not only Russian, reading and writing Russian, but also in our own language, Unganuk. In Atka we still have books that were printed in our islands in both languages. So these were the text books, the school books.

In 1867, the transfer to the United States and Sheldon Jackson came to Alaska and took over our education and was put in charge of young people and Native education of Alaska. And we all know that the 1800s were the age of assimilation, where it began. And from that

point on, it seems that the system failed our children, and continues to fail today. I graduated in 1978, and I still don't see a lot of improvement. I see we have pockets of great little programs going on, and even in rural Alaska there's some great things happening, but by and large our kids are not making it through the system.

I think that a lot of it is really based upon the assimilation model that was started in Sheldon Jackson's years, and even though we like to deny it, continues to today. We have terrible dropout rates both in the public schools, over 50 percent here in the Anchorage community, and at our university we have 90 percent of the freshman don't make it through in their first years. Those are alarming statistics. We should as a nation be shocked. It should be a huge black mark upon us.

Racism I think is an issue that we need to face and deal with. You know, it wasn't long ago in Anchorage that, in my parents' generation, where no Natives and no dogs were allowed into establishments. Signs opening stated that. And we think, okay, the signs are gone and all of that is not here. But that's not the case.

And we have teachers who are culturally insensitive here. And I teach a class on multi-cultural education for Alaska teachers every spring, and it's for new teachers to Alaska. You know, they get a two-year grace period before they have to take anything related to Alaska Native people. But in that class I've got teachers who want to argue and disagree with me on I mean, some of the statements, why do Natives kids deserve this kind of special programming? Why should we be able to do that? They should be like everybody else.

And then the last day I take them out to the Center and we have an internship program out there, and it's actually sponsored by ANA SEDS, but I bring the interns in and I ask

them to please talk about their educational experience in the school, good, bad or indifferent, it doesn't matter. You tell them what you want to tell them.

And so the one young lady that stands out in my mind, she's a wonderful speaker, we have had her there through our high school program, and how as an intern working with hundreds of tourists and actually sitting down or standing in front of them and engaging them and talking to them on the stage about Alaska Native cultures and specifically about her Yup'ik culture. She told the teachers that she moved here when she was in the sixth grade. She grew up in her home speaking Yup'ik, and continues to speak Yup'ik here in home, here at home with her family. She said, when I moved here in the sixth grade, I didn't realize that I sounded any different to the, than the non-Native kids or any other kid in Anchorage. She goes, it wasn't very long when I realized that I have a Yup'ik dialect and I know now that I sound different. She is now a senior in high school. But the most tragic thing that I think she said to them, and she actually put her head down and started to cry at this point, and it's hard to say without tears welling up with me, too. She said, since I got into high school, I've not opened my mouth in school.

And when I heard that, I thought, what a tragedy. This is somebody who is so eloquent when she speaks, and has such a rich knowledge of culture and history in Alaska. I thought, it's a tragedy for her, but it's also a huge tragedy for that entire classroom.

And the teacher asked, why is it you won't talk? She goes, because every time I do, she goes, it is either a non-Native kid, usually a white kid, or it can be another immigrant population child, every time I talk they say, what's wrong with you? You sound stupid. You sound like a dumb Native. And was asked, well, don't the teachers do anything? And she goes, sometimes they hear it and they turn their back.

So these are issues I think that are a big a larger picture than the DOE can even handle, but as a society, as a nation, we need to hit this stuff. Otherwise our children will continue to not flourish in this system.

I think we've got a system here, an educational system, that obviously doesn't value our culture or our languages. In fact, it devalues them and often in ways that maybe are not right out in public I guess is what I'm trying to say, but in hidden ways, and I know for my own experience with my daughter in school, she came to me one day, and a sophomore in high school, and said, I'm dropping out unless you do something. So we tried to work with the teachers, the counselors.

We went into the principal's office one day, and he had posted up, you could tell they were trying to make us, my wife and I, feel more comfortable as Native people I guess, because he had put up some little posters or things on Alaska Native people. It was actually Marilyn, it was actually Athabascan stuff. And I thought, well, this is good, but wrong culture. And you could tell it was temporary. It wasn't, you know, it was just a little fix to make us feel a little better.

And he was like, well, I don't know what to do, I can't get Native parents to come in here. And I said, you've got a system here that is not open to us or engaging. I said, first of all, I just had a conversation, you know, my daughter keeps getting Saturday school, and she's, you know, not long out of the village, but in our village, kids do not raise their voices to adults. In fact, they don't even look at them. Their heads go down and that's showing respect. But you talk at a very silent pace a very silent level like that. And he was giving her Saturday schools, because he would not quiet the class down. I mean, there's 30 or 40 kids in this class and he's

taking roll. All he's doing is calling out names, and she's sitting there raising her hand or going, I'm here, and him not hearing it, so she gets Saturdays. Well, I took her in there and watched this whole process, and then sure enough, she gets Saturday school. So we meet with him, and he pulls the counselor in. The counselor tells me, I know everything there is to know about Aleut children. I said, really? How is that? Did you live in our islands? Do you, you know, live with our cultures? He goes, no, I adopted an Aleut infant. And I thought, well, wonderful. I'm sure that child came to you as a complete little package of culture.

And this is what I talk about insensitivity with our educators towards our children.

I think another thing that is one of the big problems that we tend not to talk about, and that's standardized testing. We as educators know every bit of research says you cannot create a standardized test that is culturally non-biased. Yet we as a nation put standardized tests first and foremost. I can't understand that about us. I can't understand why we do that other than I've heard there's a conspiracy theory, and that it keeps ethnic minorities in their place. And I start thinking about that, and maybe it is. Look at Martin Luther King. I think on his SAT he scored in the lower third percentile, I think it was the oral component of it or something that does yet today we think of him as the world's our nation's greatest orator. Something's wrong with that picture.

And in my own experience in working with kids in our region out there, I know that our third graders had to take a standardized test, and every single one of them failed this question. And the question was this: It was how do you get from one small town to the next. And they had a little picture of a train, a bus and an airplane. Can you guess what our children put?

SEVERAL: Airplane.

MR. PETTICREW: It was the wrong answer. We failed that test.

I think that district schools need the ability to I'm not saying we don't need to test our children, but I think that we additionally need to be able to test them when they are ready, not age or grade level. When they are developmentally ready. And that's another thing as educators we know, that research points out, yet our state continues to insist that kids are tested at certain grade level.

And I say this because I worked for a district that spent 12 years reforming its education. It got rid of grade levels. It got rid of letter grades. It created a continuous progress curriculum. It was actually started before the state even had its own standards. We took the national standards developed by the Councils of Educators that were put together years ago. We took those and met with our elders in our communities. What is it from our village that's so important to know? And then we worked on combining those two things together. And it was it made some amazing differences for us. Our parents were so much happier, because they knew exactly what kids should know and needed to know, and all through the years of their education. Kids loved it, because it was individualized. Everyone liked it, because it was looking at western standards through a Native lens. And so when we studied velocity or distance, we looked at the norsaq, the throwing stick. And we studied anatomy, we dissected sea lions.

Which, you know, that's another thing kids get test, even the state of Alaska, it sends out standard tests for us in the Aleutian Islands. It's about moose hunting, which is great if you're a child from the Interior. But my kids out there know nothing about that. You can pull a sea lion up and those kids in the fourth and fifth grade can tell you the Unangax name for every

part, the English name for every part, what it's used for, and how it works with the animal. So we're just testing our kids on the wrong things.

I think that if we want to see improvement for Alaska Native/American Indian children, and I'll even go beyond that and say for any child in this country, we need to look at systemic reform. We simply can't stand here any longer and say the education that was good enough for me is good enough for my kids. We've got to realize that the system this country has developed in education was really, I call it the factory model. It's to make factory workers. We've produced kids that are all doing the same thing at the same time. The bell rings, boom, they switched, or they're all lined up in nice little rows, too. Big problem is that we've sent our factories overseas.

So we need to a nation of critical thinkers. And I know I'm singing to the choir, to the educators, because I know we all feel the same way. We have somehow got to get government to understand that. And we've got to move that along. I think that we need schools that are based upon best practice and research, and not just best for the dominant culture. We've been in discussion in this district before with other high leaders in the education field pushing for reform for Natives, and for even in the whole school, and we were told, I've got a system that works good for some kids, for some families, and for that reason, I'm unwilling to change it.

It should work good for all kids. For every family. We need Native engagement. We're and people always wonder why Native people won't go into the schools. They're uninviting for us. Our languages are not accepted or valued in there. Our parents were beaten for speaking their language in there. Of course nobody wants to go into that system. It's a system that eats you up. And it pushed who we are out. We can't in fact, that's what we hear

from our high school kids that come out and visit us, engage in our high school program. Why do you like to come here? Because I can be who I am. I can't be that way in the public school system.

We've also got to include Native world views in the system. It can't just be about, okay, let's have a dancing class and let's offer a language class. Those are all great and wonderful, but we've got to go deep. They've got to be part of culture, and it's got to be those deep parts of our culture that are valued and taught, including our values.

Here's an example. In my own language we say, to learn is achixanax (phonetic); we say to teach is achixanax. It's the same word. Traditionally we can't separate those two things, which kind of just amazes me, because now research in western education says teachers should be facilitators, which is that same concept. It's not the sage on the stage. So we had ancient education that was already light years ahead of where western ed was when it came here.

I think that funds need to be made available and directed towards those models which support educational improvement, and I just don't see that happening. I see districts that can't change or won't change. I see I talked to a teacher who said, I've done this for 30 years and taught this way, and damned if I will every change. I'm like, I told him, I said, my God, I'm glad you're not my doctor and I'm coming to you with cancer, because I wouldn't want a doctor who practices like they did 30 years ago. I'd want somebody on the cutting edge of technology. Why does education want to flounder in an ancient past? Why can't we move on and look at our research and move forward?

I think that and I'll end here I guess. I'm wanting the public system education to change for the benefit of our children. I'm tired of seeing a system that does not meet the needs

of our people or our children. I'm tired of seeing young people killing themselves. I'm sick of the suicide, alcohol, drug abuse, all of the social ills. And we as Native people, we ought we have the highest rates. I can't help but think that the denial of our culture, our language, the forced assimilation has not played a big part in that. And I think that as Native people and this is to all of our leaders and corporate people and tribal leaders, you know, we were in charge of our children years ago and we had flourishing, wonderful societies of powerful and strong and nobody was we were not killing ourselves. We, our children were alive and thriving and they had a happy future. That educational system was taken away from us. And in essence we've kind of abdicated it now.

But I think it's time that we need to take back our role in education. This is a new generation; it's a new time. We simply can't sit and watch this continue to happen again and again. And I feel that if the public system, state and federal, can't meet the needs of our children and again I graduated in '78, and I'm not seeing a whole lot of change, how long are we as Native people to sit and allow this to happen? And if we can't, if the system won't change for us and benefit for us, then perhaps it's time for Alaska Native people and American Indian people to take our children back and create our own educational systems where our people can flourish.

(Speaking Native language)

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: Ethan, thank you so much. You know, I think you've brought up some really important points, and I think systems change is an important part of that, and realizing that we do have a system now that inadvertently, and hopefully not purposely, degrades

and tears down our youth instead of building them, and that we're an important part of building our youth and building new systems that addresses the needs where they're at.

We just have a few more minutes before lunch is served, which will be in room 4, right behind us. I think we have time for one more person. And just a reminder, during lunch I encourage you to go to the back to sign up and give your public comments.

I'd like to invite Laird Jones from Tlingit and Haida to give us comments.

MR. JONES: Wow. I'm not sure I can follow that presentation. Is it always better to talk right before lunch when food's on the table, or come back after lunch when everyone's tired and hungry or full and tired.

Hang on. I've come to that age where I've got to have glasses to be able to read my own writing.

Gunalcheesh. (Speaking Native language.) Thank you for coming here and providing this opportunity. My English name is Laird Jones. My Tlingit name is Chukat-Nikati (phonetic), Cape Fox tribe out of the Ketchikan, southern Southeast area. My crests are eagle/beaver/halibut. I've got a little bit of Tlingit, a little bit of Tsimshian and a little bit of Haida in me, and just a little less of Scottish. So I've got a little, a variety of backgrounds.

I guess I'm a product of the Ketchikan School District. I graduated there in 1973. Then I went to Fairbanks and got my bachelor's in science and finished there in '78. I think both experiences had their challenges and also their opportunities and positive aspects.

I think one of the things in Fairbanks that was really a support for me, because I was so far from home, was that then, at the time it was the student orientation services. It was

designed to, you know, help Alaska Native students that were going into a large, in our case, urban community that was foreign. It's now the rural students services, or RSS. And one of the counselors I had there has just retired recently, just a wonderful woman.

Currently I'm the manager of the vocational training and resource center, or VTRC, with Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. In our little facility we try to pick up the students that haven't made it through the system. We work with the TANIF (ph) program, trying to design some sort of education to help students that haven't made it, and some that have that want to like redo commercial driver's license, hazardous waste training, computer training, a number of things. We've gotten a few grants. I'll come back to that a little bit later. And to try to make our, or figure out why our, the student, the schools are failing our students on such a long, regular basis as many other presenters have talked about already.

I really appreciated Lee's words in talking about the historical trauma. ANCSA, Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act had some real positive benefits, but it also had some real negatives as he touched on.

They've also talked about boarding schools, and this came to us. My grandmother, who passed away, was born in 1900. And it wasn't until she was in the Pioneer Home in her late 80s that she started talking about her older sister that we never knew that was sent to Carlisle School in Pennsylvania where she died of an illness on Christmas by herself. And the only thing that was brought back to the family was a certified letter that she had died. When my parents were doing some genealogical work, they went back to Pennsylvania, met some great people there that were trying to consolidate that history, and discovered that there was never a death certificate. There's no record that she had died. And part of it was because

Carlisle did not want to have negative press about what was going on at the schools, so just sent the letter to the family that she had died. So they worked and now have an official after-the-fact that somebody may have died in Pennsylvania. And, you know, there's nothing in the records here. So they were able to send that to here so at least there's a document that she had lived and had a life and where she had passed away.

My parents went to Sheldon Jackson boarding school. That's in middle upper grades of grade school and high school. They enjoyed it. They had some good times there. They met. That's where they, you know, got married from there.

But in so it was at least through time the boarding schools had evolved, and I think our boarding schools here did a better job than others, but it still was the trauma of taking the kids, as other people talked about, and losing their connection, losing that aspect of it. I think that's who we are. It's not that we can't change that, but that's part of our history, and as people talk about, is not in Alaska Native history being taught in the schools.

We had I think as Ethan really said eloquently, is we had a formal education system. It wasn't just the parents. In Southeast our children were passed off to the uncles and aunts, and that was part of where they received their training of how to live, who they were, the culture, the importance and values. With the boarding schools, that was taken away, that opportunity that there they were fired as educators. So it was a tremendous loss to the people.

I think as you've seen all the numbers, it's nationwide. Again, this is just kind of some background, but even in our school district, in Juneau it's the same as up here and probably statewide, is half of the boys don't make it through the system. They're dropping out. And it's a huge loss. And we're struggling internally trying to figure out as a tribe, trying to figure out what

can we do to address that? And so we've talked about with some of the things going on here, is what we call is kind of a wrap around. Trying to involve Indian Child Welfare Act workers, the TANEF workers, you know, getting them involved in the school district.

Some of the challenges we have is you have the, I forgot the term, but probably one of the acronyms you have in your 75 pages, you know, sharing information as far as the school records back and forth. FERPA I think it is.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: FERPA.

MR. JONES: Something like that. We have a JOM worker in the school district that they're questioning whether she should have access to the student records. They're currently allowing it, but it's called into question, so it puts us at a pause, like how do we, you know, we have confidentiality requirements. So what's the difference? Let alone sharing it with parents and the case workers are working with the families that are trying to we have Head Start that's trying to work with the students and you have to be income eligible to be in the program. They have a requirement and I know this is of what you guys are here for, but they have a requirement the Head Start people have to use their database for the records of who's involved, who's enrolled in there, their aspects of the family life, that's totally separate from our records, so our ability to be able to communicate internally impinged because of these different requirements and different programs.

Everything always seems to come down to money. I guess, you know, Alaska Federation of Natives has come out with a resolution, some letters. I'll leave copies of those here. You may have got them already, but just to make sure. Our president wanted to make sure that I left them here.

A lot of these programs that we're trying to implement for the federal government has what they call indirect caps. They only want to pay us so much money to implement the federal program. We have an administration, a structure, a finance department, a human resource department to make our organization function. So if we take a grant that has a lower cap, or a fixed cap on what we can recover, it has to come from somewhere. It can't come from a federal program. We have a small trust fund that was a lawsuit that we had run back in '35 that's we're struggling to keep active so it can be there forever for the future kids. That's where the difference comes from, so we're trying to implement a program, but we have a cap. And a lot of the education grants that we've looked at have a cap, and so we have to ask, it's a good idea, but can we afford it, you know, because we only have a limited amount of resources.

We've done a few things with our school district I want to emphasize, too, is that the Juneau School District has been receptive, trying to get input. They have limited resources. You know, that's through our legislature and through Department of Ed and trying to make things work. So we have made some strides, we have made some progress.

But you look at the numbers, overall the nationwide, things go up faster than our achievement. So the gap is not getting smaller, it's getting wider. So, yes, we're getting some improvements, yes, we're making some strides. I think you've heard of some great programs here, these pockets that are there, but how do you get that out here?

We just got a 394-page Sequestration Transparency Act a Sequestration Act document that's talking about the federal government's going to lose like for various programs, and we're at the top of the list, 7.8 percent budget cuts this coming fiscal year. So we're striving to try to do things, but we're at the head of the list of the cuts because of all the goings on.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: We who? We the tribe?

MR. JONES: We the tribe.....

MS. SILVERTHORNE: Okay.

MR. JONES:are going to have less funds. We have some funds that come through BIA that are on a constant basis, but those are on the cutting blocks even though we have such a small piece of the overall pie. And it's going to hit the other federal agencies for their funds, too.

So those are kind of some of the lay of the land of where we're stuck at. We do need some changes. We have made some strides. I don't want to belittle that or not express appreciation of that. We've got a long ways to go. Just listening has just been exciting, all the different things that are occurring. How can we support them. How can we expand them into other areas.

I mean, the UA system did a study of all students coming into the University of Alaska system from an Alaska school. 60 percent of them, at least the number that I heard, had to take either remedial math, remedial English, or both. Another staggering statistic I heard recently here was that of incoming freshman of Alaska Native students going to the UA system, 90 percent don't come back. They don't finish. So the ones that we do get through are still struggling tremendously. Those are the harsh realities and things we're trying to address.

So I guess we've been exploring things like internet and Skype, you know, to try to get our programs out to different schools. At VTRC we've done some, on the higher ed end of

it of the trying to get the classes out to the communities rather than try to bring the community people into Juneau, our urban area of 30,000.

And I think those are the highlights I had, or the points I wanted to make. It's now lunch.

(Laughter)

MR. JONES: Thank you.

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: Thanks again for your comments. They're very powerful.

Just a reminder, lunch is going to be in room 4 back here. We'll go ahead and break until about 1:00 o'clock. We're reconvene, and again please sign up to give your comments, or you can feel free to fill out your written comments, and I believe there's baskets back there collecting them.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record for a luncheon recess.)

MS. FREDEEN: Good afternoon, everyone. I hope you guys enjoyed lunch. Diane's is one of my favorite places to get sandwiches.

I thought we'd go ahead and get started. One of the things I'd like to start off with was kind of thanking everyone. I think we had some wonderful conversations this morning, great comments. We heard a lot about the challenges we're facing, and the barriers that our students face, and what we're doing. As we move forward through the afternoon, we'd love to hear more comments, and what's working, what ideas are out there, what partnerships. And in

particular, I don't know if you guys have had a chance to read in the package this news release, but if you guys have comments on the news release as well, that would be wonderful to share.

We have several people signed up to speak this afternoon. Just to give you a time frame, we are scheduled to go to 3:00 p.m. with comments this afternoon, so please be mindful of the time, try to keep your comments, you know, to between 3 and 5 minutes, with some flexibility there.

So I'd like to invite Jonathan Larson to come up, and he's actually on the Johnson-O'Malley committee for Cook Inlet Tribal Council.

MR. LARSON: Hi. My name is Jonathan Larson, and I'm here representing my kids. I have three kids in the district, a junior, an eighth grader and a fifth grader. And although I try to advocate at different committee levels, none of it seems to be very effective in terms of the committees, but I've got to get my notes here, because I had some notes here.

I guess I first wanted just to ask, are you guys managing Indian education or are you leading Indian education? Because there is a difference there. You know, when I went to college, I never thought I'd go to college, or even graduate from college, but when I did, my academic advisor said something that really stuck to me, and it's basically leaders managers do what they're supposed to do; leaders do what's right. And I just ask that question, because I think it's something that as people in position to make decisions, whether you're Native or not Native, sometimes we forget where we came from. And are we doing the right thing for Native people?

And I guess really what I'm saying is, is I heard the Health, the Heritage Center talk. I heard well, I haven't heard Cook Inlet, but I'm sure Cook Inlet since their hosting has been at your ear, and so, you know and the district talk. And one of the real big absences here is

parents. I don't know what the target audience is, but if it's the Heritage Center, the school district and Cook Inlet Tribal Council, you guys have got them by the short hairs. They take your money. They give you reports probably quarterly and I know annually on what their programs are doing. What you need to do is listen to parents and students, where your funding hits the road, because that's the important decisions, that's the important input that you guys need as decisionmakers when you come to do we fund them in something they're doing great, or do we fund it because we've been funding it for 30 years?

You know, these programs sometimes have to take you have to relook at the programs, you know. You have to take a look at is it effective? And I know for a fact there are effective programs in the district, and I know for a fact there are very ineffective programs in this district. And part of the thing is, and I've seen it at a school meeting, someone will ask the superintendent, why are we doing it this way? Here's the response, verbatim, you can go look at the audio tapes, because we've always done it that way. Okay. Well, I'm sure a lot of you may have heard this, but the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results. That's what our district here is doing. And, you know, and I think it comes more from maybe it should come from the top, this new paradigm, this new shift in thinking.

The federal government's modeling something, and I'm here at a learning session, and I know I'm there's more than me as a parent here, but I would really hope from the Department of Education level, the state Department of Education level, the Anchorage School District, that you guys would really be wanting to hear from parents, because they are the key cog in this.

We have a new superintendent at the Anchorage School District. Attendance. I mean, he's willing to work with the municipal prosecutors to prosecute parents that aren't getting their kids to school. But he's not willing to advertise something like this.

And here's another example of communication. I serve on JOM and have for about three years, and we get we have about, I don't know, Doreen, you can correct me, but we have maybe 8,000 Alaska Native students that filled out their, your guys' cards. And do you know how many parents we get to our meeting? We're lucky to have 30. Out of 8,000 students times maybe one and a half, given parent-wise, given single parents and whatnot. But we get maybe 30, you know, and so that just says a lot.

And here's a simple thing is JOM funding hasn't changed from BIA in over 20 years, 25, 27 years. 25 years. We're all based on the 1995 funding level. The BIA does not have a position down at headquarters to oversee the counts of Native students in on our reservations, whether they're BIA school, or whether they're here to supplement a district like Cook Inlet Tribal Council's JOM program is to. And so what we have, it's just a lack of communication.

You know, I learned something. My mom gave me a card when I was 17. I wasn't a very good I wasn't the best son I guess at 17. But my mom gave me something, and it means something to me today, because I have a 16-year-old. And it said, a lot could be solved by simply communicating. And here's an example. The school district has a list of all the Native kids that they serve and that Cook Inlet Tribal Council serves. JOM has a meeting on Thursday, I wish you guys could stay, and you'd see the 30 parents, and they're passionate about their students, and the best for their students. But since BIA won't allow JOM to take a count of their

students, we've asked the Anchorage School District for a list of those parents so we can make direct contact with parents to notify them not only of our meeting on Thursday, but some of the opportunities that we have. I mean, Amy, our, we just got, we almost doubled our budget in discretionary funding from BIA. We're scratching our heads trying to say, how are we going to spend this, you know? But we know there's needs out there, but we I would like those decisions to be based on parent input, hearing from the parents, what are your kid's struggles? What are your struggles? Do you not feel -- I heard not feeling comfortable going into the school. You know, I have been forced to build a relationship with probably all five of the principals at Dimond, you know, all their assistants and their under secretaries if you might, you know.

But anyway, you know I guess I'm frustrated. I'm optimistic. I'm worried about my students, my kids. I'm worried about students like my kids, because as we heard earlier, and if you look at the statistics, nothing has significantly changed from when I graduated in 1988 from high school to the kids that are going to graduate this year and next year. Statistically we're at the bottom. And if we keep doing the same funding formula, the same funding approach, the same program approach, we're probably going to be this way my son's trying to help his grandkids out in school, you know. And, you know, my mom did this for me, you know, 30-some years ago. I'm doing it, you know.

And I know Native people will stand here and I learned something working for the federal government, and I know it's time-wise, but sometimes it's not the idea, it's just not the time. But I think it's time that the federal government, you know, really take a look at the way they deliver and model maybe what it is and listen to the parents and the students most importantly. You know, at some of these committees when a student comes in, what we hear

from them, where the rubber hits the road, is more impactful than that assistant superintendent who's supposed to be there helping us and is bucking us.

But I have one last thing I want to share, and I think it just goes back to communication and having a voice and being heard. The Anchorage School District back in 1975 as a result of community uprising, it was towards the end of the civil rights stuff, and the community said, we want to have a voice to the school district. And so they commissioned the University of Washington to do a study, and they said, bing, let's create the multi-cultural education concerns advisory committee. That was in 1975. This committee has functional, it's been dysfunctional. You know, there's need for some leadership and some guidance. It's a school board appointed committee with no leadership or support from the school board. And right now the Anchorage School District, and I believe is going backwards here, is they are proposing to eliminate that role and that direct connect to the school board, which is a voice of the multi-cultural community, and put it in the hands of the superintendent. I believe that's going backwards. I believe that's going, those school board members are already distant and isolated from the minority and multi-cultural communities already, and now they are even further distancing themselves.

And so it's things like that that speak volumes to me as a Native person trying to advocate. You know, I'm going to be advocating whether I'm on JOM, whether I'm on the MECAC (ph) committee for my kids regardless, because I have to. And, you know, the Anchorage School District has great things going on, and I want to thank Doreen and the Title VII program for Project P. You know, I don't like the fact that it's now a credit recovery, because that's like a negative thing. My son did one credit recovery by choice. The rest of them he took in that program and got A's. And it's a credit to the program and the people in there,

because I think they get just as much benefit from interacting with Native kids as those Native kids do from learning from learning from these teachers who care genuinely. That was one of the things my son said, was Mike cares about me, I feel it. That was his algebra teacher.

The school district was going to take my son who failed a survey algebra class in eighth grade and pass him on into ninth grade algebra. You're good to go, son. Uh-uh. I said, no way. That's setting him up for failure. And my son, before he goes into high school, took a high school class online and proved he can do it. And he's proven it ever since in that program.

And I'm just hoping that from a funding standpoint, I heard some timing issues, you know, I think that's a real big issue. And from the state perspective is how about forward fund some of the or forward fund all of the educational responsibilities that the state has by law, and don't put us behind the eight ball, because you're putting everyone behind the eight ball when you don't forward fund it, but you really put Native kids who are at the bottom of the academic achievement gap at a disadvantage, and will continue to do that if the funding formula isn't corrected.

And so I think that's covered most of it. But I do want to say there are great things happening, but I know that a lot more things can happen. And I invite anyone in the audience or here to attend the JOM meeting on the 20th. It's at 5:30 right here.

And thank you.

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: Jonathan, thank you for your comments. I think we've heard today in the morning that we need to have active listening, and I think that it is well appreciated

and we value that you brought to the table that we need to have the right voices at the table as well, especially through our parents and the students. So thank you for that.

Next I'd like to invite Lee from the Sealaska Heritage institute.

MR. KADINGER: All right. Thank you for coming here to the wonderful state of Alaska. My name is Lee Kadinger. I'm the chief operating officer for Sealaska Heritage Institute.

And I guess to give a point of reference, I'm non-Native, but my wife Louise is from Hoonah, Alaska. She's Tlingit. And our six kids are a range of ages. Our four older ones have all graduated high school, so they're 100 percent graduation rate. So part of the comments I provide you today are not only in my official position, but also as a father with a fairly good ratio of graduation rate.

SHI was created to promote and enhance Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian cultures throughout Southeast Alaska. And one of the largest components of SHI is our education department. One of the more one of the larger impacts that we've recently had is an MOA that we signed with the Juneau School District, the University of Alaska-Southeast, and Sealaska Heritage Institute, which takes a little different approach to, maybe a more holistic approach to education and involving Alaska Native organizations.

SHI firmly believes that Alaska Native organizations and Alaska Native people are the ones who should be directly involved with Alaska Natives education. And one of the largest things that we saw as an issue in Southeast Alaska is Native teachers. Very few Native teachers. There are Native teachers are graduated from college at UAS through the PITAAS program, but they aren't getting jobs in the classroom. I heard one, I believe it was Ethan, who

mentioned that he needed to go get Outside experience and then come back before they'd hire them. We try to look at that and say how can we as a Native organization not in the school district impact that.

And one of the parts that we had added to the MOA that we signed was that we have a seat on the hiring committee so whenever there's interviews for new teachers, we have a seat and we play an active role in that. And I believe we sat in for five of six different hirings right now, which is a very different approach, but it's something that we have a seat on. We can interview candidates, we can ask questions, and we feel actively involves us in a very different and a very real way.

I myself don't have a degree in education. Mine is in economics and business. So I think it gives an interesting perspective to things. Not necessarily this is how it has to be done, because this is how we've always done it, but a much more different approach. So we implemented that.

We also implemented a teacher training that was held I want to say August 13th, 14th. It was a two-day training for all new teachers to the school district and all new teachers to the university. And we went over everything. We had Native leaders speak. We had Native elders speak. We had youth that were in the high school speak. We had college youth speak. A lot different. This was funded by the University of Alaska-Southeast, Juneau School District, and Sealaska Heritage Institute, all through discretionary monies that we had to throw this together in its first year. But basically it brought about 30-some people out for an overnight experience, and we did traditional storytelling. We had a lot of experiences that these teachers can expect, some of the things that they'll hear from youth, both Native and non-Native, to try to

give them a short crash course. Rather than what another participant said, taking a course within the first two years, we felt it was important within the first two days of coming to Alaska. And so to try provide them something so they aren't floundering for the first year. They have some very real knowledge right off the bat. And we hope to grow this over time to be able to involve maybe follow-up sessions in the fall, in the winter and in the spring, and also to let those teachers, let those university professors know if they have questions regarding culture, or if they have questions regarding protocols, that they contact that they feel free to contact the Native community and not just think, oh, I shouldn't get involved with this, that they should contact us and ask how to best move forward in that light.

So that's what SHI is and some of the great things that we've started, and many more, but I don't want to take up too much time.

I'd like to go on to some brief talking points of a program, Alaska Native education program, that's very important to all of Alaska, but also imperative to education programs throughout Southeast Alaska. Our basic premise as I mentioned before is that Alaska Native people and Alaska Native organizations should be directing, managing, and participating in Native education in every way.

And the biggest thing that we've seen over the last decade is Alaska Native education program funds have gone from a more equal sharing when it first started between Alaska Native organizations, schools and non-Native organizations, to schools, universities and non-Native organizations. 75 percent of that funding goes to schools and universities, roughly 18 percent or 17 percent last year went to Native organizations, and then there's non-Native non-

profits that are in there somewhere. And so the largest pool of funding for Alaska Native students is not involving or going through Alaska Native organizations.

Schools, universities do have to have a partnership set up in order to apply for the grant, but what we've found through many discussions, through many of these various type meetings is that a lot of times what happens is there's a letter of support. I know first hand, because I happened to see Alaska Heritage Institute, when we were looking at who received grants over the last decade, our name was on the list as a partner. And when we looked back through it, it was because we wrote a letter of support six years ago for a program that we were a partner with. And afterwards we asked, well, how did it go? And it was something that Native organizations may be writing a letter of support, not realizing that that's the partnership. And that's what it equates to, a one-page letter of support upon the submittal of a grant, and that's it. So we feel and we really believe that with Alaska Native organizations, being the ones that manage, direct, and are involved in those education, not only are you setting up Alaska Native people and Alaska Native organizations for the long-term benefit of education in Alaska, but you're directly involving them, and then they will partner with school districts, they will partner with universities to implement programs that they see best fit for their students and their children.

The priorities by the Department of Education have little or no relevance to the state of Alaska. I know one thing that was mentioned was the novice applicant received five points. But one of the other things that popped up this year was Race to the Top was one of the priorities, which included school and teacher improvement, but really the way it was written was geared towards schools or universities, and it felt like Alaska Native organizations, there's no way that we can, could have applied to it the way that it was written and the way that it was

looked at. It looked like it was strictly written for schools and universities to improve their teacher performance rather than something that Alaska Native organizations could become involved with.

We feel that Alaska Native organizations and Alaska Native people should be involved with these priorities through meetings like this, helping to develop what those priorities are for next year, rather than having those priorities become somewhat of an indictment and say this is what they are. And in some cases taking the Alaska Native Equity Program into focus to develop those, and other times stretching it to the limit to make up priorities and say, well, this is how it relates to ANEP. But we feel that we should be consulted with in that process.

You know, I think that's pretty much the gist of all the talking points that I want to have, and I appreciate you all's time today. Thank you so much.

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: Lee, thank you for sharing some of the things that have been working in the partnerships you've been working on in the programs through Sealaska Heritage Institute, and for those talking points on the ANEP program. It's important that we hear those.

Next I'd like to invite Doreen Brown from the school district.

MS. BROWN: Thank you. Again, my name is Doreen Brown. I'm the supervisor for Title VII Indian education for the Anchorage School District.

We're actually the largest grantee in the nation. We have over 8,000 Native students in the school district and we have lots of work to do.

I appreciate the Department of Education coming here today and listening to us. We've been here before. In April of 2010 we had a listening session. What I would invite you to do, or challenge Department of Ed is to be more strategic and thoughtful in creating thoughtful dialogue between the state, the tribes, and our communities. And then once those things are given to you that we you provide some feedback that is measurable, because once again, like I said, we've been here before.

The other thing is that to really, to advertise this as well, this isn't necessarily a representation of our state. I feel like a big burden is on our shoulders, everyone that's sitting here, because not everyone here is at the table that can speak to their region and their needs throughout our state.

Speaking of that, I know that we have a What Works Clearinghouse for the nation, but it would be nice if we were able to regionalize that either by, within the five states that are nearest to us, or with even Alaska. We're often not included in those things for what works. I think we're a unique state. We're a wonderful state, but we have very different in my opinion unique issues versus what I call the Lower 48.

The other thing is the funding cycle. I'm going to reposit that out again. I know that with the discretionary funding through Title VII that was just awarded I guess about a month ago, and again ANE, that isn't even out until September. That really puts us at a disadvantage. I can talk a lot about this. We are not able to hire teachers unless they're new to the district; therefore they may not have the experience that we're looking for working with our Native peoples. People are obligated by contract within the district. They can't make those transfers after September 30th if we were needing to hire someone within the school district to help us

fulfill the grant obligations. So looking again at trying to award these grants in April or May at the latest so that we could have a couple of months before school starts to implement these wonderful demonstration grants and other grants as well.

The other thing is I know that this is a tribal consultation, we need to really look as a nation, and certainly within the Anchorage or Alaska, as to how any of our students are enrolled in tribes and how many of the tribes are represented in these large urban centers. And I talked about this in 2010. We have lots of tribes in Anchorage. There's over 8,000 Native students. I don't think there's one tribe that can be a voice for us, for our Native people here. So how do we address that, and how is that being addressed in the other urban centers? And how do you as the Department of Education make sure that that voice is there for our students and not just from one tribe, because it cannot be that way in the urban centers.

The other thing is just the technical support. Again this was brought up in 2010. We need support in reading and interpreting EGAR (ph), looking at Title VI 506 forms for eligibility. That's been around for many, many, many years, probably since the 70s; it has not changed. And other technical support within those grants. I know that it's done once a year, but I'd like to see that intensified, especially for the new people. It seems to be a revolving door with Title VI. I know I've been in the position for seven years, but with other organizations, people that are not aware of the law and the implications for that law, to fulfill that law, and they're really at a loss when they're trying to go in to these districts and trying to fulfill the grant obligations. So support with that.

The other thing in the identification of Native students. Right now the way the federal government is identifying our Native students, we're really looking at when they're

reporting out on NCLB, for example. When they're reporting out on an Alaska Native or American students, those are students that have only selected Alaska Native or American Indian. That is not representing our whole population. We have many, many, many students that select more than one box for ethnicity. And that data is not being, it's not reflective of who we're truly serving or who we truly are. So I think a better representation from the census part of it all the way to NCLB and a variety of other things that we're doing, we just need a clearer picture on who we truly are as people.

FERPA is another one that needs to be addressed. I know that I'm trying to work right now with the Heritage Center; I'm trying to work with Cook Inlet Tribal Council, with even JOM. There's strong FERPA regulations that need to be addressed, especially I know that tribes have really brought this up. I can't, not that it's my responsibility, but it's hard for the district to even share addresses and children's phone numbers without being in comp, not in compliance with FERPA. So that needs to be addressed. If we're going to have agencies helping us from the district point of view, and certainly from the tribal point of view, those FERPA issues or constraints I guess need to be addressed, and in a way that's systematic and somewhat less complicated than I think it is right now.

Going back to Alaska Native education grants and funding, I will have to agree that, you know, it's disheartening that so many agencies that are not Native agencies or not directly involved in some of these in most of the grants, I'd like to see that flopped where we have a percentage that has to go out to a certain amount of agencies that are Native run, but I would be reluctant as an Anchorage School District employee to give up my ability to run. I have two grants right now that we've done a great job with that. And it's just not a partnership on paper. We hire Native people. We have elders coming in. We are very major, great stewards of

that money to make sure that our students and our families are engaged in the educational system. And the thing that makes us different is that we are in the system and so we are able to navigate that I think a lot better, or in a different capacity, for example, than the Heritage Center. So again I'd hate to strip that away from other agencies, because they do offer some things, but maybe looking at the percentage, that the certain percentage is allocated Alaska Native organizations for that funding.

I just have a couple more, sorry. The other thing that I'm concerned about is as a school district, Anchorage School District, we have adopted Common Core. And the concern that I have, and I don't think there's a lot of research out there right now, but how is Common Core impacting our language, our indigenous language instruction, and how is that impacting our cultural responsive practices? There's not enough out there. From just the amount of knowledge that I have, it is a concern. I feel like it's very standardized and homogenized. And I have and I don't know how to combat that as a Title VII director. How do I go into schools and say when it's one person or a team of people that doesn't always have a voice that says, you know, where is the language? Where is the cultural responsive part of this? We need to stand up. I need Office of Indian Ed, I need every entity to come and say, this is important. Yes, we want kids to have RIGR (ph), yes, we want them learning, but we also need to retain the culture and the language as well. And we've not done enough work for that, and I feel like we're kind of getting behind for me, I feel like I'm a little bit behind the eight ball on this one.

On the state level we have a teacher certification for language. I think that's a very difficult way about getting what they call, it's like a teacher certification, but somebody can come in and become certified to teach a language in a school. I think we need to really look at that and making sure that we have access for people to come in to reach language and culture.

And how can that be addressed in a systematic way without obtaining this, what we call a Certificate M? Because if we look at the statistics, I don't know how many there's not very many people in the state of Alaska that have Certificate M. So I appreciate the effort, but I don't think it's working for our people and our languages in the school.

Let me see. I have a couple more.

Oh, the last one I'd like to bring up sorry. It's just the draft memo that you guys included. It's the draft memo of understanding, the MOU between Department of Ed and the Department of Bureau of Indian Education. And the things I'd like to bring up with that, just to be thinking about, is that there needs to be specific measures. And I was looking through it and I just found it right before lunch. But one through five, it's on page it's labeled as page 1 in your packet. First of all, when I read through it, there's a lot of what I would consider feely words. You know, enjoy productive and satisfying lives. I don't know what that means. I want measures. If we're asking the Department of Ed and the Bureau of Indian Education to do something, what is it to be productive and have satisfying lives?

The other part is even one through five, increasing the number and percentage of Indian children who enter kindergarten ready for success. What does that look like? Where are the measures? We're held accountable. We want them to be held accountable, too. So it can't be just words. There has to be some measures. I want a two percent raise. I I don't know what that would look like, but to be looking at that draft again and making sure that we can hold them accountable.

With that again we don't have BIA here in Alaska. We don't have tribes [sic]. And I know that Alaska Native Education Equity was supposed to help with that, but I just feel

like in the Lower 48 when I go to NIA, when my friends go to NCAI, and all these other initiatives, I really feel like the Lower 48 is really represented, but Alaska does not have a voice. We're still not being heard. And we have a large Native population and it is very unique. We're not many of our communities are not into revitalization of language. We're talking about the retention of language. We're talking about the retention of culture, not retaining it, not bringing it back. We're holding on by the skin of our teeth. It's different.

Thank you.

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: Doreen, thank you again for your leadership, and your, you know, quite apparent passion for our youth in our schools. You brought up several important points, several ideas on how to improve communications and then several issues that need to be addressed, for instance, around who is the larger, who is the voice for our youth when it is such a melting pot in our schools with so many villages, tribes and affiliations represented in the schools. And I think one of the things we need to hear about more today is how partners out in the community can bring that voice. We have partners from AFN here, regional representation of Alaska Native Heritage Center that can all work in partnership to be that voice for the youth in our schools. And it's I look forward to hearing more comments around that, and I'd also want to again encourage everyone to share what's working and for our youth, and ideas we can bring to the table and share.

Next on the list we have DeWayne Ingram.

MR. INGRAM: Good afternoon. And I'd like to first thank you for this opportunity to speak. It's very encouraging to have this chance and to have you here today to heard us on our needs. So thank you very much.

And a couple of the points that I'm going to make, some of them have been brought up already, so I'll just reemphasize them, because I feel very passionate about them as well.

But again I'm DeWayne Ingram. I work with Title VII Indian education and I manage a program called Project Kallo, and it's for Native boys pre-K through fifth grade. And I've got to tell you, I've just seen some amazing things from being a part of this. So I'm wearing the hat we talked about wearing different hats. I have the hat of a project manager and the hat of a very proud father of Tlingit/Cheyenne/ Blackfoot and African American boys that I'm so proud of.

And so let me tell you a little bit about what I've seen and things to just really bring to the table as talking points for this consultation.

The first thing I want to bring up is at our program we rally focus on social/emotional learning. There's a huge amount of literature and research that supports that social/ emotional learning increases academic success. Social/ emotional learning is an academic term. What is it really all about? It's about cultural awareness for our Native children, but also I heard Martin Brokenleg say once it's about teaching to the heart of kids.

And just a quick story for us, we run an after-school program that focuses on reconnecting children with their culture through Native elders we bring into the classroom. And this topic was brought up about partnerships with an Alaska Native Education Equity Program

grant, ensuring that we're partnering. Well, we're partnering with the community. We're partnering with the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program. With the Heritage Center. You name it. So we have a very concerted effort to ensure that with these funds we are partnering.

So every time we start this club, we do it with a talking circle. And usually there's an elder there. And it's just amazing what I've seen, because we start this, the first few weeks of school, this is last years, we'd see young second graders, they'd have their talking piece and they'd go around the circles. Some would speak with just confidence and just can't wait to share about the topic of the talking circle. But there was always I remember this one second grader would never say anything, very introverted. He'd sit there. He wouldn't even say no when it was his time to talk. He'd just go, and nod his head, and say no. But as it kept going along, eventually he'd speak up and say, the particular topic of the talking circle was what do you like about Club Kallo part of the program? And he just said, I really like Club Kallo with just the brightest look on his face, and he just spoke up. And myself and the teachers went, oh, my goodness, he came alive. And then the teachers also said that he's just there's something different about him now in the classroom. He's speaking up and doing these not that there's anything wrong with being quiet. I was a quiet student. But just to see that change and impact. Speaking to social/emotional learning.

And I think Doreen had mentioned this as well, because I think it's very important to focus on a common core and alignment, and to have math, reading and science as a focus, but we can't forget the research that shows that social/ emotional learning supports that, because we can't have a common core for an uncommon problem. We've got to have an uncommon approach sometimes. So that's something we have to look at.

So we talked about national data. Big scope, right? We talked about state data. Well, I can tell you about data within this program. So not only do we do an after school club, but we're collecting research. We're doing a correlation analysis. Every year of this grant, we look at SVA scores, attendance, and with a test that's called the DESA (ph). It measures social and emotional learning skills. 72 questions that a teacher will answer about the boy's social and emotional skills. Amazing what we just recently found out.

So I'm going to talk local, right just in this program. So a sample size of about 450 students. We look at their SVA scores and their DESA scores. We pulled out of that Native boys particularly, about 26, and found the most astounding statistic. So the DESA, the lowest score is a zero, highest score is an 80. And what we found for Native boys, if they scored a 50 on that DESA, they performed oftentimes above other students in their SVA scores. So when you do that correlation, it's just amazing to see.

What does that mean? What does it all talk about? And it's been mentioned so many times today, reconnecting kids with their culture, their language, identifying who they are is so, so important. So we need to talk about math, can't deny that. We need to talk about science and ready, but we also need to have on the discussion culture as well and social/emotional learning. It's got to be there.

The other item, just to bring up really quickly is this program being focused on boys. When you're looking at data, and some of you may have heard of the 80/20 rule where most of it's coming from 20 percent of it, make sure we're looking at the gender, pulling out the gender part of that as well, because there is definitely not only a color line in terms of the data,

with children of color, but specifically you will really see some astounding things when you pull out boys of color data. Definitely some work that needs to be done there.

Already mentioned, but I've just got to emphasize, because I deal with it as a project manager in terms of budgeting, planning, communicating to principals and teachers. Ensuring proper execution of this project is the timing of our grant cycle funding. This is a huge hindrance we try our best to overcome and make sure that we're effective, but please take it back. It's got to change. We have to have this happen in the spring so that we can use our summertime to execute our plan and execute the plan in the fall, not develop the plan in the fall and execute in the winter when we're already behind the curve with educators.

Another point to bring up is that the funding kind of touched on this briefly, but funding within the district and outside of the district. Again, I think it's a matter of having the balance there, not necessarily only external stakeholders, but also the internal with the district, and that we're working together and ensuring, like you said, that it's not just on paper, but we're actually day-to-day operating together and functioning.

And just the last point that I'll make is that I can remember, I think it was 1902, W.E.B. Du Bois said that the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line. Well, guess what? It's 2012, and the problem of the 21st century is the color line, and usually, more often than not, where are you going to find that color line? In education. So we definitely have work to do.

And I can remember my son coming home one day and saying to me, he said, Daddy, am I Tlingit? Am I Alaska Native? And I said, of course you are. Well, the kids are saying that I'm not. I said, well, why are they saying what do you mean that they're saying it?

But they're saying that I'm not, as if that was something for him not to be proud of. So we're talking a lot about negative statistics. We're so far behind. Drop out. You name it. But I see and I try to instill in my children that there's strength within their culture and their heritage, and that's something that they never ever at any point in their that they should be ashamed of.

So let's bring these points to the table, and I appreciate your time and attention.

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: Such a wonderful way to spend a Monday, hearing a story about a young boy blooming in a program like that, and, DeWayne, thank you for bringing the story, and for bringing it back to the level also of not only how individual impacts are made, but how those individual impacts add up to be population impacts. So thank you for that.

Next we have Adriene Active, who's a parent.

MS. ACTIVE: Hello. Good afternoon. My name is Adriene Active. I'm a parent of three young girls. I'm half Inupiaq and half Jemez Pueblo from New Mexico.

Thanks for coming and thank you for hearing our testimony today.

My girls are actually 22, 20 and 8, so there's quite a range. I've been through the whole system here. Preschool, elementary and secondary, middle and high school.

And my main concerns are with , you know, of course, we're here for the education, right? And our staggering statistics. And I actually had a moment to speak a minute with someone here, and it's not just education, although this, of course, a systemic issue, right, not just specific to Department of Education, but to everything. I wrote down like with corrections, health and human services, juvenile justice, SAMSHA, substance abuse, mental

health, cops, Department of Interior, of course, BIA, and the prevention education treatment services. And I'm sure there's some that I've missed.

You know, the statistics that we have, of course, you all know are staggering across the board, so I think when we think of solutions, a suggestion is to look at how do we provide wrap around services for families who are failing, right? For families who are in need. I think if we look at the solution the same way as providing wrap around services for all the systems, and how can we come together? You guys as a board, or as a commission, meeting with the other institutions, the other departments. How do we effect change? You know? What are what's our not only the story behind our issues, but what's the solution.

And, of course, this morning it was interesting how I ended up here. I came here seeking assistance and advocacies for my own daughter who's eight no, God, she just turned nine. She's turned nine. And she's in third grade. She's at the highly gifted program, which is she went to school, elementary, at Homestead, which is a very good school in Eagle River, and then she tested for Ignite, which is a highly gifted program within each school, and then she tested above and beyond Ignite. She's at the 99 and 100 percent statistics on the composite, whatever those proficiency tests are. And she had a certain level of IQ that you needed to get into the separate program, as well as advanced at least three grade levels beyond her grade level. So she's at third grade. She's at seventh grade level for reading, math, logic, everything. So she's doing quite well. And she looks very non-Native. She's very much Aleut, she had but she has the big eyes and so in the street she could pass for a non-Native.

However, her being and her soul is very much Native. So she's expected to she's and, granted, she's the only Native in this whole program, this whole highly gifted

program. There's 180 throughout Anchorage School District who get bussed to this program, because they're so far above and beyond what their regular school can provide, which I'm really thankful for.

I think providing cultural resonance programs for the parents who are teaching I mean, for the teachers who are teaching at the highly gifted level is a really strong need. This morning I ran and I'm going to get tears again. I was in tears this morning, because I get so angry. And, you know, I mean, I myself am educated and working on my bastard [sic] bachelor's that came out wrong, didn't it? Oh, my God. I'm making a spectacle this morning this afternoon. I'm working on my master's in research and statistics and science.

And I went to school out at Chugiak. Grew up being called a salmon cruncher, Klootch, you know, everything, you name it. And I made it through by fighting, you know. And I'm tired of fighting. I'm tired of fighting for me and my kids. And that's why I came here, because she's been started to get singled out and expected to behave and answer in a way that's not her. And the teachers don't understand that. I'm not saying she doesn't want to understand it.

What my concern is, is her, my eight-year-old, my nine-year-old, starting to get to the point where she's where she may lose her drive to learn, you know. Because she is exceptionally gifted. And I'm not saying that to brag. It's just that's way she is, you know. And I struggle keeping up with her.

So my point is how do we work with teachers, me as a parent, and as somebody who's educated, and as an executive director for the National Association of Social Workers here for Alaska, as well as years of work here with AFN and United Way and I mean, I just, I have

experience, you know, and I know how to operate in the western world, you know. But I find myself having to fight, and I'm tired of fighting.

I don't know what the solution is. I do know that what we went through this morning should never happen again. The teacher's tenured, you know, or tenured or whatever it is. I know on UAA it's tenured, right? I don't know what it is at elementary. I just know that she's untouchable. And somebody mentioned something about we've done this for years, and that was her response to me. I've taught this way for years. We need to move beyond I've taught this way for years to this is a cutting edge, this is what we're going to spearhead for our kids here in the Anchorage School District. And, you know, I don't know why Alaska Natives when we have issues, and I don't see this across with everybody, however I've noticed as a general broad statement is that when we have something that comes up, and maybe it's because a lot of them are like me, we're tired of fighting. You know, things happen to our people and we don't stand up as a people. The unity is not really strong here. Very much urban. And, you know, I just keep on having to fight and I'm tired of fighting. So hopefully you guys will come up with a solution and make things better, you know. And I'm all on board for assisting in whatever way I can.

So thanks for your time, thanks for being here.

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: Adriene, thank you so much for the courage for standing up and sharing your story and your daughter's story. It takes a tremendous amount to stand up and share like that and give us give feedback and talk about the need for change.

Next up on the list is Patsy from the Alaska Native Charter School who will be sharing a presentation here. So we're just going to take a quick moment to set up.

MS. SHAHA: Is it okay if I just take this over there? Is that okay? All right.

MS. FREDEEN: Or I can press the button for you, too.

MS. SHAHA: Oh, that's okay. I'd feel guilty. Can you hear me?

I'm just going to plug this in really quick. Okay. So oh, it's fuzzy, I'm sorry.

I wanted I've been listening all morning, and I was thrilled when I stumbled across this meeting on clicking through different things on the web site. My name is Patsy Shaha, and I have the privilege of being the principal of the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School. This is an amazing thing that I get to present to you. This is about, this is really fuzzy, I must be using it wrong. This is about what works.

MS. FREDEEN: Get a little further away from it.

MS. SHAHA: Can you hear me still? Okay. So and I put it on this thing during lunch, because I didn't want you guys looking at me, because this isn't about me. It's about the kids. It's about the achievement. So that's why I thought it was important to take your five minutes looking there instead of at me. Thank you.

So this is our achievement at our school. This is the district for across the board, and this is our school that we've only had for four years. We are a Title I school, so and we are a focus school that includes Native culture. So our constituents at the beginning you know, we put ourselves out there, we're a new school, who wants to come? The people that were coming to us from the beginning were the ones who were saying, this isn't working wherever I am.

Whatever school I'm in, it isn't working, so, heck, I'll try this new one. So that's why we started so low. And this is cut off, because I can't show you I don't have, we can't show this until the middle of October, what the final data is. Thank you.

So we are a public charter school in the Anchorage School District, and we have grades preschool through seven. We run about 200 to 225 students in our building and we don't surpass that, because well, you'll see why as I go through it. We are we very much target our instruction.

We're a Title I school, which means that more than half of our students are on free or reduced lunch, but over 70 I can't remember the 72, 73 percent are free and reduced lunch, so that means all of our kids in our entire building get free and reduced lunch and breakfast and a snack three times a week.

We have the proud distinction of saying that we are a nationally distinguished Title I school. There's only 68 in the nation last year, we were one. And that is a small, tiny little school in the Anchorage School District. And we did that because of the charts that you saw before, and because what you're about to see, what works.

Also down at the bottom we have for the past two years made annual yearly progress in the Safe Harbor realm. These are the students that we represent. It's not just Alaska Natives. The chart didn't come out very well, but this is the Alaska Natives to here, and then this is other. The two or more races does include some Alaska Natives.

So what we do, we mix culture and we mix excellence in focused instruction. Both of those. Equal. 50 percent.

Now, in the excellence of instruction, every educator in my opinion should read this book, and that's why I chose to take a second to put it in here. Michael Schmoker's the author and it's Results Now. And what he says makes excellence in performance in students is gathering and analyzing data and then regularly making professional development based on that data. So, for example, let's say that I inherit a third grade class that is low on fluency in reading. Well, I as a teacher then need to find professional development on how to meet that need. So that's one of the things that Mike Schmoker says. And the last one is, there's regular teaming with your other instructors, your other professionals, on how to meet that data I mean, to increase the data. And that's what we do.

Now, on the Native culture side, we this is what we break down in grades. In our grades, year long, every class has a culture that they study. So the kindergartners get an introduction, and then you see how it breaks down. Sixth grade, they review them all. And in seventh grade they get into the politics. They get in ANCSA, they get into the analysis of tribes and money and how that happens.

Also, another thing that we do is we have a quarterly focus. Every quarter there is a different focus on different parts of the cultures. For example, how we get our food, where we live, the language, how we build our structures. We also something that's very, very, very important.

Now, imagine yourself if you were to every single day of your profession begin with the following: School for everybody else starts at 9:00. Our students all volunteer to get there at 8:50. At 8:50 all the students are in a common area, and we have what we call a community gathering, and we all get together and we have a community time where we celebrate

each other. We have an important social/emotional learning thought that is spoken in Yup'ik and in English. And, of course, we say the Pledge of Allegiance (Speaking Native language). And then we say it we say it in English, then we say it in Yup'ik.

And on Mondays, every Monday morning we have a guest elder who takes three to five minutes to address our students and say, this is why I think education is important. And my interruption in thought was because my fabulous teacher over here, Veronica Guganik, she was late this morning to our meeting here, because she needed to go to the school to translate for our elder that was there today. And she got back, and I said, how did it go? And she goes, electric, oh, it was wonderful, she said.

We also have a Yup'ik instructor. Every student gets at least two hours a week of Yup'ik instruction, going back to what Doreen was saying about, and Annette was saying about involving language in the classroom.

And we also have several different ways that we approach the nurturing of the soul, because that is very important in what we do in addressing this population. One of them is in an elementary school we use Council's Choices, another one is called Conscious Discipline, and another one is that we have volunteer, well, not a volunteer, but a coop with Southcentral Foundation and the Alaska Native Heritage Center and they sent somebody in who is a behavioral specialist so that they can help the children one-on-one with their individual challenges, behavior, so that then the kid can sit in class and learn.

Oops. I don't know what I did. Oh, I messed it up. I should have just let you do it. I'm sorry. So we did this one.

MS. FREDEEN: Okay. I'll let you do it.

MS. SHAHA: The next one. So this was just to review for you our achievement. It's working. It's working. We have in four years brought it up that much. And this one here is almost double. Go ahead.

So that is the end of my presentation about what we do at the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School that works. Our children are happy, they come to school. They are in attendance. It is fabulous. And we only have 12 teachers.

Thank you.

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: Patsy, thank you for sharing the presentation. If you haven't had a chance to tour this school, it is a lot of fun. So, please, if you have a chance, go take a look at what they're doing over there. It's pretty amazing. The kids are energized. It's always fun to be around kids, especially when they're new to school, as we just started a new school year.

Next, speaking of schools, we have Josi Willcox from Chickaloon.

MS. WILLCOX: I'm following a PowerPoint presentation with scribbles I made. First I'd like to say (Speaking Native language). Good afternoon. And how is everyone. My name is Josi, and I am the education director for Chickaloon Native Village, Chickaloon Village Traditional Council.

And one of the things that I oversee is the Ya Ne Dah Ah school. Ya Ne Dah Ah is Ahtna Athabascan for "ancient teachings." It is a school that was started by our clan grandmother over 20 years ago in response to what she saw as a crisis in her work at the prisons

with our Native men, that they had completely lost their connection to who they are, and were ending up in jail or worse.

So she started a Saturday morning school the summer of '92. And the parents got behind her and said, no, we don't want to send our kids back to public school. So they went into a full-time school that fall, and it has been in operation since.

We have a 100 percent graduation rate. Five years ago when I started as the teacher, we made it our initiative to make sure all of our kiddoes went on to higher education. And thus far every one that has graduated has. We have two that are on their way to master's degrees.

Unfortunately, because we are not part of BIA, there is no funding for our school. We have to write grants, which means we have to teach to the grant, which means we have to compete, a tribe of 250 people, with districts that have as many 8,000 Native students.

I sat and listened to all the generational stories, and we struggle with the same issues. When Doreen spoke of the retention of the language and the culture, being that we are on the roadway system, our last fluent speaker passed when Aunt Katie passed four years ago. However, because of her efforts, we do have children who are now considered intermediate speakers, one of which has gone on to public high school; however, she has to take the language after school, because it's not offered in our district.

We can't get our elder speaker certified. He lives in Copper Center. And the only way to get him certified with a Certificate M is to have him hired by the school district, which means he would have to relocate. We need to look as a state as to what we can do to ensure that our children are getting what they need in their local area schools.

I'm not going to go into all the different specific that I wanted to talk about, because I don't need to. They were already addressed.

Annette spoke to the fact that the ANEP gave points to new programs. What about those that are successful? What about those that are proven? The fact that so many go to non-Native entities, what about our tribal governments, our tribal entities that are doing for their own people.

Ethan and Annette and so many others who have spoken to the fact that we've been teaching our children for millennia with no suicides. No crime rates. They've been successful. WE have a really good idea of what needs to be done. We've had no suicides in Chickaloon in over 40 years. I encourage the state to listen to its people.

I would like to also speak to the technical support of the ANEP. It's kind of nuts to read through and make sense of, but thanks to our partnerships with the Mat-Su Borough School District and other entities, the Native Heritage Center, people we talk with, we're able to kind of figure things out. But again those are the issues we would like to see both the state and the federal government work on, please. (Speaking Native language)

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: Josi, you brought up some really great example of what works for our youth, connecting them to their culture, to themselves and their history and really allowing them to see what success is like in their own community, and it's very important. Thank you for that.

We have Nicole Borrromeo from AFN.

MS. BORROMEO: Thank you. As Amy said, my name is Nicole Borromeo and I'm from AFN.

I just wanted to go ahead and share with you and it is kind of awkward standing like this, but twist the mic a little bit to share what AFN has done in terms of ANEP, and what our position is. As most of you guys know, and I'm not sure that you, Joyce Silverthorne, are not. AFN is the largest native organization in the state of Alaska. Our membership includes all 12 regional for-profit ANCSA corporations, their tribal consortia counterparts, and 188 of the 321 federally-recognized tribes here in Alaska. So our job is really to listen to what the tribes and corporations want, to formulate the Native position, to advocate on that position, and then to see it advanced.

So in early February I guess it was, this year, AFN passed a resolution on the ANEP program, because we saw two concerns with the program. The first is that, it's been mentioned, and I just want to reiterate as well so it goes into the record, that 75 percent of the funds are not coming to Alaska Native organizations, but rather to non-Native organizations. The other concern is that the Department of Education now has complete discretion in how those funds are awarded through a competitive grant process.

So what our resolution spoke to and the solutions that we offered is to redirect those funds. Have them come directly to our Alaska Native organizations so that we can go out into the community and find our non-Native partners, like Doreen. And we don't want to take away from what's already out there and happening. We want to expand on it.

And our second solution to have the DOE come to Alaska, consult with us as you're doing here today before you identify priorities for the funds.

I just wanted to let you also know that at convention this year, we're hosting five workshops. One of the workshops will be on education reform, and we would like to have you back to participate in the workshop.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY: I'll be there.

MS. BORROMEO: You'll be there. Okay. Great. And for all of you guys here, too, please come to convention. I know that many of you are coming already. Come to the education workshop. Let's continue to work on this issue. There are so many great ideas in this room and brilliant people, and we just want to be supportive in any way that we can.

Thanks.

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: Thank you, Nicole. I'm not sure if we have others signed up to speak, but that is the last person I have on my list.

MS. EVANS: I just had a quick comment. I really appreciate you coming today from AFN, and I just wanted to.....

MS. SILVERTHORNE: Please come up to the mic, that's how we get it recorded to the record.

MS. EVANS: My apology.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you.

MS. FREDEEN: And please repeat your name, Yatibaey?

MS. EVANS: My name is Yatibaey. And I just wanted to say thank you for coming, and again thank you all for coming as well. And I just something that's been on my mind a lot about the AFN conference, as well as NIEA is that those dates sometimes overlap or they're really close together. And I know that Anchorage is the host of NIEA's conference in 2014. And this year the dates exactly overlap and so this is a big conference for all of us Alaska Native educators, and so we're kind of like torn between, you know, attending AFN or NIEA, and so I guess in the future planning, if we can communicate on those dates so they don't overlap or especially when NIEA comes in 2014, that they're just, you know, right alongside there.

And then I also, being in Fairbanks, heard that our mayor, if re-elected, is planning on getting AFN to come to Fairbanks in that 2014 year, which I was like, oh, my gosh. I was really concerned, because that's when NIEA is going to be in Anchorage.

So I just wanted to share that so that's on everybody else's minds.

MS. FREDEEN: Thank you for that important reminder and kind of preview on kind of how important it is to coordinate dates as on major initiatives.

We do have a few more people signed up. I just got the list. So I think we have I'm sorry, the handwriting isn't very good. We have Brown from the University of Alaska-Southwest or Southeast, sorry. Sorry about that.

MS. CADIENTE BROWN: I have bad handwriting? That's the first I've heard. My name is Ronalden Cadiente Brown, and I appreciate the opportunity that you created in allowing many of us to come forward.

Inadvertently my entire career has been rooted with Indian education dollars. Back in 1972 when the act was envisioned, I was a high school student in Juneau, Alaska. My Tlingit name is Antah-halot (phonetic). Through my mother I belong to the brown bear clan of Kilisnoo in Angoon.

In 1973 our school district received funding as the first level of funding, and I don't really remember how it happened, but I ended up in a study hall in my high school. And I really didn't need a study hall. I was doing well with my education. And it was I credit a friend of mine, that we were in friendly competition for good grades, and so we both had 4.0's, and I guess they scheduled us into a study hall, because we didn't, we were caught up with our credits.

I made an appointment to visit with our counselor about college as a junior, and was not well received. Quite honestly her response was, you want to go to college? And stepped back and said, well, can't I? I have a good GPA, I'm interested. And the degree of counseling that I received from her was, pointing to a bookcase and saying, those are colleges, pick a catalog, and make your choice. And that was it.

Lo and behold, in that study hall, because we were cut up on work, she intro the Indian education instructor introduced beading. And so as I was sitting there beading, I started asking her questions, because she had just returned from college. I asked her how did you get there, what did you study, what was it like, where did you go, what do I need to do. And lo and behold, because of her guidance, I ended up in college.

My desire was to become a school counselor, because like you've heard before, I didn't want the same thing to happen to other Native students. By the end of my undergraduate

work, I was I landed, by the grace of God I guess, an opportunity to participate in a Indian Education Act project with Portland Public Schools and stepped in as a tutor, K/12, and spent four years working with Portland Public Schools before homesickness set in and it was time to come back to Juneau.

I stepped into a director position with Indian education. So I'm just amazed at how it impacted me. During that time we created some of the first curriculum, even some of us in this room, Ethan in particular I'm pointing to. We created a showcase program, some of you may not be aware, but the Indian education programs identified exemplary programs and ours was one. Our foundational piece was what we now call place-based education. We anchored traditional knowledge in our schools with a focus on social studies. In doing so, we did something extraordinary that I look back at now. We involved parents, we involved the tribe, we involved elders, and it wasn't just us forging ahead creating curriculum. It working with a very diverse advisory group to critique our work, and in essence legitimize it. So the elders had first and foremost had their opportunity to guide us. It was some of the most rewarding work I would say that I was involved with.

After eight years there, I landed an Indian education fellowship. That was my ticket into Stanford University, because of the Indian education curriculum materials that were part of my resume of experience. I was one of the only fellowship recipients from the state of Alaska. And so it goes on and on.

Currently I'm yes, I'm retired from the school district. I am I was invited to step in with the University of Alaska-Southeast, and we are overseeing my primary role is the PITAAS program, a program with an acronym, Preparing Indigenous Teachers and

Administrators for Alaska Schools. In the state of Alaska we have five percent of our teaching force are Alaska Native. That's an unfortunately very low number. And to date, since 2000 with the inception of the program, we've graduated almost 70 teachers into the ranks of teacher teaching throughout the state of Alaska. Do all of them go into teaching? No, unfortunately. Opportunity presents itself, and but I would be happy to share with you that the majority of our students do step into the very challenging field of education.

I had a chance to attend a very special state or national judicial college gathering in Juneau recently. And one of the guest speakers dealing with the Indian Child Welfare Act made a very poignant statement. And that is, do our children see themselves reflected in our schools? I'll repeat that. Do our children see themselves reflected in our schools? I think that's the foundation of what you're hearing today.

I would be appalled if we are in a situation of vying for funds, working against our tribal brothers and sisters on reservations. I know that both Juneau and Anchorage are hubs for rural Alaska. We have a very diverse populations, and I think we're richer for that. But I also know that we're very unprepared for the challenges that that brings. And I know in my new role I'm working with a very strong determination that the students that I am funding and I would point out, too, I understand the argument, you know, we're a non-Native entity as a recipient for ANEP funds. However, beyond the indirect, all of those funds are going to Native people, predominantly through scholarships, and I'm very proud to be associated and have that opportunity to work with our applicants and our students as recipients as they work toward that very challenging degree.

In my career, too, I've also I've moved into roles of administration, vice principal and principal. As principal of Yaakoosge Daakahidi Alternative High School, I was there for seven years, and I would say that the common denominator, and we saw that in the charter school, our common denominator I think is that I had the privilege of working with people who love our children. The majority of our students, between 50 and 60 percent of our students were Alaska Native versus the district as a whole where they represented 23, 24 percent of the population. And that included PARE educators, teachers, counselors. And I think the bottom line that we held was increased expectations. You're not going to fail. No excuses. Leave your garbage at the door. You know, like I was dealing with students who had been through it all. They'd been through the battle and came in defensive often, and within an hour you could see the stress melt off of their shoulders. This wasn't a regular school.

In the seven years I was there, for Juneau standards, it was high, but we served I counted them up in my departure. We had served 1500 students that came through our doors, that we served. We didn't accept everyone, but who we served. That was as high as our compressive high school's enrollment. And that is not something to celebrate. I think I would much rather see our students find success in their schools.

And I think that brings me back to beg the question, do our children see themselves reflected in our schools? I want to applaud the Department of Education for the Indian Education Act funds, for the Alaska Native education programs. Without those funds I would venture to say that our schools in Alaska would look horribly different. We would lack the language programs. We would lack the cultural programs. We would lack many, many, many of our Alaska Native staff.

And I guess my take-away is that these funds are of great value. I realize when we talk about diminished returns and dropout rates, I want you to walk away with the idea that what can we do to measure success differently? I suffered through No Child Left Behind, and seeing the change that was forced upon Indian education programs who were successful, who were making a difference, and lo and behold, the ruler changed and you had to toss out what you were doing and focus on data. I'm not afraid of data. I think that the data through NCLB was helpful in part because it didn't allow school districts to look the other way. For as painful and outrageous as it is to look at low completion rates, I would have to say that it would be a very different experience if we changed the ruler, that instead that we were not looking at labeling our children as failures, but labeling the school as failures, the teachers as failures if they are not producing. And I say that because I've worked long and hard in policy, and you can have the greatest policy in the world, but if it doesn't impact practice, if it doesn't change how you're doing things, then that's where the issue lies. I've always taught that way. There's no reason for me to change, as an example I heard recently within the afternoon.

You know, how a principle decides to staff their building, what assignments they give, where they place our students. I mean, it goes on and on and on. And I had hoped that NCLB would sort of lift the lid off of schools so that you could really look deeper into how school districts operate. I don't think it's done that. I think we have a lot of number crunchers who can be very creative in their direction of attention to our public.

I would like instead to also see a focus on rigorous teacher training and evaluation, and that we look at their success with our students. What are you doing differently and how have you been trained? How is your school district? How has your state trained you to be an effective educator with our children?

I would also like to venture forward, too, that the comprehensive centers are a unique idea. When I first started with the Juneau Indian Studies Program, we were working with Northwest Labs, and they were very much a research facility, and I appreciate that in hindsight to what we have now. I don't believe the comprehensive centers do enough research so that you can say this is a promising practice, this is leadership in the field of Indian education, this is the gold standard. I don't think we have that. We're focused too much on grant writing and reporting to get there. And I would venture to offer up that that's were our tribal entities could play a pivotal role with the cultural expertise that exists, that how powerful that would look.

So I've taken enough of your time. I appreciate the opportunity to speak. I'm actually quite shocked that so much of my career has been impacted by Indian education. I didn't really plan it that way I don't think, but I'm grateful. I've been truly blessed.

I appreciate your time again, and thank you so much for venturing into our beautiful state. Gunalcheesh.

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: Ronalden, thank you for sharing. I think you pointed out how funding can be used to promote and help programs that make positive impact with our youth. You shared some very great examples of how it personally impacted you, but also what you're doing to help our youth.

Next we have Barbara Cadiente Nelson from the Juneau School District.

MS. CADIENTE NELSON: Well, first of all, let me just say that that was my sister Ronalden, and I leaned over and I said, I yield my time to you, so my comments are going

to be really brief, because she said it so well, and I'd really like those words to hang in the air as well as the others that have spoken today. I had a long list of things that I wanted to talk about, but I'm going to just ask you this.

First of all, I do represent the tribe, Douglas Indian Association of Juneau area. It's a small tribe. And then I'm also the Title VII program director for Title VII dollars, Juneau School District. In our school district, our students comprise 26 percent of the population, yet we have 49 percent of the dropout rate. And we have with the small dollars, it funds 25 percent of my time, and the other dollars are to fund the five culture PARA educators. This year the district, even downsizing the budget, because of political pressure by the Native community, retained four positions that also were to deliver culturally relevant curricula, and dug deep in their pockets and maintained those extra four positions from general funds. And that's not a small step forward. That's a big step forward. And so it takes a lot of political pressure from the Native community to sustain these positions and the vision that our children will be culturally competent.

And I was very pleased when I saw that this was a tribal consultation for urban students, because we serve in our district students that are coming in from the village that are moving in, looking for ways to sustain their families with employment and housing, et cetera. And so we have a very transient population in from the village. And so their experience, believe it or not, it's surprisingly, that they have had less of an experience in terms of cultural relevance in the village. They're living it, but when they go in the classroom, they're not experiencing it, yet it's our passion and it's our mission to provide them that. But you can imagine that with nine staff to 1300 students plus, that we're run pretty thin. It's sad. This year is sad.

The last three years have been incredibly productive in that we partnered with Goldbelt Heritage Foundation, a non-profit entity of an ANCSA corporation in Juneau. They're a local entity. And so our staff, the Indian Studies staff was paired with culture bearers and elders in the classrooms. And the events, the classroom lessons were very rich. And I don't know how else to articulate this, but to say that it's so much more rigorous to teach through culture. We're not there to we're not a buttons and beads program. We're there to really move with the knowledge that we've inherited, that we have to perpetuate to remain who we are. And to do so means that we're really struggling to repatriate knowledge and to make sure again that these meet that academic rigor.

As much as I love cultural programs, unless there's that rigor, then I think that we could get be kept busy doing cultural programs and miss what we're about. And what we're about is having our place at the table where policies are made and where we can have a new world order.

I want to say this, of late, and I can say this, you can't, but I was so impressed by the Democratic National Convention, because really what it expressed and conveyed was a new world order. A new world order where there's global diversity that's of value.

And what I want you to go back with is this. As you fly above our mountains and our waterways, and as you fly above our streams, this is who we are. We have such a history, even as a Tlingit from Southeast Alaska. During the glaciation, you know, we were up in these areas and we migrated back to our homelands in the Southeast. Can you imagine, you may hear of our songs and our dances and our regalia, that really is about our history. But that story of migration, that story of occupance, that story of survivance is still alive and well in us.

And we may be a few voices, just as Ronalden mentioned, that without Indian education dollars, I am one of 600 staff people. Just one. At 25 percent salary funded. If Indian education dollars were to go away, there wouldn't be that initiative. There wouldn't be that expectation. So oftentimes I feel like the Wizard of Oz behind a curtain, and I can really blow a lot of air to make that curtain move, but without Indian ed dollars, then I wouldn't have that platform.

What I need to be effective, as I heard Doreen Brown speak, is more sharing of information on what best practices are, what leverages that you use to move a community forward, because that's what's going to change. It's going to be the voices of the parents. We heard today on the elders that are dying with this information to move us forward, to remember who we are. That's what we have as a burden as Native people, as Tlingits, as Haidas, as Tsimshians, as Aleuts, as Yup'iks, as Athabascans, as Aleuts. We have that.

I stand here feeling very privileged having known some of our forbearers in education. The late Dr. Reverend Walter Sobolof, Tlingit. The late Oscar Kawagli, Yup'ik. The late William Demmer, Tlingit/Sioux, who in Alaska said, this is important. Even with their doctorate degrees, they would go right back to the source of who they are and acknowledge their mother and their lineage. But this is so important. That's what we have on our backs, too, is to they saw the vision, they understood, as do our elders.

So as you leave here again, I'd like you to be mindful that it's in us. We have it just to survive, not only to survive, but to thrive. If you would take a look at the website, Alaska Native Knowledge Network, what really jumps out at you is that this is a global initiative. We're indigenous people, and our lives and our way of life and our histories are in danger. Our

languages are in danger, and we have something to contribute to this world. And if not for that courage and the conviction coming from D.C., there's the social justice expectation that the very onslaught to acculturate and assimilate us was not the right approach, and to make it right. And these dollars are making it right. And sadly in this room, we're all competing for these dollars, and it's up to us to figure out how to do it.

I'm going to walk away with this, because it's a burden that I carry. I had a teacher tell me lately that one of her kids were acting up in class, and she finally went over and said, what's going on? What's wrong? And he said, I didn't eat. And she's, was that all? Well, let's go look for something, and she gave him her lunch. And then a cousin next to him said to the teacher, he didn't eat dinner last night either. When we bring our children in and our parents in for meetings. we try to offer food, and, of course, our grant dollars don't pay for that. So we're going to different sources and asking for help there. It's a very real need. We can't feed starved minds, and so we try have to find alternative ways to feed them.

This stands in such a great contrast, why of the small dollars that are paying for Indian education in my district, that we're paying over \$20,000 for industry, that I can't allocate even \$1,000 so that I can buy peanut butter and bread or something to put in these children's stomach. That seems like a small problem. It seems like a small problem that if you could just give us a percentage a small percentage, we'll make we'll double that up. We'll make those fishes and loaves feed the masses, so maybe you can put your mind to that.

So again, gunalcheesh for traveling so far, and I hope that you have safe travels back.

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: Barbara, thank you for reminding us about the importance of sharing both not only our financial resources, but our food resources and our wisdom. I think both you and your sister shared some very powerful quotes. I was particularly impressed with the move forward with the knowledge we inherited, and I think that speaks a lot to what we're looking forward to in the next 20 years as we look at making sure our youth are successful.

We have one more person on the list. Sue McCullough from Early College Charter School.

MS. McCULLOUGH: Good afternoon. My name is Sue McCullough. I'm from the Effie Kokrine Early College Charter School. I'm the early college coordinator. I've been in this position for five years. I'm going on my fifth year.

I've heard your stories. Many of them make me cry, because I see this every day at my school. I'm not allowed to compete for those dollars. I get grants tossed my way every day. Please look at this. Apply for this. This applies for us. And I read through it and I go, we can't apply for this. We're not a district. This isn't this goes to the district. This has to go back to the North Star Borough. I try to find grants that will fulfill my school and pay for my children at my school to have the best education they can have.

The positive things that we have at our school, we do have language. We have Koyukon. We have Gwich'in. I pay for an Inupiat instructor from the University to come to my school. Those teachers, except for the Inupiat professor have all we have had to apply to help them get that type M certificate. It's been successful. We offer that. It's not an after-school program. It should never be an after-school program. Language is language. It's who we are. It's how we communicate.

I didn't go to school in America. I went to school overseas. I grew up not in America. I grew up in Spain. I grew up in North Africa. My language is important to me. Learning someone else's language, learning two other languages was how I had to get around. So I know language is important. So that covers that language piece.

The net piece is the food. I just finished a summer program. A summer program that I have been pushing since I started at this program at this school. I've been pushing to have a summer school, not for college retention or for high school credit recovery. This is to have a leg up, so our students could get ahead. So our students could be successful in a four-hour day as opposed to struggling through an all-day school. No, we don't start until 10:00 in the morning, and that's great. We're the only school in Fairbanks that starts at 10:00. Awesome. Our kids benefit from that.

But the number one thing is food. If I cannot teach my students where their food comes from, because many of our students eat at the food bank. They eat out of the cafeteria, which is horrible food. We bring you know, we'll make soup. We get moose. We get road kill. Our children all come down that hall and help clean that moose if it comes in. Everybody participates in that food.

But during the summer months I take pride in saying that this summer was our first summer that we grew an acre of food. I had six kids in my program. I almost got shut down, because somebody said, oh, this isn't successful. I said, wait a minute, this is our first year. We can't close a program because we don't have a large number of students. We have to continue. We have to show and continue next summer, advertise now, get our word out that this is for everyone who wants to lean about our natural resources in this state. How to feed your

community. How to feed yourself. How to have those year-round hydroponic foods in your classroom. How to grow food. How to store food. This is part of our curriculum. This isn't part of an after school program or part of our cooperative extension that comes down and helps or a 4-H Club or an FFA chapter. This is all the time. We need to do it all the time.

We were denied this year of giving our students, our rising ninth grade students high school credit for this science class. That class could have been full. Many parents were like, ah, no, you don't need to do that, you can do something else. I had a few middle school students.

My goal with this program, part of my goal this summer was to give our students a leg up so when they came into ninth grade, they had one credit that they felt successful in, that they did well in, and that they knew that they could move forward. We could not give that credit. And that to me if they go through eighth grade graduation in May, why cannot they earn that credit in June? That's my question. Why can they not earn that credit in June? They need to earn that credit. We want success, right? So that was the other thing.

The great things that are happening at my school, as a college coordinator, I'm proud to say I've had one student out of the many who have come through my program, graduated high school with 36 college credits and went to Stanford. That's just one of the many successes. I have students, 20 students every year that attempt or and complete college classes at my school. Everything from English 111 to English 213, math 107, which is pre-calculus, all the way through calculus. That's our goal this year. This is our first year we're going to offer a wildland fires to our students. This is the first year we're going to offer comm 141, which is

public speaking, for our students. These are the classes. These are the gatekeeper classes at university that hold all these students back.

I heard one man here say today 90 percent don't finish. Why? Why is that? Because we aren't helping them in these preliminary years at high school. This is critical. If we can offer these classes and help them with the most support possible through these gatekeeper classes, and we are not these are taught by university professors. They are not taught by high school student or high school teachers. So university professors that come to my building and teach these classes. It has the academic rigor of the university. And we play by those rules. These kids will be more successful at university. They're going to step in already done with year one at UAF or UAS or UAA or wherever else they choose to go.

Part of my job is to make sure that these kids are successful, and to help them every step of the way to get there, to get to college, or to get to a trade program. But all those trade programs and all those two-year programs require the same classes.

Who pays for those classes? I raffle a four-wheeler every year. That's where those classes come from. I pay that money from a raffle. Maybe some may come out of our 1.5 million that we get as a charter, and that's what we get. Doyon Foundation is the only Native corporation that pays for a high school student to take dual college classes. This year I have one Doyon Foundation student. The others are from other corporations. Their corporations will not pay. We've asked. We don't get they don't get funded. So we pick up that tab, and that's fine. That's part of the initiative.

This initiative started back in 19 or 2006 under the Bill and Melinda Gates Early College Initiative. We were the only early college high school in the state under that initiative. We've grown. We're still going. Even though the program is gone. The grant moneys are done. I still report to Jobs for the Future, which is Gates' tracking.

And I just want to say that we have to foster. WE have to provide the funds if we want success. It's not only about money. I understand that. I have great partners. You know, I have the National Park Service right next door. They come and help with other tasks and events. I have elders, but we still have to pay for them. They want a stipend. Or they need they want they would like to be paid. We live in Fairbanks. They need transportation. You know, I work with the School of Natural Resources and Agriculture. I work with Interior Aleutians campus. I work with Doyon. I work with TCC. We have a teacher who comes down, who's sponsored by NASA to come teach my students science and chemistry and give college credit for those classes. And NASA pays for that. So and I have partnerships with the individual programs and individual departments at the university. And I do have an MOU. Our school does have an MOU, memorandum of understanding with the university. But we cannot do this alone. We need help. We need financial help. In some of these programs, we need to pay for transportation.

That's all. I mean, there's so much I could say, but I'm not going to say any more. But I think that this has been an amazing learning experience for myself. I have, I've learned a lot from everyone in this room, and I thank you. And if anybody can give me insight, more insight to bring parents to my school I try. People tell me I'll sit and wait. They'll go, no one's going to come. I said, I don't care if it's one parent. I wait until that hour when I said the meeting was going to happen is over. I wait many nights by myself and one other parent will

show up. Sometimes five. I bake food. I do all sorts of things, and I only have maybe a handful of parents come. So if someone has more secrets to bring parents to school, that would be great. So I'm open to suggestions.

Thank you and I appreciate everyone in this room.

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: Sue, you made some really important points about the need to define success and setting the path to success early for our youth, and it's appreciate.

We do have one person on the phone, and I know we're running short on time. It's just before three, but we have Lolly Carpult via phone who would like to make a comment.

MS. CARPULT: Hello, can you hear me?

MS. FREDEEN: Yes, we can.

MS. CARPULT: My name is Lolly Carpult. I currently reside in Fairbanks. I'm from Mountain Village. And the last position I had was with Alaska Native Teaching Corporation Project which was funded by Office of Indian Education, a four-year grant from 2008 to 2012. And unfortunately we applied, but we did not get another four-year grant or this one. This year which would have carried us on, you know, another four years in support of Alaska Native education interns and Alaska Native room teachers.

Before I and I'll share more on that, I really appreciate everyone's work, and their insights and knowing that just being there, even if you're just one person, because I heard some testimony about being the only person, and I've been there many times. You give hope to

one or more students or other staff or faculty. So know that even if you're one, you make a big difference.

I really believe in the circle of education. You know, we're talking about a cultural-based curriculum. I worked with the initiative with many of the people in the room that were part of that in 1995 through 2000. And then also another grant with the University of Alaska-Statewide, teachers of Alaska now, teach the educators of Alaska with partnerships across the state and they've got a website. The Native Educators Association is a big part of that, has been a crucial partner in fact. And they've also been a crucial partner in the Alaska Native Project housed at the School of Education here at UAF. So having gone through culture-based program development with many partners, looking at strengthen models that already existed before and then sharing and validating that it is, they are on the right track with developing lesson plans as teachers that include culture and just getting that validation for the teacher that might be the only Native teacher in a very small community to the many that LK and CIT, the largest number of certified Yup'ik teachers across the state. And then to the future educators recruiting students to become teachers, hoping that they don't lose their way of learning and teaching when they are part of the SEA (ph) clubs across Alaska, that they bring to the school, and they also have an impact on if they're working with non-Native teachers and teaching them about their communities and their way of knowing. And then now with teachers, indigenous teacher preparation. This grant was over three-quarter of our support.

We don't have full ride scholarships for education majors. So students referred to us by the elementary and secondary programs at the School of Education here. I explain the program, project to them, and they signed agreements saying they understood it was pay-back or cash pay-back or a service pay-back. And our goal was 27 Alaska Native teachers by the end of

2012. We reached over three-quarters, because we didn't have the numbers of Alaska Native education majors in elementary and secondary combined. Over 50 percent of our Alaska Native education interns were in elementary. For a fact, this part year there were no Alaska Native interns at the secondary level at the School of Ed.

We need a new model I believe, and some of our faculty are talking about developing a secondary teacher preparation model more appropriate for rural Alaska.

I also got a chance to work with Upward Bound students, and I've mentioned at different meetings that our Alaska Native students, some choose the public schools or the university system with something to share and to enrich the schools or universities they come with if they have the opportunity provided by teachers or faculty. They've got dual knowledge system, dual ways of knowing, and if we could just tap into a way of teacher preparation that looked at ways of doing that.

There is a need for indigenous teacher prep in Alaska. We've had different models across the state, and to have three-year grants such as the ANEPs that funded the Future Educators of Alaska, and then now Alaska Native Teacher prep that is funded by off that was funded by Office of Indian Ed. Three and four years are not enough time to see results, and like proponents of indigenous teacher prep for the ones that I worked with, I know PITAAS in June I want to put them under FEA, and they're funded by ANEP. And then for us, the Office of Indian Ed professional development grants, three-quarters of student support, which is tuition, fees and books, a living monthly living stipend for the nine months they're student teaching, child care if they have children, and then travel, and we developed an Alaska Indigenous Education Institute, and seasoned veteran Alaska Native educators were the professors for,

quote/unquote, "reteaching" our new teachers, quote/unquote, "decolonizing." And our Alaska Native interns and new teachers are hungry for ways to incorporate indigenous knowledge into their teacher prep and also into their first year as teachers.

We are long overdue for an Alaska Indigenous teacher prep program, I believe. I've been fortunate to travel to different places across this nation, Hawaii, Arizona, that have and to Canada and Akaroa, New Zealand where they have indigenous teacher prep staff. So we've got models and we've got one young man spoke from the Alaska Native Heritage Center. I absolutely like his the model they have with the Sealaska Heritage Institute, the school district, and University of Alaska-Southeast, all partnering together. I think if we brought that model up a notch to statewide coordination, this is just a thought, with AFN, Alaska Native Educators, First Alaskans, our Alaska Native politicians, partnering with the University of Alaska-Statewide, with the Department of Education in Juneau. That infrastructure I think would help in the coordination of policies, and then helping us in our positions, because I as Alaska Native teacher preparation coordinator, the project is peripheral to the already established Bureau of Education program.

So now that we are not funded for another four years, what components are going to be sustained within the School of Ed we have yet to see. That's a work in progress.

I really would like to echo what some of the speakers spoke, particularly hearing of an award like August, September, October. By then it's hard to implement some of the initiatives or the components that are in the grant. So if there's a way we can know in the spring time, and we can begin planning in the late spring into summer for the upcoming fall, because in-

service time, we would like our educators, seasoned educators with our new teachers at their in-services, and in their classrooms where they're cultural mentoring.

And what we learned from the Alaska Native teacher prep project with the components there, it helps bring about it helps nurture indigenous education major voices. It also helps nurture indigenous faculty voices. We need those kind of voices and ideas to incorporate our ideas into the current teacher preparation project.

So I'll stop there and end with remember you make a difference even if you're just one person, and I really appreciate the opportunity speak.

Thank you.

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: Lolly, thanks so much for joining us on the phone. I know it can be hard to follow remotely on the phone, and we appreciate your comments.

We're getting ready for closing remarks, but I just would like to note that Commissioner Hanley has a prior commitment and may need to leave before we do final remarks, and retrieval of the colors. I'd like to invite anyone sitting at the head table to give a few brief closing remarks.

PARTICIPANT: I didn't get an opportunity to get my name on the list. Would it be appropriate to --

MS. FREDEEN: I'm sorry. We're out of time. But if you have in your packet--there's a comment card. You could turn that in, that would be great.

Do you have any closing remarks?

COMMISSIONER HANLEY: Well, I sure appreciate the insight and the input today. And I came here to learn. And I really and I recognize and I heard it throughout the day, the importance of working together. This is not something that the USDOE can do by themselves. It's not something that the state can do by themselves. It's something we need to do together.

And I think I heard it several times, too, it was a very powerful statement, it's not that our kids are failing, it's that we're failing our kids. And it saddens me that we have to come here to focus on an issue that we've dropped the ball on a whole section of our kids. And I'm encouraged that we've recognized that and, you know, it's too bad it's taken us this long to get here, but and we still have a long ways to go.

But I look, especially in regards to Native education, and we built a system on a flawed philosophy of assimilation. And rather than recognizing that at some point and turning around and saying we've got to fix this, we've got to empower that. We've got to recognize the value of what's there and building from there. We've just said, well, let's just keep going. And so we've got a system now that I would like to think is not based on assimilation but it is founded on that and it was never corrected. So we have that background that I think some of our new teachers come into, and they don't fully understand. They don't understand why there's a hesitancy to be involved with the education system.

I spoke the other day, actually we were up at a Northern Dialogue up in Talkeetna this weekend, and I spoke of a culture of expectation. Somebody said, well, what's the difference between different schools? I said, well, you know, I think it's a culture of expectation,

and I had to clarify that, because I'm not saying that some people expect less, but when the background is from the elders that, you know, my experience in a school was horrible. I had my mouth washed out with soap. I was not allowed to speak my Native language. I was, you know, put down for who I was. Well, what's the expectation they have of sending their kids. I can picture elders being very hesitant, recognizing that that's what's supposed to be done, but being very hesitant. And I try to put myself in that situation. I'm going, boy, I would cringe every day that I sent my kids to school, if that was my expectation of my own background.

Ronalden said something very powerful. She said, do our children see themselves reflected in our schools. And we've got a great Native educator in one of our villages. And when she'd gone to college and come back to teach, one of the kids came up and asked her, oh, are you white now, because that's what she recognized, is teachers are not who we are. They're white folks that come in and leave. It's a different culture. It's something different. And so I'd have to answer that question of do our children see themselves reflected in our schools, and at least in that case the answer's clearly no.

The problem I think is relatively complex. I don't think there's going to be a simple formula to fix it, because the needs are different. It's an uncommon situation. But when I look at what we need to do, maybe the first step is to really strengthen who is in our schools. You know, I looked at what you spoke about, is of training teachers, our greatest resource. We talk about our greatest resource being our children, our greatest resource will be our children who come back and educate in rural Alaska. That's how we begin to change that culture, it's how we empower that so that the kids are reflected in their schools. They see that, and it sets a vision for who they want to be. So there's not a separation of, well, I can either have my culture or I can have an education. That's a horrible place for somebody to be in.

So I always leave these meetings feeling a little bit weighed down, and appropriately so. But going back and taking my many pages of notes and saying, okay, now what? And so I look forward to there's such a huge representation from around the state, I really look forward to getting more input. And it doesn't have to be at these meetings. It can be on an individual basis with just calling up. I need to make sure that the state a lot of these issues really take place at the local level. I yearn some times to be back at the school, and to be back as a principal, to be back as a teacher, and work at that level. That's where the power really is. But at this level, I need to make sure we're supporting those efforts that are positive, and making sure we're not putting up hurdles that are hindering the work that's being done, the work that needs to be done, especially for our Native children.

So I thank you very much for taking time to provide your input. It's really valuable for me, and it's critical that we move together. So thank you.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you.

(Applause)

MS. SILVERTHORNE: Before we run out of time, I had hoped that we might be able to have Annette and Lisa actually talk to us a little bit more for the record about the structure of how the state of Alaska has such unique political and structural differences from the Lower 48, and I hope that we can still use some of the materials to put that into the record anyway. And it has been a good opportunity to hear that first hand.

One of the challenges of coming to these meetings is to remember that I'm supposed to be silent, and that I'm supposed to take this all back in and be able to get it to the places that can change those things that you're struggling with.

When I was listening earlier in the day, I wrote down locus of control, that the control of different components that you've talked about today like everywhere from the local area, from the state and how it's operating, and unfortunately we come today with the face of the Department of Education as a whole when in fact the program I operate only has a component of that.

And Lisa and Gloria warned me that there were concerns about ANEP. I have no control over that, which is really interesting. I am a Title VII director for the Department, but that Title VII program is outside of my control. And so I will take the information I've learned today, and make sure that it gets back to the right people. But I want you to know that it isn't within my control to make some of the recommendations that I've heard.

I don't know how it was decided or when that that Title VII program was pulled out of the Title VII office, but it has been. And that's one of the components that we have made a commitment to try and understand better, and with all due haste bring it back together with the other Title VII programs, because it is unfair, not only to you folks who are trying to get your voices heard, but to have that split and not be hearing from you about the concerns about how it is operated.

So it was an interesting an opportunity about two months ago that we had a meeting where we were in the same room. And it was the first explanation I had heard of ANEP as well. So I hear your voice. And I do know that the entire department is trying to get the grants out of the door before the academic year begins. But they're also trying to do other things that have delayed them this year. And the discretionary programs are part of that example. So we'll struggle and try to get the Federal Register notices out earlier and try to speed up the

process again, and it's a work in progress. But it is important, and there is an acknowledgement across the floor that the programs need to be in place before the academic year begins. It just is it's getting closer, but not there yet.

Parental role. I couldn't agree with you more about the need and the importance of parental role. I'm a great grandmother of seven, and all of the family in between that that means. And I have been at the parent committees for Title VII, Head Start, Title I, Johnson-O'Malley, all as it depended on the great diversity of my children and grandchildren and what they were involved in and where their interests lie.

So one of the things that we are talking to our attorney about is how those parental committees can be better communicated across. We do intend to have during our technical assistance day, the day before NIEA, October 17th, at least one panel discussion about the parental committees and the interactions and overlaps and how to be able to function more clearly and with better consistency across the board. So that is one piece that will be in there.

Another that will be a part of that TA day is the FERPA regulations. There has been a change in FERPA within this past year. And it is possible for tribes and/or organizations to be acknowledged in the role that they have with their children as a FERPA-eligible entity. There's some criteria. You have to meet the confidentiality, but it can be done. And so we'll be having our attorney talk to us about how that does happen.

Technical support. One of the things we've realized as we attempted to implement the STEP pilot project is that we need more technical support for us at the Department in learning our responsibilities as a federal agency, and understanding the great diversity of tribes and tribal perspectives and situations that we deal with. And that we need

greater technical support for our tribal entities. For many of our tribal leaders, this is the first time they have stepped into the education arena, that that has been mostly for not better. It was out of their control and as children were taken into boarding school situations, it was not something that tribal leaders were able to influence or change at that time. That's changing. And so we're really working hard to be able to reach across to tribal leadership and to have conversations about that role and about what the interaction can be.

And then as the last piece, the Common Core. I invite you to take a look at at least one of the other Common Core documents I'm aware of. Before I came to this job, I was in Montana at the state department, and they worked on a Common Core guideline that they have on their website under the Office of Public Instruction Department, Montana, OPI. And under Indian education, Common Core standards, and you'll find Common Core standards that incorporate not a 15 percent over and above the Common Core standards, but a means of reaching the 85 percent of the Common Core criteria through curriculum that incorporates Native literature, Native math, Native science, and incorporates it through that process so it doesn't have to be an add-on at the end.

I thank you for this opportunity today. Our Corps people have been waiting for a very long time for us to wrap up our day and so with that, thank you for coming.

(Applause)

MS. OOSAHWEE: I think Joyce has kind of addressed some of the specific concerns you had today, and so in the interest of time I'm going to keep this short and brief.

I want to than you guys for coming. I want to thank you for the work you do. I want to thank you for being a voice and an advocate for the students. I think we have a better

idea and a snapshot of Alaska Native education right now, and we see some of the issues and we see some of the strengths, and I think that one of the strengths, and one of the greatest strengths might be from the people in this room and other people around the state like you. So thank you very much for coming today.

(Applause)

MS. EVANS SMITH: If I could just add a couple of closing remarks. One of the things I would like to recommend that we look at is other examples in other parts of the world where indigenous education has transformed itself. I would like us to look systemwide at, for example, New Zealand where they've done groundbreaking work that now has preschool through Ph.D. level instruction in the Maori language. It all started with tiny programs in people's garages and in people's homes. It started so very small, but has completely transformed their system.

And I'd like to say that hopefully by the end of this process, and, you know, so it's not 1978 looking forward to 2012, so it's not 2012 and then, you know, 2038 we're in the same position. I would like to say that we have made significant change and that our young people are they know they are successful, because they are Alaska Native, because of what they come from, and not in spite of being Alaska Native.

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: Doreen, I don't know if you want to give a few quick closing words?

MS. BROWN: I just value everyone's input today and appreciate all of you coming and I look forward to the success of our people and our students. Thank you, everyone, for coming.

(Applause)

MS. FREDEEN: Just real briefly, I want to thank everyone for their time today and it was a long day. We heard some very valuable comments. We heard stories of individual hardships and success, what works and what barriers are still out there. We're reminded of the power of our history and how we can build off the wisdom of our heritage, and how we're going to work together towards innovation in the future for our youth.

And I want to make it short and sweet so that we can have our Army National Guard do the retrieval of the colors.

(Colors retrieved)

MS. FREDEEN: Thanks again everyone. If you have written comments, please remember to turn those in. Thanks.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter was adjourned.)