

1. **Welcome to Southeast Alaska —**
  - The esteemed Howard Luke: We were given something and we destroyed it. It makes me so sad.
2. **Alaska Native Education problems**
  - Mainstream American education is a model of assimilation by exclusion
  - Eurocentric curriculum & delivery teach our children that they are less important, and not the standard of intelligence, beauty, and success
  - 51% Alaska Native graduation rate
  - Suicide leading cause of death among Alaska Native Youth
  - Teaching children based upon values and principles that by nature exclude Alaska Natives results in low self-esteem, low investment, and language loss
3. **Educational Challenges for Alaska Natives (health, poverty)**
  - The poverty rate among AI/ANs in 2009 was 23.6% (2009 census), and 32.4% of the under-18 AI/AN population lives in poverty
  - Average AI/AN household income is \$33,300, while the national average is \$46,200.
  - Graduation rate for AN in 2010-11 was 51%, compared with 79% national average
  - 13.3 percent of Native Americans have undergraduate degrees, versus 24.4 percent of the general population
4. **Endangered Languages**
  - 12 of Alaska's 20 Alaska Native Languages have 100 speakers or less
  - Michael Krauss saw this pattern in the 1990s and predicted that, without substantial change, our languages would begin dying off en masse and we would have half of what we have now within the next 20 years
  - The time for gradual action has passed. We need to be the change we seek.
5. **Standardized Education and Declining State Budgets**
  - Rural schools are undoubtedly at risk
  - Alaska is struggling to find long-term solutions to a stable budget
  - Systems that already fail Alaska Native People are at risk of decreased funding and support
  - Current Alaskan education structures fail Alaska Native families, resulting in cultural appropriation, imbalanced income levels between local native people and non-local educators and administrators
6. **Following the Advice of Our Elders**
  - This is Ƙaajaakwtí, Dr. Walter Soboleff. You are meeting in the building that carries his name. He was L'eeneidí, and what we would call kaa tlein, a big man.

- Has du eeti x'aakeidix áyá haa sitee uháan yáa yagiye. Yéi áyá a daa tuxditaan xáach. Ách áyá wa.éich tsú i toowú toox' tlaḡ wáa sá x'alitseen. Ách áyá a daat eehán tsu yáa yagiyeedé.
- We are the seeds in their remains today. This is how I think about it. This is why you too, inside you feel how very valuable it is. This is why you are standing up for it even up to today.
- People who know who they are do not kill themselves.

#### 7. 'Aha Pūnana Leo & Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u

- 'Aha Pūnana Leo is a language nest: the youngest students are 6 months old and it is divided into three groups: infants, toddlers, and preschool. Students are taught 100% in Hawaiian language, and there are classes for parents.
- Nāwahī is a Hawaiian Language Medium Charter School. All content is taught in Hawaiian, and there is no English until the 4th grade, at which time there is one hour of English per day, taught through Hawaiian. Students also learn Japanese through Hawaiian.

#### 8. The 'Aha Pūnana Leo Language Movement

- Went from severe language decline to thousands of speakers in 25 years
- Had similar high school graduation rates as Alaska Natives do now
- Nāwahī school has a 20 year record of a 100% graduation rate and 80% college placement rate
- Hawai'i is a world leader in indigenous language revitalization

#### 9. Sami · Māori · Gaelic

- Each of these languages went from highly endangered to relative safety through the following approaches:
  - building their own school
  - ensuring language equity through policy
  - starting their own media production
  - normalizing language use in communities

#### 10. How Do We Do It?

- The Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) provides educational opportunities to American Indians and Alaska Natives, by funding elementary and secondary schools. BIE directly operates 59 of these schools, while another 124 are operated by tribes under BIE contracts or grants. The schools are located on 64 reservations in 23 states, serving about 42,000 Indian students. The BIE also funds 26 tribal colleges and universities.
- A secondary option would be as Public Charter Schools, but I do not think that options brings as much flexibility, funding, and support.

#### 11. Budget Possibilities

- Based on student head counts and typical Bureau of Indian Education funding through a self-governance contract. Additional funding through grant-writing efforts, philanthropic efforts, and language nest tuition.

## **12. The Age of Self-Governance in Alaska Native Education**

- Sovereignty should begin with how we raise our children
- Sovereignty should be based upon protected that which makes us who we are
- You cannot have identity without language, it is the thought world that ties us to a distinct past and a certain future
- Assimilation does not work. It only creates more death and loss for our people

## **13. Teaching the World Through Indigenous Perspectives**

- Nature contains the creatures, plants, and elements of Nature that have named and defined themselves to my ancestors and are naming and defining themselves to me. My ancestors made my language from Nature. When I speak Yupiaq, I am thrust into the thought world of my ancestors.  
— Oscar Kawagley
- Even from long ago we have placed our grandchildren high above ourselves. Yes. We cherish them. Even those things we treasure we used to offer up to them, to those who are our grandchildren. That is why we made these songs their vision.  
— Kaal.átk' Charlie Joseph, Kaagwaantaan

## **14. Taking Control of Our Languages**

- We did not put ourselves in this situation, but we can get ourselves out of it
- Historical trauma begins to end when we unite to undo the horrors of American genocide
- This is bigger than revitalization, it is a movement of reclamation, and it begins with the ways we bring up our babies, teach our children, and elevate our own ways of knowing

## **15. Strong Languages, Strong People**

- Language Revitalization has been linked to suicide prevention, diabetes prevention, higher performance in standardized testing
- By shifting our focus from “fixing”and educational system that tried to destroy us to building our own, we create more opportunities for our people
- With language schools, we link ourselves to national and global networks committed to indigenous language survival and self-determination.

Howard Luke: You can do anything. If you just put it in your heart.