



CENTRAL COUNCIL  
*Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska*  
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Executive Council of the Central Council  
TLINGIT AND HAIDA INDIAN TRIBES OF ALASKA

Resolution EC/ 14-46

Title: Support of Alaska Native Languages in Head Start & Early Childhood Education Programs

WHEREAS, Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Central Council) is a federally recognized tribe of more than 29,000 tribal citizens worldwide; and

WHEREAS, there are an estimated 200 speakers of the Tlingit language and 12 speakers of the Haida language worldwide; and

WHEREAS, Central Council was authorized by the 2014 Tribal Assembly resolution 14-15 to establish a Language Department; and

WHEREAS, Central Council's Language Department will work toward reversing language shift and create opportunity to revitalize the Tlingit and Haida ancestral languages to maintain our Tribal sovereignty, cultural resources and traditional values; and

WHEREAS, Head Start and early childhood education programs promote school readiness for children by offering educational, nutritional, health, social, and other services; and

WHEREAS, sixteen (16) federally funded Head Start grantees are in operation in the State of Alaska, serving 103 communities and 3,466 children of which 1,605 of which are American Indian or Alaska Native children; and

WHEREAS, the Head Start Bureau Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs states "Effective Head Start programming requires understanding, respect, and responsiveness to the cultures of all people, but particularly to those enrolled children and families": and

WHEREAS, the Office of Head Start (OHS) began an effort in 2010-2011 to learn about the successes, progress, and challenges faced by tribal communities engaged in preserving, revitalizing, or reclaiming their tribal language; and

WHEREAS, in the ten years after 2001, reports reflect that the number of Head Start children who speak a tribal language at home had decreased by 10%; and

WHEREAS, Alaska Native languages represent a significant resource to the State of Alaska and have contributed to its vitality and diversity; and

WHEREAS, the foundation of Alaska Native cultures and ancient traditional knowledge are embedded in Alaska Native languages; and

WHEREAS, knowledge of Alaska Natives languages promotes positive self-identity of Alaska Natives; and

WHEREAS, studies have demonstrated that the academic performance of Alaska Native students improve when Alaska Native students are taught their Native language and culture; and

WHEREAS, the Head Start Act of 2007 Program Performance Standards provides for the integration of tribal language and culture in Head Start classrooms, in the curricula, and across program services and systems; and

WHEREAS, confident and competent teachers who are provided with the appropriate professional development are necessary to successfully teach Native languages to young children and to successfully integrate tribal languages into Head Start and early childhood education programs; and

WHEREAS, the development and integration of Native language instruction into early childhood education programs and funding from local, state, and national levels are necessary and vital to successfully support the survival of Native languages and to further advance the academic achievement of Native students;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED Central Council urges the Alaska Congressional Delegation to support the survival of Native language and promote the academic achievement of Alaska Native students through the following measures:

To enact legislation or amend existing legislation such as the Native American Languages Reauthorization Act of 1974 to provide for the integration of Native language instruction into all Alaska Head Start Programs and other early childhood education programs serving Alaska Natives,

To provide for the necessary training and funding of Head Start and early childhood education program teachers to ensure the success of the language programs,

To appropriate the necessary funding to support these measures.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Central Council respectfully requests the Alaska State Legislature and Governor of Alaska to support the survival of Native languages and promote the academic achievement of Alaska Native students through the following measures:

To enact legislation for the development and integration of Native language instruction into early childhood education programs,

To provide for the necessary training of early childhood language teachers to teach Native languages in the early childhood education programs,

To provide for the allocation of funds to Alaska School Districts and Alaska Native language programs to support these measures.

ADOPTED this 25<sup>th</sup> day of August 2014, by the Executive Council of the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, by a vote of 6 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstentions and 0 absences.

**CERTIFY**



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President Richard J. Peterson

**ATTEST**



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Tribal Secretary Jolene Edenshaw