

The Value of  
Alaska Native Organizations  
in Promoting the  
Educational Success of Native Students

Before  
The Honorable U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski  
Field Hearing of the United States Senate  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions  
“BEST – Building Educational Success Together”

By  
Rosita *Kaaháni* Worl, Ph.D.  
Sealaska Heritage Institute  
Juneau, Alaska

Anchorage, Alaska

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The purpose of the hearing will be to learn what **efforts by Alaska Native organizations** to improve the educational outcomes of Alaska Native children and youth are working, what **challenges** remain, and the **role of the federal government** in helping to build on success.

## **Summary**

### **Efforts by Native Organizations**

Focusing on Native educational achievement

Integrating language and cultural restoration in school as a means to improve academic achievement of Native students

Monitoring progress of Alaska Native education and federal funding for Native education and language

Promoting systemic change in educational systems to address Native educational needs

#### Specific Actions:

Teacher training and employment in school districts  
Curriculum Development  
Professional Development  
Partnerships with school districts and Alaska's university system  
Summer Academies and programs  
Federal and state funding for Native education

Case Study of Native Education in Juneau

### **Challenges**

- Positive Native identities
- Cross cultural training and understanding
- Increasing number of Native teachers and administrators and their employment in schools
- Recognition by schools, government and public that integration of indigenous culture and language into schools promotes academic achievement
- Funding to support Alaska Native organizational participation in educational efforts

### **The Role of Federal Government**

- Advocacy, support and funding for Native educational and language programs
- Support research efforts to understand barriers to Native academic success
- Fund Alaska Native organization to become full partners in educational efforts

**Rosita Worl, Ph.D., President of Sealaska Heritage Institute**

Dr. Rosita Worl (*Kaaháni*) is Tlingit, Ch'áak' (Eagle) moiety of the Shangukweidí (Thunderbird) Clan from the Kawdliyaayí Hít (House Lowered from the Sun) in Klukwan. She left the University of Alaska Southeast where she taught anthropology to assume the position of President of the Sealaska Heritage Institute. *Kaaháni* has a Ph.D. from Harvard University and an Honorary Doctorate in Science from the University of Alaska. *Kaaháni* serves as Vice Chair of Sealaska Corporation. Dr. Worl has received many honors and serves on the boards of several different statewide and national Native organizations. She has authored numerous scholarly works of her research, and she continues to be an invited lecturer at many statewide, national and international events.