

**IN OUR WAY: EXPANDING THE SUCCESS OF  
NATIVE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE-BASED  
EDUCATION**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS**

**UNITED STATES SENATE**

**ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS**

**FIRST SESSION**

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**MAY 26, 2011**  
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**THURSDAY, MAY 26, 2011**

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:15 p.m. in room 628, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Daniel K. Akaka, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL K. AKAKA,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII**

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning. I call this hearing of the Committee on Indian Affairs to order.

Aloha, and thank you very much, all of you for being with us today. On this day, we think about language and culture-based education. I think it is only fitting to begin with an example of what we are trying to save, to advance and move forward. With that in mind, I want to set the tone for this hearing, and ask Namaka Rawlins of Aha Punana Leo to do an opening protocol in our Native Hawaiian language to open this hearing.

Namaka?

Ms. RAWLINS. [Greeting and opening protocol in native tongue.]

The CHAIRMAN. Aloha. Mahalo nui loa, Namaka.

Today's hearing is called In Our Way: Expanding the Success of Native Language and Culture-Based Education. This hearing will explore the trends and achievements in Native language and culture-based education, identify barriers to greater success and key strategies to meeting student and Native community needs through education.

You may know that I started my career as a young Native Hawaiian teacher. I worked to implement the Native Hawaiian perspective into the curriculum and learning environments of my students, because I believed that was the best way to ensure their success. I really believe that one way to get to these young people is through their culture.

I remember with a big smile that when I was learning to read in Hawaii, just think the years back there, and the big words, big letters, and what do I read about? Snow.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. And I wondered, gee, what is this? But anyway, that is what I mean when I say culture. In Hawaii, we do have snow on our mountains, but not in the villages and towns there. This is why I have always believed to get students at their roots and their culture is when we are really getting to the spirit of learning and education.

It is troubling to know that of the 300 plus Native languages that were once spoken in this great Country that only 175 remain. And many are at risk of being lost. Native languages are vital to the Native peoples to whom they belong. There are numerous examples of where their continued existence has benefitted the United States as a whole.

As a World War II veteran, I can assure you—and there are just three of us left in the Senate today, Senator Inouye, Senator Lautenberg and I—I can assure you we learned the value of the Navajo language then, in World War II, and of the bravery of the Navajo people.

I commend the work of many of our witnesses today. You have been committed and innovative in solving the challenges and laying a foundation for achieving academic excellence in a way that honors the unique Native cultures of America.

I want to extend a special mahalo, or thank you, to all of those who have traveled from Hawaii, Alaska and other places in this Country to join us today. I appreciate your presence at these proceedings.

My good friend, and I am so happy to be able to work with him, Senator Barrasso, I would like to ask him to make an opening statement. Senator Barrasso?

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN BARRASSO,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM WYOMING**

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. When you start talking about your earlier days as a teacher, I would think that Senator Franken would join me in saying, you continue to be a teacher, a teacher to us in the Senate, a teacher to your colleagues, to any of the staff on both sides of the aisle, to people in this room, we continue to learn from you in so many ways. You talk about your service in World War II, we just had 104 World War II veterans from Wyoming here as part of an honor flight. There is so much to learn, for all of us.

I just wanted to take the time to thank you and just let you know that you continue to be an exceptional teacher. In medical school they always gave the best teacher what was called the golden apple. Students would take an apple to a teacher. And I know in the Senate you would be the deserved one to receive a golden apple.

So I am very, very privileged to serve with you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to be here today because of the significant work that we all need to continue to do as we deal with the consideration of Indian education in the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act. We all know that quality education is really a key component to any healthy and thriving community. It is also an area where there is, as we all know, much work to be done and much room for improvement.

In the past, this Committee has received discouraging testimony about dropout rates, poor achievement rates, from our Indian students. We see that in Wyoming. According to the trends found in the Bureau of Indian Education report card for the past three years, graduation rates of Indian students ranged between 53 and 57 percent. Dropout rates ranged from 8 to nearly 10 percent for the same three years.

So we need to hear how we can close the achievement gaps and build upon some of the successes that have been achieved in Indian education. So I am happy that we are having this hearing today. It is important that we give attention to, and careful attention to those elements that support and advance academic achievement. All of us, Congress, the Administration, the tribes, the Indian education community, parents, families and the students themselves need to work together at improving the quality of Indian education and the quality of student performance.

So this will have to be a collaborative effort on all levels. I suspect that the best ideas will be found at the local level. I want to thank the witnesses, I look forward to the testimony.

And to you, Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank you for the leadership and the guidance that you have continued to show on this Committee and in this Senate and for this Nation as a tremendous teacher for all of us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Barrasso, thank you so much for your kind words. I look forward to continuing to work with you on this. Senator Franken?

**STATEMENT OF HON. AL FRANKEN,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM MINNESOTA**

Senator FRANKEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In Hebrew, I don't know if we have a word for snow.

[Laughter.]

Senator FRANKEN. I think maybe our Native Alaskans have more than one word.

And I too want to associate myself with what the Vice Chair of this Committee said about you as a teacher. I really appreciate that. By the way, the word rabbi in Hebrew means teacher. So thank you, Rabbi, and Chairman, for holding this hearing. I appreciate your continuing efforts to improve educational opportunities for Native students.

It is painfully clear that our current education strategies are not working for Native students. As Senator Barrasso was saying, we have all heard the statistics. Indian students perform below their peers in standardized tests, in reading and math. Approximately one out of every two Indian children fail to make it through high school. In Minnesota, actually, the high school graduation rate for Indian children is only 41 percent.

But there are also success stories. At the Nay Ah Shing school in Minnesota, students are learning about their language and culture, which will strengthen their school's climate and its ability to engage students, which we know is so important. Everything on the Help Committee that we have been looking at in terms of No Child Left Behind says that when kids are engaged, they do well.

In Minnesota public schools, pre-K students in the High Five program spend the morning learning English and in the afternoon they have a Dakota or Ojibway immersion classroom. Over the last four years, this program has produced a 16 point gain in kindergarten readiness. Last night in Minneapolis, 65 Native students participated in the Indian graduation celebration. It is up from 35 last year.

We know that Indian children do better in school when they have opportunities to learn their language and culture. There are good models in Native communities across the Country that are producing results. It is vitally important to highlight these success stories, and I want to thank the witnesses for being here so we can learn from you. You will be teaching us as well.

So I look forward to listening to your testimony on the strategies that work and learning what we can do to expand success. One of the most moving things I find when I do Native events in Minnesota is the drumming and the singing. It is so beautiful. To see these kids, in some cases pretty little kids, drumming and speaking in their ancestral tongue or singing in it, it is absolutely gorgeous. And you just can't help but go, like, well, of course. Of course, learning your language, of course, being proud of your culture, being proud of your heritage is going to do wonders for every aspect of your being, including your academic well-being. Of course.

So thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you, Rabbi, for today's hearing.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Franken. Again, thank you for your kind words and I look forward to continuing to work with you. I of course seriously hope that I can measure up to the honor of being a rabbi.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Education is the foundation of all progress for our communities. As Native peoples, our futures are strengthened when we can employ educational practices that help our children thrive and excel. There is an old Hawaiian adage I think is instructive on this topic. It is, A'ohe pau ka 'ike I ka halau ho'okahi, and it means, all knowledge is not taught in the same school.

I am looking forward to hearing from the witnesses on the different strategies they have employed to help our Native students achieve and succeed, and their perspectives on how to expand on current successes and promising trends. We want to build on the basics.

We only have limited time to conduct the hearing and therefore, had to limit the number of witnesses we invited. But as Chairman, it is my goal to ensure that we hear from all who want to contribute to the discussion. So we have ways for you to let us know how you are feeling. The hearing record will be open for two weeks from today, and I encourage everyone to submit your comments, your written testimony. I want to remind the witnesses to please limit your oral testimony to five minutes today.

I would like to invite the first panel, and you are all here, and I welcome you to this hearing.

Joining us today is Namaka Rawlins, a liaison of the 'Aha Punana Leo of the University of Hawaii College of Hawaiian Language at Hilo. Larry Lasley is a member of the Meskwaki Settle-

ment School Board in Tama, Iowa, where the tribe operates a BIE school.

Alvin Parker is the principal of Ka Waihona o ka Na'auao Public Charter School in Waianae, Hawaii. Our fourth panelist is Kevin Shendo, the Education Director for the Pueblo of Jemez in New Mexico. So again, welcome to all of you.

Ms. Rawlins, please proceed with your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF NAMAKA RAWLINS, LIAISON, 'AHA PUNANA LEO, UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT HILO COLLEGE OF HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE**

Ms. RAWLINS. Mahalo. Chairman Akaka, Vice Chairman Barrasso, Senator Franken and members of the Committee on Indian Affairs, my name is Namaka Rawlins. I am past Executive Director of 'Aha Punana Leo, served as Chairperson of the Native Hawaiian Education Council, and just recently completed my term as board member of the National Indian Education Association.

Today I represent the 'Aha Punana Leo Language Nest and Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikolani, Hawaiian language college at UH Hilo. Together, these entities, with laboratory school programs, represent Hawaii's P-20 vertical alignment of Hawaiian Language Medium education system. It is the most developed program in a Native American language. P-20 refers to an education pipeline from early childhood through the doctorate. Our successes include 100 percent graduation rate and 80 percent college enrolment, due to the rigorous academics of our program.

It is an honor to testify before you on Native American education with a particular emphasis on the crucial role of our Native American languages and cultures in the education of Native Hawaiians, American Indians and Alaska Natives. It is also an honor to be here with my colleagues from our National Coalition of Indigenous Language and Culture-Based Education Research Group. My full testimony is provided. I will highlight a few things.

There is overwhelming support in Native American communities throughout the Country to revive and restore long-suppressed native languages and cultures to the children of those communities. Those languages are crucial to Native American literature, ceremonial life, spirituality, kinship practices and overall indigenous identity.

It is possible to restore these languages to communities to assure the continuity of Native American identity and to bolster the academic achievement and college and career readiness of Native students. There is much research on the effectiveness of immersion as a language teaching methodology. Immersion is not only the most effective method of restoring Native languages, it is also a most effective program academically for Native American children. Well-established Native American language immersion programs currently exist in Arizona, Montana, Wyoming, Oklahoma, New York, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Montana, Oregon, Alaska and Hawaii. Lakota-speaking tribes in North and South Dakota and others have started immersion projects or are working to do so.

Senator, the Native American Languages Act, NALA, was passed in 1990, over 20 years ago, with policies and provisions that assure Native American language-speaking children the right to use their

languages in federally-funded public education. These provisions are absent in the No Child Left Behind Act. It is crucial that the most egregious conflict between NALA and No Child Left Behind relative to our highly endangered Native American languages be eliminated now.

The harshest barriers to Native American immersion are in Title I, as they relate to testing and teacher qualification, disregarding the distinctiveness of Native American language immersion. The results of measures of student performance in a language other than the language of instruction threaten our programs and force them to abandon immersion prematurely. Fear of Title I is what prevents many programs from even starting.

I ask that you consider allowing our consortium in Hilo to serve as a federally-mandated center for excellence for any school that meets the definition of a Native American language nest or a Native American language survival school, to serve parallel to a State education agency for the U.S. DOE. It would be an option for these schools. It would build on our existing national coalition of indigenous language and culture-based education network of researchers and practitioners in Native American language immersion and culture-based schools. The center will support highly-qualified language schools and highly-qualified teacher programs, opening the doors for other Native communities.

Through the U.S. policy and support of Native American languages, NALA in 1990, we were able to create programs to support immersion and Native American languages and demonstrate academic success through language programs. Thank you for that opportunity.

Now we ask that you further provide us empowerment by creating this center for excellence, so we can share with the Nation our model of academic success and its proven impact on Native student achievement. This concept is aligned with the Obama Administration's educational blueprint in support of Native American language education. It solidifies the U.S. endorsement of the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. That document includes numerous references to the rights of indigenous peoples, such as Native Americans, to continue education in languages, culture and traditions which are proving to have positive impacts academically on our children. We need support for changing Federal education legislation, to make access to quality education through Native American languages a reality, as an educational optional for all Native Americans throughout the United States, based on the proven successes of our model.

Mahalo.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Rawlins follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NAMAKA RAWLINS, LIAISON, 'AHA PUNANA LEO,  
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, HILO COLLEGE OF HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE

'Auheha 'oukou e ka Lunaho'omalu Kenekoa Akaka a me nā lāā o ke Kōmike 'Iiikini o ka 'Aha Kenekoa o 'Amelika Hui Pō 'Ia, aloha mai kākou, iā 'oe e Kenekoa Akaka ke aloha pumehana a pēlā pū iā 'oe e Kenekoa Inouye, aloha mai Hawai'i mai.

**GREETING**

Chairman Akaka, Vice Chairman Barrasso, Senator Inouye and Members of the Committee on Indian Affairs, my name is Nāmaka Rawlins, Outreach specialist for the 'Aha Pūnana Leo, Inc. and the Liaison of the state of Hawai'i Hawaiian language college. These entities work together and represent Hawai'i's P-20 vertical alignment of Hawaiian language medium education system. P-20 refers to an education pipeline from early childhood through to the doctorate. We are the most developed program in a Native American language, with special strengths in early childhood, secondary programming, teacher training, testing, and graduate education.

I am past Executive Director of the 'Aha Pūnana Leo, served as chairperson of the Native Hawaiian Education Council and just recently completed my term as board member of the National Indian Education Association.

Today, I come before you as the Outreach Specialist of the 'Aha Pūnana Leo, Inc., and the Liaison of Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōiani, Hawaiian language college established by the Hawai'i State Legislature in 1997 at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. These two entities lead a consortium of programs in Hawai'i and also in the national Native American language immersion effort.

It is an honor to testify before you on Native American education with a particular emphasis on the crucial role of our Native American languages and cultures in the education of Native Hawaiians, American Indians, and Alaska Natives.

**HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF OUR WORK**

In the 1970's, there were less than 50 children below the age of 18 fluent in Hawaiian. The Hawaiian language was near extinction. In response, advocacy for language study grew. As an example, Native Hawaiian elders in my community organized themselves and pushed for our language to be taught in the public schools and the local University of Hawai'i at Hilo. They have since passed but there has been an explosion in the growth of children highly fluent in Hawaiian. This occurred through developing resources and teaching methods for college and high school Hawaiian language classes and language appreciation in elementary school but most notably through preschool through grade 12 Immersion schools. Our programming is built upon the Kumu Honua Mauli Ola – a unified Native Hawaiian educational philosophy, and the Pepeke, a Hawaiian culture-based paradigm for teaching Hawaiian which is built on solid linguistic research.

The 'Aha Pūnana Leo, Inc. is the oldest Native American language Immersion focused non-profit in the United States. Nearly 30 years ago, the 'Aha Pūnana Leo established its language nests, preschools modeled on the Maori Kohanga Reo. Hawaiian is used exclusively and is the medium of education. This is the model proven successful in reversing language loss. It is through this system that we are improving our teaching and learning in public education to ensure the success of our children and families in an education that makes sense and that

comes from communities committed to building a future for their children based on the language and knowledge of the ancestors.

'Aha Pūnana Leo currently administers 11 statewide early childhood education center based language nests. Through our language and culture, we remain competitive in a global economy with an educated citizenry whose ideas and dreams contribute to a better world.

We serve the entire State of Hawai'i through Hawaiian language teaching, curriculum development, teacher training, media development, and technology development. Working together the Hawaiian language college and 'Aha Pūnana Leo, Inc. serve Native Hawaiian communities outside the state as well, especially through on-line language learning. Nationally, 'Aha Pūnana Leo's preschool programming is the only language nest system of schools rather than a single school.

#### **WORLD REKNOWN HAWAIIAN P-20 NATIVE LANGUAGE IMMERSION**

Ka Haka 'Ula o Ke'elikōlani college is the University of Hawai'i's Hawaiian language college and provides B.A. M.A. & Doctoral degrees, an indigenous teacher education certification, a laboratory school program including the k-12 Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīkalanī'ōpu'u and houses the State's Hawaiian language curriculum and testing center, Hale Kuamo'o. All of these programs are taught and administered through the Hawaiian language. Our college is world renown for its work in indigenous language and culture-based education. In addition to mainstream accreditation through the Western Association of Schools & Colleges (WASC), we also received the first P-20 accreditation in the world from WINHEC – the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium whose representation members are from the US, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Norway, and other countries with significant indigenous populations.

The Hawaiian language college is the only entity of higher education in the United States that is operated internally through a Native American language. We offer 57 standard content courses from the B.A. level to the doctorate through Hawaiian and an additional 13 special topics and directed studies courses through Hawaiian. In addition, students focusing on other indigenous languages may take directed studies through those languages at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

In many universities in the United States, when Native American languages are offered at all, they are offered under the linguistics department rather than under the Native Studies program. Our Hawaiian language college is unique in that linguistics is taught under the college and the linguists must speak Hawaiian to be tenured and to participate in college governance.

Besides having the only Ph.D. in the world specifically focusing on indigenous language and culture revitalization, the Hawaiian language college also has the only total immersion indigenous teacher education program and the only Native American language immersion laboratory school program preschool to high school in existence in the United States. Our holistic unified programming is in line with the holistic nature of many Native American cultures and approach to education.

The P-20 Hawaiian Medium education continuum is a promising model of Native American language revitalization, reversing language loss while exceeding the nation's Native student high school graduation rate and college admission rate. It is no longer a secret that the highest academically performing Native American students relative to their peers are typically those who are well grounded in their traditional languages and cultures. Language and culture matter, and the strong language and culture programming of immersion has proven the strongest both in terms of language revitalization and positive educational outcomes. Within our college's preschool to grade 12 Hawaiian immersion laboratory school, we have a 100% high school graduation rate and an 80% college entrance rate. We have maintained

these rates since 1999 with our first high school graduation. There is no academic selection of entering students to our very modest campus. Nearly 70% of students qualify for the free and reduced lunch program. Over 96% are Native children and 100% graduate fully fluent in both Hawaiian and English.

While we have made great progress over the last nearly 30 years, we still have a lot of work to do. What we have learned is shared through technical assistance to many Native American tribes wanting to learn how they can replicate the model. Some are not in a position to do full immersion right now, but are learning the small steps that can be taken to reclaim their languages. Others are following the model and implementing as their resources permit. The challenge we all have is developing the capacity within our communities so that we can continue to grow our programs. Nationally, Native American Immersion is a model of education that many communities wish to implement, but which have faced numerous barriers. Being the most developed P-20 immersion programming in the country with much experience providing outreach to other Native American communities, our Hawaiian language medium consortium has some suggestions that will help to ensure federal educational policies do not hinder the growth and development of Native American languages and cultures in the education of Native American students.

The consortium between the Hawaiian Language College and 'Aha Pūnana Leo attracts some 350 Indigenous educator visitors a year and numerous inquiries and requests for assistance in developing Native American language and culture training programs, language nests, and Native American language survival schools.

For the past twenty years we have been recognized as "the go-to source of support" for Native American immersion and teaching methodology for endangered indigenous languages. We have sought out private support from such entities as the Lanman Foundation and the Kellogg Foundation to assist our many visitors, and also stretched our state support to help other Native American groups who are struggling to begin and sustain a highly successful means of educating Native American children.

In 2002 under the leadership of the late Dr. William Demmert, Jr., the 'Aha Pūnana Leo began the work of developing assessment instruments and methodologies with a consortium of immersion and culture-based programs in the United States for the individual languages and cultures as an internal alternative to NCLB testing. With assistance from Dr. John Townner a reading expert and colleague of Dr. Demmert we piloted assessments in Navajo, Hawaiian, Blackfeet, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Ojibwe, and English (Tulalip Washington tribe.) The coalition on Indigenous language and culture-based education includes researchers and practitioners some of whom are here today to testify. I will let them provide testimony to this effort.

The Hawaiian language college has also consulted in the development of the B.A. program in Cherokee at Northeastern University in Oklahoma. Cherokee is only the fourth Native American language for which it is possible to obtain a B.A. The others are Hawaiian, Eskimo, and Lakota. Hawaiian is the only one for which it is possible to obtain an M.A., or Ph.D.

I provide the above information to you as context for my testimony, which will focus on Native American language and culture education, especially what is called "immersion" or Native American language nests and Native American language survival schools. These are areas where the 'Aha Pūnana Leo and Hawaiian language college are not only national, but international leaders.

#### **NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES WANT TO RESTORE ENDANGERED LANGUAGES**

A traditional Hawaiian saying is: "I ka 'ōlelo nō ke ola; I ka 'ōlelo nō ka make." In our language rests life; In our language rests death." There is overwhelming support, not only in my community, but also in Native American communities throughout the country, to revive

and restore long suppressed Native American languages to the children of those communities. Of the some 300 languages indigenous to the present United States at first contact with Europeans, only some 175 survived suppressive school policies to the end of the twentieth century and of those, only 20 survived with children speakers. These languages are crucial to Native American literature, ceremonial life, spirituality, kinship practices, and overall indigenous identity. It is possible to restore these languages to communities to assure the continuity of Native American identity and to bolster the academic achievement of Native students.

#### **THE NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGE IMMERSION MOVEMENT**

Native American language immersion, or what are also called Native American language nests for preschoolers and Native American language survival schools for kindergarten through high school are the most effective means for fully restoring Native American languages. These are schools where the language of instruction of all subjects is a Native American language rather than English. Immersion as a language teaching methodology initially developed in Canada for the teaching of French and foreign languages to English speaking children. The methodology then spread to the United States and internationally for the teaching of other languages. There is much research on the effectiveness of immersion throughout the world with indigenous immersion seen as a distinct form of immersion. Hawaiian is the second largest indigenous language taught through immersion in the world, after New Zealand Māori.

Native American language immersion is not only the most effective method of restoring Native American languages, it is also a most effective program academically for Native American children with excellent English language literacy outcomes. Well established immersion programs currently exist for languages such as Mohawk in New York, Cherokee in Oklahoma and North Carolina, Ojibwe in Wisconsin and Minnesota, Arapaho in Wyoming, three languages in Montana namely Blackfeet, Salish, and Atsina/Gros Ventre, Navajo in Arizona, Chinuk Wawa in Oregon, two languages in Alaska, namely Central Alaskan Yup'ik and Inupiaq, and also Hawaiian. Many other tribes have projects starting immersion or are working to do so, including Lakota speaking tribes in North and South Dakota, the Sauk and Choctaw tribes in Oklahoma, and various tribes in other parts of the country.

Approximately half of all children enrolled in Native American immersion are in schools in Hawai'i. Hawai'i is also the only state that extends full Native American language immersion into high school programs. The Hawaiian language college was developed from a Hawaiian Studies Department at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo to extend Hawaiian immersion into the B.A. and graduate levels, with the laboratory school program and teacher education program to develop best practices, testing, curriculum, and other services for immersion schools and other schools teaching Hawaiian. Approximately 5,000 students in English language public and private high schools are studying Hawaiian in standard high school language courses. My position within the college is to work with the many tribal groups who visit us to learn how to do immersion and who contact us by e-mail or telephone for information on immersion.

#### **LEGISLATION NOT ALIGNED TO SUPPORT NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE-BASED PROGRAMS**

It is well known throughout the United States among educators that past US policies regarding Native American education were extremely harsh and included physical punishment of children caught speaking those languages. Less well known is the fact that current federal educational legislation includes many barriers to the inclusion of Native American languages in schooling. These barriers are due to oversight and lack of attention to the unique circumstances of Native American languages. Nevertheless, these barriers are the reason that so few immersion programs or even standard second language programs exist for teaching Native American languages to Native American children. Rules that bar testing in the language of instruction and that judge the qualifications of teachers of Native American languages based on foreign language and mainstream English models has also slowed the

growth of immersion programs.

There are other barriers as well. Some federally funded colleges and universities do not accept high school study of Native American languages as meeting second language study requirements for entry into, or graduation from, their institutions. Teacher accrediting agencies are also placing barriers on the accreditation of university teacher education programs for the teaching of languages that do not have B.A. programs in those universities, including the vast majority of Native American languages. Some states have placed barriers on children who speak Native American languages in the home from enrolling in Native American immersion schools, resulting in those children losing their fluency in the language when they attend schools that do not continue their learning and use of their traditional language. In many cases Native American children in immersion are classified with immigrant children in bilingual programs that must move to primarily English medium education within three years. This immigrant focused assimilation model, of course, is not suitable for the revitalization of Native American languages, and ignores the unique rights of Native Americans to continue our languages in our homelands.

Again, these barriers, to my knowledge, are not based on a desire to discriminate against Native American students. The discrimination is due to federal educational legislation failing to take into account the unique needs of Native American languages and the crisis of extinction facing Native American languages. In developing educational legislation for expanding the success of Native Language & Culture-Based Education the federal government must depend on information on best practices occurring on the ground. It must come from the knowledge base of those teaching Native American languages and their use as the languages of instruction in P-12 education. In absence of this attention to unique circumstances, educational legislation may result in continued suppression of Native American languages in American education.

#### **NEED FOR ALIGNMENT IN ALL AREAS OF FEDERAL EDUCATIONAL LEGISLATION AND A SOURCE FOR SPECIAL SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY**

Throughout the current No Child Left Behind Act in every one of the ten titles, there are provisions to deal with the unique needs of immigrant children in the schools, both legal and illegal immigrant children, who speak languages other than English. Title III focuses primarily on these children. Parallel alignment of every title of the new Elementary and Secondary Education Act needs to be made relative to Native American language and culture-based education. Many of these provisions will not involve any additional funds, but simply allow best practices as developed at the Hawaiian language college and among our national immersion and other partners to participate on a level playing field with other schools. Without them, our programs will continue to be disadvantaged in federal educational legislation. Without them our precious languages will continue to move on a pathway to extinction.

There should also be special designated funding for Native American language teaching, be it through courses in high schools, or through immersion in preschool Native American language nests and K-12 Native American language survival schools. For the past thirty years since this movement began from Hawai'i and spread through the nation, there have been no dedicated resources to support these highly successful schools.

#### **NEED FOR IMMEDIATE MITIGATING ACTION**

Senators, the Native American Languages Act (NALA) was passed in 1990, over twenty years ago with policies and provisions that assure Native American language speaking children the right to use their languages in federally funded public education. These provisions were generally ignored when No Child Left Behind was passed in 2001. It is crucial that the most egregious conflicts between NALA and NCLB relative to our highly endangered Native American

languages be eliminated now. Furthermore, as you consider reauthorization of ESEA over the next year or two, these conflicts need to be given additional attention.

I ask that you consider allowing our consortium in Hilo to serve as a federally mandated Center for Excellence for any school that meets the definition of a Native American Language Nest or Native American Language Survival School to serve the USDE and to assist these schools in mitigating their issues while meeting the requirements for establishing and monitoring adequate yearly progress for students and setting standards for AYP. This would include providing technical support in formulating standards connected to curriculum, testing academic skills of students through Native American languages and determination of highly qualified status for teachers using Native American languages. It would be an option for these schools. It would build on our existing national coalition of indigenous language and culture based education network of research and practitioners in Native American language immersion and culture based schools. This Center of Excellence would also provide support for outreach and partnerships with other Native American language efforts that need to expand in terms of direct input to the USDE relative to removing discriminatory barriers to Native American language education.

In our experience of working with Native American groups throughout the United States, with indigenous groups in the Pacific and East Asia, and with the distinct Native Hawaiian communities in our state, it is clear that you cannot use a "one-size-fits-all" approach with indigenous language and culture-based education. In providing direction to the USDOE, we seek to assure that alternative pathways to academic rigor and teacher preparation are based on the unique circumstances of each particular Native American language. The current pathways established for accountability in mainstream higher education to address the needs of disadvantaged students falls short on delivery under the circumstances of Native American languages and cultures. This center is able to meet the challenge of ensuring rigorous alternative pathways based in best practices that address broad academic needs in order to participate in the globalized world that has entered all Native American communities.

In addition to giving attention to the unique needs of distinct languages and communities, this center can consult the USDOE of the various needs at grade levels taught through Native American languages and cultures. As stated earlier, immersion programs outside Hawaii have had great difficulty in expanding programming into high school. Progressing past third grade is difficult for most, because as mentioned earlier students are frequently classified along with non-English speaking students, who are required to move out of use of their languages within three years of entering an American school. Our over fifteen years experience with high school immersion programming can provide this support.

There may be an opportunity as well to support the expanded interest in language teaching occurring at Tribal Colleges to develop successful methods of teaching their specific languages to their students and in building their capacity to support Native American language immersion implementation. Our own early efforts to teach Hawaiian in the University of Hawaii system were largely unsuccessful in producing fluent second language learners, a situation which I understand currently exists for some tribal college Native American language teaching programs. Professor Larry Kimura is widely recognized as the individual who finally in the early 1970s was successful in developing strong college level speakers of Hawaiian. Since that time we have greatly increased our efficiency and system of teaching the endangered Hawaiian language. A successful effort to take our model to serve another endangered Native American language was the establishment of the B.A. in Cherokee Education at Northeastern State University in Oklahoma, with its affiliated Cherokee immersion school. This program was established with support from the Cherokee Tribe that sent administrators and faculty to Hilo to work with us on different strategies to adapt our programming to their circumstances.

**ALIGNMENT OF ACTION WITH POLICIES**

What I am calling for in terms of alignment of federal educational legislation to support immersion and Native American language and culture education is something that is supported already by the United States government, at least in theory and policy statements. In 1990 President Bush signed the Native American Languages Act (NALA) that established United States policy relative to the unique status of Native American languages and the right of Native Americans to use Native American languages in education, including immersion, and the use of Native American languages to substitute for foreign languages in fulfilling college requirements. This twenty-year-old policy statement has been largely ignored and overlooked in the creation of federal educational legislation. Again, I believe that NALA has been overlooked because of a lack of advocacy and input relative to federal educational legislation and where a recognized center such as the Center of Excellence that we are proposing to be officially recognized in Hilo can serve this role.

Other policy statements beyond NALA also exist. More recently, in response to overwhelming support from Native American organizations including the National Indian Education Association, the National Congress of American Indians, and tribal and state organizations, President Obama and Education Secretary Duncan have included statements of support for Native American language education. President Obama's support stretches back to the 2008 presidential campaign singling out Native American language education as an area he promised to support. Secretary Duncan's support is clear in the 2010 USDE "Blueprint for Reform" that states under Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education that the focus will be on "unique needs" ... "including Native language immersion and Native language restoration programs, and develop tribal specific standards and assessments."

**INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES**

The 2010 "Blueprint for Reform" gives much attention to bringing the United States up to "world standards" in education, and to the fact that "10 countries have passed us." Among those countries are New Zealand, Finland, and even nearby Canada. Distinctive of all three are long standing experience in multilingual education, including immersion, for indigenous populations. Our consortium of the 'Aha Pūnana Leo and Hawaiian Language College have an especially strong relationship with Māori language and culture-based education in New Zealand and also contacts with Canadian and Finnish indigenous language programs as well. Indeed, internationally, the Hawaiian language immersion effort is the second largest after New Zealand Māori immersion education.

Last fall President Obama endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. That document includes numerous references to the right of indigenous peoples such as Native Americans to continue their languages, cultures and traditions. Article 14 in particular is highly relevant to this hearing as it relates to the right to education through indigenous languages. While this is already United States policy through the Native American Languages Act and already supported in the 2010 Educational Blueprint, the President's endorsement of this UN Declaration is further support for changing federal educational legislation to make access to quality education through Native American languages a reality as an educational option for all Native Americans throughout the United States.

Mahalo nui loa no kēia kono 'ana mai ia'u e kū hō'ike no ka 'ōlelo a ko'u mau kūpuna a me nā kūpuna o nā 'ōiwi a pau o 'Amelika Hui Pū 'Ia.

Mahalo nui, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mahalo nui, Ms. Rawlins.

Mr. Lasley, please proceed with your testimony. May I say that all of your full testimony will be included in the record. Mr. Lasley?

**STATEMENT OF LARRY C. LASLEY, SR., MEMBER, MESKWAKI SETTLEMENT SCHOOL BOARD**

Mr. LASLEY. Chairman Akaka and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on a topic critical to the Meskwaki people. My name is Larry Lasley, and I serve on the Meskwaki Settlement School Board.

I am here today because our language is our identity, and our language is dying. Like many of my people, I am concerned about the dwindling number of fluent Meskwaki speakers on our settle-

ment. Today fewer than 16 percent of tribal members identify themselves as fluent in Meskwaki. The vast majority of these fluent speakers are over the age of 50. Virtually no tribal members under the age of 40 are fluent in our Native language.

For this reason, we are implementing a program to more aggressively halt this language loss. Since the early 1980s, we have supported a language and culture program in our school authorizations. However, the program remains more of a special project than an essential part of our education curriculum.

Today, we seek to apply a language and culturally based curriculum on a much broader scale, so that our students may perform at higher levels of academic achievement. To that end, we believe the Committee should prod the Government to act in several areas that would assist tribes in implementing language and culture preservation programs.

First and foremost, we feel the Committee should support culturally-based education best practices and language immersion in early childhood education. In addition, we recommend the Federal Government take the lead in developing a centralized repository of knowledge, something akin to the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development. Storing fact-based material, proven methods and documented experience in one central repository would permit tribes to immediately access reliable, evidence-supported data for their language and cultural programs.

Next, language revitalization requires technical expertise that tribes may lack. The Government should assist tribes in establishing capacity in a host of areas, including linguistics, documentation, data collection and analysis to ensure an effective approach to language preservation. Moreover, the Government should partner in the design of a core culturally-based curriculum that could be modified to meet the specific needs of any tribe.

Third, a particularly important area for capacity building is teacher training. The skill set for teaching a language like Meskwaki to second language learners is not an innate ability, but rather, a learned set of skills. Native language speakers require advanced training to become successful teachers. This training must be rooted in Research and evidence-based instructional practices.

Fourth, teachers must meet certain requirements to be certified, such as the highly qualified requirements found in No Child Left Behind. However, in Indian Country, these requirements may undermine schools' ability to employ Native-fluent speakers as teachers. We recommend the Government mandate a policy to enable tribes to establish their own requirements for Native language teachers. Those best qualified must be able to teach these vital subjects.

Finally, tribal language programs have dozens of initiatives that must be implemented to reestablish a safe state of the language and culture. These initiatives require significant resources; resources that are too often lacking in tribal economies where scarce necessities such as clean water, health care, care for our elders, public safety and other priorities, must make the priority. We are dedicated to preserving our language and our cultural heritage. We seek to strengthen our spiritual connections to our Creator, to

renew our ties to our ancestors and to provide this uniquely Meskwaki gift to our descendants.

To this end we value bi-cultural education and intend to maintain high standards for both the education and evaluation of our youth. We also intend to implement research-based approaches in language and culturally-based learning to best position our students for success. We believe these initiatives will strengthen our tribal nation and enhance our ability to contribute to the American story, as our history always has.

However, we cannot implement these initiatives on our own. While the programs must be driven by tribal leaders, we believe the Government can and should play a meaningful role in their design and implementation. We appreciate the Committee's interest in preserving our Native languages and look forward to working with you in this regard.

[Expression in native tongue.] Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lasley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LARRY C. LASLEY, SR., MEMBER, MESKWAKI SETTLEMENT SCHOOL BOARD

Chairman Akaka, Vice Chairman Barrasso and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on a topic critical to the Meskwaki people. My name is Larry Lasley, and I serve on the Meskwaki Settlement School Board, which oversees our Tribe's Settlement School, a BIA grant-funded school serving students from early childhood through the 12th grade. I am also the Tribe's Economic Development Director, a position which uniquely qualifies me to address the importance of educating our young people.

I come before you today to speak on the significance of an education rooted in our traditional language and cultural values. Like many of my people, I am concerned about the dwindling number of fluent Meskwaki speakers on our Settlement. With each passing generation, fewer of our tribal members possess the ability to converse in the language provided by our Creator. This situation threatens to extinguish our language from our Settlement. Such a loss of language would carry profound and tragic consequences for my people. For this reason, our tribe is acting aggressively to stop this language loss, implementing programs in our school and our community to the best of our abilities. Without this concerted intervention, our youngest fluent speakers will soon be too old to effectively teach the Meskwaki language to a new generation.

Over the past decade, we have implemented two comprehensive surveys of our Tribal members to better understand the status of the Meskwaki language on our Settlement. According to these surveys, the 1960s marked the beginning of a language shift—one which continues to this day. When I speak of language shift, I speak of a shift away from the heritage language of Meskwaki and a strengthening of the English language among my people. In essence, fluency in English began to replace fluency in Meskwaki. As a result, each subsequent decade since the 1960s has yielded decreased fluency among tribal members; now, unfortunately, it has advanced to the point where our children are not mastering the Meskwaki language. More troubling, this language shift has undermined the Tribe's very ability to teach our children our native tongue.

The most recent survey, conducted during the tribal membership audit of 2010, found that only 16 percent of tribal members identify themselves as "fluent" in the Meskwaki language. On the other hand, 63 percent said they understood only a few words or no words at all. While it is fortunate that almost all tribal members (90 percent) understand something of the language, the age distribution of these figures exhibits the critical situation we face. The majority of fluent speakers are 50 or older. Virtually no tribal members under the age of 40 are fluent in the Meskwaki language.

These facts carry profound implications for the strength of the Meskwaki nation. Our language is a key component of our identity. It provides an important link to our history, our story, our spirituality. Our language is integral to our way of life and to our sovereign identity. Alarming, our language is in peril.

### **The Importance of the Meskwaki Language**

For our people, the Meskwaki language is a gift from the Creator. We know that this language is the only language that our deities use. This is the language that our souls know—this is the language we are meant to use from the time we are born until we journey on to the next world. The Meskwaki language is central to our identity—it carries the most meaningful and deepest levels of our selves. It carries our spirituality, our religion, our connection to the Earth, and our connections beyond the continuums of time and space.

Our language provides an important connection to our Creator and to the other spirits we know. These connections must never be broken, as to be broken from those spirits is to experience the end of all things. Similarly, our connections to our past—our ancestors—and our future—our descendants—serves as another key tenet of our spirituality. Our language is a key tie that binds those connections for all time. The loss of our language threatens these sacred ties.

Even today, the Meskwaki culture permeates our daily life, from the food we eat, to hunting and gathering, to harvesting, clothing, and home making. Our games, songs, athletics, and dances incorporate our tribe's original cultural attributes. Our kinship system, a critical component of our way of life, is not anything like that of mainstream Western culture. To be a part of the Meskwaki tribe means being responsible to family and extended family, to the clans, the leadership systems, and the unique duties each of these roles are given. Most important, all of our cultural attributes and the resulting thought processes, feelings and ideas are uniquely Meskwaki. As such, they cannot be equated or fully expressed in any language other than the Meskwaki language.

Languages vary from society to society, and often the meanings and implications of statements cannot be simply translated. When translations occur, critical knowledge and meaning becomes lost or lessened. These interruptions in the continuum of language, culture, spirituality, religion, and understandings cause disruptions in our social wellbeing. Our people have naturally suffered for generations from the unfortunate events in our history. The disconnection from culture, language, and spirituality makes recovery even more challenging for many of our people—as individuals, as families, and as a tribe.

For our nation to be successful, we must keep an open connection to our past, our future, our spiritual beliefs, and our cultural ways. Our tribe needs the freedom to remain who we are and preserve our identity. We hope to be afforded a chance for survival. But it will not be possible for the Meskwaki people to endure with broken pieces. Without our language and culture, we will perish.

### **Challenges to a Language-Based Curriculum**

As a Tribe, we have prioritized the education of our young people as a critical piece of our strategic development. To this end we value bicultural education and intend to maintain high standards for the education and evaluation of our youth. We also intend to implement proven research-based approaches on language and culturally-based learning in an effort to best position our students for success.

Since the early 1980s the Tribe has supported a language and culture program within school operations. However, the program remains more of a special activity than an essential element of our education curriculum or a tribe-wide mandate. We desire to apply a language and culturally-based curriculum on a much broader scale—along the lines that have been expressed by tribal people and educational professionals alike—so that our students may progress and perform at higher levels of academic achievement. Implementing this ambitious agenda, while critically important, remains difficult.

To this end, we have secured grant funding to develop a tribal-wide language preservation program. Our language coordinator has begun holding language roundtables three times a week—sessions that bring together Meskwaki speakers and learners. We have begun to develop technologies to support classroom instruction and independent studies. Still, additional training and support is needed to build the capacity to teach the Meskwaki language. As the tribe is the sole tribe in Iowa—and as Indigenous languages are particularly difficult to learn—language instruction proves especially challenging.

We must connect our tribal-wide language preservation program with our schools. This effort will prove especially challenging with the approximately 310 Meskwaki students that attend the public school system. However, the Committee could help remedy this situation by supporting culturally-based education best practices and language immersion in early childhood education.

With regard to challenges to language programming, we have identified the following:

### *I. Timely Access to Supporting Information*

Currently, there is helpful information available to tribes who are just starting out with building language revitalization programs. However, this trend of creating programs is still relatively new and is being enacted by tribes, who almost always have restricted resources. As a result, access to the most helpful information is limited. There is not an overabundance of information—and much of the information is not directly on point. One must first locate the information, which is somewhat of a challenge when first starting out, and then the useful must be separated from the useless.

We believe funding allocated toward a centralized repository of knowledge—something analogous to the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development—would benefit all tribes, as tribes need their culture, language and identity as much, if not more, than economic development. Fact based material, proven methods and documented experience all in one central repository would both save time and money for all new and existing language programs.

The very nature of language loss essentially means that there is a limit in the number of years in which a solution can be completely implemented. Language loss can occur in little as one generation. The information that we need in order to be successful must be available to us immediately, it must be supported by evidence, and it must be reliable. Government support for a centralized repository for such research would be of great assistance to all tribes.

### *II. Funding for Tribal Language Programs*

Language Revitalization is an expansive and expensive project that attempts to halt the shift away from the native language. Tribal Language Programs have dozens of initiatives that must be implemented in order to reestablish a safe state of the language and culture, including staffing, education, documentation, equipment, and teacher training. These initiatives require significant resources, resources that are too often lacking in tribal economies where scarce necessities such as clean water, access to health care, care for our elders, public safety and other essential services must take priority.

#### *Staffing*

Tribal language programs have myriad tasks to accomplish. Common goals necessary for success in any tribal language program include: Assessment of the Language (surveying or thinking groups), Documentation, Program Planning, Community Building, Teacher Training, Understanding Second Language Acquisition, and Establishing Educational Systems that include Cultural Standards and Culturally Based Curriculum. Many of these tasks lend themselves to a standardized approach. By assuming a lead role in identifying the best practices in applicable areas, the Federal Government could substantially lessen the burden of designing and implementing these initiatives. Moreover, as a repository of such practices, the government could provide training in order to establish and enhance Tribes capacities to successfully operate language preservation programs.

#### *Education*

Similarly, the federal government should assist tribes in establishing capacity in the areas of linguistics, data collection and analysis, language teaching, second language acquisition, community building and curriculum design to ensure an effective and focused approach to language preservation.

#### *Documentation*

Language Revitalization cannot have instantaneous results. Therefore, one key priority in all language programming must be to preserve the existing cultural knowledge. This preservation is referred to as Documentation. Language and Cultural Documentation is critical for future reference and often relies on the leadership of tribal elders.

Documentation as a linguistic data collection activity can take years. It can include thousands of pages of transcriptions, hundreds of hours of video and audio recording, dozens of hours of cataloguing, and ample media to collect and store such information. While documentation is time consuming, utilizing state of the art technologies can reduce the time and expense associated with these activities. The Federal Government should work to ensure that Tribes have access to these technologies as well as to properly trained staff to provide support to these efforts.

#### *Equipment*

As noted above, a basic amount of equipment is necessary to accomplish many of the goals of language programming. Setting up a new department is difficult to fund, and modern equipment required for such things as Documentation can become

costly. Equipment needs include printing capabilities for large numbers of booklets, handouts, and awareness building materials for community building. Computers are required for daily tasks as well as long-term projects such as surveying, documentation, and training. Native language teaching and learning materials are often made from scratch by program staff and language teachers. Creating language learning resources often requires the capabilities of creating graphics, printing large documents, and lamination or other finishing.

#### Training for Teachers

The skill set for teaching a language like Meskwaki to second language learners is not an innate ability, but rather a learned set of skills. Native language speakers must be trained in order to become successful teachers. Due to the unique methods of teaching Native languages, training often requires travel or immersion—which is not widely available in local areas.

#### *III. Mandate State Support of Tribal Language Programming in Schools*

In every state, teachers must meet certain requirements before being certified as a teacher, with good reason. However, in Indian Country these requirements may undermine the ability of schools to employ native fluent speakers as “teachers.” Too often, such native speakers receive lower pay and a lower status in the school as a result of the failure to meet certain requirements.

This poses a dilemma, as there are a limited number of speakers, and therefore there are only a limited number of people who can teach the native language. Moreover, the likelihood of a native fluent speaker pursuing a teaching certificate is significantly lowered by the aging population of fluent speakers and by the unique lifestyle and belief systems of tribal people.

Some states have passed amendments to allow for tribes to establish their own requirements for certifying a “Native Language Teacher.” This type of amendment must be made available for the benefit of every tribe. We recommend the Federal Government mandate such a policy across the board. The presence of Native Language Teachers is essential to allowing the Native Languages to be taught to students.

For example, although the Settlement School seeks to employ Native Americans, primarily enrolled tribal members and descendants who are speakers and have knowledge of the Meskwaki culture, the “Highly Qualified” requirements in NCLB impede the ability to fill positions with Tribal members. If these “Highly Qualified” requirements are not addressed, funding will be needed to send tribal members to school to seek further certification and to create a local certification and training program for Tribal and community members so that they can gain employment in the school and support our Meskwaki language and culture programs.

#### *IV. Assistance and Support for Culture-Based Standards and Curriculum*

We have a great need for educational standards and curriculums both in the school and our community. Standards would put into effect a minimum amount of tribal, traditional, linguistic, and cultural knowledge among each learner, each student, and each community member. This is an overwhelmingly enormous task that requires the involvement of traditional elders, experienced educators, and program planners. Tribes are short on the number of fluent speakers who are experienced in the areas of education, standards and curriculum design—let alone teaching language and culture in a classroom environment. Culture teachers are often not trained teachers, so they have limited access to courses and even less access to courses specific to Native language and culture instruction. We have found traditional methods are no longer effective enough to push and revitalize the language. Therefore, language and culture teachers need advanced and state-of-the-art training—training in research-based instructional practices and evidence-based practices like in differentiation of instruction and sheltered instructional practices.

#### **History of the Meskwaki Language**

As demonstrated below, the Meskwaki language is tied to and integral in the history and life of our Tribe and our Nation. Our language falls into the Algonquian language family, one of the five major language families into which the majority of North America’s Indigenous languages can be categorized. Algonquian is not a tribal name or identification, but rather the name of the language family itself.

*1800s—Reservation era:* The Federal Government established the Sac and Fox Reservations in Kansas and Oklahoma. While some of our relatives went to the Sac and Fox reservations, a small bunch, refused to be placed on the reservations. This group of Meskwakis wished to settle and remain along the Iowa River—lands that more closely resembled the home we once had. The tribe gathered and pooled their resources to purchase its first 80 acres of land in 1856. By 1857 our agreement with

the State of Iowa was firmly in place to be established as a tribal group, owning land in common. Each parcel of land was subsequently purchased with common funds. The land that was purchased was bought with the tribe's primary priority in mind—the well being and livelihood of our people. The purchase of land in common serves as evidence of our unity as a tribe, our sense of community, and our reliance upon one other for the benefit of the whole. Through this period, our language and cultural practices served as both unifying and motivating factors.

*1880s—Emergence of the Written Meskwaki language:* Earliest documented use of reading and writing.

*1900s—Boarding Schools:* Our people were subject to the boarding school era—many of our surviving elders were sent to boarding schools as children and forced to abandon their usage of the Meskwaki language. They were compelled to speak English and faced physical and verbal abuse for the use of the Native tongue. Despite this treatment, or perhaps in part because of it, the Meskwaki language remained a vibrant and integral part of our Tribal community.

*1900s—Linguistic Studies:* Franz Boas and Leonard Bloomfield, two of history's most influential linguists, conducted some of the first—as well as the most important—studies on the various Algonquian languages, Meskwaki included. Their works serve as the baseline to any further study of Algonquian languages and have contributed substantial knowledge to the linguistic analysis of Meskwaki. In the early 1900s a Meskwaki linguist by the name of William Jones, himself a disciple of Franz Boas, conducted further study on his language—advancing the understanding of the importance of the language relative to the Algonquian family. In furtherance of this work, the Bureau of American Ethnology commissioned a year-long study of Meskwaki language and culture, collecting thousands of pages of data on the Meskwaki language and way of life. These studies reflect the amount of interest in the Algonquian languages—particularly Meskwaki—and provide an important historical baseline.

*1940s—Language in Service of the United States:* 16% of our Tribal members enlisted in the Army in the wake of Pearl Harbor. Ultimately 8 Members of the Tribe were recognized by Congress for their contribution to the war effort as Code Talkers. Relying on our unique language, these Meskwaki helped successfully direct efforts against the Germans in North Africa.

*1940s–1980s—Infrastructure Enters the Meskwaki Lifestyle:* The Meskwaki were self-sufficient and self-sustaining in the days of hunting and gathering and the days of freedom of migration. However, by purchasing our land in Iowa, and therefore committing to this location, we surrendered to the reality of our new lifestyle and its limitations. To gain water, food, materials, sanitation, housing, and other resources, increasingly we were forced to utilize the English language. As this increasing utilization of the English language grew, the tribe experienced, perhaps inevitably, a decrease in the use of Meskwaki.

*1990–2000s—Linguistic Studies—A Growing Appreciation of the Meskwaki Language:* Many prominent contemporary linguists have conducted, and continue to conduct, analyses of the Meskwaki language. For many of these scholars, the Meskwaki language holds a special mystique among the Algonquian languages. In a 2008 Culture Symposium at the Meskwaki Settlement, Dr. Amy Dahlstrom explained the Meskwaki language's significance to linguists. Often linguists compare the distinct languages within a language family for their similarities in an effort to trace them back to the original language, or a “proto” language. Dr. Dahlstrom explained that of all Algonquian languages, the Meskwaki language is most similar to the Proto-Algonquian language. This implies that over the past 200 plus years of history, the Meskwaki language has changed the least from its original form. So there lies special significance of this language as to why it didn't change, a particular link to our ancestors who spoke the Meskwaki language much as it is today, and important potential insights as to why other Algonquian languages deviated more from the original proto-language.

### **Conclusion**

Like many of our fellow Tribes we have dedicated ourselves to preserving our language and our cultural heritage. In so doing, we seek to strengthen our spiritual connections to our Creator, to renew our ties to our ancestors and to provide this uniquely Meskwaki gift to our descendants. We believe these initiatives will strengthen our Tribal nation and enhance our ability to contribute to the American story as we have throughout our history. While the programs must be driven by Tribal leaders, we believe the federal government can play a meaningful and constructive role in their design and implementation. On behalf of the Meskwaki Tribe, thank you for the opportunity to present our thoughts in this regard.

This concludes my prepared statement. I welcome any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Lasley.  
Mr. Parker, will you please proceed with your statement?

**STATEMENT OF ALVIN N. PARKER, PRINCIPAL, KA WAIHONA O  
KA NAAUAO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL**

Mr. PARKER. Aloha, Chairman Akaka and Committee members. My name is Alvin Parker, and I am the Principal of Ka Waihona o ka Na'auao Public Charter School, which is located on the Waianae Coast, the western side of the Island of Oahu.

The school is situated in an economically depressed community that is predominantly Native Hawaiian or part Hawaiian. The Waianae community, as many Native American communities, has experienced rapid alcohol, sexual and substance abuse, early teen pregnancy, a large percentage of Native Hawaiians incarcerated, and the disintegration of family and Native Hawaiian values due to these social maladies.

The mission of Ka Waihona o ka Na'auao is to create socially responsible, resilient and resourceful young men and women by providing an environment of academic excellence, social competence and cultural awareness. This environment offers a moral compass molded by the students' early experiences with Native educators who understand and pass on all that is good in our Native cultural values.

The school has purposefully sought out highly qualified Native Hawaiian educators who come from the community. Of the school faculty members, 63 percent have advanced degrees and 20 of 41 members are graduates of the Kamehameha Schools. Ka Waihona thrives on the premise that this type of role modeling empowers the student body to believe that they can achieve, and that all things are possible.

Ka Waihona embraces a curriculum that is academically rigorous and culturally sensitive. The school is in good standing with the No Child Left behind Federal mandate and has made annual yearly progress for four of the last six years. Ka Waihona embeds cultural values in everyday education by displaying visual prompts in the classrooms and referencing them consistently. These Native values include Ho'ihi, be respectful, Kuleana, be responsible, Malama, be safe, Ha'aha'a, be humble, Lokahi, unit, and Ho'omau, persevere.

Students also participate in a host of cultural vents and activities throughout the school year. These include honoring the Native rulers of the past at the royal mausoleum, displaying their knowledge in a cultural show for the community, participating in a day of festivities which include activities ancient Hawaiians conducted on a daily basis for survival, weekly hula lessons, daily Hawaiian language lessons for the middle school students and a daily school-wide protocol that includes Native Hawaiian chants and songs.

Ka Waihona is founded on the belief that exposing the students to Native Hawaiian values and offering them opportunities to participate in the culture is imperative to their social maturation. The exposure and substantive support by the faculty to make these values a part of everyday lessons and behavior expectations is integral to the school's approach to education and ultimately the school's mission.

The combination of a cultural component and intensely rigorous academic curriculum provides the students with a solid base that allows them social mobility that is often not a reality for Native Hawaiians. Education, whether it be cultural or academic, plays a vital role in nurturing and sustaining our Native people.

Finally, I would like to thank Senator Daniel K. Akaka for extending the invitation to provide testimony on this important subject. Senator Akaka embodies all that is good and possible for Native Hawaiians and part Hawaiians. His leadership in the United States Senate has set a precedent for indigenous people, and I believe every Hawaiian and part Hawaiian says Mahalo to Senator Akaka.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Parker follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ALVIN N. PARKER, PRINCIPAL, KA WAIHONA O KA NAAUAO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

Ka Waihona o ka Naauao (KWON) is located on the Wai'anae Coast, the western side of the island of O'ahu. The Wai'anae community, as many Native American communities, has experienced rampant alcohol, sexual and substance abuse, early teen pregnancy, a large percentage of Native Hawaiians incarcerated, and the disintegration of family and Native Hawaiian values due to the above listed social maladies. The mission of Ka Waihona o ka Na'auao is to create socially responsible, resilient and resourceful young men and women by providing an environment of academic excellence, social confidence and cultural awareness. Because of this, KWON embraces a curriculum that is both academically rigorous and culturally sensitive.

KWON houses opened ten years ago in an educationally altered chicken coop with 60 students in grades kindergarten through three. Currently, there are 572 students in 24 classrooms in grades kindergarten through eight on a traditional school campus. Of our students, 93 percent are Native Hawaiian and 62 percent are economically disadvantaged. Each class has an educational assistant in addition to a classroom teacher which allows for a lower student-teacher ratio and more effective classroom management. KWON provides a core curriculum of language arts, social studies, science, and math along with resource courses that include music, art, language, physical education, and culture.

The school is in good standing with the No Child Left Behind federal mandate and has made Annual Yearly Progress for four of the last six years. KWON's founder formed the school with the strong belief that education is the most effective way to remedy the maladies of a community. This belief is at the heart of the school's efforts to foster a more community inclusive form of education, an integrated curriculum, and an academically rigorous educational experience, along with measurable outcomes set at the highest standard. KWON offers a schooling experience that is a viable alternative to the existing conventional public school model. KWON is structured to be responsive to the learning styles, cultural values, and future desires of the families of the community. It emphasizes a caring, collaborative environment for all persons within the school community. This includes students, teachers, parents, staff, volunteers, and community members who, together, implement an effective and relevant educational experience.

KWON is founded on its Na Mea Waiwai or Core Values: Ho'ihi (respect), Kuleana (responsibility), Malama (safety), Ha'aha'a (humility), Lokahi (unity), and Ho'omau (perseverance). A set of posters displaying these school values is displayed in every room on campus to allow for easy reference and frequent discussion. The exposure and substantive support by the faculty to make these values a part of everyday lessons and behavior expectations is integral to the school's approach to education and ultimately the school's mission. Students participate in a host of cultural activities throughout the school year. These include honoring the native rulers of the past at the Royal Mausoleum (burial place), displaying their knowledge in a cultural show for the community, participating in a day of festivities which include activities ancient Hawaiians conducted on a daily basis for survival, weekly hula classes, daily Hawaiian language classes for middle school students, and a daily schoolwide protocol that includes a variety of Native Hawaiian chants and songs including Hawaii Pono, our state song. KWON exposes students to native Hawaiian values and offers them opportunities to participate in a culture which is beneficial

to their social maturation. The combination of a cultural component and an intensely rigorous academic curriculum provides the students with a solid base that allows for a social mobility that is often not a reality for native Hawaiians. Education, whether it be cultural or academic, plays a vital role in nurturing and sustaining our native people.

KWON's Hawaii State Assessment scores have steadily improved since the school's first taking of the HSA in 2005. In the most recent state assessment data (2009), where 300 is passing, KWON scored a 303 in reading and a 288 in math. This is an improvement from 296 in reading and 280 in math in 2008. KWON was able to meet AYP this year and is now in School Improvement Year One, Good Standing, due to the consistent gains in each class and grade level, especially in mathematics. This is remarkable considering only one other public school in the district met AYP. The surrounding community's schools house eight of the 10 lowest scoring schools in the state. The schools in the same district have consistently struggled to make gains on state tests. In SY 2009–2010, KWON met the school's goals set in SY 2008–2009. KWON moved 10 percent of students in each reading standard up to higher standard by moving 8 Students move from Well Below standard to Approaching standard, 6 Students move from Approaching standard to Meets standard, and 11 Students move from Meets standard to Exceeds standard. We were also able to move 10 percent of students in each math standard up to higher standard by moving 12 Students move from Well Below standard to Approaching standard, 7 Students move from Approaching standard to Meets standard, and 6 Students move from Meets standard to Exceeds standard. All teachers use the same assessments and are using the data from those assessments to drive instruction.

KWON implements Guided Reading Groups and Literature and Inquiry Circles in grades Kindergarten through eight. KWON supports these Guided Reading Groups and Literature and Inquiry Circles with a number of Big Books, Shared Reading Kits, Internet Sources through SmartBoards and other technology rich sources, the Accelerated Reader Program (a daily progress monitoring software assessment for monitoring the practice of reading), STAR Reading (standardized computer adaptive assessment) from Renaissance Learning (which works hand in hand with Neo IIs and Notebook software), A to Z Readers (materials to teach guided reading, phonemic awareness, reading comprehension, reading fluency, alphabet, and vocabulary through professionally developed downloadable leveled books, lesson plans, worksheets, and reading assessments), Leveled Reading Libraries for grade levels K–8, and many Hawaiian culture books, which assist in teaching our curriculum's cultural component.

All teachers, parents, and students sign an annual school compact and middle school parents stay in close contact with instructional staff through the TeacherEase program. The middle school implements Teacherease, which systematized our 7th and 8th grade classrooms through standards-based lesson plans, curriculum mapping, gradebooks, report cards, and parent communication/access. The website enhances teacher collaboration and improves communication between administrators, teachers, parents, and students. We also use the portion of the system that provides demographics, attendance, and scheduling assistance. The various supports for KWON students include the following: in class technology tutoring through Accelerated Reading and Math, Reading Fluency Software, skill specific online programs, daily grade updates and communication with parents, counseling services, and Title I and IDEA support. Kindergarten through sixth grade employs a Standards Based report card.

During instruction, lower elementary teachers focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, and differentiation with pre-decodable and decodable books. KWON employs Small Group Instruction through Guided and Shared Reading on a daily basis. Teachers also use listening centers, Author's Chair, and Reader's and Writer's Theatre daily as another teaching strategy that easily allows for differentiation. Literature and Inquiry Circles are used for focused critical thinking sessions to introduce and break down new material and allow students to learn from one another through collaborative groups. Middle and upper elementary teachers create project-based, interdisciplinary, independent research projects in order to promote non-fiction reading and writing, internet familiarity, and independent work. Science, math and reading journals are conducted daily in classrooms. Students also work in small groups using strategies such as role playing, think/pair/share, and jigsawing.

Teachers differentiate using multi-sensory, multiple intelligence lessons in order to engage each student in the classroom. Teachers also differentiate according to student ability using skill specific work they have created or by using differentiated items provided by KWON's curricular programs. Formative assessments are employed frequently in the form of self-assessment and goal setting, peer assessments, observations, reviews, summarizing, and exit cards.

KWON uses software and online programs such as Lexia, My Reading Coach, Reading Plus, and Fluent Reading Trainer as supplemental supports for students in order to instruct in a differentiated, skill-specific format. These programs are scientifically proven and data driven allowing students to be frequently assessed and support students until mastery. Teachers are able to access assessments and further drive instruction through worksheets and 1:1 or small group instruction. The programs are designed to support students experiencing difficulty with reading. In addition, low achieving students participate in one-to-one sessions with teachers and educational assistants using skill specific, leveled readers, computer programs, and manipulatives. During the summer prior to kindergarteners beginning school at KWON, students attend a mandatory session in which teachers assess students and meet with parents in order to introduce the entire family to KWON's expectations.

Singapore Math is implemented in grades kindergarten through eight as a core math curriculum. Singapore Math's method of teaching mathematics is based on textbooks from the national curriculum of Singapore. It is based primarily on time-tested traditional mathematics instruction methods. Singapore Math frequently uses word problems and the strategies towards solving them, rather than repetitive drilling. Singapore Math also frequently uses models in teaching problem-solving (a form of pre-algebra) rather than the trial-and-error methods. This method is a problem solving strategy which simplifies the list of 11 or more problem solving skills suggested by the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM).

KWON supplements the curriculum with Accelerated Reading and Accelerated Math which are research-based computer programs that produce high gains in reading and math for students of different achievement levels in all grades. The program creates custom-designed practice assignments for students based on a computerized diagnostic test, scores their work, and reports the results immediately. The classroom teacher is then able to work with individual students on their particular skill strengths and weaknesses. Students work at their own individual levels and are given practice time to achieve proficiency. Teachers set realistic, achievable math goals with students for optimum growth using this program. Teacher use program reports and feedback for planning instruction, diagnosis of student needs, and also to provide information for parents.

KWON's technology rich supports include MacBooks, listening centers, Samsung doc cameras, I-Pod Touch System, MacBooks, Elmos, Ipads, Neo II Boards, and SmartBoard Technology. The programs are used for reading & math instruction which increases test scores through multi-sensory literacy and math comprehension strategies, vocabulary and language development, and repeated reading/math practice. Programs are scientifically proven, skill specific, differentiated, and current, best practice.

KWON uses a three tiered RTI model. Tier I consists of general education (curricula, grading, and testing). KWON concentrates on Tier II which is an individualized, intervention level. Tier III is an intensive, skill specific intervention designed for each student. This includes Title I, Special Education, and one to one sessions conducted with teachers. All students participating in Tier II and III are monitored to ensure students' progress over time and close the achievement gap with their peers.

#### **Highly Qualified Status of Instructional Staff**

32 of the 33 instructional staff are licensed and Highly Qualified. The last teacher is currently in the process of finishing her State Approved Teacher Education Program (SATEP) and completing her Praxis tests in order to obtain licensure and is scheduled to obtain her license by the end of SY 2010–2011. 50 percent of KWON teachers hold graduate degrees in education from schools such as Gonzaga, Chaminade, and the University of Hawaii.

KWON's environment molds students' early experiences through native educators who understand and pass on all that is good in our native, cultural value system. The school has purposefully sought out highly qualified, Native Hawaiian educators who come from the community. Of the school's faculty members, 63 percent have advanced degrees, and 20 of 41 members of the staff are graduates of the Kamehameha Schools, a private school exclusively for Native Hawaiians which is difficult to gain acceptance from. KWON thrives on the premise that this type of role modeling empowers the student body to believe that they can achieve and that all things are possible.

#### **Professional Development Activities**

All KWON Professional Development (PD) activities are geared toward the increase of effective instruction. The focus of PDs at KWON is enrichment, differentiation, and skill specific instruction that is scientifically proven and data driven.

Cultural workshops connect our staff and students to the wealth of ancestral knowledge available to us. The cultural workshops also enrich the relationships among our staff and students through the focus on our Na Mea Waiwai (core values: respect, responsibility, safety, humility, unity and perseverance). Activities such as creating kikepa (Hawaiian garb), kahili (Hawaiian version of a flag), and learning new 'oli (Hawaiian songs) are conducted on a consistent basis. Historical background, personal and academic connections, and staff unity are always at the forefront of all cultural workshop activities.

KWON teachers attend Kamehameha Schools' professional development days in order to learn and implement new strategies in their classrooms. KWON teachers attended an I Teach K Conference, Singapore Math Training Conference and a Differentiation Conference for which all teachers completed a collaborative project and presented statistical and anecdotal results reflecting the worth of attending the conference. All strategies and trainings are conducted within the framework of student achievement in order to close the achievement gap and increase academic achievement.

All teachers participate in Professional Learning Communities on a weekly basis. These communities work toward (1) recognizing a need (with a focus on leadership training), (2) organizing for change (with a focus on leadership and infrastructure), (3) working on the building blocks (with a focus on infrastructure, school philosophy, and vision), (4) moving as a whole school (with a focus on the standards based change process), (5) sharing results within a professional learning community (with the focus on assessment results), (6) implementing the curriculum (with a focus on teacher-developed curriculum guides), and (7) engaging students and families (with the focus on portfolios, student self-assessment, and goal setting). Initially, the communities' meeting topics began with an assessment (by way of surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews, along with data collection) of three components of our school: infrastructure, classroom practices, and student outcomes. According to the results of the assessment, consistent professional development workshops were created and conducted. These workshops cover topics such as standards-based education, formative assessment to inform instruction, and the employment of instructional strategies across the schoolwide curriculum, all in the context of Professional Learning Communities. These communities are created and fostered not only to affect change through a partnership among the teachers but to sustain that change through grassroots involvement. We are continuing the growing process of refining our school curriculum, benchmarks, and anchor pieces for each benchmark. The communities also determine the expectations for each grade level through specific methodologies that are scientifically-proven to be effective. Through these Professional Learning Communities, teachers who are effective/knowledgeable in different areas instruct other teachers through professional workshops. These Grade Level PLCs also function as the teacher mentoring program through consistent meetings that discuss each teacher's strengths and needs in order to allow seasoned and beginning teachers to learn from one another. These learning communities allow teachers to receive the support they need to improve their classroom practices and give them adequate time to work together, both scientifically-proven necessities for classroom success.

KWON has an extensive Support Services System that supports underperforming students with skill specific, individually designed instruction. The support system provides current, best practice reading and math strategies in the following areas: sustaining improved reading outcomes through phonics interventions, data analysis/data driven instruction from formative and summative assessments in order to target core reading and math strands for increased test results, RTI/Tier III reading interventions, teaching creatively to increase standardized test scores, metacognitive and multi-sensory interventions, motivating reluctant learners, and the use of technology in the classroom. KWON's closed circuit television plays professional development DVDs that contain Best New Practices and innovative teaching strategies for teacher utilization on a consistent basis. KWON also continues to build a professional development library available for the KWON staff in the Curriculum Room. This room houses texts, CD's, and DVD's that equip teachers with current strategies and methods that engage students in order to increase student achievement.

KWON also offers Apple Institutes for Mac Software and Internet Programs Training for instructional staff. Training is for Apple Software and Internet Programs for supplemental, differentiated, skill specific, data driven reading and math instruction in the form of project based digital storytelling which increases test scores through multi-sensory literacy and math comprehension strategies, vocabulary and language development, and repeated reading/math practice. These PD days cover best instructional strategies by instructing teachers in how to best use the

programs for differentiating for each student using skill specific software and internet reading and math programs.

*Partnerships and Collaboration*

*Kamehameha Schools*—Kamehameha Schools' Ho'olako Like Program as well as Kamehameha Elementary School (KES) supports KWON by financially supporting the school's initiatives and providing the staff with opportunities for professional development (teacher trainings at the KES campus on literacy, conferences for Math and English Teachers, and workshops concerning topics such as differentiation). The Public Education Division of the Kamehameha Schools supports KWON through a longitudinal study that will track the long term effects of KWON's educational efforts through High School and beyond. This will help KWON address academic strengths and/or weaknesses that appear later in our students' academic career. KS also donated \$5000 in cultural books for our Backpack Program to begin in SY 2010–2011.

*Hawaii Association of Independent Schools*—is partnering with KWON to assist in the process of accreditation with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. KWON began the process in SY 11–12.

*Na Lei Na'auao Native Hawaiian Charter School Alliance*—KWON is a member of the Na Lei Na'auao which offers support among 12 Native Hawaiian Charter Schools.

*Hawaii Charter School Network*—The 31 charter school network provides opportunities for KWON to learn from other charter schools throughout the islands.

*University of Hawai'i at Manoa, College of Education, Center on Disability Studies*—Collaborates with KWON through the financial support of four free after school reading and math tutoring programs. These four programs focus on reading and math fluency. Currently, 200 of the 572 students at KWON attend these programs on a daily basis.

*Hawaii State Teachers Association*—Supports the teachers of KWON through union labor representatives that keep the staff aware of changing state laws that affect teachers.

*Department of Education*—Provides Financial Management Services for payroll, SPED services and trainings, as well as counseling referrals that require Department of Health involvement.

*University of Hawaii Curriculum Research Development Group*—Provides core science curriculum (DASH)

*PDERI (Professional Development and Educational Research Institute)*—provides opportunities for professional development for our staff.

*Alu Like*—collaborates with KWON by donating hundreds of books to build our school library.

*Office of Hawaiian Affairs*—financially supports KWON through grants that allow for our free bus service.

*Department of Hawaiian Home Lands*—agreed to a minimal cost, 30 year lease agreement with KWON to ensure KWON's long term support and success.

*Disney*—granted KWON a 2500 sq. ft. playground and a 1,000 sq. ft garden in the 2010–2011 school year. Disney continues to support KWON through additional grants and school visits from Mickey and Minnie.

*HeadStart*—applications are distributed during the school year for siblings of students to encourage pre-school attendance.

*Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center, The Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture (INPEACE), Parents and Children Together (PACT), and Families for R.E.A.L. (the State Student Support Services Program)*—are all resourced as needed.

The CHAIRMAN. Mahalo nui. Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Parker.

Before I call on our next witness, I would like to say that we are happy to have with us another member of the Committee, Senator Udall. Thank you for being here. I am going to ask him to introduce our next witness.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TOM UDALL,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW MEXICO**

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Chairman Akaka. I really appreciate that and have enjoyed very much hearing the earlier witnesses here.

I want to welcome Kevin Shendo to our Committee. He is the Director of the Department of Education at the Jemez Pueblo. Kevin chairs in New Mexico a very important committee that is called the New Mexico Indian Education Council that gives significant advice. He is also a leader in the field of Indian education across New Mexico. I think you are going to see by his testimony that Jemez Pueblo and Kevin Shendo have a lot to offer in terms of the subject of this hearing.

Welcome today, Kevin, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Udall. I also want to thank you so much for chairing the hearing on stereotypes.

Senator UDALL. It was my pleasure to do. You have a very able staff to support me here. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Senator Udall follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. TOM UDALL, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW MEXICO

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for convening a hearing on this important topic, Expanding on the Success of Native Language and Culture based Education. I have been a strong supporter of preserving native languages and culture, recognizing both the historical and cultural significance of language preservation, in addition to the inherent value and sense of identity that comes from the recognition of native cultures. Native languages are a treasure in and of themselves, and we must ensure their survival.

We cannot deny the role the United States government has played in the loss of Native languages. We remember the cruel history when students at government boarding schools were prohibited from using their native languages. Our policies of relocation and assimilation further diluted native languages and strained the ability of many tribes to pass their language and culture down to their children. Thankfully, the days of denying native language and culture are ending.

I am proud to have helped create the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act in 2006, which authorized funding to tribes for new programs to revitalize native languages and prevent the loss of their heritage and culture. This program has helped fund language nests, survival schools, and restoration programs. For example, in my own State of New Mexico, these funds have helped support such programs as the Mescalero Apache Language Immersion School, and Pueblo of Pojoaque and Ramah Navajo School Board Native Language Preservation and Maintenance programs.

I'd like to say a word about Esther Martinez. Esther Martinez was a 94-year-old language instructor and storyteller. She was killed on her way home to Ohkay Owingeh in 2006, a pueblo in northern New Mexico. Ms. Martinez had just been honored with the National Heritage Fellowship award here in Washington, D.C. for her role in teaching Tewa to generations of students.

Ms. Martinez was dedicated to preserving her Native language. She was known by her Tewa name, Poe Tsawa, which means Blue Water. Among her former students, both young and old, she was simply referred to as Ko'o, or Aunt.

Many of us also honor the Navajo Code Talkers, those World War II soldiers who used their language to create an unbreakable code, helping the Allies win the war. Because the Navajo language had survived and been passed down, Americans had a code that the Japanese were never able to crack. Their success in that mission helped the Marines capture Iwo Jima. It contributed to American victory. And it saved untold numbers of Allied soldiers. This legacy, and these languages, must not be lost.

According to the Indigenous Language Institute in New Mexico, of the more than 300 languages spoken in the U.S. at the time of European contact, only 175 remain, and by 2050, only 20 will be spoken with regular use, unless efforts are taken to teach the languages to new generations. We must not let this happen.

I'd like to welcome the witnesses today, and look forward to learning about their experiences and hearing their advice on how we can further honor and preserve native language and culture for our children and future generations.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Udall.

Mr. Shendo, will you please begin with your testimony?

**STATEMENT OF KEVIN SHENDO, EDUCATION DIRECTOR,  
PUEBLO OF JEMEZ**

Mr. SHENDO. [Greeting in Native tongue.] Good afternoon, Chairman Akaka, Senator Udall. Thank you for the invitation to be able to provide testimony to you here today on this very important subject of Native language and culture-based education.

Again, I am Kevin Shendo, Education Director for the Pueblo of Jemez. The Pueblo of Jemez is situated in north central New Mexico. We have a population of about 3,700. What is significant about Jemez is it lies in a rural mountainous area of north central New Mexico. The last survey we did in 2006 showed that 80 percent of our membership are still fluent in the Jemez language. It is an oral language that is not written. So this is very vital for us to continue to teach our young people and raise them within the context of the language and the Jemez community, within where language is learned. So I truly do appreciate the opportunity to share our story and our success with the work we have done in education.

The Pueblo of Jemez in 1999 began its reorganization efforts and had a visioning session which they entitled Vision 2010 and asked the community to come together and share what they envisioned Jemez looking like in the year 2010. From that visioning session came three main priorities. The first was to build capacity within our young people to be able to assume responsible leadership roles within our community as well as beyond our community boundaries. Second was to take ownership over the education systems of our young people.

And third was to redefine education, redefine it so that Jemez language and culture are at the heart of what we teach, how we teach and where we teach our young people. So that whole redefining education movement began 10 years ago in Jemez, looking at the importance of language and culture and it being at the heart of how we educate our young people and looking at how we move forward in the educational process.

Through that visioning session and the three themes that emerged, one of the most important things that came out of that was building what today we know as the Jemez Collaborative Education Group. That is the tribal program managers and coordinators working with our local schools: public, charter and Bureau, and really looking at bringing them together to begin to coordinate our school systems and really looking at how we can best serve the needs of our students, looking at the unique curriculum that each school offers, looking at the transitions that need to be put in place, and honoring language and culture across all school systems. And rather than competing for students, because we come from a small community, but are very rich in school choice, looking at how we can best meet the needs of our students as they transition from one school system to the next.

From that collaborative effort came the growth of our joint professional development days with all our educators and our annual Education retreats. From which we have been able to develop our Jemez language and culture curriculum, K through 8th, that we are now looking at implementing and integrating within our school systems. This really has enabled us to evolve with the work we have been doing on our language, looking at how important it is

and the retention of it. Currently at our Head Start, early childhood level, over 60 percent of our children coming into our Head Start program are Jemez language speakers. So it does become really important that not only the education but the transitions that take place within our school systems are responsive to the priorities and needs of the community. So this collaborative work has become a key piece in the work that we are able to do.

Through that works, the growth of the curriculum and development of it; what we have realized now, is that as we begin to look at laws like No Child Left Behind and Head Start mandates, that a lot of the Research-based curriculum and assessments and evaluations do not fit the model that we are trying to build that is rooted in an oral language within our community. So we are really looking at now beginning to define Research that supports the work that we are doing, Research that is owned by the tribe, directed by the tribe, working with institutions of higher education.

Two of the posters you see displayed here are from a Research project that was conducted by our Head Start in partnership with Arizona State University. The title of the Research was Becoming Jemez: Looking at the Early Childhood Experiences of Jemez Children, where language is learned, how it is learned and whether Head Start supports the language learning of our young people or not.

So this whole step and process of really looking at how language has become an integral part of how we move forward in our educational system and looking at the importance of oral language learning, I think that has made language and culture integration in the school systems very key. When you look at the report by the common core that was developed looking at the countries where student performance is very high, they are offering an education that is deeper and going wider, whereas the United States has been looking more of narrowing the curriculum and really looking at a monolingual system.

What we are hoping to prove is that a multilingual effort is vital and for multilingualism to be seen as an asset rather than a deficit with English language learners. That is why this hearing is important for us in looking at language and culture and how it is integrated throughout all our school systems, and also allowing the ability for tribes to develop our own research based methods, and giving tribal education departments and tribal governments more authority, similar to that of State education agencies over the education of our children.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Shendo follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KEVIN SHENDO, EDUCATION DIRECTOR, PUEBLO OF JEMEZ

The Pueblo of Jemez, is located in north central New Mexico and we have a tribal membership of approximately 3,788. Jemez is a very traditional Pueblo and we have maintained our cultural and religious practices. We are the only Pueblo where the Towa language is spoken, a language that is unwritten. In 1999, the Pueblo of Jemez, through its Vision 2010 community sessions, asserted our authority and desire to determine what is most important to the education of our tribal members.

Jemez began our re-organization efforts in 1999 as part of the Visioning and Planning sessions for our community. From Vision 2010 and the community planning sessions, emerged three overriding themes that have been at the core of our Redefining Education Movement; one of these themes is to Redefine Education—so that

Jemez Language and Culture are at the heart of how, where and what we teach our children to ensure the survival and advancement of our Jemez people.

After a series of organizational changes, the Jemez Department of Education was redesigned to reflect a comprehensive approach to education which begins with our most precious resource, our infants and works up to our adult learners and college students. Encompassing all support programs, schools and services from our different tribal programs and local schools: bureau, public and charter. The Jemez Department of Education is a part of the Jemez Tribal Government and Administration. The Education Director reports to the Tribal Administrator who in turn, reports to the Jemez Governors and the Jemez Tribal Council.

The Pueblo of Jemez is pleased with the progress it has made in creating a tribal education system that engages with State, Tribal and Federal institutions. Markers of success for the Pueblo of Jemez Educational System include:

- Creation of the Jemez Education Collaborative, a coalition of Tribal Education Program Managers, Coordinators, and School Administrators from the Public, Bureau and Charter schools serving Jemez students. The Education Collaborative meets monthly to discuss critical education issues impacting our student population. Rather than compete for students, funding and resources, the collaborative works cooperatively to ensure that the best educational services, transitions and supports are provided to our students to ensure their success.
- As part of this collaborative began the development of a Jemez Language and Culture Curriculum from Early Childhood to 8th Grade through the annual Teacher Retreat and the Joint Professional Development Days involving all teachers from the local community schools and tribal programs.
- Further, the involvement of the tribe in the schools has resulted in an integration of our tribal language, culture and priorities directly into the curriculum. This was done in coordination with the teachers, community schools, the Jemez Language Team, and the Jemez Education Department. We are, in essence, developing an indigenous pedagogy that best meets the academic needs of our student population.
- Conducting research to support the Jemez educational initiatives focused on developing Jemez Educational Standards, complete with assessments and evaluations, rooted in Jemez Language, Culture and Tribal priorities that integrate State, National and International educational standards.
  - “Becoming Jemez PhotoVoice Project—the early childhood experiences of Jemez children and the context within which language is learned” is a prime example of one such research project being directed by the tribe in collaboration with Arizona State University.

The Pueblo of Jemez Tribal Education Department has developed meaningful relationships with our community and State partners:

- Jemez has established two public charter schools within reservation lands with Tribal Council approval in collaboration with the local public school district, as New Mexico initially set up a dependent charter school law, listing LEAs as the authorizing agents; but the charter law was reauthorized to now allow the State of New Mexico to become a second authorizing agent, making two options available and honoring the government-to-government relationship between NM and its 22 tribes.
- Jemez has entered into an MOU with the State of New Mexico for alternative licensure for Jemez Language and Culture Instructors. Jemez will determine which of its tribal members are viable to teach Jemez Language and Culture within the local schools and the state will honor the tribe’s authority by granting the recommended individuals an alternative license to teach within the public school systems.
- Jemez also has an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) with the NM Public Education Department—Indian Education Division for grant funds awarded to the Jemez Department of Education to support language programs and student support services.

The work of the Jemez Education Department has had and continues to have an impact on increasing the academic performance of our students:

- The Jemez Valley Public School District was only one of two school districts in the State of NM to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as a district in the 2009/10 school year based on the academic achievement of the students within their respective schools.

- Jemez on average has over 80 percent of its high school graduates going on to 2 and 4 year institutions.
- Through its different programs, the Jemez Education Department is directly reaching and impacting over 450 students per month, and over 100 students per day.
- The four and five year graduation rates for Jemez Valley High School and Walatowa High Charter School are above the state averages and significant for schools with high Native populations.

Recommendations to strengthen tribal control and to ensure language and culture based education models are funded and made a priority are as follows:

- ESEA Reauthorization needs to be inclusive of tribal priorities: Opportunities for integrating language and culture based programs have been overlooked because of No Child Left Behind. Focus has been on Reading and Math, because our Native children are unique, a lot of them have succeeded but are we losing our Native identity along the way.
- NCLB English only legislation needs to be repealed and be made inclusive of home languages other than English. A greater value and acknowledgement of multilingualism as an asset is a must.
- Recognizing that “Top Down” mandates don’t work and western education models are not the answer to tribal communities working to develop educational standards that are rooted in Language and Culture and that integrate local priorities.
- Parents are a child’s first teacher—a financial investment and focus needs to be put on parent support and education programs/services. Without strong parental support and intervention, a child often struggles and is more prone to experiment with and participate in risky behaviors.
- Bureau of Indian Education mandate on background checks for all classroom instructors takes up to six (6) months. Revisiting policy to expedite the process or work with local police departments for community educators, some of which are certified language/culture instructors and respected elders.
- Invest in “Grow Your Own” programs: Each community has unique needs and challenges so they need to develop their own programs. This empowers community members and develops a sense of ownership, “when we “Grow our Own” we then take pride in, and want, need, and value what we produce. This brings ownership and local responsibility.”
- Increasing the role of Tribal Education Departments to that of State Education Agencies and giving Tribes more authority in the education of their children through the ESEA Reauthorization: “Jemez people know best, what is best for Jemez children.”
- Legislation needs to address federal and state educational funding going directly to the tribes, helping to build capacity, thus enabling them to best meet their community’s educational needs and priorities.
- Invest in research that supports Native language and traditional community based learning models. These are “Education Best Practices” and legislation should support best practices in Native Communities and research that is driven by tribal communities and their research partners.
- Invest in holistic education models that incorporate all aspects of a child’s learning, to meet the needs of the whole child: Educationally, Socially, Culturally, Spiritually, Emotionally, Physically and Nutritionally. A healthy, well child can be taught to learn and master most anything. “It takes a village to raise a child.”

As Tribes and Tribal Education Departments, we have a responsibility to hold the Federal and State Governments, public school districts and schools that serve our students accountable, to ensure that our students are readily prepared for college or a career. So Jemez echoes that the burden of education for our young people not to be the responsibility of one, but that it truly becomes a joint, collaborative effort, which creates a win-win situation for all; thus ensuring the educational sovereignty of tribes and our right to self-determination.

The Pueblo of Jemez has always been and will continue to be a strong supporter of educational initiatives. Diverse educational opportunities, together with traditional knowledge, fluency in our Towa language and a strong cultural foundation have empowered us and education has opened doors of opportunity. The Pueblo of Jemez realizes that education is a lifelong journey and that it is critical to meet the needs of our community at all levels: educationally, culturally and socially.

The Pueblo of Jemez Department of Education is central to providing different educational opportunities, services and programs to all tribal members. Because of its partnerships and collaborations with higher education institutions, community schools and organizations, state and federal agencies; It is a place from which one is able to access a multitude of services within the educational arena.

In closing, I would like to quote the National Congress of American Indians and the National Indian Education Association's Tribal Priorities for Indian Education. "The health, well-being, and success of Native children are central to Tribal Sovereignty. Tribal Communities, supported by strong tribal governments, are responsible for raising, teaching and caring for children. Native children in turn form the back bone of future tribal success."

Thank you for the opportunity to provide Testimony before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Shendo, for your testimony.

Now we will move into questions for our witnesses. My first question is to Namaka Rawlins. Your consortium has done work with other Native peoples to assist in their own language perpetuation efforts. Can you describe the work that you do and the impact that work has had on other Native communities?

Ms. RAWLINS. Mahalo. Yes, let me see, I wrote it down. Our consortium, with the two partners as I explained earlier, has a full P-20, preschool through the doctorate degree. Within the consortium, we are providing, and with our laboratory school, we are providing technical assistance to others that are looking at our model and wanting to replicate the model. So we have had visitors, over 350 indigenous visitors annually, that come to see our model, on the ground.

So they are able to see firsthand what language nest looks like, with our preschoolers, and then able to see what the K through 12 looks like, education, what teaching in our language, all subject areas, what that looks like. Then onto the Hawaiian language college, where you have the bachelors, masters program and the doctorate degree, along with the teacher certification program, indigenous teacher certification program, and the curriculum development center and technologies. So we have offered this technical assistance for many years. We were able to get the support of private foundations to help us, so that we could provide this sort of support.

And in particular, we were able to support the Cherokee Nation in the development of a similar model to have the eastern, I think it is called North Eastern University, the similar model, working with the Cherokee immersion program there. So having that integrated elementary and university component to support that, we were able to demonstrate that and support taking that model to that community as well.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Lasley, you talked about the challenges associated with teacher certification in your written testimony, and a desire to see tribes have the authority to certify Native language teachers. Can you explain what minimum qualifications tribes might adopt if such authority was made available?

Mr. LASLEY. I think the qualifications clearly have to be one, that the teacher is a tribal member who is very familiar with the language itself and also cultural values pertaining to child-rearing. Many of our children have to begin learning the language almost from birth. Beyond that, I think something akin to an associate's

degree, whereby they are provided enough training in modern teaching techniques to be able to apply those or refine them in a tribal setting, so that indeed, they do meet some minimum qualifications, but also that they are acknowledged and recognized by tribal standards that they are adequately trained to provide the instruction.

So it would be up to the tribes to develop that criteria. I believe we can successfully do that if in fact we have the mandate or the means, the opportunity to be able to do that without being stifled by other Federal regulations that emphasize the most recent ways of judging or certifying qualified teachers.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. We will have another round of questions.

Senator Udall?

Senator UDALL. Chairman Akaka, thank you very much. This has been an excellent panel.

I am very interested in strengthening the pipeline for tribal students to become professionals, and returning to their communities, especially as teachers and health care providers. What suggestions do any of the panelists have for growing our own Native teachers and how do we encourage college students to pursue a career in teaching, especially in Native communities? Kevin, do you want to start?

Mr. SHENDO. Thank you, Senator Udall. One of the things we have done in our community actually, is looking at growing our own, starting a college internship program, that we have had our tribal programs invest resources and funding in, so that they are able to set aside funding through their regular budgets to hire college students coming back into the community, both giving them the opportunity to work in the field that they are studying within the local community, but also then, to build a pipeline to reintegrate them back into the community once they receive their degrees.

This has been a tremendous program that we have put together. That is one. The other partnership that we established is with the AmeriCorps Vista program, looking at volunteer service to our community and giving young people the professional experience they need, but also the resources to be able to continue to pursue their education. I think opportunities as such have been very beneficial to us. One thing that has been a real focus for a lot of our college students is learning about the tribal government, tribal programs and how they function within the context of the community. That is something that cannot be taught in a college classroom, but one that has to be learned and experienced through those professional experiences that we are able to provide our young people.

Senator UDALL. Do any of the other panelists want to weigh in on that?

Ms. RAWLINS. I would like to. I was thinking about your question. In our experience, over the 30 years that we have been in the development of programs based on our language and our culture, it has brought up from within our own communities the empowerment from within our communities to return, that is part of the education. We talked about Kuleana earlier, responsibility, so it is innate, it is a part of the way we do things.

So today's hearing, the way we do our language and culture education, it fosters and it builds upon that strength of our Native communities to want to be a part of solutions and coming back and giving back. So when we look at the Punana Leo, when we started our language nest, we had parents that got involved that went on to become teachers themselves, because they were becoming involved in the education of their children and sought to get their teaching certification so they could be a part of this education in our language and through our language.

We have now, because of being around this long, 30 years, we now have students that have graduated from our education system that are now returning and contributing back. It is just part of the way our education and how we are building within our communities that idea of Kuleana, responsibility, and coming back and contributing back to your community. You just don't take away, you come back and give back, too.

Mr. LASLEY. We would agree. I think our tribe sees that as an opportunity, grow your own programs, things of that nature. We see glimmers of hope at the earliest grade levels now, when we introduce Meskwaki speakers into those classrooms as teacher aides. So we also have certified teaching staff in certain classrooms that also voluntarily implement some of our Meskwaki language, even though they are non-Indian. We still see the students responding and learning phrases and words.

So we believe it can be done, and we also would like more support in the reauthorization to promote those practices to be seen as continued opportunities.

Mr. PARKER. May I say something? Curiously, where my school resides in Waianae, the major problem it had is retaining teachers. So that was used as a reason for educational failure. At the school that I am the principal at, 21 of my 40 teachers are of Hawaiian ethnicity. And the school has 93 percent Hawaiian, so obviously the role modeling automatically takes place in this community. We have found it to be a very powerful component in that a number of our students go on to private schools after they leave our public school. Private schools are obviously the elite of the educational system in the State of Hawaii.

Senator UDALL. Thank you. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Udall.

My question now is directed to Alvin Parker. Can you discuss how the Native Hawaiian community in Waianae has been involved in the design and goals of your school? And also whether or not you think that contributes to student achievement?

Mr. PARKER. Yes, Senator. Waianae coast is made up of three mokus, Makaha Moku, the Waianae moku, the Maili moku, excuse me, four mokus, and Nanakuli moku. These are four individual communities that are along the 17-mile Waianae coast. We have students from every one of these mokus. So a total student body of about 600 children, ranging from K to eighth grade.

So we get a lot of input from our families. But what we basically return to them is a high-quality educational facility. That is what they appreciate. Why I am using the four mokus to identify how we work together, if just one Nanakui moku provided all 600 stu-

dents, then you wouldn't be getting this cross-section. But we get a lot of people.

I will give you an example. We recently put this project Kaboom together, with the help of the Disney Corporation. In one day, 250 family members and about 50 students showed up and built a \$250,000 playground in one day. It was the most amazing sight. I never could have believed it if I hadn't seen it, it was a fantastic sight. That is one way I can indicate to you, physically indicate to you that it is being done in the Waianae coast.

We were one of only two grants that Disney allocated. And the other allocation came from the NFL Players Association in the State of Hawaii. That is my most recent example. This happened on April 28th.

The CHAIRMAN. Mahalo. Mr. Shendo, despite their different structures, how has the Pueblo been able to successfully integrate cultural language programs in each school? What recommendations can you provide the Committee?

Mr. SHENDO. I think the overriding theme has been staying true to the vision of the community and honoring that. Even regardless of the school system or the educational system that is in place, when serving the needs of our tribal students, every school system within its leadership has come to understand and honor the vision of the community and honor the priority of language and culture in its educational system. I think with that, and the tribe prioritizing and pushing that has enabled the different educational systems to stay true to the vision of the community and honor it.

There have been barriers or challenges in certain school systems. But we have been able to come together as a collaborative and work through them to ensure that language and culture are integrated. In some schools it is more present than others. But it is present in every school system. I think that is the important piece, that the schools have come to the table with the tribe and honor and respect the priority of language and culture that the tribe is integrating.

The other piece that has made this collaboration possible is the State of New Mexico has an Indian Education Act. Through the Indian Education Act, the State recognizes the authority of the Tribe with the ultimate control or authority of tribes over the education of their children. So through that, there are different avenues and ways. One is the alternative licensure where each tribe is able to enter into an agreement with the State of New Mexico, so that the tribe becomes the authorizing agent to decide which of its tribal members they can license to be able to teach language and culture within the public school systems, Bureau or charter, and then the State will recognize them by giving that individual an alternative licensure to be able to come into the school systems.

So there are different avenues that have been put in place at the State level. But also at the local level, it is just the coming together and recognition of honoring the tribe and its priorities. But really also, teaching from the perspective of honoring and validating the prior knowledge that children bring into the classroom, and relating education to the experiences that children bring from their respective communities, because in our school district, we have the Pueblo of Jemez and also the Pueblo of Zia.

I think the recommendation that I would make to the Committee is, the Indian Education Act really helped to propel Indian education within the State of New Mexico. So maybe looking at legislation that forces the different entities and agencies to come together in a sense. But I think through a collaborative process, because if it is not written in law, there are lost opportunities where the collaboration won't happen. But if the mechanisms are put in place to enable the collaborations to happen, they become key to the success that can be realized.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for your response.

Ms. Rawlins, could you provide the Committee with additional information on English language outcomes for immersion programs? Do students educated in Native American languages face challenges when they move on to higher education taught in English?

Ms. RAWLINS. Thank you. Our model is that English is offered, or English Language Arts is introduced in grade five for an hour a day. At the end, I reported that we have 100 percent graduation rate. When our students graduate, they are 100 percent bilingual, biliterate, both in Hawaiian and in English. They are, at senior year, they are concurrently enrolled in local university courses or the community college. So they are taking courses in English in the 12th grade.

So the system that we have is a rigorous acquisition of both Hawaiian language as your prime language of instruction and prime target language in the early years, and then the gradual grade five, your hour of English in grade five. Then of course, there is the research that students do in intermediate high school or like you Google your regular researches in English. A lot of the textbooks that they have in high school and intermediate school are English textbooks. But the medium of instruction remains Hawaiian.

So this model has proven to have the, like I said, 100 percent graduation rate, 80 percent of them entering college. In addition to this, our students have graduated from the university, both our local universities, University of Hawaii at Hilo, at Manoa, our community colleges in Hawaii, as well as colleges on the mainland, including Loyola and Stanford. We just had our first Punana Leo graduate receive his Ph.D. from Oxford.

So these are examples of the success of English language, positive English language outcomes for our students that are grounded in their language in Hawaiian that are then moving into English and all of the other support that, like I said earlier, they are having to research and everything is in English. So they are well prepared.

I think I answered the question.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Lasley, you mentioned the need for a central repository of knowledge pertaining to language programs. Please describe the challenges you face due to the lack of a central repository. And any suggestions you may have regarding how a repository would function.

Mr. LASLEY. I think first and foremost this centrally-located repository of knowledge and resources would be certain amassed and would be the responsibility of either that institution or an organi-

zation which has frankly, a huge amount of resources, financially and human, in order to bring all the resources and materials, for example, that have been developed by the Native Hawaiian population to the broader Native American or tribal audience or consumer. I think across the United States there are varying levels of success taking place. But in our case, for example, with me, over 40 years ago, being brought up in immersion, in the Meskwaki language was simply part of our life, our lifestyle.

Over that amount of time, lifestyles have changed, technologies have changed. And the influences on our young people are much more mainstream, as opposed to tribal. So an organization that has a huge amount of resources and the ability to travel to touch each and every one of these Native communities with regard to whatever stage they are in in development of language preservation from those that are the most advanced, that have been doing this for 30 years, to those that are only starting but may have a strong culture and heritage still intact. The raw material is there within the community. But it simply has to be organized based on effective and proven models that have been developed over a long period of time by other tribal cultures.

It will take a fair amount of work, it will take a fair amount of time. But I think it can be accomplished to the betterment of not only Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, but also Native American tribes here on the mainland, so to speak. But again, I think it has to be very business-oriented, it has to be very structured. But I do believe it can be accomplished.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for your response.

Mr. Parker, how are your students performing as compared to the other schools in the communities that you serve? Can you identify what you believe to be the key factors in their success?

Mr. PARKER. That is a loaded question, Senator. We are the only school on the Waianae coast that has passed AYP. And we have done it four out of six years.

I believe it is because one of the key ingredients is we have a sustainable faculty. We don't lose teachers. The majority of my teachers, except for two of them, have been with me for five years or longer. There is only one teacher that is not HQTd, and she is in the process of getting her highly-qualified status.

Another reason would be that the students, when they enter in kindergarten, which is our entry point, they don't leave until they, if they get into Kamehameha from sixth to seventh grade, then they will leave, or eight and ninth, but they normally stay the entire nine years. I think the consistency of faculty, the stability of the student body, it matters quite a bit.

I wrote a masters project on how do you build a sustainable school, a successful sustainable school. Part of it was design. So the school has been in existence for, it is going on its 11th year. We have done pretty well.

Another thing is the faculty is predominantly Hawaiian. So the children, they look at their teachers and they realize that anything is possible. The only two Caucasian teachers I have, one was born in Hawaii and her name is Noni, and the other has been living there for 35 years. So that is the type of faculty, I think it really does matter to the students, especially in a socioeconomically de-

pressed community. And these people travel as far as Hawaii Ke to get to Nanakuli to work. You know the geographics, that is quite a distance to travel every morning.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Shendo, the Pueblo's charter school has a graduation rate of 89.4 percent. This program has been very successful compared to the national rate for Native students of 49 percent. Can you describe why you think the charter school is so successful in graduating students? Also, how can we translate that success to other schools through legislation?

Mr. SHENDO. The graduation rate at Walatowa High Charter School, again, one of the key factors is the zero, minimal to zero turnover of staff. That is key. The other thing that has been key and I have expressed is the honoring of the language and culture, and really teaching to the students within the context of the communities they come from. It is taking the academic subjects and knowledge, but putting them and teaching them from a perspective where it relates back to the community, then education really means something. And working with our community professionals that are serving the tribe as well as elders and community members that carry key knowledge and integrating them as co-teachers, as facilitators, as part of the learning process.

So it is really taking the school and integrating it into the community and teaching from the perspective of the community, so, as the different subjects are taught, they relate back to the community that the students come from and also, they honor the prior knowledge that young people bring into the classroom. That has been one of the biggest keys of success.

Walatowa High also received an early college grant. So we are trying to transition it now. We have been working the last four years, implementing an early college program, and really raising the expectations of our students. Looking at multi-lingualism as an asset, looking at models internationally that have been successful and integrating what has been successful with those international models that integrate multi-lingual, multi-cultural programs into the school systems. The motto of the school is think globally, create locally.

So it really affords the opportunity of the staff to look at diversifying the curriculum. Doesn't look at the subject matter singly. But looking at integration of experiential learning processes that are across disciplines, so that one project may involve all the different disciplines in the schools and contribute to that student's learning of that particular lesson from the different subjects. But they all interrelate. I think that has been one of the biggest successes of the school, of its success rate and graduation rates, that have helped really to benefit the students and their success.

And how can we translate that to other schools and areas? It is really helping, I think, and I don't know how we can do this through legislation, but helping communities to define a vision. That has been one of our biggest benefits, having a vision, a common vision that we can all work toward, and everyone understanding that vision. And through the reauthorization, some of the proposed legislation is to develop the capacity of tribal departments of education within different Native communities. Maybe that may

be an avenue to begin to address this, and looking at what ways which can be utilized to help to replicate a similar model.

But it is really looking at validating the prior knowledge that young people bring, it is integrating the educational system into the communities and communities into the schools.

The CHAIRMAN. I want to thank you very much, our first panel, for your responses to our questions. Without question, your responses will help us refine what needs to be in our education programs for Native peoples. That is the intent of all of this. The thing is, we want to make it the best.

What has been coming out also is that there have been successes. There is a reason for that. We would like to take advantage of this and as I have said earlier, want to build on the basis of what we have done that has been successful and make it better. All for the sake of retaining and keeping our culture and language alive for the people of our Country.

And for me, without question, this will help the United States also. So this will help our peoples to be more productive. Because the future is there, and there are so many new things that are coming up and our young people need to be educated to the point where they can begin to contribute to this production. This Committee will be taking up some of these, like energy and other areas, that can help the tribes as well, to help them be productive.

Again, mahalo nui loa, thank you very much for your responses and I want to tell you, we are very indebted to you for helping us achieve a better future for education in our Native languages. Mahalo. Thank you.

I would like to now call the second panel, and invite the second panel to the witness table. Mahalo nui for the lei, and this really honors me. We are so happy to have all of you.

We have Jana Harcharek, Director of the Iñupiaq Education, with the North Slope Borough School District in Barrow, Alaska. David Beaulieu, a Professor with the University of Wisconsin At Milwaukee, will speak second. And our final witness, Shawn Kanaiaupuni, with the Kamehameha Schools, in Honolulu, Hawaii. Welcome to the Committee, and to this hearing.

Ms. Harcharek, will you please proceed with your testimony? Your full testimonies will be included in the record.

**STATEMENT OF JANA HARCHAREK, DIRECTOR OF IÑUPIAQ EDUCATION, NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT, BARROW ALASKA**

Ms. HARCHAREK. [Greeting in Native tongue]. Chairman Akaka, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

My name is Pausauraq Jana Harcharek. I am the Director of Iñupiaq Education at the North Slope Borough School District. I have lived in Barrow, Alaska, all of my life save for when I had to leave home to attend high school.

I have devoted my entire professional life to language and cultural preservation and perpetuation. The North Slope Borough School District is comprised of 11 public schools, situated in 8 communities spread across 88,000 square miles. Our district serves 1,816 students from preschool and kindergarten through grade 12.

Founding North Slope Borough Mayor Eden Hobson was an astute man who knew that we had an unprecedented opportunity to direct our own destiny. In 1975, he said, "Today we have control over our educational system." He wanted an assessment of whether or not our school system was truly becoming an Inupiat school system, reflecting Inupiat educational philosophies, or if in fact, we were merely theoretically exercising political control over an educational system that continued to transmit white urban culture.

Thirty-six years later, our school board continues to strive for the realization of Mayor Hobson's vision for education. The mission of the district as defined by the board is that learning in our schools is rooted in the values, history and language of the Inupiat. Our board wants our students prepared to excel as productive citizens of the world, able to integrate Inupiat knowledge and values with western ways.

Five years ago, the North Slope Borough School District finally decided that it was time to go to the people, it was time to forego the abysmal philosophical underpinnings of the district to impose a system created in white urban America for white urban children on Inupiat children, because it was failing. It was time for a change. It was time to begin building the bridge of trust between school and community. So the District went to the people, and the people spoke.

The people said loudly and clearly that they want their children's schools to reflect who they are. They said their children no longer should have to leave their identities outside when they walk into their schools. They should know their history and who their leaders are. They should see Inupiat art forms in their buildings. They should learn to think like Inupiat, because they are Inupiat.

Two years ago, the District formed a committee called Ilinniagnikun Apqusiqtit. They are the people who break the trail for learning. It is through their efforts that the Inupiat learning framework was born. This framework, adopted by the board last summer, is now the foundation upon which Inupiat culture and language-based academic curricula and assessment processes are being developed.

The prospects for increasing academic achievement as a result are very, very promising. The goal is for all North Slope students to reach their intellectual potential and achieve academic success through the integration of Inupiat knowledge into the core content areas of reading, writing, mathematics and science.

The District is actively mapping its curriculum and aligning it with the Alaska State Content and Performance Standards, adapting a nationally-recognized curriculum development methodology, referred to as understanding by design. The process includes the engagement of our communities, elders, parents, leaders, business and governmental partners, teachers and students. We all know that students perform better academically when parents are involved.

The development of Inupiat language and culture-based curriculum, written from the perspective of the Inupiat, will have long-term positive outcomes for increased academic performance and local teacher hire and retention. This is supported by research. Through community ownership of education and investment in new

educational practices now, we increase the relevance and viability of the teaching profession from the perspective of our students. When our students see themselves honored in the classroom with curriculum that is written from their perspective, they will see that teaching is an honorable profession.

Seems Mayor Hobson had figured out what needed to be done to make our schools more effective decades before the mainstream did. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Harcharek follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JANA HARCHAREK, DIRECTOR OF IÑUPIAQ EDUCATION,  
NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT, BARROW ALASKA

Chairman Akaka, and distinguished members of the committee, qayanaq, for the opportunity to provide comments. My name is Pausauraq Jana Harcharek. I am the Director of Iñupiaq Education at the North Slope Borough School District. I have lived in Barrow, Alaska all of my life, save for when I had to leave home to attend high school. I have devoted my entire professional life to language and cultural preservation and perpetuation.

The North Slope Borough School District is comprised of eleven public schools situated in eight communities spread across 88,000 square miles. Our district serves 1,816 students from preschool and kindergarten through grade 12.

Founding North Slope Borough Mayor Eben Hopson was an astute man who knew that we had an unprecedented opportunity to direct our own destiny. In 1975, he said, "Today, we have control over our educational system." He wanted an assessment of whether or not our school system was truly becoming an Inupiat school system, reflecting Inupiat educational philosophies, or, if, in fact, we were only theoretically exercising "political control" over an educational system that continues to transmit white urban culture.

36 years later our School Board continues to strive for the realization of Mayor Hopson's vision for education. The mission of the district as defined by the board is that, "Learning in our schools is rooted in the values, history and language of the Iñupiat." Our board wants our students prepared to excel as productive citizens of the world, able to integrate Iñupiaq knowledge and values with Western ways.

Five years ago the North Slope Borough School District finally decided that it was time to go to the people. It was time to forego the abysmal philosophical underpinnings of the district to impose a system created in white urban America for white urban children on Iñupiaq children because it was failing.

It was time for change. It was time to begin building the bridge of trust between school and community. So the district went to the people and the people spoke. The people said loudly and clearly that they want their children's schools to reflect who they are. They said their children no longer should have to leave their identities outside when they walk into their schools. They should know their history and who their leaders are. They should see Iñupiaq art forms in their buildings. They should learn to think like Iñupiat because they are Iñupiat.



As we move forward with this work we feel it is imperative that we recognize experts who are learned in Inupiat ways of knowing and have expertise in Inupiat ways of doing things. They are absolutely fundamental to this process and we must find ways of honoring their knowledge and the contribution they make towards anchoring our students in who they are.

98 percent of our teachers are not of Inupiat descent. They are from the "lower 48" and do not bring with them an understanding of life in the Arctic. Moving forward, we must provide our teachers with opportunities to learn about the Inupiat Learning Framework. By clearly defining the interconnected elements of the framework and providing the necessary training we can ensure that our educators feel comfortable with making the connections. As we implement the Inupiat Learning Framework, the district must simultaneously train teachers to serve the unique educational needs of our people. We anticipate that meeting these needs will have the long-term effect of increasing the number of local teachers and having the added effect of increasing teacher retention – two key pieces for success.

The development of Inupiat language and culture based curriculum written from the perspective of the Inupiat will have long-term positive outcomes for increased academic performance and local teacher hire and retention – this is supported by research. Through community ownership of education and investment in new educational practices now, we increase the relevance and viability of the teaching profession from the perspective of our students. When our students see themselves honored in the classroom with curriculum that is written from their perspective, they will see that teaching is an honorable profession.

The investment we make now is projected to increase the number of local, permanent residents teaching in our classrooms, improve the quality of instruction delivered and drastically reduce the amount of time and financial resources allocated each year to recruit and train new teachers.

By no means is will this be accomplished quickly. We are in it for the long haul. Our curriculum mapping and alignment timeline is projected out for five years. We will begin year two with the onset of the new school year. The district has developed an initial series of culture based units that were used in classrooms this last school year and will continue to be used. The reaction on the part of our children is amazing. There is a fourth grade integrated unit titled, "Time and

Ptarmigan" that includes a chapter book that children read as they progress in the unit. When teachers were piloting the unit they reported that they had to use it as a reward for completing other tasks because children loved it so much. Imagine children not wanting to put a school text down.

Seems Mayor Hopson had figured out what needed to be done to make our schools more effective decades before the mainstream did.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Ms. Harcharek.

And now we will receive the testimony of Dr. Beaulieu. Please proceed.

**STATEMENT OF DAVID BEAULIEU, PROFESSOR OF  
EDUCATION POLICY AND COMMUNITY STUDIES; DIRECTOR,  
ELECTA QUINNEY INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN INDIAN  
EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE**

Dr. BEAULIEU. Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I am David Beaulieu. I am an enrolled member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe from the White Earth Indian Reservation in Northern Minnesota. I am a former director of the U.S. Office of Indian Education and a past president of NIEA, the National Indian Education Association.

Between 2002 and 2005, I was involved, along with William Demmert and other research partners, in an effort funded by the U.S. Department of Education to consider whether it was feasible to conduct experimental or quasi-experimental Research to determine the impact of culturally-based education on the academic achievement of Native American students, and if so, to propose a Research design to do that.

The need for such Research originated in President Clinton's and President Bush's executive orders on American Indian and Alaska Native education. Our Research group proposed a quasi-experimental design that ultimately was not funded, nor was there a request for any other design to answer the Research question.

There has not been any Federal support for this type of research or Research concerning best practices in culturally-based education also required by the executive orders since the request for feasibility in 2002. The importance of doing Research on this subject, outside of the fact that Native American educators and leaders wish to have the kind of information that allows for effective development of educational programs for Native American students, is a realization that all of our Native American education-related statutes in part suggest a relationship of meeting what is known as the special educational and culturally related academic needs of Native American students with academic achievement.

The theoretical literature in this area focuses on the need for social-cultural congruency between the expectations of the school and the dispositions of learners for education-related discourse. For example, Research related to cognition or the ability to acquire knowledge has focused on what is known as elaboration, or the process of forming associations between new information and prior knowledge. For learning to occur, the new information must undergo some form of processing that focuses on conceptual characteristics of the new information, such as its meaning, personal or social relevance or relationship to prior knowledge and experience. Culture and language provides a basis for such associations.

An area known as cultural historical activity theory looks at language vocabularies and routines acquired by the learners through the process of socialization as children through language exchanges and social activity as a primary cognitive tool for individual and group problem-solving and adaptation. The processes of schooling result in positive outcomes when they are congruent with the learner's cognitive and linguistic tools.

Positive learning also occurs when school participation structures are congruent with the learner's. Examples include turn-taking, wait time, observational learning versus trial and error, and other

various courtesies and conventions of conversation unique in many cultures.

William Demmert and John Towner, as a part of the feasibility study, conducted a literature review to identify all the experimental and quasi-experimental research on culturally-based education and academic achievement that had been accomplished. Starting with over 10,000 documents, only two directly looked at the relationship of culturally-based education to academic achievement. This type of Research simply has not been done. There are many studies of less scientific rigor that demonstrate potentially positive relationships. It is noted that the literature does not suggest the opposite is true.

The achievement and education progress data of Native American students in school programs without culturally-based efforts indicate the current educational strategies are not effective for many Native students. Where there is a comprehensive focus on Native language and culture, as the core of the school's approach, the results are significantly different. Dr. Teresa McCarty from Arizona State University in a 2009 report to the U.S. Department of Education describes the educational approach and results of a number of schools, including those that focus on students where the home language is other than English, or where the objective is language and culture revitalization as well as focused culturally-based education programmatic efforts.

Summarizing the results of her report, she stated that there is compelling empirical evidence that strong, additive, academically rigorous Native language and culture programs have salutary effects on both Native language and culture revitalization and student achievement as measured by multiple types of assessments. Time spent learning the Native language in a strong program, regardless of Native language expertise, is not lost in developing academic English.

She also noted other aspects of what is considered a strong program: enhanced self-esteem, motivation, ethnic pride are evidenced as factors, improved attendance, and college-going rates, and unique and varied opportunities for involvement of parents and elders in the children's learning is associated with enhanced achievement. Both of these factors are noted for strong Native language and culture programs.

There is ample evidence that well-developed efforts work. My testimony elaborates on these points, and I have provided the Committee with both the reports I have mentioned. My testimony also suggests areas where existing statutory language, if utilized, could be a basis for more success. We need more research and programmatic support that assists in developing strong Native language programs.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Beaulieu follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID BEAULIEU, PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION POLICY AND COMMUNITY STUDIES; DIRECTOR, ELECTA QUINNEY INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE

Background:

My name is Dr. David Beaulieu. I am an enrolled member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe-White Earth Reservation. I currently serve as a Professor of Education Policy and Community Studies and Director of the Electa Quinney Institute for American Indian Education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. I have testified before this committee in the past concerning education of Native American students as Director of the Office of Indian Education at the US Department of Education and as President of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) and last year as an expert witness related to Indian education and the No Child Left Behind Act.

My testimony is focused on what we know about the role of Native language and culture based education in the academic success of Native American Students from the theoretical, research, and best practice literature. I will refer primarily to my role as partner in a research and school based partnership that looked at the role of culturally based education that was jointly initiated by William Demmert Jr. and I. Dr. Demmert chaired and led the group. I will utilize the literature review on the relation of culturally based education to academic achievement developed by Demmert and Towner as part of that work and utilize the report of Dr. Teresa McCarty of Arizona State that was prepared for the U.S. Department of Education in 2009 on promising practices. Both documents have been provided the committee.

The need for research on Native language and culture based education:

Executive Order 13096 of August 6, 1998 on American Indian Alaska Native education signed by President Clinton called for the development and implementation of a comprehensive research agenda that included the requirement to "evaluate the role of native language and culture in the development of educational strategies". The research agenda published by the U.S. Department of Education in 2001 had two priorities related to language and culture, 1. Research related to the effects on educational outcomes for students and schools of incorporating American Indian and Alaska Native language and culture into the school curriculum and 2. Research related to best practices demonstrated as effective for implementing a culturally relevant learning environment and identification of factors that serve as barriers or facilitators for implementation

President Bush signed Executive Order 13336 on American Indian and Alaska Native education on May 5, 2004 which called for an assessment of the impact and role of native language and culture on the development of educational strategies to improve academic achievement.

In 2002, responding to the research agenda's priority, I was involved along with William Demmert Jr in a successful effort to develop a response to a Multi Award Task Order

(MATO) from the US Department of Education to consider whether it was feasible to conduct experimental or quasi experimental research to determine the impact of culturally based education on the academic achievement of Native American students and if so to propose a research design that would determine the impact of culturally based education on academic achievement. We were joined by the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL) now Education Northwest that served as a research partner and fiscal agent and Roland Tharp from the Center for Research on Education Diversity and Excellence. (CREDE)

As part of that project William Demmert Jr and John Towner developed "A review of the research literature on the influences of culturally based education on the academic performance of Native American students" The review was specifically focused on determining what experimental or quasi-experimental studies had been developed related to impact of culturally based education to the academic achievement of Native American students. I focused on surveying all existing culturally based education programs in the United States so as to determine and classify the total array of what was being offered as culturally based education programs for Native American students. The review of the literature also reviewed the theoretical literature on the relationship of culture and language to academic achievement.

Our research group proposed a quasi-experimental research design for the purpose of determining the impact of culturally based education upon the academic achievement of Native American students to the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in the summer of 2005. The design we had proposed was not funded and the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) did not request any other design to answer the research question despite President Bush's Executive Order 13336 calling for an assessment of the impact and role of native language and culture on the development of educational strategies to improve academic achievement.

Our research group nonetheless continued to develop an effort to do the research by inviting five Native language immersion schools, along with schools with non language focused culturally based education programs to join the research partners as school based partners. Jointly the school based partners along with the research partners developed rubrics that defined and could potentially measure the extent to which culturally based education existed in a school community and curriculum based measures (CBM) of academic achievement in the language of instruction for each school in reading, writing and arithmetic. With these tools developed, the design called for comparing the academic achievement of a school that had "culturally based education" with a school that did not serving Native American students from the same community.

A number of groups such as King Kamehameha Schools, the Kellogg Foundation, and The Education Testing Service (ETS) supported various aspects of the work allowing our partnership to continue the effort until we ran out of funding possibilities over a year ago and the chair of our group Dr. William Demmert Jr had passed away. There has not been any support for this type of research since the initial exploration of the feasibility of

doing experimental or quasi-experimental research was requested during the period 2002-2005.

The importance of doing research on the subject outside of the fact that Native American educators and leaders wish to have the kind of information that allows for the effective development of education programs for Native American students is the realization that all of our Native American education related statutes in part suggest a relationship of meeting what is known as the special educational and culturally related academic needs of Native American students with academic achievement.

#### Theoretical Literature

The technical proposal of our research partnership to the Institute of Education Sciences "Preliminary Study for Experimental Research on Culturally Based Education for American Indian/Alaska Native Students" identified three major theoretical approaches within the literature to addressing issues related to CBE interventions. The three approaches offer different mechanisms and explanations for how and why such interventions are effective but can be considered ever more elaborate iterations of the same concept related to the need for social cultural congruency between the expectations of the school and the dispositions of learners for education related discourse.

#### Cultural Compatibility

Cultural compatibility holds that the more human interactions in the school and classroom are like those of the student's culture, the better the goals of the school will be reached. Efforts at improving Indian education have been focused on the kinds of compatibility that would prove efficacious

#### Cognitive Theory

Research has focused around what is known as elaboration or the process of forming associations between new information and prior knowledge. For learning to occur, relevant prior knowledge in long-term memory must be activated, or made accessible, and the new information must undergo some form of processing that focuses on conceptual characteristics of the new information, such as its meaning, personal and social relevance, or relationship to prior knowledge and experience. Also, the greater the number of associations made between the new and the known, the more likely the new material will be retained and recalled.

Considering what is known from such studies, culturally based education would be superior to the extent that it activates existing culturally based schema, to which new abstract instructional goals can be related; to the extent to which cultural context facilitates encoding of new material in a meaningful manner and encourages more elaborative strategies.

#### Cultural-Historical-Activity Theory (CHAT)

Language vocabularies and routines acquired by the learners through the processes of socialization through language exchanges and social activity as infants and young children are the primary cognitive tools for individual and group problem solving and

adaptation. Attitudes and values are similarly and simultaneously formed through those exchanges. Culturally-based secondary socialization processes such as schooling can be facilitated by activating the learners' cognitive and linguistic tools laid down by community socialization. CHAT also suggests positive learning outcomes when school participation structures are congruent with those in the learners' repertoires. Examples that have been widely studied include turn-taking, wait time, observational learning vs. trial-and-error, and various courtesies and conventions of conversation. All of these are represented as characteristic in AI/AN populations differ from the conventions of the school in the common tradition.

The relationship between culturally based education and academic achievement for Native American students is thus focused on teaching and learning strategies that provide access to the academic goals and objectives of the school through recognizing and building upon Native American student experience, values, and knowledge of the students and their families as developed within their families and communities.

The Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE) has developed what are known as the Five Effective Standards of Pedagogy which bring to life teaching practices that demonstrate some of what is known from the theoretical literature related to culturally based education. These standards of pedagogy are known to be effective particularly for culturally unique students but are also effective for other students as well.

#### Research:

As part of the feasibility study mentioned, William Demmert and John Towner conducted a literature review to identify experimental and quasi-experimental research on cultural based education and academic achievement. Experimental and quasi-experimental studies consider questions of causation. Experimental designs randomly assign subjects to treatment conditions by the researchers which minimally include a treatment group and a control group. Experimental research is preferred for questions of cause and effect. Quasi-Experimental designs are those in which the researcher has some control of assignment of subjects to treatments but can only work with intact groups such as a classroom or a school. There are a number of issues in implementing these designs particularly in education settings as it is often not feasible or reasonable to assign some students to a treatment group and not others and the time for results to occur may create changes in the composition of the groups and as with all designs valid measures of achievement are an issue.

The Demmert review started with more than 10,000 documents and found only four experimental studies and two quasi-experimental studies. The review found very little research on that level of rigor directly bearing on the question of the relationship of language and culture to academic achievement. Also, of the six experimental or quasi-experimental studies identified only two, a study by Roland Tharp, the King Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) (1982) a reading program specifically developed for Hawaiian children and a study by Lipka and Adams, (2002) Improving Alaska Native rural and urban students' mathematical understanding of perimeter and area that tested the effectiveness of a culturally based unit of instruction on perimeter and

area on student learning of these concepts at the sixth grade level demonstrated a relationship of cultural based education to academic achievement.

The very small number of studies that demonstrate any causal relationship of culturally based education to achievement is an indication that experimental and quasi-experimental studies simply have not been done.

However there are a large number of studies in which groups are compared but there was no control over who got what and when, where groups are formed in a non random fashion. Many of these studies demonstrate potentially positive relationships between culturally based education programs and improved student academic, social, and cultural development but cannot be relied upon as studies to determine causation. It's noted the literature does not suggest the opposite to be true.

The achievement and education progress data of Native American students in school programs without culturally based efforts indicate that current education strategies are not efficacious for many Native American students.

#### Best Practices:

Dr. Theresa McCarty has developed a policy paper for The Promising Practices and Partnerships in Indian Education Working Group and the U.S. Department of Education "State of the Field: The Role of Native Language and Cultures in American Indian Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Student Achievement"(January 2009). Dr. McCarty's report lists promising practices when the home language is not the school language; when a primary goal is Native language and cultural revitalization; and culturally based education/culturally responsive education.

#### Home language is not the school language

Rock Point: Rock Point has a program where separate but complementary time was devoted to learning in Navajo Language and to English, learning to read first in Navajo Language and then English. Longitudinal data from Rock Point show that students there not only outperformed comparable Navajo students in English-only programs, they surpassed their own previous annual growth rates and those of comparison-group students in BIE schools – and they did so by a greater margin each year

Rough Rock KEEP: the Rough Rock English-Navajo Language Arts Program served approximately 200 students each year in grades K-6. Classrooms were organized around learning centers and small-group instruction in Navajo and English. Curriculum centered on interdisciplinary units with local themes with annual summer literature camps that involved students, teachers, parents, and elders. The program had a strong professional development component, bilingual teacher initiated research and collaboration to "indigenize" the curriculum

### Results

Longitudinal data show that after four years in the program, students' mean scores on criterion-referenced tests of English comprehension increased from 58 percent to 91 percent. On standardized reading tests scores initially declined, then rose steadily, in some cases approaching or exceeding national norms. When data were analyzed over five years, students demonstrated superior English reading, language arts, and mathematics performance compared to a matched peer group who did not participate in the program. Students also were assessed as having stronger Navajo oral language and Navajo literacy abilities; they became stronger in both languages and had the benefit of additive bilingualism.

### Manokotak:

Manokotak is a Yup'ik speaking village in the Southeastern Regional School District where nearly all in the village spoke Yup'ik. The school that served the village was restructured. Beginning in kindergarten students received four hours of instruction in Yup'ik and one in English, progressively increasing English instruction to 4.5 hours by the fifth and sixth grades. The program used a holistic approach to language arts, building on students' home-community experiences as content for literacy development.

### Results

At the end of the program's initial year, kindergartners exceeded the district's expected means for their performance on standardized tests, while first and second graders achieved below expected means. By the second year, all student groups exceeded the district's expected means.

### Native Language and Cultural Revitalization

#### Nawahiokalani'opu'u Laboratory School

Nāwahī is a Hawaiian-medium, early childhood through high school affiliation of programs featuring a college preparatory curriculum rooted in Native Hawaiian language and culture teaching all subjects through Hawaiian language and values. English instruction begins in fifth grade with a standard English language arts course; students enroll in such a course every semester through grade 12. Elementary students also study Japanese, and intermediate students study Latin.

Nāwahī students not only surpass their non-immersion peers on English standardized tests, they outperform the state average for all ethnic groups on high school graduation, college attendance, and academic honors. The school has a 100 percent high school graduation rate and a college attendance rate of 80 percent.

#### Tsehootsooí Dine Bi'ólta'

Tsehootsooí Diné Bi'ólta' (TDB, The Navajo School at the Meadow Between the Rocks or the Fort Defiance Navajo Immersion School), is a full-immersion K-8 school, with

plans under way for an early college program and expansion through grade 12. In the lower grades, all instruction, including initial literacy, occurs in Navajo. English is introduced in second grade and gradually increased until a 50-50 distribution is attained by grade 6. TDB's program is organized to afford maximum exposure to Navajo, incorporating tribal standards for Navajo language and culture and state content standards.

#### Results

Longitudinal data from TDB indicate that Native-language revitalization has not come at the cost of children's acquisition of English or their academic achievement. Navajo immersion students consistently outperform their peers in English-only classrooms on local and state assessments of English reading, writing, and mathematics

In 2007 the principal at Tsehootooi Dine Bi'olta Maggie Benally, testified before the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, U.S. Senate Hearing on *No Child Left Behind: Improving Education in Indian Country* that from 2004 to 2007 the school had met the [AYP] required under NCLB, where other schools in the district were inconsistent. She told the committee that the educational goals for our children can be achieved by validating our educational needs - to ensure the survival of the unique Dine culture and language.

#### Puente de Hozho Dual Immersion

Puente de Hozho is a trilingual K-8 public magnet school in Flagstaff, Arizona offering two parallel bilingual programs: a conventional dual immersion model in which native Spanish-speaking and native English-speaking students are taught jointly for a half-day in each language, and one-way Navajo immersion in which English-dominant Navajo students are taught in Navajo. In the latter program, kindergartners receive 90 percent of their instruction in Navajo, with English instructional time gradually increased to 80/20 in first grade and 60/40 by third grade, until a 50/50 balance is attained in grades four through eight. All state standards are taught in Navajo and English or Spanish and English.

#### Results

Puente de Hózhó has consistently met state standards, with its students outperforming comparable peers in monolingual English programs by as much as seven points in English language arts, ten points in mathematics, and 21 points in English reading.

#### Culturally responsive education/culturally responsive schooling

Premised on the theory that the most influential factor in students' school performance is, in "how we teach and arrange social activity in schools," culturally based education incorporates Native Language and culture into the schools programs. Culturally based education is academically effective and locally meaningful in light of community members' aspirations for their children. CBE that is cultural in character is...more

powerful” and whole-school approaches are stronger than “add-on” programmatic interventions.

As part of the feasibility study, I reviewed 145 federally funded language preservation grants and 1,200 Indian Education Act formula grants and determined that there were five principal types of culturally based education programs. From this review I identified a random and purposeful sample of 164 culturally based education programs. The following are the categories of culturally based education that I identified

1. Culturally based instruction where the language of instruction is the Native language;
2. Native language instruction where the Native language is a subject of instruction;
3. Native studies programs that enhances the existing curriculum program around specific Native content such as history, civics or culture related content;
4. Native cultural enrichment which bring local community cultural events to the school or allow students to participate in community cultural events; and
5. Culturally relevant materials which add Indian related content to reading materials.

Within the sample of programs, the vast majority of programs were offered and in greater combination with each other in schools with 50-100% Native Student enrollment. These efforts remain for the most part programmatic in character. In other words they are offered as program interventions in an otherwise non-culturally based education school education program.

Demmert in the already mentioned literature review lists six critical elements of CBE. These are:

1. Recognition and use of Native American (American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian) languages (this may include use bilingually, or as a first or second language).
2. Pedagogy that stresses traditional cultural characteristics and adult-child interactions as the starting place for one's education (mores that are currently practiced in the community, and which may differ community to community).
3. Pedagogy in which teaching strategies are congruent with the traditional culture as well as contemporary ways of knowing and learning (opportunities to observe, opportunities to practice, and opportunities to demonstrate skills).
4. Curriculum that is based on traditional culture that recognizes the importance of Native spirituality, and places the education of young children in a contemporary context (e.g., use and understanding of the visual arts, legends, oral histories, and fundamental beliefs of the community).
5. Strong Native community participation (including parents, elders, other community resources) in educating children and in the planning and operation of school activities.
6. Knowledge and use of the social and political mores of the community

The research literature suggests that social linguistic approaches that are congruent with the student's home and community culture would have the greatest impact upon academic achievement and that school-wide efforts rather than programmatic interventions would be most influential.

The need for comprehensive Indian education plans

The Indian Education Act of 1972 Part A the formula grant program has as one of its main purposes "meeting the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students, so that such students can meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards as all other students are expected to meet." The "so that" phrase potentially presents a research question. When I was serving as director of the U.S. Office of Indian Education (OIE) 1997-2001, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) proposed a study to determine the relationship of the formula grant program to achievement. I argued at the time that the approximate \$150 per student now approximately \$300 per student available could never be considered influential on reforming schools no matter how correct the point of view or intention of the statute, and that many factors both within and outside the school's control impacted student achievement in complex ways.

Also there is a wide array of allowable activities possible which may predictably have varying degrees of direct impact on achievement but are valuable for other reasons. Also the statute does not describe what is a special education or culturally related academic need allowing this to be defined locally. For these reasons and others the Title VII Part A formula grant program may not present a researchable question related to achievement but may still be valuable for the educational experience of American Indian and Alaska Native children in that they may provide many important services or enrich the school curriculum.

Considering what we know about culturally based education, the one area that shows real possibility in the Title VII formula grant is the policy language that requires the development of a comprehensive Indian education plans (Section 7114 b). based upon a comprehensive local assessment and prioritization of the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of the American Indian and Alaska Native students, These plans require a description of how the best available talents and resources, including individuals from the Indian community will be used to meet the needs of Indian students and requires an assurance that the comprehensive program was developed in open consultation with the parents of Indian children and parents. The requirements of the statute for developing these plans would potentially result in state and local Indian education plans comparable and consistent with local and state education plans required under Title I as is required in Title VII Part A the formula grant program currently. The development of comprehensive plans as intended by statute is not occurring

If the required comprehensive plans were developed as required and with the same rigor as Title I state and local education plans, the entire array of resources available would potentially be focused on meeting "the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students in any local education

agency, so that such students can meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards as all other students are expected to meet. The evidence on significantly improving the academic achievement of Native American students has been documented in many school sites where there is a comprehensive focus on the unique educational and culturally related needs of Native American students. The fact that this requirement is not being fulfilled may explain a great deal why we continue to see the results we have in the inability of schools to accomplish achievement and progress rates for American Indian student the same as all other students.

Benally, M. (2007, August 10). Statement of Maggie Benally (Navajo), Principal, Tsehootool Dine Bi'olta (Immersion School). Testimony before the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, U.S. Senate Hearing on *No Child Left Behind: Improving Education in Indian Country*

Demmert and Towner, *A Review of the Research Literature on the Influences of Culturally Based Education on the Academic Performance of Native American Students*, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, September 1, 2003

McCarty, T. L., *State of the Field-The Role of Native Languages and Cultures in American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Student Achievement*, The Promising Practices and Partnerships in Indian Education Working Group and the U.S. Department of Education Office of Indian Education Programs, January 2009

Technical and Business Proposals, Preliminary Study for Experimental Research on Culturally Based Education for American Indian/Alaska Native Students, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory Portland, Oregon June 28, 2002

The attachments have been retained in Committee files.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Dr. Beaulieu.  
Now we will receive the testimony of Dr. Kanaiaupuni. Will you please proceed?

**STATEMENT OF SHAWN KANAIAUPUNI, PH.D., DIVISION  
DIRECTOR, KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS**

Dr. KANAIAUPUNI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and aloha, Members of the Committee.

My name is Shawn Kanaiaupuni, and although the Kapuniaia's did live down the street from me growing up, it is a real honor and privilege to be able to share research with you today about new research on Native language and culture that very much is consistent with those of my colleague, David Beaulieu, about improving educational outcomes for Native students.

I am currently the Director of the Public Education Support Division and formerly the Research and Evaluation Division of Kamehameha Schools, and have also served on the National Indian Education Association as a board member and sit on the Native Hawaiian Education Council.

I represent Kamehameha Schools, which is a 125-year old private charitable trust in Hawaii, dedicated to educating our Native children. We operate several private campuses, but also spend some \$25 million to \$30 million annually in support of our public

schools and public education, because they educate about 85 percent of the 70,000 Native Hawaiian youth in our State.

Data trends over time within our DOE indicate that although proficiency rates for all race and ethnic groups have increased over time, and you can see this busy slide really shows an increasing trend since 2003 in proficiency rates. But what we see is that there is a very large achievement gap. I want you to focus on the red line there at the bottom, compared to the top performing groups in our State, which tend to be Japanese, Chinese and Korean. The State average is somewhere in the middle. But basically that achievement gap has existed over the last 50 to 60 years, based on our research.

This chart is for math. The same is true in language arts. The concerning thing about this is that our Native students comprise the largest single race and ethnic group in our State public school system, about 25 percent. So one in every four. Our Samoan youth also fare very poorly. They comprise about 3 percent of our public school system.

The other important thing that is concerning to us besides the enduring nature of the achievement gap is that based on the data, conventional methods of educating our Native students have not worked. It is not a gap, it is a gaping hole.

So really I want to share with you some of our research results of a recent study on what works for Native students. The study specifically addresses culture-based education and the resulting impact on student outcomes, including academic student outcomes. It is the first large-scale empirical study of its kind that we know of, including data from 600 teachers, some 3,000 students, about 2,000 parents, from 62 participating schools that include conventional DOE schools, the DOE has been a partner in this study, culture-based charter schools, which have been very promising in terms of Native education and conventional charter schools as well, also language immersion schools in our State (we have 17 public language immersion schools) and our own private campuses.

We ran lots of analyses, from very simple descriptive analyses to multi-variate analyses to very sophisticated multi-level statistical analyses run by national experts in the field. In the interest of time, the key findings are the following.

We find a very consistent, enduring, positive impact of culture-based education on student outcomes. Higher CBE use is related to higher socio-emotional development for students, things like identity, self-efficacy, aspirations, the things that lead to positive academic achievement. We find that higher culture-based education use is related to higher student civic engagement, not only feeling connected to your community and to civic issues in your area, but also taking action on those issues, like getting out there to protect the environment, to share with others and educate others about how fragile our environmental system is, about getting out there to attend public meetings about community affairs. These are what our students do.

And these are the students that we want to see taking care of us when we grow older.

Higher culture-based education use is also related to students spending more time on homework, to their feeling a sense of be-

longing in school, a sense of having trusting relationships, like teachers really care about them. Some may call that the soft fuzzy stuff of education, but in reality, if you are familiar with many of our Native communities that have sustained multiple generations of marginalization in public schools, feeling a sense of connection to school is really the single most leading indicator of future educational success, of wanting to go to college, of being successful in your career.

In fact, our data show that from culture-based charter schools, 90 percent of students graduate and go on to their successful careers in college. That is compared to our State average of 80 percent and for Native Hawaiians, around 60 percent.

We find that higher culture-based education use is also related to students expecting to graduate from college, not just high school, but also college. And finally, higher culture-based education use, in our fancy, nested, multi-level hierarchical linear models, controlling for all kind of other explanatory factors, is related to student academic success in both reading and math test scores. That is kind of what everybody wants to hear. It is a smaller but statistically significant effect in the positive direction. For Native students, that is the right direction. So we want to build on those successes.

Put very simply, research shows that culture in the classroom matters. We need more funding and support at the Federal and State levels to promote culture-based education, rigorous and relevant culture-based education. Because these investments have demonstrable benefits for Native students. As we like to say in our State, what is good for Native students is good for all students.

Mahalo.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Kanaiaupuni follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SHAWN KANAIAUPUNI, PH.D., DIVISION DIRECTOR,  
KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS

Aloha mal kākou e members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs,

**Please accept my deepest gratitude to be able to share this testimony with you today about Kamehameha Schools' investments in expanding the success of Native language and culture based education.**

I share this testimony as Director of the Public Education Support Division since 2007 and former Director of the Research and Evaluation Division at Kamehameha Schools (2001-2007). To provide some background, my research agenda at Kamehameha has focused on culture-based education, racial identity, and Native Hawaiian education and wellbeing. Born and raised in Hawai'i, my experiences and doctoral training were completed at several top tier research institutions prior to returning to Hawai'i in 2001. In particular, I served as faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Sociology after completing my doctoral studies at the University of Chicago in Sociology with a specialization in Demography and Family Sociology (my MBA was completed locally at the University of Hawai'i). It has been a privilege to serve on several voluntary boards, including the Executive Council of the Native Hawaiian Education Council (2005-present) and the National Indian Education Association (2008-2010), among others, in service to improving educational outcomes and wellbeing of Native children.

*With extraordinary foresight, Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, great-granddaughter and last royal descendant of Kamehameha the Great founded Kamehameha Schools (see [www.ksbe.edu](http://www.ksbe.edu)). Today, Kamehameha Schools (KS) includes three K-12 campuses over 20 preschool sites and a vibrant array of community based educational opportunities across the state of Hawaii. These initiatives aim to improve the capability and wellbeing of Hawaiians through education. If KS is going to be successful at fulfilling its mission, then the single most important collaborator in that is the public education system. Of the almost 70,000 Hawaiian school aged students who attend school in Hawai'i, 60,000 of those children attend public school. To that end, KS spent \$31M on funding and collaborations to the State Department of Education in SY2009-10.*

To leverage its resources, Kamehameha Schools looks to support efforts in public education that are Hawaiian-focused in both content and context. Data trends over time within the Hawai'i state Department of Education (HIDOE) indicate that although assessment scores for all race/ethnic groups have increased over time, the achievement gap for Native Hawaiians continues to endure (refer to the red line in the two figures below).



This fact is of significant concern, especially because Native Hawaiians comprise the single largest race/ethnic group in the HDOE. Kamehameha Schools seeks to work alongside our public school counterparts and other organizations to find ways to close this substantial achievement gap.

#### Culture-based Education and Native Student Outcomes

My testimony focuses on the results of a recent study, *Hawaiian Cultural Influences in Education*, which provides fresh insights on what works for Native students. The study specifically addresses the question of culture-based education approaches and the resulting impact on student outcomes. The study is based on interviews with 600 teachers, 2,969 students, and 2,264 parents at 62 participating schools, including regular public schools, culture-based and conventional charter schools, schools with Hawaiian-immersion programs, and the private Kamehameha Schools.

The study was a collaborative effort of the Kamehameha Schools, Hawaii Department of Education, and Na Lei Na'auao, an alliance of Hawaiian-focused public charter schools. As such, it is the first large-scale empirical study of its kind. Data were collected from teachers about culturally relevant and effective teaching practices and merged with student survey and institutional data on math and reading achievement, in addition to other outcomes. Two reputable researchers from the University of Hawai'i and Claremont University were hired for their expertise in multilevel statistical modeling, bringing a highly objective, empirical perspective to the data and analyses. The research team employed multilevel statistical methods to analyze data collected from public and private schools. Setting this study apart from others was the ability of the dataset to link statistically culture-based education to academic student performance outcomes.

The findings are consistent with prior qualitative studies, indicating that culture-based education strategies positively impact student outcomes, including Native Hawaiian student outcomes. Specifically, the analyses indicate a set of nested relationships linking the use of culture-based education (CBE) strategies by teachers and by schools to student educational outcomes:

- first, the data show that CBE use positively impacts student socio-emotional wellbeing (ie, identity, self-efficacy, social relationships);
- second, enhanced socio-emotional wellbeing, in turn, positively affects math and reading test scores;
- and third, the analyses suggest a smaller, yet statistically significant relationship between CBE use and math and reading test scores, most notably when teachers' use of culture-based strategies is supported by overall use of culture-based strategies in the school.

The study also found that students whose teachers used culture-based education approaches reported higher Hawaiian cultural affiliation (both Hawaiian and other students), civic engagement, and school motivation than did students of other teachers. For example, the survey data show that students in CBE schools demonstrate higher civic engagement than students in other schools. They are more likely to have strong community ties by working to protect the local environment and by attending public meetings about community affairs.

Analysis revealed that students whose teachers use CBE approaches are also more likely to spend time on their homework every night and reported high levels of trusting relationships with teachers and staff, and a deep sense of belonging at school. Specifically, students whose teachers use culture-based approaches were significantly more likely to feel that many people at school are like family, that they can trust people

at their school, and that teachers at their school go out of their way to help them. For Native students, cultivating this sense of engagement and belonging in school is often the single most important leading indicator of educational success, especially in communities sustaining multiple generations of marginalization in public schools.

Finally, 87.9 percent of students whose teachers used culture-based strategies said they expect to graduate from college compared with 73.3 percent of students whose teachers tended not to use such strategies. Data from Hawaiian-focused charter schools support this finding, showing 10% higher graduation rates, compared to conventional DOE schools.

#### **Policy Implications for CBE and Its Relationship to Student Outcomes**

The findings of this study have several state and local policy implications relevant to culture-based education and its positive relationship to student achievement:

- **Teacher education programs (both at the university level and in professional development settings) should provide foundational understandings of culture-based teaching strategies.**

Best practices in achieving relevance and rigor in the classroom are well-articulated through culture-based education pedagogy and practice. Programs at the university and organizational level designed to instill best practice teaching methods for both new and existing teachers should incorporate culturally-relevant strategies to broaden styles and approaches towards teaching.

- **Funding for culture and language-based charter and other schools serving Native students should be increased from federal and state governments, as well as other organizations.**

Culture-based schools such as Hawaiian-focused charter schools are highly effective at integrating CBE to the benefit of their students in more ways than one: attendance, timely completion, postsecondary aspirations, and others. Though powerful in application, findings show that CBE is not the normative approach to teaching and learning in Hawai'i; thus, financial and political support for culture-rich environments such as Hawaiian-focused charter schools should be strongly increased to secure their sustainability.

- **Develop appropriate pay compensation incentives for high CBE teachers.**

Findings indicate that high CBE teachers not only promote academic rigor and relevance for students, but also instill self-esteem and emphasize the values of civic engagement through the fostering of community attachment and giveback. Maintaining these educators who are highly effective teachers of CBE will be critical to the sustainability of CBE pedagogy in practice and the student achievement outcomes tied to these teaching practices. Pay incentive programs should be adopted to sustain high CBE educators and encourage low CBE teachers to seek appropriate training and education to improve skills and competencies in this area.

- **Promote CBE at the school administration level in the mainstream public school setting.**

Faced with challenges in student attendance, engagement and achievement, conventional public schools should consider research showing that high CBE environments provide strong incentives for students to

attend and engage in school and their community. Looking to better engage students and improve their performance across the board, school leaders should explore ways to support CBE instruction and integrate strategies to support culturally-rich environments.

#### **Putting the Research in Action**

Based on this research, Kamehameha Schools supports programs, services, and schools that provide culturally rich environments. As part of our Education Strategic plan, KS hopes to significantly impact more Hawaiian children ages 0-8 and grades 4-16+, and their families/ caregivers over the next five years, in collaboration with others whenever possible. For example, Kamehameha Schools works with 12 nonprofit tax-exempt organizations, including 'Aha Pūnana Leo, KALO and Ho'okāko'o Corporation, to assist a total of 14 start-up and 3 conversion charters. Together, these 17 public Hawaiian-focused charter schools (HFCS) comprise just over half of the 31 public charter schools in the state, providing community-based, culturally-grounded educational options for children.

Kamehameha Schools believes that culture-based charter schools provide more positive educational choices and ultimately enhance academic achievement and greater school engagement for Hawaiian students. Through these collaborations, Kamehameha Schools currently assists nearly 4,000 students in eleven communities on 4 islands, within the public education system.

Recent research conducted over the past five years shows that culture-based charter schools are implementing positive educational strategies and make a difference to Hawai'i's public school landscape in the following ways:

- They demonstrate success in helping "at-risk" students jump-start academic momentum using rigorous place-based and project-based strategies;
- The schools provide relevant and rigorous education in ways that engage all students and exceed expectations in academic student gains;
- They cultivate values of environmental stewardship and civic responsibility among future leaders;
- They build a strong sense of belonging through caring and supportive student/teacher relationships;
- They enhance the well-being, family involvement, and economic sustainability of communities.

Last year, Kamehameha Schools launched an initiative to support five Hawaiian language immersion schools to seek WASC accreditation. All five were accepted as WASC candidates in May, 2011 and will be the first Hawaiian language schools to be accredited in our state.

In summary, it is my hope that sharing these innovations and research based findings help support future conversations that strengthen the culture, language, and educational successes of other indigenous communities through our nation and beyond. We have found that supporting and replicating the successful strategies found in culture-based charter schools provides strong returns to investments in education of indigenous youth and communities in Hawai'i. These investments have potential benefits for the entire public school system, and particularly our indigenous students.

We recommend continued federal support for culture-based learning in general and in the promising vehicle of charter schools in particular. That support should include encouraging states to support their own culture and language-based schools, including public charter schools, through matching grant funding and grant award criteria, as was done in the "Race-to-the-Top" grant. It should also establish

legislative goals and criteria for states to require equitable operating facilities funds for culture and language-based charter schools, especially those that offer educational environments that support the unique cultures and languages of our indigenous peoples. We strongly believe that promoting federal, state and private collaborations for innovation and culture-based learning will produce – and has already produced -- outstanding student achievement.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Malia Kana'iaupuni, PhD  
Division Director, Public Education Support

Attachment

## Updated Facts and Highlights about Culture-based Charter Schools in Hawai'i

**Public Charter Schools are the public school of choice for many families in Hawaii.** Enrollment at Hawaiian-focused Charter Schools (HFCS) has increased 500%, growing at an average rate of 16% per year. This school year, almost 4000 children enrolled in a Hawaiian-focused Charter School, about 80% of them are Native Hawaiian.

**Public Charter Schools work with challenging student populations (economic disadvantage, rural, below grade level, etc.)** 66% of the HFCS student population participates in the Free and Reduced Lunch program; 15% have special educational needs.

**Public Charter Schools continue to demonstrate academic progress.** 80% of the HFCS met or exceeded proficiency in Reading on the HSA for SY0910. While math continues to be an area of concern, of the schools that did not meet proficiency on last year's HSA in Math, 80% did make improvements in their scores between 6 and 15%.

Our research also reveals that students in HFCS are more likely to graduate on time relative to those in the DOE (89% compared to statewide rates in the DOE at 80% and approximately 67% for Native Hawaiian students).

**Public Charter Schools build successful students, families and communities**

- 90% parent involvement and satisfaction rates.
- Students of HFCS indicate high levels of teacher and school connectedness, known positive mediators of pro-social behavior in youth.
- Students in Hawaiian-focused charters are 7 times less likely to be excessively absent

For the past 10 years, HFCS have advanced an agenda of educational, cultural and civic engagement and KS believes this work aligns with our mission and educational priorities. With ten years of Innovation behind them, HFCS have produced innovative, replicable models and approaches to public education that have demonstrated ability to address achievement gaps and achieve high standards of learning. These include the following areas that charter schools contribute to the state's Race to The Top and Common Education Agenda:

### 1. Expanded Learning Time

For the U.S. Department of Education, expanded learning time (ELT) is "increased learning time means using a longer school day, week, or year schedule to significantly increase the total number of school hours to include additional time for: Instruction in core academic subjects, Instruction in other subjects and enrichment activities, Teachers to collaborate, plan, and engage in professional development

In 2009, the KS supported Ho'opukūkū Corporation led a pioneering effort in the state by developing and piloting two school-based expanded learning models with strong parent support and student and teacher buy-in. The ELT program shows great promise; preliminary data indicating a programmatic impact on student learning. At Kualapū'u, the school day has been lengthened by 23%, increasing instructional time by 49%. As a result, Kualapū'u has consistently met or exceeded HSA benchmarks. At Kamaile

Academy, the school day has been expanded by 30% and HSA scores have incrementally increased since the program's inception.

### 2. Singapore Math-in Hawaiian Language and English medium schools

The Singapore Math Method of teaching mathematics has a consistent and strong emphasis on problem solving and model drawing, with a focus on in-depth understanding of the essential math skills recommended in the NCTM Curriculum Focal Points (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics), the National Mathematics Advisory Panel, and the proposed Common Core State Standards. Eight charter schools have implemented the Singapore Math Method for the past three years and have created a repository of lesson plans and implementation tips that they share among themselves. The Hawaiian immersion charter schools have also translated the US and Standards versions of the curriculum into Hawaiian, developed supplementary materials for the classroom and have made the materials available to other Hawaiian immersion schools in the state. Schools fully implementing the program report strong gains in elementary school math scores.

### 3. Overcoming the Odds through Instructional Leadership

Ka Waihona o ka Na'auao Charter School located in Nāhākūlī. In SY1011, the school enrolled over 500 students and continues to maintain a waitlist of 200+ largely due to limited space. Ka Waihona is structured to be responsive to the learning styles, cultural values, and future desires of the families of the community. Strong instructional leadership is evident on the school's campus. The presence of best practices in teaching and learning like grade level professional learning communities, an action research group studying the effects of looping on K-1 units, and a committed, effective, and highly qualified staff indicate that Ka Waihona's principal and leadership team share a commitment to the school's vision and have cultivated a school environment that is rooted in professional inquiry, reflective practices and continuous improvement. Ka Waihona's leadership has successfully woven Hawaiian beliefs, values and practices into the ethos of the school creating flexibility and opportunities for teaching to be structured in ways that honors Hawaiian children and the way they learn. Ka Waihona highlights include: Strong growth trends in HSA scores that have kept pace with AYP benchmarks, 100% HQ teachers, Math curriculum coordinator, Grade level PLCs, 1 educational assistant in every classroom.

While a full case study has not been conducted yet, preliminary findings at the school show great promise. Ka Waihona has achieved an economy of scale similar to a mainstream DOE school and has managed to leverage its resources that have led to considerable student growth and achievement in a community where significant learning gaps have prevailed for years.

### 4. College and Career Readiness

Last school year, Ke Kula o Samuel M. Kamakau Public Charter Schools was awarded a grant from the USDOE to fund a program named Pukōya Kani Yāina, a college and career program that spans grades K-12 for developing and learning tools and knowledge that allows students to be more effective after high school graduation. Programmatic pieces include a significant parent support piece, test taking and study skills, financial literacy and planning, computer basics, online budgeting, genealogy research, financial aid, FAFSA, and scholarships. The school has implemented the Career Work Readiness Assessment and has conducted an annual analysis of HSA scores compared to SAT scores as ways to track the impact of the project on student outcomes. Project details and results will be shared by the end of the school year.

Attachments: "New research on the Impact of Cultural Influences in Education on Native Hawaiian Student Outcomes" and "The Impact of Culture-Based Education on Native Student Outcomes Evidence from Hawaii" have been retained in Committee files and can be found at [www.kshbe.edu/spi/cbe.php](http://www.kshbe.edu/spi/cbe.php).

The CHAIRMAN. Mahalo. Thank you very much for your testimony.

Ms. HARCHAREK, you mentioned that the Iñupiaq learning framework, in particular you mentioned that as the foundation for the development of an academic curricula and assessment processes. Can you elaborate on how the Iñupiaq learning framework was developed and how the school district trains its teachers in this framework?

Ms. HARCHAREK. Thank you, Senator.

The Iñupiaq learning framework came about as a result, as I mentioned earlier, of going to the people. We initially traveled to

each of the communities and said to the people, we have imposed our school system on our people for far long enough. It is now time for us to hear from you what it is your expectations are of our school. And what we heard them say is that they wanted to see themselves in school.

As a result of that, and they even wanted to see Native foods served in school in the lunch program. So we heard a wide range of suggestions, ranging from curriculum content to food that is served in schools to the aesthetics of the building.

In terms of the content piece, we again convened a group of people from across the district, comprised of elders, and we included people who were in the younger age range, the young parents, and worked them through a process that lasted over a year, asking them what it is they believe the 18 year old well-grounded, well-educated young person looks like today. And they arrived at quite a list, as you can imagine.

It is from that list, then, we derived what we are referring to as the Iñupiaq learning framework. It is divided into realms that are realms important to the Iñupiaq world view. And from that, then, we have proceeded into the process of a curriculum mapping and alignment process.

At first, when we present the Iñupiaq learning framework to our cadre of teachers, 98 percent of whom, of course, at not from the North Slope, who are from the lower 48, we knew we had the daunting task of first of all, convincing them that this is the way to go, and secondly, to provide them with the level or comfort that they need in order to be able to effectively utilize the Iñupiaq learning framework. We have done that mainly through in-service.

The next piece in the plan is to, rather than in-service teachers, where they are passive receivers of information, we are going to again engage the community in a dialogue about different facets of the Iñupiaq learning framework, and have the teachers surrounding them so that the teachers are learning from the community people. We continue to search for other ways to do the training and have tried a variety of different ways, many of which haven't worked. So we are hoping that this new way of bringing in the community into the conversation will aid us in that process. Not only will it train teachers, but it will also continue to engage the community in the education process.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for that response.

Dr. Beaulieu, your testimony points to several best practice Native language programs throughout the United States. To what extent have Native communities been able to utilize these so-called best practice programs to develop their own language programs? Are there ways to expand the success of these best practice programs to new and emerging Native language programs?

Dr. BEAULIEU. Senator, Mr. Chairman, yes, there is. One of the issues we have, of course, with Native language programs, immersion and others, is that there is a lot of need and little resources out there. It is very difficult to focus on attempts to develop approaches and to bring through to fruition.

There are many good examples, and I think the Department of Education study that I alluded to that Dr. Teresa McCarty sub-

mitted is an effort to try to bring together a listing of what are those best practices, best practices for school programs where the home language is other than English or programs that emphasize language revitalization immersion.

Aside of documenting the results of those schools, which are all similar to the ones just reported by Shawn, is that they also indicate what is the strong program, how do you define a strong program, what do you need to work on. That is encouraging, to have that kind of information to develop programs.

There are opportunities, I believe, in the Indian education statutes, to begin to look at ways of doing more comprehensive approaches to language and culture education in schools which educate Native American students. There are areas of the statute which are under-utilized or not used, which could show some potential.

There is a requirement in the Title VII formula grant program that talks about the development of a comprehensive Indian education plan, both local and State, that responds to the assessed needs of American Indian students regarding their special education and culture-related needs, and to align them with State and local education plans. We don't do that. I think if we did, I think that there would begin to be an ability to focus on language and culture education.

We know from the research literature that the school-wide programs are more effective than programmatic interventions. We also know the social linguistic approaches are more effective as well. We need better dissemination of results and we need more opportunity to accomplish good programs. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for your response.

Dr. Kanaiaupuni, can you describe some of the gains that are being made by Native Hawaiian focused charter schools, and how they are using culture-based education to reach children who may have otherwise fallen through the cracks in the regular school system? Is there data showing that progress is being made for these children in the standard math and reading categories using this approach?

Dr. KANAIAUPUNI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Yes, there is data. Our organization supports 17 culture based charter schools in our State. So we are very committed to collecting and gathering and assessing data, so that we can continue to make good, wise choices in how we invest our monies. And supporting those schools in an environment of very scarce resources for charter schools in our State has been paramount to our leadership.

Knowing a little bit about the context matters, as you suggested. The proportion of low income students in our culture-based charter schools is about two-thirds, so one out of every three. In some schools, 100 percent are low income students. Also, in the schools that are middle and high schools, the students tend to come in several grade levels below the entering grade that they are starting in a charter school. So there is sometimes an academic gap to make up for in charter schools.

What we have seen is some amazing progress. These are community-based schools that employ culturally-relevant, rigorous learning. So they engage students right off the bat. Eighty percent of

our Hawaiian focused charter schools using culture-based education met or exceeded proficiency in reading on our State assessment scores last year. Math is an area of concern for the entire State and Nation. Of the schools that did not meet proficiency on last year's State assessment in math, 80 percent of them made improvements in their gains (so moving kids from starting point A to ending point B in a single year) of between 6 and 15 percent. According to our State DOE, 9 percent is exceeding expectations in the amount of a gain in a single year. That is what our charter schools are doing.

The other really important thing to us is far beyond math and reading test scores. It is actually about graduation and kids making it through high school on a timely basis. As I mentioned before, 90 percent of our students in culture-based charter schools are graduating on time from high school, which is an amazing feat. Many of them go on to college. And many of the charter schools are very innovative on building that college credit momentum by starting college in the last year of high school, while they are at the culture-based school.

We also have very high percent of family involvement. That is a leading indicator, again, of achievement, of math and reading test score achievement for students. And students are seven times less likely to be chronically absent in culture-based education in charter schools. So those are some of the statistics that I can share with you today. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Jana Harcharek, how has the focus of the North Slope Borough School District shifted over time with respect to teaching Iñupiaq language and culture? What best practices can you share with other public school districts who want to embrace culture-based curriculum development and implementation?

Ms. HARCHAREK. Thank you, Senator.

I believe that initially, as I mentioned in my testimony, the vision was there to have local control over our educational system operate in such a way that we also had local control over content. That dream hasn't been realized. And it hasn't been until recently that we have put a concerted effort into making that happen.

So historically, what our district was doing was perpetuating the assimilationist methodology. And so the major shift has been in shifting to one of embracing the culture and the language of the people. The results we are seeing initially with the implementation of some of our culture-based units have been absolutely phenomenal. We have students who are wanting to come to school, we have teachers who are using our culture-based units as reward for completing tasks in other areas, we have students who don't want to put their reading texts down that accompany the culture-based units because they are so interested in the stories. We have students saying, we want more of this, we have parents saying, we are learning about our own culture from our kids, things that we never knew before.

So my response to that has been, the shift has been in one of not continuing to shut out who we are in our schools, but rather embracing it and using it as a mechanism by which to promote and increase the academic achievement of our students.

In terms of best practices and sharing those, I am very proud to share with you today a partnership that we have had with our regional corporation, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, in the development of a unit that teaches about the history of our regional corporation. So the unit is designed to bring kids to an understanding about how the land claims movement happened up through how a corporation can be used as a tool to advance the Iñupiaq agenda. It is through these kinds of partnerships that I believe we can really strengthen the responsibility that we all share, not only as individuals, but as entities in our communities, for education.

Our hope is that we continue to build on these partnerships and through these partnerships and the sharing of resources, really, if you can imagine a school, or our school district, my dream for our district is that there will be one day when we don't have to order the textbooks that are produced in massive quantities here in the lower 48 that really, by omission, do our kids such an injustice. It is through the sharing of these kind of methodologies, especially in curriculum development, that I think we can make great inroads.

A suggestion was made to me this morning in Senator Murkowski's staff that this is exactly the kind of thing that we need to do in all of our public schools in Alaska in order for us to understand the history of Alaska and the direction into which our future is leading us.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. And you did mention this, and I just want an answer to this one, you mentioned that during your time, you had to go to high school away from home. Now, how is that today? Do they go to high school at home?

Ms. HARCHAREK. We can now say, we go to high school at home.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Dr. Beaulieu, what role does research play in developing, implementing and assessing the success of Native language programs?

Dr. BEAULIEU. It plays a great role, not only in terms of doing national studies and other things, it sort of attempts to document the success, because we need to document that success. But it also is extremely important to guide the development of schools. Typically that research is more focused on the school at hand, where you can do Research in the context of actually developing the school. So you develop the data that you need, where you can discuss and interpret that data within the school leadership and you can apply it where it matters. And you can document results over time.

We find that that is a wonderful approach, of course, to improving schools. And then of course, sharing that result. We need research, we need to understand what works and to develop programs which are strong and can get the job done.

So it is very important, both in terms of a national level and in terms of understanding the approaches that sort of generally work and then also more specifically, to guide school improvement. We need to document this particularly for the Senate and the Congress and others who have issues and need to know the extent to which these practices work. We have not been supported in that. I mentioned that in my remarks, that we haven't had Federal support, typically, to do that type of research. We have attempted to do that through the research agenda that President Clinton had required

under the executive order and also President Bush had required in his iteration of the executive order on American Indian and Alaska Native education.

But outside of a few small efforts that were initiated then, nothing has occurred since. We need that kind of support for that effort. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Dr. Kanaiaupuni, I would say that Hawaii is so fortunate to have Kamehameha Schools support these charter school programs, which has been a big help, as you said. They are working with 17 schools in Hawaii. Kamehameha is providing specific kinds of assistance and investment into the culture-based charter schools in Hawaii.

Do you think the kinds of support you are offering these schools can be replicated around the Country? Are there additional supports that your data suggests could help to expand the success of these kinds of schools nationally?

Dr. KANAIAUPUNI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you for your kind words about our support. We have, as I mentioned, done so in an environment with scarce resources and wanting to support our communities in educating Native students in particular. The things that I think could be taken into consideration to inform policy, to support culture-based schools and language-based schools across the Nation include things like leadership development; teacher education and professional development for our culture-based and culture-rich environments; and curriculum, instruction and assessment resources for our culture-based education environments.

We need to support educational rigor, because a lot of what we found is that communities are creating their own environment in a dearth of not liking what they are seeing in a conventional DOE school. So communities are creating our own culturally relevant educational systems.

So supporting those efforts in systemic ways through policies, through funding, through legislation, is highly desirable, in particular around the areas that I mentioned, leadership and teacher development, highly-qualified teachers—in culture-based settings. Curriculum instruction and assessment, especially for Native language-based schools that always struggle with different assessment needs.

And further research, of course, to understand how we can achieve the highest quality in educational rigor through culture-based education. Those are just some of the ways.

We also support our schools, most recently, with an effort to support all of them, all 17, through the accreditation process. I am pleased to report that we have one that has already been accredited, on the big island of Hawaii, and then five more that are all Hawaiian-language based have just been accepted for WASC candidacy last month, and will go through the process next year.

So really important, systemic support for culture-based education in general. I hope that helps. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank all of you on our second panel very much. Your response, without question, again, will be helpful to us in trying to improve the Native American education programs

throughout our Country. That is the whole intent of all of this. This Committee will continue to pursue that and craft a bill that can continue to help you in your work as you work with Native education in your areas.

Again, I want to thank our witnesses for participating in today's hearing. I want again to thank you for your commitment that you are demonstrating to Native education and for exemplifying the principle of *kulia i ka nu'u*, striving for excellence.

I will remind everyone that the record is open. Again, we want to hear from you if you have feelings that you want to express. We will be open for written testimony for two weeks. So if you have others who may be interested in doing that, please tell them they have two weeks to do it. We look forward to all the responses we can get to put this together.

So I want to tell you, I really enjoyed this hearing, to hear how you have done and to know that what you have been doing has been working. I still believe that teaching young people through their cultures and traditions helps them to learn well, and it takes their interest. Because I think that culture and traditions are the roots of their lives and if you force or cut that root off, somehow it interferes with the natural growth and progress of our Native people.

We have so much to work for, and I am so delighted and feel it a privilege to be working with you on this and with you, I look forward to trying to do a great job legislatively for the Native education of our Country. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:15 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]



## A P P E N D I X

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL K. INOUE, U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this oversight hearing on expanding the success of Native Language and Culture-Based education. I would also like to extend a special welcome to Ms. Namaka Rawlins from the University of Hawaii Hilo College of Hawaiian Language; Mr. Alvin Parker, Principal of Ka Waihona o ka Na'auao public charter school; and Dr. Shawn Kanaiaupuni, Division Director with Kamehameha Schools. Thank you for taking time out to travel to Washington D.C. and personally deliver your testimony in front of the Committee today.

In Hawaii, back in 1896 education through the Hawaiian language was outlawed in both public and private schools. There were strict punishments for those who taught or spoke Hawaiian in school. This led to a rapid disappearance of the Hawaiian language, in fact by 1984 there were only a few elders and a tiny population on the island of Niihau that were fluent speakers of the Hawaiian language. This is one example of the delicate conditions indigenous native languages face every day.

The story of the Hawaiian language did not end in 1984 but it was the start of a new beginning. After many long discussions with the elders and the Native Hawaiian community the importance of perpetuating the language became imminent and the course was to re-establish Hawaiian medium education schools. This was the beginning of Aha Punana Leo a preschool that is based upon the language nest model where students are taught solely in their native language and culture.

Today I am so proud to say that the Hawaiian language still lives. In Hawaii today a student can choose to be entirely taught through the Hawaiian language from the preschool level all the way up to a doctoral level. Adding language or culture to the education of Native students not only improves their test scores but it provides a sense of belonging a sense of self-worth that they might not get in a traditional educational setting.

I understand that while this has worked for the Hawaiians it might not work for all the other indigenous native peoples across the country. I also recognize that there have been many challenges along the way. My hope is that you could work together, share with each other, and speak with one voice, so that you can bring a fundamental piece of your culture back to your people.

I look forward to continuing this discussion and working with my colleagues on this most important issue.

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CHEROKEE NATION

**INTRODUCTION**

Chairman Akaka, Vice Chairman Barrasso, and Members of the Committee, thank you for convening this hearing and giving the Cherokee Nation (Nation) the opportunity to submit testimony on Native American language and culture-based education services. The Cherokee Nation is the second-largest tribal nation in the United States with more than 300,000 citizens and a 14-county, 7,000-square-mile Oklahoma jurisdiction. To maintain self reliance and stability, the Cherokee Nation strives to maintain our culture and spread our language to new generations.

**CHEROKEE NATION EDUCATION SERVICES**

Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chad Smith has set his top three priorities which drive the programming of the tribal government. These priorities are "Jobs, Community, and Language." Cherokee Nation Education Services (CNES) is critical to meeting all three priorities. Its mission is to develop and support comprehensive social, educational and employment programs for Cherokee People within the Cherokee Nation. Since 1975 the Tribe has operated Johnson O'Malley programs, and since the late 1980s the Nation has further prioritized education.

The Tribe has organized its education work into an Education Division that furthers and enhances our cultural identity and maintains and expands our language to new generations. CNES has an annual budget of almost \$44 million. CNES has 329 employees and serves nearly 30,000 people through its programs and services. Additionally, Cherokee Nation citizens attend 96 public schools in our Tribal jurisdiction and Sequoyah Schools, a Tribally-operated BIE school system in Tahlequah, where students learn our history and culture.

Cherokee Language Immersion School: The Immersion School currently serves 100 students annually and expects to increase enrollment in the coming years. The program immerses students from kindergarten through fifth grade in the Cherokee language for an entire school day. The school will also add another grade each subsequent school year to accommodate matriculation. Children learn math, science, writing and other core subjects, much like their school age counterparts in public schools, but the language of instruction is Cherokee. All teachers are fluent in Cherokee and are certified by the State of Oklahoma. By age 4, children are able to read in

Cherokee and by kindergarten they begin to address Oklahoma State Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) standards in Cherokee.

We also have a Curriculum Department, a Technology Department, and a Translation Department, all of which work together to create teaching materials in the Cherokee language and the Cherokee syllabary. A highlight of our work is the relationship with Apple in which Cherokee Nation has worked closely with the company to develop Cherokee language software for Macintosh operating systems, iPhone, iPod, and iPad. A person can even download the Cherokee language application and syllabary on iTunes and in the Application Store simply by searching "Cherokee language".

Furthermore, students work on Mac laptops; the Macintosh operating system has supported Cherokee language since 2003 and features a keypad overlay with Cherokee's 85 characters. One notable use of the technology is that it has enabled our students to chat online in Cherokee with students from the Eastern Band of Cherokee's immersion program.

The Technology Department continues to work with technology providers to ensure that all of the software programs the children use are Cherokee-language compatible and has also recently partnered with Google so our tribal members can search the internet in Cherokee. Currently, the Translation Department employs six translators who develop material for books and resources to use in-class, often using historic documents written in Cherokee. The results are interactive CD-ROMS, worksheets, books, and games developed for the immersion program, all using the Cherokee language.

The School serves as a national model for teaching native languages and has been featured among the nation's most promising practices for native language preservation. Immersion students consistently perform at a higher level than their mono-lingual counterparts on state standardized tests. The success of the Cherokee Language Immersion School has inspired several other tribal education departments to create similar programs across the country. Additionally, educators have modified the Cherokee model to teach native languages to adult students.

Because the Immersion School is tribally funded and is, therefore, limited to a small number of students, additional funding is needed to enable Cherokee Nation to engage in meaningful preservation efforts in public schools. The Committee should recognize the barriers tribes face in implementing language programs in state school systems and the need to provide assistance to tribes working to preserve native language through public school instruction.

Sequoyah Schools: Sequoyah Schools is a former BIA boarding school, which was turned over to the Nation in 1985. Today the Campus covers over 96 acres and houses more than 400 students. Even though the majority of students are Cherokee tribal citizens, the school has kids representing 42 tribes in grades 7-12. The School is regionally and state accredited and has consistently met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Sequoyah Schools also receives funding from Bureau of Indian Education grants and the Cherokee Nation motor vehicle tag funds.

Sequoyah Schools was not performing well when the Nation took over its management in 1985. Today, it is the school of choice for college-bound students. Last year graduating students

received \$3.5 million in scholarships and therefore, admission to Sequoyah Schools is highly competitive. The School offers Advanced Placement classes, concurrent enrollment in local colleges and universities, technology-focused classes like robotics, fine arts and performing arts classes.

In addition, Sequoyah Schools' success has been driven by local tribally-led initiatives to identify problems and is committed to use tribal resources to solve them. Sequoyah Schools developed a long-term facility plan addressing infrastructure issues, including the need for new dormitory space and library renovations. Cherokee Nation's ultimate goal is to create an academic environment at Sequoyah Schools that mirrors other college preparatory schools in the country. Sequoyah Schools is in the process of developing advanced curriculum and data software to track student's academic performance and achievement. With better data, the Nation hopes to improve academic and extracurricular programming to better serve and support students.

**Jackson-O'Malley Program:** The Nation administers supplemental education programs for 22,500 Indian students from age 3 through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade who are members of a federally-recognized tribe in the 96 schools across the fourteen-county jurisdictional service area. The Nation has provided the public schools with guidance and assistance on Cherokee culture, history, and language.

**Learn and Serve Program:** The Cherokee Nation Learn and Serve program sub-grants funds to K-12 public schools for service projects that integrate the teaching of tribal history and culture. The service learning projects are open to all students and the program is supported by tribal funding and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Between 2001 and 2011 Cherokee Nation awarded \$236,939 in sub-grant funding to 40 area public schools through resources of the Learn and Serve America program. Annually, for the past eleven years, an average of \$76,686 has been disseminated on a competitive basis to fund service-learning projects with a Cherokee cultural content emphasis. The school-based projects have involved an average of 200 students per site with an estimated overall impact on over ten thousand students ranging from kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The student activities are designed to enhance traditional cultural values and include parents, grandparents and other adult volunteers.

Supplementing the sub-grant awards, each year, Learn and Serve has provided staff development and professional networking opportunities for public school teachers and has organized special projects such as Youth Leadership Development Conferences that bring students from all project sites together for cooperative learning and Cherokee affinity to reflect traditional values.

Each Learn and Serve project has been implemented through a local partnership formed to strengthen school/community relations. This year, the program served all students (native and non-native) attending 23 public schools. Funds are available through a grant application process that includes tribal history and environmental issues, such as education about a superfund site located in eastern Oklahoma.

**Cherokee Language in the Public Schools:** The Nation and local, public school superintendents are also working together to establish Cherokee language instruction in the schools. The

Northeastern State University degree in Cherokee Language Education and the Cherokee certification test are important steps in this process. Oklahoma requires students to complete two years of coursework in a foreign language, and since Cherokee is considered a world language, it is now being taught to youth in Oklahoma schools.

**Cherokee Nation Foundation and Heritage Center:** The Foundation is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt charitable organization and its mission is to provide higher educational assistance to the Cherokee People and revitalize the Cherokee Language. It was also the first not-for-profit organization incorporated under the Cherokee Nation and administers scholarships, developed a Cherokee language dictionary and a CD with Cherokee lullabies. Additionally, the Foundation is currently in the process of writing, illustrating, and producing a Cherokee language historical book. Members of the foundation are appointed by the Cherokee Principal Chief and confirmed by the Tribal Council. In addition, the Heritage and Cultural Center provides cultural programs to regional public schools by focusing on tribal language, history, and traditional games. The Nation serves many schools and children through this program.

## CONCLUSION

Cherokee Nation wants to have a fully-functioning educational system that will give Tribal citizens and surrounding communities the ability to accomplish the goal of building "Jobs, Community, and Language." We want to work with all stakeholders and entities that play a role in educating Cherokee children. Furthermore, the Nation wants to participate in training teachers in all schools in northeastern Oklahoma because Cherokee students attend numerous schools throughout the state's public school system.

In addition, Cherokee Nation Education Services wants the ability to develop public school curriculum, administer assessments, and perform academic data tracking. All of these functions are necessary to the Nation's goal of building a safety net that no student can fall through. The Nation is already performing some of these functions on a limited basis but cannot perform every function with every school because of limited funding. Ultimately, the Nation wants its students to be educated in the skills and technology of today as well as the language and life ways of traditional Cherokee culture to ensure that we may continue to attract businesses, jobs, and cohesive tribal development in the region. Most importantly, Cherokee Nation strives to keep Tribal citizens in our jurisdiction where our people can find fulfilling and meaningful jobs so that our rich culture is not only maintained, but thrives and expands.

Once again, the Cherokee Nation thanks the Chairman, Vice Chairman and the Members of the Committee for their time and should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact our Cherokee Nation Washington Office at (202) 393-7007.

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF COLIN KIPPEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Chairman Akaka, Vice Chairman Barrasso, and Members of the Committee on Indian Affairs, the National Indian Education Association is the oldest and largest association representing American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. The Mission of the National Indian Education Association is to support traditional Native cultures and values, to enable Native learners to become contributing members of their communities, to promote Native control of educational institutions, and to improve educational opportunities and resources for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians throughout the United States. It is an honor to provide written testimony on Native language and culture based education.

**Background**

Few Native students experience Native language or culture in their schools. According to the 2009 National Indian Education Study, among the Nation's Native eighth grade students 42% are in classrooms where their teachers never or hardly ever talk about Native traditions or culture, 79% are in schools where no one speaks in a Native language, and 53% are in schools that don't offer any presentations of Native music, dance, arts, crafts or traditions (Mead, Grigg, Moran, & Kuang, 2010), 2010). Discontinuities between Native culture and the dominant culture most present in schools are often identified as reasons for low Native student educational outcomes. Studies suggest that cultural programming in schools positively influences Native student educational outcomes (McCarty, Wallace, Lynch & Benally, 1991; Mehan, Lintz, Okamoto & Wills, 1995; Powers, 2006), especially among Native students who most strongly identify with their Native culture (Powers, 2006). Culturally-based education (CBE) provides a definition and framework for designing cultural programming for schools that shows promise for improving Native student academic outcomes.

**What is Culturally Based Education?**

In a Native American context, culturally based education, or CBE, "is the grounding of instruction and student learning in the values, norms, knowledge, beliefs, practices, experiences, and language that are the foundation of an indigenous culture (Kana'iaupuni, 2007). Research studies have identified several components of CBE that are critical to improve Native student academic achievement. In their literature review, Demmert and Towner (2003) operationally define CBE as having six critical elements: 1) Recognition and use of Native languages; 2) Pedagogy using traditional cultural characteristics and adult-child interactions; 3) Teaching strategies that are congruent with traditional culture and ways of knowing and learning; 4)

Curriculum based on traditional culture and Native spirituality; 5) Strong Native community participation in education and the planning and operation of school activities; and 6) Knowledge and use of the community's political and social mores.

In a more recent literature review, Kana'iaupuni (2007) identified five basic elements that comprise CBE: 1) LANGUAGE: Recognizing and using native or heritage language; 2) FAMILY & COMMUNITY: Actively involving family and community in the development of curricula, everyday learning, and leadership; 3) CONTEXT: Structuring the school and the classroom in culturally-appropriate ways; 4) CONTENT: Making learning meaningful and relevant through culturally grounded content and assessment; and 5) DATA & ACCOUNTABILITY: Gathering and maintaining data using various methods to insure student progress in culturally responsible ways. This article notes that while the educational strategies of the Western majority culture have failed in reducing educational disparities between Native students and their non-Native peers, indigenous culture-based educational strategies show promise in improving Native student academic success. The article provides a bibliography of recent research reports and their abstracts to support this claim.

#### **Does Culturally Based Education Work?**

Research suggests that CBE alone is not sufficient to improve Native student academic outcomes and thus not an alternative to a high standard academic curriculum. Rather, it is the *combination* of CBE and high academic standards that is most likely to improve the academic achievement and attendance and reduce the dropout rates of Native students (Demmert & Towner, 2003; Tharp, 1982). Furthermore, Demmert (2001) notes that CBE, especially those containing bilingual and immersion programs, are most successful in producing positive student outcomes when there is a very strong ongoing commitment by the school to maintaining the use of the Native language and local knowledge and culture are integral parts of the curriculum.

Many correlational and case studies collectively indicate a positive relationship between the use of Native language and CBE practices that have high expectations and learning standards and improved academic outcomes among Native students (Demmert, 2001; Hill, Kawagley, & Barnhardt, 2000; Kamehameha Schools, 2010; Klump & McNair, 2005; Lipka & Adams, 2002; Lipka & McCarty, 1994; McCarty, 2003; Smith, Leake & Kamckpona, 1998; Stiles, 1997; Tharp, 1982; Yagi, 1985). For example, a five-year longitudinal study conducted among Native students in grades kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> in Portland Public Schools examined the impact of CBE that also included tutoring, attendance monitoring, and hardship assistance. Findings showed an increase in attendance and achievement among American Indian students (Yagi, 1985). One study of school based Native language and culture programs in Arizona, Hawaii, Canada, and New Zealand reported that outcomes from all of the program studied included decreased dropout rates, increased sense of heritage and identity, and improved test scores (Stiles, 1997). The author notes that in CBE programs, culture cannot be separated from the language and it is important to begin such programs at an early age, preferably preschool. Lipka and Adams (2002) conducted a CBE study among 258 urban and rural Yup'ik children focusing on mathematics concepts of area and perimeter. Curriculum materials were developed using CBE elements to reflect the culture of the population. Compared to the control group, which did not receive instruction using CBE strategies, the treatment group's percentage gain score on a locally constructed achievement test on perimeter and area, was significantly higher. Finally, a five-year study of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI) was conducted to determine the impact of CBE on Alaska Native students' academic performance. AKRSI implements CBE using pedagogical practices and school curricula that incorporate indigenous knowledge and

ways of knowing into the formal education system. These systems have complementary scientific and mathematical knowledge and skills that can strengthen the quality of education for students throughout rural Alaska. Researchers found that the AKRSI strategy has produced increases in student achievement scores; the number of rural students attending college; and the number of Native students choosing to pursue studies in the fields of science, math, and engineering; and a decrease in Alaska dropout rates (Hill, Kawagley, & Barnhardt, 2000). Language immersion programs, a subset of CBE, also show promise of improving Native student academic outcomes and revitalizing endangered indigenous languages (McCarty, 2003).

Much of the CBE research over the last 30 years on the impact of CBE and language immersion on student achievement has been descriptive and non-experimental (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2004). A recent study conducted in Hawaii; however, provides the first large scale empirical study among high school students of the impact of CBE on Native student educational outcomes and offers insight into why CBE works. The "Hawaiian Cultural Influences in Education" study is based on surveys from 600 teachers, 2,969 students, and 2,264 parents at 62 participating schools as well as academic achievement data for math and reading. Findings suggests that CBE positively impacts student socio-emotional well-being (e.g., identity, self-efficacy, social relationships) and math and reading test scores. Additionally, students of teachers using CBE report greater Hawaiian cultural affiliation, civic engagement, and school motivation than do students of other teachers (Kana' iaupuni, Ledward, & Jensen, 2010).

Another reason CBE works is that it reduces the cultural discontinuity between Native communities and their schools (Barnhardt, 1990; Luig & Yamauchi, 2010) and improves Native parent, family, and community involvement in school (Lipka & McCarty, 1994; McLaughlin, 1992). Improving the cultural congruence between home and school has been shown to positively impact Native student success in school (Barnhardt, 1990). Native language literacy has become a source of empowerment for the Mesa Valley Navajo community in Arizona. Community members view their schools as less alien and thus they are more likely to become involved (McLaughlin, 1992). Lipka and McCarty (1994), in their study of Native Navajo and Yup'ik teachers and elders, observed that CBE yielded improved academic performance among Native students and changes in attitudes about schools and schooling among teachers, students, and members of the communities where these schools were located.

#### **Does Culturally Based Education Work Where Diverse Cultures Are Present?**

Research suggests that CBE promotes positive student academic outcomes even in situations where numerous cultures are represented (Scott, Straker, & Katz, 2008). In their book on bridging student cultures with education, Scott, Straker, and Katz (2008) offer research-based practices to maximize student learning in multicultural school environments. Even among Native students, research supports the role of CBE in schools represented by multiple Native cultural groups, such as in urban settings or off-reservation Bureau of Indian education schools. Part of the reason for this is that, while Native cultures are diverse, they also share many common themes of character, interconnectedness, philosophy, cyclical processes, well-being, the role of storytelling, and ways of teaching and learning (Cajete, 1994). The other reason for this is that, even among very diverse Native cultures, "every process of indigenous learning and teaching...revolves around 'learning how to learn'" (Cajete, 1994, p. 222). Cajete goes on to describe the universal elements of indigenous teaching and learning as listening, observing, experiencing with all one's senses, developing intuitive understanding, and respecting time-tested traditions of learning. (Rose Marie McGuire, 2011) Program Manager, Department of Indian Education, Denver Public Schools, personal communication). Ms. McGuire presented

testimony to the U.S. Department of Education on March 4, 2011 in Denver, Colorado, at an Indian listening session conducted by the Department for Indians from numerous tribes attending public school in Denver, Colorado. Testimony presented there has yet to be placed on the Department's national website. Ms. McGuire's experience confirms positive outcomes amongst American Indian students from different tribes using the native language and culture from only one of the tribes.

## References

**Barahardt, R (1990).** Two cultures, one school: St. Mary's, Alaska. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 17*(2), 54-65. (EJ420524)

Abstract: Describes the successful school serving preschool through twelfth grade in St. Mary's Alaska—a small Yup'ik community. Examines the bilingual curriculum, strong community support, and the school's philosophy and goals emphasizing integration of Yup'ik ways and values and the educational responsibility of the community.

**Cajete, G. (1994).** *Look to the mountain: An ecology of indigenous education.* Durango, CO: Kivaki.

Abstract: This book explores the nature of indigenous education, outlining key elements of American Indian perspectives on learning and teaching. It advocates developing a contemporary, culturally based, educational process founded upon traditional tribal values, orientations, and principles, while simultaneously using the most appropriate concepts, technologies, and content of modern education. Environmental relationship, myth, visionary traditions, traditional arts, tribal community, and nature-centered spirituality have traditionally formed the foundations of American Indian life for discovering one's true face (character, potential, identity), one's heart (soul, creative self, true passion), and one's foundation (true work, vocation), all of which lead to the expression of a complete life. Indigenous education is a process of education grounded in the basics of human nature. It can provide new ways of educating for ecological thinking and environmental sustainability, and has the potential, not only for the transformation of what is misnamed "Indian education," but also for profound applications toward transforming modern American education. Chapters explore the spiritual, environmental, mythic, visionary, artistic, affective, and communal foundations of indigenous education. A final chapter discusses ethno-science, and relates seven core courses for an indigenous science curriculum to the seven cardinal directions honored by all indigenous peoples. An appendix lists 24 principles applicable to the holistic presentation of any content to any age level.

**Demmert, W. G., Jr. (2001).** Improving academic performance among Native American students: A review of the research literature. Charleston, WV: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, Appalachian Educational Laboratory. Available at <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED463917.pdf>

Abstract: This literature review examines research-based information on educational approaches and programs associated with improving the academic performance of Native American students. A search reviewed ERIC's over 8,000 documents on American Indian education, as well as master's and doctoral dissertations and other sources of research on the education of Native Americans. Selected research reports and articles were organized into the following categories: early childhood environment and experiences; Native language and cultural programs; teachers, instruction, and curriculum; community and parental influences on academic performance; student characteristics; economic and social factors; and factors leading to success in college or college completion. The status of research and major research findings are reviewed for each of these categories; brief summaries of research findings with citations are included following the review of each category. Also included are an annotated bibliography of more than 100 research reports, journal articles, and dissertations, most

published after 1985; and a bibliography of 23 additional references to other literature reviews and non-Native studies.

**Demmert, W. G., Jr., & Towner, J. C. (2003).** *A review of the research literature on the influences of culturally based education on the academic performance of Native American students* [Final paper]. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Available at <http://educationnorhwest.org/resource/561>

**Abstract:** One of the major tasks facing Native American communities (American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians) is to create lifelong learning opportunities that allow all the members to improve their quality of life, and to meet their tribal responsibilities through meaningful contributions to the local, national, and world communities in which they live and interact. The greatest educational challenge for many is to build learning environments that allow each of their young children to obtain an education that "creates good people that are knowledgeable and wise." The formal reports cited in this review of the literature present the position that knowing, understanding, and appreciating one's cultural base are necessary starting points for initiating a young child's formal education. The theory is that it sets the stage for what occurs in a youngster's later life. The task of this report is to review the research literature to determine whether there is a direct relationship between a culturally based education curriculum and improved academic performance among Native American students.

**Gay, G. (2000).** *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

**Abstract:** The achievement of students of color continues to be disproportionately low at all levels of education. More than ever, this foundational book on culturally responsive teaching is essential reading in addressing the needs of today's diverse student population. Combining insights from multicultural education theory and research with real-life classroom stories, the author demonstrates that all students will perform better on multiple measures of achievement when teaching is filtered through their own cultural experiences. This bestselling text has been extensively revised to include: Expanded coverage of student ethnic groups: African and Latino Americans as well as Asian and Native Americans; A new section on standards and diversity; New examples of culturally diverse curriculum content; More examples of programs and techniques that exemplify culturally responsive teaching; An emphasis on positive, action-driven possibilities in student-teacher relationships; New material on culturally diverse communication, addressing common myths about language diversity and the effects of "English Plus" instruction.

**Hill, F., Kawagley, O., & Barnhardt, R. (2000).** Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative final report: Phase I, 1995-2000. Washington, DC: Rural School and Community Trust. (ERIC Document Reproduction No. ED453994) Available at <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED453994.pdf>

**Abstract:** The Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI) implements initiatives to document the indigenous knowledge systems of Alaska Natives and develop pedagogical practices and school curricula that appropriately incorporate indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing into the formal education system. These initiatives foster interconnectivity between two interdependent but historically disconnected and alienated educational systems—the indigenous knowledge systems rooted in Native cultures, and the formal education system

that has been imported. These systems have complementary scientific and mathematical knowledge and skills that can strengthen the quality of education for students throughout rural Alaska. AKRSI has positively influenced student performance. In its first 5 years, the AKRSI strategy has produced increases in student achievement scores; the number of rural students attending college; and the number of Native students choosing to pursue studies in the fields of science, math, and engineering; and a decrease in Alaska dropout rates. AKRSI-sponsored initiatives are briefly described, along with the evaluations currently underway that provide evidence of progress related to these systemic-reform change indicators: resource changes, policy changes, management changes, data utilization, implementation of standards-based curriculum, partnerships, and research.

**Kamehameha Schools. (2010, December).** *Sustaining quality, Hawaiian-focused charter schools: An update to KSEGE on the Kamehameha Schools' charter school accreditation support program.* [Unpublished presentation]. Honolulu, HI: Author.

**Kana'iaupuni, S. M. (2007).** *A brief overview of culture-based education and annotated bibliography* (Culture-Based Education Brief Series). Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools, Research & Evaluation. Available at <http://www.ksbe.edu/spi/cbe.php>

**Kana'iaupuni, S., Ledward, B., & Jensen, U. (2010).** *Culture-based education and its relationship to student outcomes.* Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools, Research & Evaluation. Available at [http://www.ksbe.edu/spi/PDFS/CBE\\_relationship\\_to\\_student\\_outcomes.pdf](http://www.ksbe.edu/spi/PDFS/CBE_relationship_to_student_outcomes.pdf)

**Abstract:** The study, Hawaiian Cultural Influences in Education (HCIE), is a collaborative effort of the Kamehameha Schools, Hawai'i Department of Education, and Nā Lāi Na'auao, an alliance of Hawaiian-focused public charter schools, and is the first large-scale empirical study of its kind among high school students. Results are based on survey data from 600 teachers, 2,969 students, and 2,264 parents at 62 participating schools, including public, charter, and private schools and schools with Hawaiian-immersion programs. Hierarchical linear models were used to conduct multilevel statistical analyses of the data. Results are consistent with prior qualitative studies, indicating that culture-based educational strategies positively impact student outcomes, particularly Native Hawaiian student outcomes. First, culture-based education (CBE) positively impacts student socio-emotional well-being (e.g., identity, self-efficacy, social relationships). Second, enhanced socio-emotional well-being positively affects math and reading test scores. Third, CBE is positively related to math and reading test scores for all students, and particularly for those with low socio-emotional development, most notably when supported by overall CBE use within the school. Fourth, teachers using culture-based educational strategies report greater Hawaiian cultural affiliation, civic engagement, and school motivation than do students of other teachers.

**Klump, J., & McNair, G. (2005).** *Culturally responsive practices for student success: A regional sampler.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Available at [http://oln.educationnorthwest.org/webfm\\_send/3](http://oln.educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/3)

**Abstract:** The purpose of this issue of *By Request* is to introduce pre-K–12 educators to the topic of culturally responsive educational practices—practices that can be defined as “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning more relevant and effective for them” (Gay,

2000, p. 29). The booklet pertains to the unique experiences of teachers and school administrators in the Northwest and Pacific regions, and provides a starting place for educators to consider as they develop culturally responsive practices in their schools and districts. We briefly review practices that research indicates can contribute to the academic success of students from diverse racial, cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Then we take a closer look at how Pacific Northwest and Hawaiian state organizations, districts, school leaders, and school staff are responding to the needs of their diverse student populations. We describe the challenges and successes of these educators and provide examples of their culturally responsive strategies. Finally, we identify some resources for further reading on the subject. In addition, an annotated bibliography of research studies will be available on our Web site.

Lipka, J., & Adams, B. (2004). *Culturally based math education as a way to improve Alaska Native students' math performance*. Athens, OH: Appalachian Collaborative Center for Learning, Assessment, and Instruction in Mathematics. Available at <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED484849.pdf>

**Abstract:** Culturally based instruction has long been touted as a preferred approach to improving the performance of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students' academic performance. However, there has been scant research to support this conjecture, particularly when quantitative data and quasi-experimental designs are included. The results of this study show that the culturally based math curriculum, *Building a Fish Rack: Investigations into Proof, Properties, Perimeter, and Area*, enabled sixth grade Yup'ik students and their urban counterparts to increase their mathematical understanding of perimeter and area. The study involved one semester's worth of data (258 students in 15 classes). The study was a strong quasi-experimental design with random assignment and the results were based on pre- and post-test score differences. The study involved one urban school district, Fairbanks, and four rural school districts with approximately a 97% Yup'ik population. The study showed that the difference in test results between all treatment groups and all control groups was significant beyond the accepted standard of  $p < 0.05$ . Although the urban treatment group gained the most from this curriculum, the most important finding is that the rural treatment group outperformed the rural control group at a significant level beyond the accepted standard of  $p < 0.05$ . The study is encouraging, as it shows that the treatment effect on Yup'ik students narrows the long-standing academic gap when comparing that group's and the Yup'ik control group's relative performance against the urban control group. Further studies are necessary to determine if the results can be replicated, if the results are tied to a specific topic area, and if a study that uses complementary research methods can unpack the factors behind the gain.

Lipka, J., & McCarty, T. L. (1994). Changing the culture of schooling: Navajo and Yup'ik cases. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 25(3), 266-84.

**Abstract:** This article presents two cases in which Indigenous teacher groups are transforming the culture of schooling. Data are drawn from over a decade of ethnographic and action-oriented research at Rough Rock Demonstration School, on the Navajo Nation in northeastern Arizona, and in 10 Yup'ik community schools in southwestern Alaska. By coming together in Indigenous teacher study groups, Navajo and Yup'ik teachers and elders are finding creative ways to use their culture, knowledge, and language in the construction of curriculum and pedagogy. These teacher groups have created zones of safety in which

resistance to conventional practices can be expressed and innovative approaches to schooling investigated and practiced. The work of these teacher groups has theoretical implications for community-based teacher preparation. Factors influencing development of these groups and their ability to effect change are discussed, along with the challenges of transferring their cultural creations to the wider institutions of schooling.

- Ling, R. J. I., & Yamauchi, L. A. (2010).** The influences of indigenous heritage language education on students and families in a Hawaiian language immersion program. *Heritage Language Journal*, 7(2), 46-75.

Abstract: Papahana Kaiapuni is a K-12 public school program in which the Hawaiian language is the medium of instruction. In 1987, parents and language activists started the program in response to the dwindling number of speakers that resulted from a nearly century-long ban on the indigenous language. This study examined how participation in this indigenous heritage language program influenced students and their families. Data included interviews with 12 adolescent students and their family members. Results suggested that the program promoted students' learning about and practicing traditional Hawaiian values, and influenced cultural pride among family members. Participation in the program also encouraged youths and their family members to become politically active around Hawaiian cultural issues. Unlike the more typical process in which culture is passed down from the older to the younger generations, participants viewed Kaiapuni students as the carriers of the culture and language, teaching older family members about these topics. Informants also reported that Kaiapuni promoted positive community views about both Hawaiian language and culture revitalization efforts.

- McCarty, T. L. (2003).** Revitalising indigenous languages in homogenising times. *Comparative Education*, 39(2), 147-63.

Abstract: Data from three well-documented American Indian language immersion programs (teaching Navajo, Hawaiian, and Keres) and from an ongoing large comparative study of language shift/retention in six Indian school-community sites suggest that immersion schooling can serve the dual roles of promoting students' school success and revitalizing endangered indigenous languages.

- McCarty, T. L., Wallace, S., Lynch, R. H., & Benally, A. (1991).** Classroom inquiry and Navajo learning styles: A call for reassessment. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 22(1), 42-59.

Abstract: Describes experimental K-9 bilingual-bicultural curriculum in Navajo studies emphasizing open-ended questioning, inductive/analytical reasoning, and student verbalization in both small and large groups, and discusses reasons why it has been well received by teachers and students. Findings challenge conventional view that these students are nonanalytical, nonverbal learners. Suggests educational application of such "learning styles" can perpetuate patterns of learned dependence.

- McLaughlin, D. (1992).** *When Literacy empowers: Navajo language in print*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

**Abstract:** This book presents an ethnographic study of literacy practices and beliefs about Navajo and English usage in one Navajo community. Throughout the book, Spolsky's structuralist notion of "special diglossia" on the Navajo Reservation—Navajo for most oral communication and English for nearly all written purposes—is contrasted with Street's "ideological model" of literacy, which relates literacy functions and beliefs to the requirements of local institutions and ideologies as they reflect particular requirements of the more powerful mainstream society. Chapter 1 reviews traditions of sociolinguistic analysis and previous research on Navajo and English usage. Chapter 2 provides a historical background and description of the community from the different perspectives of major actors in local institutional settings: trading post, chapterhouse (center of local tribal government), mission church, and community school. This chapter also details the history and development of the school's bilingual education program. Chapter 3 describes ways that the trading post and chapterhouse "script" uses for English print, while Chapter 4 describes uses for written English and Navajo scripted by the community school and church. The concluding chapter presents survey data on the community's literacy-related practices and beliefs and discusses study implications in terms of pedagogical practice in Navajo schools and theoretical notions about the relationship between literacy and society. Appendices describe a demonstration project in applied literacy and include survey questionnaires in English and Navajo.

**Mead, N., Grigg, W., Moran, R., & Kuang, M. (2010).** *National Indian Education Study 2009 - part II: The educational experiences of American Indian and Alaska Native students in grades 4 and 8*. Washington, DC: US Department of Education, Institute of Education Science, National Center for Education Statistics. Available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/studies/2010463.asp>

**Abstract:** The study fulfills a mandate of Executive Order 13336 issued in 2004 to assist AI/AN students in meeting challenging academic standards in a manner consistent with tribal traditions, languages, and cultures. In the report, fourth- and eighth-grade American Indian/Alaska Native students provide information about themselves, their families and communities, and their school experiences. Teachers provide information about educational practices to promote the academic achievement of American Indian/Alaska Native students. School administrators also report on school environment for American Indian/Alaska Native students. Overall results reported for the nation include AI/AN students attending public, private, and other types of schools. Results are also reported for three mutually exclusive categories based on school type and proportion of AI/AN students: low density public schools where less than 25 percent of the student body is AI/AN; high density public schools where 25 percent or more of the students are AI/AN; and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools that serve AI/AN students almost exclusively. All comparisons are based on statistical tests of significance (with appropriate adjustments for multiple comparisons), and only differences that are statistically significant are discussed in the report.

**Mehan, H., Lintz, A., Okamoto, D., & Wills, J. S. (1995).** Ethnographic studies of multicultural education in classrooms and schools. In J. A. Banks & C. A. McGee Banks (Eds.), *The handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp. 129-144). New York: Macmillan.

**Abstract:** Offered here is a landmark resource covering major theory and research of the past thirty years. Within one volume can be found writings by leading scholars, theorists, and practitioners in the field. Educators at all levels will find this an invaluable reference." Educational Leadership "The Handbook is a valuable contribution. Every person concerned

with the complexity of American society and the process of schooling should have it as a basic reference tool." Multicultural Education "Nothing currently available in the field has the scope of this excellent Handbook." Library Journal "The depth and breadth of coverage is remarkable and the level of research and scholarship impressive. Banks and McGee Banks have edited an invaluable reference guide." Teachers College Record "The scope of coverage in this Handbook will make a significant contribution to a wide audience. A broad spectrum of professionals can utilize this book - teacher educators, researchers, sociologists, school psychologists, administrators, and those generally interested in the best practices for educating children in a diverse society." Multicultural Review "The Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education is more than an invaluable landmark publication written and reviewed by distinguished and recognized scholars in multicultural education. It is a conceptual, theoretical, and methodological testimonial to the powerful emergence of a critically important metadiscipline with wide-reaching social, educational, and political implications." Journal of Teacher Education "In the Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education, Banks and McGee Banks and their contributors have created a scholarly masterpiece that synthesizes research, theory, and policy on multicultural education.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. (2004). *Experimental research in culturally based education: An assessment of feasibility*. Portland, OR: Author. Available at [http://educationnorthwest.org/webfin\\_send/194](http://educationnorthwest.org/webfin_send/194)

**Abstract:** This report describes activities conducted by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) under this task order to assess the feasibility of conducting experimental research in culturally based education (CBE). Two data sources were used to write this report. First, the research team conducted a review of extant research on the impact of culturally based education on the school performance of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students. The intent was to identify research studies in which the researcher has some *control over the assignment of subjects* to treatment conditions, using experimental or quasi-experimental designs. Random assignment of subjects to treatment conditions is difficult in applied settings for a number of practical reasons. However, experimental research provides valid and reliable evidence that allows us to draw cause-and-effect conclusions on CBE interventions. The purpose of the review of CBE research was twofold: (1) to determine the strength of evidence concerning the effectiveness of CBE and (2) to assess the extent to which previous research indicates that experimental research on CBE is feasible. Second, a national survey of CBE programs was conducted to uncover existing culturally based education interventions to determine the feasibility of developing experimental or quasi-experimental research designs among existing programs. These interventions exhibit significant variability with respect to their purpose, quality of program and staff, the context in which they are implemented, and student characteristics. The purpose of the survey was to reveal the number of similar interventions implemented in different locations that allow the random assignment of students required in experimental or quasi-experimental research. The literature review identified six studies examining the effects of some aspects of CBE programs or interventions that involved random assignment of subjects to treatments. Results of the national survey suggest that random assignment of students to treatment and control conditions is likely to be feasible in a sizable number of the CBE programs. It is also likely that in cases where random assignment is not possible, arrangements can be made to identify matched comparison groups at the classroom or school level. The remaining sections of this report provide background information on

culturally based education and describe in greater detail the results of the literature review and the national survey of CBE programs.

- Powers, K. (2006).** An exploratory study of cultural identity and culture-based educational programs for urban American Indian students. *Urban Education, 41*, 20-49. Available at <http://ucx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/41/1/20>

**Abstract:** Extant survey data collected from 240 urban American Indian students were used to examine the impact of culture-based and universally accepted effective practices in education on American Indian educational outcomes. The results found that culture-based programs had a largely indirect effect, affecting students' educational outcomes via universal constructs, such as a safe and positive school climate, parent involvement in school, and instruction quality. Furthermore, individual students' cultural identification appears to moderate the effects of cultural programs. Cultural programming appeared to have greater influence on urban American Indian students who were most strongly identified with their American Indian culture.

- Scott, J. C., Straker, D. Y., & Katz, L. (Eds.). (2008).** *Affirming students' right to their own language: Bridging language policies and pedagogical practices*. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis.

**Abstract:** How can teachers make sound pedagogical decisions and advocate for educational policies that best serve the needs of students in today's diverse classrooms? What is the pedagogical value of providing culturally and linguistically diverse students greater access to their own language and cultural orientations? This landmark volume responds to the call to attend to the unfinished pedagogical business of the NCTE Conference on College Composition and Communication 1974 Students' Right to Their Own Language resolution. Chronicling the interplay between legislated/litigated education policies and language and literacy teaching in diverse classrooms, it presents exemplary research-based practices that maximize students' learning by utilizing their home-based cultural, language, and literacy practices to help them meet school expectations. Pre-service teachers, practicing teachers, and teacher educators need both resources and knowledge, including global perspectives, about language variation in PreK-12 classrooms and hands-on strategies that enable teachers to promote students' use of their own language in the classroom while also addressing mandated content and performance standards. This book meets that need.

- Smith, D. C., Leake, D. W., & Kamekona, N. (1998).** Effects of a culturally competent school-based intervention for at-risk Hawaiian students. *Pacific Educational Research Journal, 9*(1), 3-22. (EJ592505)

**Abstract:** Studied the effects of an intervention designed to foster emotional, academic, and interpersonal skills on 22 elementary school students at risk of emotional and behavioral disorders. The intervention, which was designed to be culturally competent, was associated with decreased clinical symptoms and improved academic and behavioral performance.

- Stiles, D. B. (1997).** Four successful Indigenous language programs. In J. Reyhner (Ed.), *Teaching Indigenous languages*. Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University Press. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED41 5079)

**Abstract:** This paper examines four Indigenous language programs to compare common components, problems, and outcomes. The programs are Cree Way in Quebec, Canada, Hualapai in Arizona, Te Kohanga Reo (Maori) in New Zealand, and Punana Leo (Hawaiian) in Hawaii. These programs were chosen for four characteristics: (1) the languages are no longer transmitted to the younger generation (in the home or community); (2) the programs all have curriculum development, community support parent involvement, and government support; (3) the programs exist in different countries; and (4) they are recommended as model programs for endangered Indigenous languages. Each program's description covers historical background; program development; funding; parent, community, and academic involvement; and current status. Each program has a curriculum that combines Indigenous language and cultural heritage, literacy, community involvement, and parent participation. Common problems are related to teacher availability, teacher training, lack of written materials, and funding. Outcomes of all programs have included decreased dropout rates, increased sense of heritage and identity, and improved test scores. It is concluded that the success of these types of programs depends on home and community initiative and involvement; culture cannot be separated from the language. It is also important to begin the program at an early age, preferably preschool; to have a firm theoretical foundation; and to have written teaching materials.

**Tharp, R. (1982).** The effective instruction of comprehension: Results and description of the Kamehameha Early Education Program. *Reading Research Quarterly, 17*(4), 503–527.

**Abstract:** A reading program for young children, which features systematic instruction in comprehension, has been developed for Polynesian-Hawaiian children in grades one through three with a potentially high risk for educational failure. The Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) program was assessed in terms of three experiments: (1) a successive-cohorts analysis demonstrated the KEEP program superior to a phonics-based program; (2) an experimental vs. control design demonstrated superiority of the KEEP-laboratory school program over matched public school controls; and (3) when installed in public school classrooms, the KEEP program was superior to control classrooms under conditions of random student assignment. The program is described fully, with emphasis on its comprehension orientation, small-group format, direct teacher instruction, systematic instructional objectives, criterion referenced testing, and quality control of teacher performance. The KEEP program is carefully adapted to the cultural needs and abilities of Hawaiian children. Implications for development of instructional programs for other minority children are discussed. On all outcome measures, the experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group.

**Yagi, K. (1985).** *Indian education act project in the Portland public schools. 1984-85 evaluation report.* Oregon: Portland Public Schools, Evaluation Department. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED268 168)

**Abstract:** The Portland Indian Education Act Project (IEAP), completing its 11<sup>th</sup> year, serves American Indian students from preschool through high school. Eligibility for services is established according to federal guidelines. Objectives set for the project concentrate on increasing academic achievement and school attendance, and reducing early school attrition. The main activities are tutoring counseling, attendance monitoring, cultural education, and hardship assistance. Data are collected and maintained to evaluate the project's progress annually, as well as longitudinally. This evaluation report is divided into four major sections:

introduction, program description, evaluation of objectives, and comments and conclusions. The plan used in the evaluation of objectives consists of evaluation questions related to each of the three objectives. District statistical data compiled over five years shows a decline in attrition while also showing an increase in attendance and achievement among American Indian students. Efforts of the IEAP staff emphasize significant use of resources, sometimes community resources, in these areas. Data accumulated and compiled for IEAP evaluation purposes continue to show educational needs for American Indian students in Portland. Funding restrictions pose a threat to program quality and make it increasingly more difficult for the project to design and implement a comprehensive program.

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF TAFFI U'LELE SHEATHER-WISE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
KANU O KA AINA LEARNING 'OHANA

*Aloha Senator Akaka, Chairman Committee on Indian Affairs, Vice Chair Barrasso and members of the Committee and their Staff:*

*My name is Taffi U'lele Sheather-Wise, one of the founders of KANU, the first K-12 native Hawaiian charter school on the Big Island of Hawaii and KALO, a Native Hawaiian Educational and Community Based Organization. It is an honor to present testimony on the unprecedented success and growth of our unique educational model and why our model beckons continued federal support for expansion through the next decade and beyond. For decades native Hawaiian students had no choice but to participate in a public school system ranked 42<sup>nd</sup> in the nation or pay for private schooling. With a 67% public school graduation rate, sub-standard attendance rates, and only 12 out of every 100 Hawaiian students graduating from college in 4 years, the state of public education in Hawaii is undeniable. The current system has failed to meet the needs of the children, and native Hawaiians in particular. Hawaii also has the largest per-capita private school population in the nation which speaks to the long standing general population's dissatisfaction with the existing public system. However, private schooling is not a viable or appropriate choice especially for Hawaiians desiring to be educated with a cultural Hawaiian foundation. With no choice in sight, a small group of native Hawaiians took action. Armed with the "Aloha spirit", in a canvas tent, and on personal credit cards, the first native Hawaiian charter school was born in 2000.*

*The qualitative and quantitative evidence of successful cultural impacts on education has clearly been laid out by researchers Dr. Shawn Kanakaupuni and Dr. David Beuilieu at the Senate Oversight Hearing held on May 26, 2011. By delivering relevant and rigorous learning experiences through native language, culture, and values-based practices, the "NLN Education with Aloha" model has equipped Hawaiian students with an unmatched foundation for post-secondary access and future choice. One compelling piece of evidence is the high school graduation rate. 89% of NLN students graduate from high school compared to the national graduation rate of 70% and the Hawaiian public school rate of 67%. The Education with Aloha model produces an increase of 22% and deserves the undivided attention of legislative decision makers. It is clear this momentum should not be stopped. A decade later and twelve schools strong, Education with Aloha is continuing the pursuit of excellence, practicing culturally relevant community based education, uniquely controlled by each community and sharing successes and best practices validated by unprecedented data. KANU can humbly claim the honor of being the first WASC/HALS accredited Indigenous school in the nation -2010, and five more schools have been accepted as candidates this month. KALO's model of public private partnership holds the first educational building in Hawaii awarded the U.S. Green Building Council Leadership In Energy and Environmental Design Platinum certification-2010. Kamehameha Schools supports NLN as a vehicle for autonomous tribal empowered education with refinement resources and best practices opportunities. However, beyond choice, certifications and recognitions, student outcomes are the most impressive.*

*Education is the social justice issue of this generation. I implore you to support the following authorizing and funding requests:*

- *Authorize Indigenous SEA authority, autonomy and funding with a USDOE approved plan and appropriate accountability for any community that chooses to engage in culture based education.*

- Eliminate the SEA/LEA monopoly Hawaii's traditional DOE has over public education federal allocations and grant opportunities.
- Mandate that federal funding provided to states per public school child, follow the child to any public educational institution, with enforcement & ramifications for violations & allow direct funding access to the public institutions that were prejudiced against.
- Authorize indigenous control to define Highly Qualified Teachers, which takes modern teaching techniques and appropriately refines them for native educational settings.
- Authorize appropriate access to P-20 State data for research and evaluation purposes and a collaborative repository for research study.
- Authorize and fund opportunities for best practices refinement and dissemination across the nation.
- Fund empowered community management organizational structures which will provide accountability, data and evaluation, and economy of scale that is community controlled and joined by choice.
- Authorize and fund Native Hawaiian Education organizations the ability to participate in FY2012 Presidential Budget Request for the USDOE to include:
  - o formula grants to schools and tribes,
  - o competitive grants,
  - o national activities of research and effective practices for improving outcomes of native students,
  - o the new Tribal educational agency pilot initiative,
  - o Impact aid,
  - o Tribally controlled postsecondary programs.
- Fund incentive opportunities for public private partnerships that empower community initiative and economic development through education to relieve the expense burden and make education a community focus.
- Fund opportunities to grow our own teachers, not mandated by the western "accredited" large institutions which regulations stifle indigenous cultural practices and language.
- Fund post-secondary financial support to kick start college entrance and graduation for our indigenous high school graduates, eliminating the economic barrier that exists and providing geographic support mechanisms.
- Fund indigenous early education programs and gifted and talented programs.

#### Hawaiian name Index

- Kani o ka 'Āina New Century Public Charter School = KANI
- Kani o ka 'Āina Learning 'Ōhana = KALO
- Nālel Nā'auao Alliance of Hawaiian Charter Schools = self-actualized Hawaiian community educational organizations with like thoughts, values and initiatives actively practicing "Education with Aieha" = NLN
- Hālelu Wānana Institute of Higher Learning = Teacher Licensing and Professional Development, as well as Administrators Hawaiian Business Leadership training (KALO)
- Mālamapōkī Early Childhood Program = cultural, bilingual, place-based early education preschool (KALO)
- Nālel Ho'olahe Community Development Finance Institution = emerging Community Development Finance Institution (KALO)
- Kauhale 'Ōlwi o Pū'ukapu = LEED Platinum Community Technology Center (KALO)
- WASC/HAIS = Western Association of Schools and Colleges/Hawaii Association of Independent Schools

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FLORIAN TOM JOHNSON, PRINCIPAL, ROUGH ROCK  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

**Greetings**

Chairman Akaka, Vice Chairman Barrasso and Members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, I wish to thank Chairman Akaka and the Committee for holding this hearing and for giving me the opportunity to provide testimony for your consideration.

**Background on program and success**

*"It is as beautiful as we see this earth and the sky before us as I carry a conversation with my grandchild in the Navajo language. It can happen! Our children can continue to learn this language and carry it on for as long as this beauty (earth and sky) will exist. This generation comforts our hearts and minds as they give us hope for the survival of our language."*

- Grandmother of 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Navajo child at Rough Rock Community School at a parent meeting in 2009.

This is a testimony given by one of our student's grandparents at our developing Navajo medium school in Rough Rock, an isolated rural community located in northeast Arizona.

I am Florian Tom Johnson and currently serve the community of Rough Rock as their elementary school principal to turnaround a very low-performing school. I was born and raised on Navajo in Rock Point, Arizona. At Rock Point school in the early 1970's, I first learned to read in Navajo and was taught school subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science and social studies using the Navajo language. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, I was taught English using the Navajo language to transition my academic studies through English. I feel very satisfied with my education at Rock Point as it built a solid foundation of academics that prepared me for post-secondary studies in electrical engineering. Today, I retain my first language, Navajo.

I had the opportunity to work with two school districts that provided a support structure to establish Navajo language survival schools. One was within an Arizona public school system and the other, a grant school funded by the Bureau of Indian Education.

At Window Rock Unified School District (Arizona public school system), we were able to establish a Navajo-medium school by extracting the Navajo-medium classrooms from three of the schools and centrally locate them in one school and then expanding the school from a K-5 program to a K-10 school. The main purpose in doing so was to establish a Navajo language and culture rich environment that eventually created speakers of Navajo – a feat that wasn't possible in an English dominant environment.

I've since relocated to Rough Rock to assist in establishing a Navajo-medium program within a school that is also predominantly within an English environment.

As secluded as Rough Rock is where the nearest gas station is 15 miles away, the nearest grocery store 35 miles away and the nearest shopping center is a 2-hour drive away in New Mexico, it was just a matter of time for members of this small community's medium of communication to shift from Navajo to English.

Presently, Rough Rock Community School, a grant school funded by the Bureau of Indian Education implements a language survival school for children in grades K-4 and will add 5<sup>th</sup> grade for the upcoming school year. Of the 35 students enrolled, only three children are fluent speakers of Navajo in this developing K-4 language survival school within an English-medium school. Even within the larger school environment, these three are the only fluent speakers of the student population of 152.

Rough Rock Community School provides two parallel programs for families. One strand provides instruction through the English language and students are taught the Navajo language for 30 minutes daily. A second strand provides instruction through the Navajo language and students are taught the same challenging state academic standards as the rest of Arizona.

We're currently developing assessments, curriculum and instructional materials during the school year and summer months to prepare for the additional grade to be added the following school year. As we speak, our curriculum team currently is reviewing the revised curriculum that is now aligned to the Common Core State Standards. At Rough Rock, we are able to establish a framework built on Navajo beliefs of cognitive development and use this framework as the basis for curriculum development and instruction.

As a developing Native language survival school, we've established a relationship with 'Aha

Punana Leo and the Hawaiian Language College at the University of Hawai'i Hilo. This provides us the opportunity to collaborate in continuously refining curricular and instructional practice and yet maintaining the components of a culture-based education program.

Through this collaboration, we've been able to establish an assessment system using curriculum-based measures in Navajo for language arts and mathematics to properly monitor the academic progression of our students to ensure mastery of knowledge and skills as outlined by the state.

Window Rock USD (Navajo, Arizona), 'Aha Punana Leo (Hawaiian, Hawai'i), Lower Kuskokwim School District (Yupik, Alaska), and Niigaane (Ojibwemowin, Minnesota), all native language survival schools partnered with other educational entities were able to establish an assessment system that was valid and reliable. To date, student data is still being collected to establish norms and maintain current correlation studies with state standardized assessments.

#### **Challenges in relation to NCLB**

Window Rock Unified School District (WRUSD) is currently struggling in maintaining the core belief of creating speakers of Navajo due to their commitment to the state (through assurances) in maintaining adequate yearly progress (AYP) as outlined in NCLB. As a state public school, WRUSD is required under state education laws to provide instruction to students in English so as to prepare students in passing the state standardized assessment (Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards - AIMS) given only in English to meet federal NCLB requirements in maintaining AYP.

At WRUSD, students at 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are required to take AIMS without modifications and accommodations in the native language when 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students are given instruction in English for only 1½ hours daily – student in kindergarten through second grade are taught only through Navajo to develop Navajo oral language capacities for academic instruction. In addition, reading and mathematics standards aren't all taught through English.

Window Rock's Tséhootsool Diné Bi'ólta' (Navajo medium school) teaches less than 7% of the district's student population. In most of the communities where a language survival school is located, this percentage of student population participating in language revitalization is typical.

As a BIE school, Rough Rock is still mandated to follow Arizona's standardized assessment system. While our students are taught only through the Navajo language from kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade, our 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students are still required to take AIMS without

language modifications or accommodations.

While both WRUSD and Rough Rock struggle in hiring certified and highly qualified teachers as required under NCLB, able teachers that have shown evidence in making significant progress toward making AYP have been forced to leave in order for both districts to comply with the law. At Rough Rock, the few certified and highly qualified teachers teach multi-grade level classes forcing each teacher to teach two sets of standards for two grade levels in the same classroom on the same day.

While English-medium environments are populated with a greater number of teachers, the few teachers in the language survival schools put in greater effort and time to develop, monitor, and revise curriculum, assessments and instruction. Additionally, teachers develop their own instructional materials as there aren't many Navajo language instructional materials in reading and mathematics. The materials selected are combined to eventually produce a program that may not meet NCLB standards of scientifically base research programs. However, there has been evidence at WRUSD that the locally developed program in the Navajo language to meet the language needs of the community has brought student knowledge and skill levels to Arizona's expectations.

#### **Changes to NCLB**

As we make progress in our own survival schools, we are collectively developing alternative assessment systems in our native languages that are valid and reliable according to research standards. We have the knowledge and expertise (and will continue to build capacity) in collecting academic data from our language survival schools to determine norms, growth, cut scores and statistical information that will provide an alternative form of AYP. Language survival schools that have been in existence at least a quarter of a decade should be able to determine their alternative forms of assessment and receive funding to further refine that process and then provide guidance to newly developed language survival schools or nests.

At WRUSD, there is evidence in 2004, 2005 and 2006 where the language survival school has met the requirements of AYP while other English-medium school did not. This was accomplished with properly trained teachers whether or not they were considered certified and highly qualified teachers under NCLB definitions. A properly trained teacher in a language survival school not only needs to be familiar with the typical curriculum, instruction and assessment components of schooling, but they must also possess other necessary skills in language and culture such as a high level of indigenous language proficiency, cultural proficiency, and language acquisition processes. In addition, they need to be highly skilled in making a careful transition to English to build a higher level of English proficiency. Language survival schools must be allowed to train their teachers to have these qualities and

allow them to teach in these schools and then consider them highly qualified to teach in these settings.

WRUSD and 'Aha Punana Leo provide two examples that have met the academic goals of NCLB. Schools of this nature are rare examples in indigenous communities. Students in these schools respond favorably when the academic content taught are made relevant by making deliberate connections to their identity in the modern context of society. As allowed by the Native American Languages Acts, NCLB must allow the teaching of native languages in schools as a means to improving student academic achievement. There are already many examples of schools on Navajo where guidelines are strictly followed as outlined in NCLB and not producing positive results in student academic growth – not making AYP.

Experienced language survival schools that have a track record aligned with goals of NCLB such as those in Hawai'i with 100% graduation rates and 80% of students continuing in post-secondary institutions that show evidence of quality education programs as sought by NCLB should be allowed to receive federal funding under Title I as evidence based programs. Such funds will allow language survival schools to further develop its programs so that it could be replicated in other indigenous communities. Currently, both WRUSD and Rough Rock seek guidance from 'Aha Punana Leo and the Hawaiian Language College.

In the 1970's, the education division of the Navajo Nation conducted interviews of community members throughout the vast area of Navajoland to gain insight of Navajo thought on education. Community members were quite pleased that their children are being schooled closer to home. However, they had great concern and recognized the shift from Navajo to English language among the younger generation. Overwhelmingly, Navajo elders pleaded with the Navajo Nation for its schools to incorporate Navajo language and culture in order for the Navajo people to maintain their language and ways of doing.

Today, the average age of fluent Navajo speakers are in their 40's according to the U.S. Census, up 15 years since 2000. Like the grandmother speaking at our parent meeting, we have hope in maintaining our Navajo language. "T'11 ldoon77[ 11, *It is possible!*" she commented making reference to how the language survival school at Rough Rock is working in maintaining the Navajo language with this new generation.

Language survival schools and nests can still meet the overarching goal of student academic achievement (NCLB) with the added benefit of maintaining the indigenous language the native people hold sacred. Changes in NCLB as discussed by many that are providing testimonies will allow this to happen.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide a written testimony.

