

Hello from Staff

Laura Revels – Program Manager

We've been busy gathering information and data to get a picture of what education looks like for our communities. How is it for our students? What can Chugachmiut Education do to help? We've been exploring these questions with parents, Elders, teachers, and administrators.

We also have been analyzing statewide and region-wide data from the State of Alaska Department of Education. It is our hope by looking at all these different data points and talking with our communities, we will get a fuller picture of educational needs and develop education/learning opportunities that work for our communities. Keep your eyes open for our data results report that will be published next month.

Although we are looking at all these pieces of what I consider a big puzzle, there is one piece of the puzzle that I'm sure is on all our minds and that is Covid-19. How is that piece going to affect education? I don't have the answer to this question but I hope together we can find answers that will help students to continue to learn and thrive!

We are still encouraging parents to help us to understand what education looks like by taking our online survey, which will take about 10 minutes - it's so important to get your input! <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/parentvoices>.

Gunalchéesh. Quyana!



I like this quote because I believe that one size does not fit all when it comes to learning.

"The answer is not to standardize education, but to personalize and customize it to the needs of each child and community." - Ken Robinson

Here's to discovering and learning what education looks like for the communities Chugachmiut serves!

Andrea Floersheimer – Program Coordinator



Hello everyone! I wish I could visit you in person, but in the meantime I've enjoyed connecting with many of you over email and phone. One of the highlights of my summer has been interviewing Elders in the region about their experiences in school. Their thoughts are helping us determine the content of Chugachmiut's Tribal Education Code. We are also recording the interviews to add to Chugachmiut's archive as an oral history collection. Please reach out if you are interested in contributing to this project (my contact information is on the last page). Otherwise I've been hiking and enjoying Alaska's breathtaking outdoors. I'm looking forward to berry picking over the next several weeks.

Letter From Our Director

Mark Hiratsuka

Director of Chugachmiut Heritage



Here's to facing the new school year with resilience and spirit.

Hello everyone! Can you believe it's Fall already?

Over the past summer, our team at Chugachmiut Education has been busy gathering community input on education in the region's schools. Laura Revels coordinated with all four school districts to distribute a survey to teachers throughout the region. We received a tremendous response. An official report of what we found will be published in October with all teacher information kept confidential.

Laura has also been working to conduct outreach to parents and caretakers in our communities. We distributed a survey and received great feedback from parents, particularly from Nanwalek, Port Graham, Tatitlek and Chenega. If you are a parent and have not taken the parent survey yet, we would **love** to hear from you. The more responses we receive, the better. We are particularly missing voices from the larger communities – Cordova, Seward, and Valdez.

Our program coordinator Andrea Floersheimer has spent much of this summer interviewing Elders in the region. Because we were unable to have an Elder's Conference in Anchorage due to Covid-19, we have instead been initiating one-on-

one conversations with Elders to gather their feedback. We have asked questions about their own educational experiences as well as their observations about education in their communities today. Andrea is working to create transcripts of the interviews so that the Elders' words and valuable life experiences can be saved and shared as an oral history collection.

As we look towards the Fall, we recognize all of the uncertainty but feel hopeful in what we can accomplish. Laura is drafting a tribal education code based on the feedback you have shared with us. Our team will distribute drafts of the tribal education code when it is ready and seek your thoughts and suggestions. This project is very exciting to us because it is a significant step in articulating what Native communities want to see happening in their schools. The tribal education code will be a document that directly communicates community desires to school districts. It will also guide Chugachmiut's education programming in the years to come.

Your voices are always welcome. Please reach out to me directly any time and stay healthy and well. Quyana!

- Mark Hiratsuka



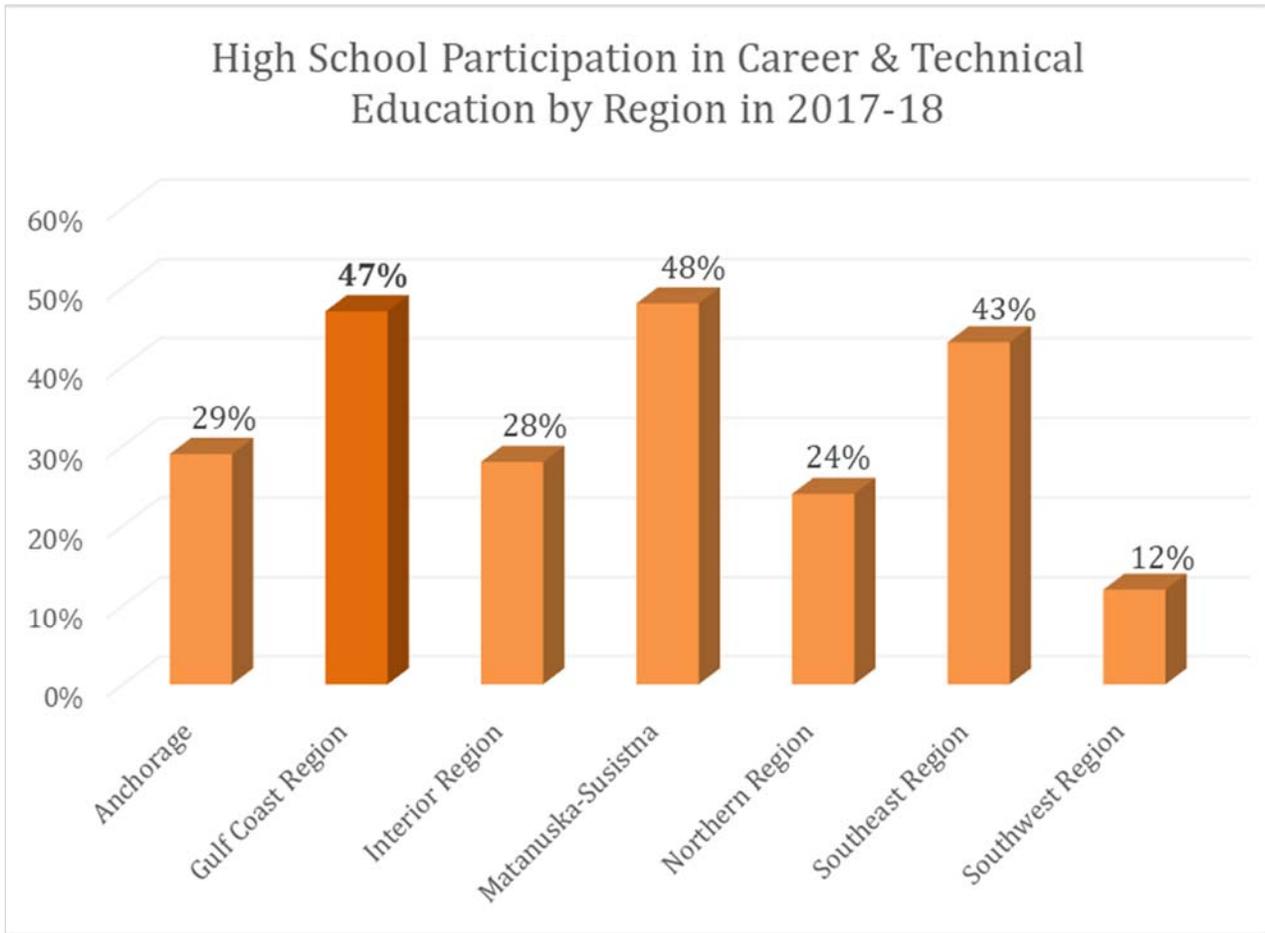
What the Data Shows

Career and Technical Choices

Choosing a career is a big decision. Exploring career options, internships, and apprenticeship programs, are all a part of helping a student make a plan of what they would like to do next after they are finished with school.

Did you know that the Chugach Region has one of the highest rates of student participation in Career and Technical Education in Alaska? This is reflected in the many science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs operating in the Chugach region. The high percentage of Alaska Native students at AVTEC and other programs is a sign that Alaska Native students are doing a great job at seizing these opportunities.

In the graph below, the Annie E. Casey Foundation identified the Chugach Region as within the Gulf Coast Region.



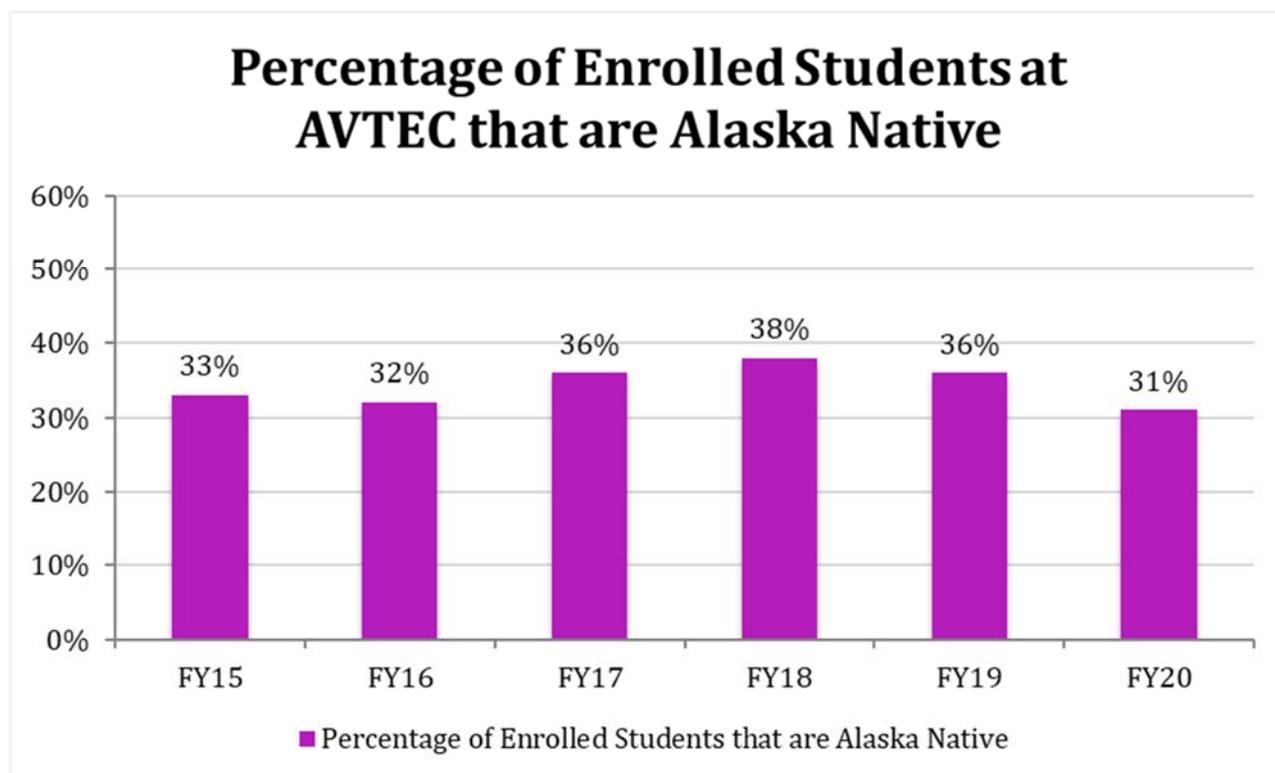
Source of data: The Annie E. Casey Foundation: Kids Count Data Center.

What the Data Shows

While programs such as AVTEC, Fab Lab, Alaska Construction Academies, and Upstream Academy provide an array of phenomenal career development opportunities, they primarily deal with the physical sciences. Careers in graphic design, website development, and photography also provide very stable (and creative!) careers, with the advantage that they can be done anywhere. Students can happily remain in their village communities while developing their skills and pursuing a rewarding career online.

Given that working with technology is already something that students in the Chugach region are good at, we want to know how we can build on that strength. Covid19 has certainly demonstrated to us how important online learning is. But it also demonstrated that nobody was prepared to suddenly shift all learning to our computers and devices at home.

As our world and careers increasingly move online, opportunities open up. Which ones interest you? What learning opportunities do you want to seize, and what obstacles stand in your way? Let us know how we can help.



The Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC) is a vocational training center operated by the State of Alaska as a Division of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Located in Seward, Alaska, AVTEC is an excellent place for Alaskans from across the state to gain key employability and technical skills and start on a career in less than a year. (Description is from AVTEC Website.)

Coping with Covid-19

The coronavirus pandemic is stressful for all Alaskans. It has disrupted our lives, our schools, travel, and how we are able to interact with one another. To help cope with these changes, we can follow the State of Alaska's guidelines for Covid-19 and make plans.

The State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) has created a plan for families with children and what to do if a parent or caregiver becomes sick from Covid-19. "A Covid-19 Family Plan" advises families to create a Circle of Support that includes family members, friends, and other trusted people who can help care for your children. The Plan includes:

- ▶ Identifying your Circle of Support
- ▶ Planning ahead with your Circle of Support
- ▶ Knowing when to activate your plan
- ▶ Finding help outside your Circle of Support
- ▶ Circle of Support Worksheet

You can download the whole family plan and the Circle of Support Worksheet at: <https://covid19.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-Planning-for-Families-with-Children-05012020.pdf>.

If you are a beneficiary of Chugachmiut, you can also call our Social Services and Behavioral Health programs for assistance on coping with Covid-19: 907-562-4155 or toll-free in Alaska: 800-478-4155.

How to Help Your Child with Online Learning

Online learning is a challenge and a big change in how our children learn. Not only does it affect children, but it affects parents too as they juggle daily life and help with children's schoolwork. Here are some tips that may help your kids thrive from e-learning.

- ◆ Encourage the understanding that online learning is not a vacation and grades, assignments, tests, etc. still matter. Check on your child's learning by working on problems together or encourage them to read their assignments out loud.

Resources

Covid-19 Related

"I am a Handwash Hero" a coloring book by ANTHC:

<https://anthc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Handwash-Activity-Book.pdf>

"Managing Anxiety & Stress During Covid 19" by ANTHC:

<https://anthc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Managing-Stress-and-Anxiety-During-COVID.pdf>

"A Healthier Home in 5 Steps" by ANTHC:

<https://anthc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/A-Healthier-Home-in-5-Steps.pdf>

If you need to find additional resources for you and your family there is 211.org (you can also call 211) to get information or referrals: <https://www.211.org/>.



Parents' Corner

- continued How to Help Your Child with Online Learning

- ◆ Avoid distractions. Create a space for learning for your child. Let them know that the learning space is a distraction-free zone by minimizing the use of their phones or TV during their learning times. This can get tricky if the TV is in the same room but it'd be helpful if the TV was not on during their learning times so they understand that you consider learning important.
- ◆ Encourage breaks. Schedule a "recess" for them to run and play and to have snacks. Try to schedule these breaks at the same time to keep it like a regular school day.
- ◆ Encourage your children to have video chats with their friends too - staying connected with their friends is an important part of growing their social skills.
- ◆ Get a tutor. Having a tutor could help your child with their school work. A tutor could help set your child up for successful learning and lessen your stress of thinking you have to do it. Children need one-on-one attention with their learning and a tutor can help! Contact your school to find out about their tutoring program.

Safety Online

Depending on the age of your child, supervised internet time is recommended. Supervised time may include:

- ▶ Spending time together to teach your kids appropriate online behavior, such as:
 - ▶ Not to share personal information such as your address, phone number or school name outside of school activities.
 - ▶ Not to meet anyone in-person without parent approval or supervision.
 - ▶ Not to respond to a threatening email, message, post or text (do report the threats the school or appropriate authorities).
- ▶ Working with your children to set a cut off time for being online so that your child is not online all day and all night.
- ▶ Keeping the computer in the common area where you can watch and monitor its use, and not in their bedrooms.

Resources

School/Homework Related

The Statewide Library Electronic Doorway (SLED) offers online tutoring in math, English, and history:

<https://lam.alaska.gov/sled/homework/>

Math can be a challenge, and this app can help out! Check out PhotoMath, for your phone or iPad to help with math homework:

<https://photomath.app/en/>



Children and Youth
Being sheltered-in-place,
away from school and
friends, can be stressful for
all children and youth.

Image Source: State of Alaska Office of Children's Services.

Parents' Corner

- continued Safety Online

- ▶ Finding out what, if any, online protection is offered by your child's school.
- ▶ Taking your child seriously if they report something that happened online that makes them uncomfortable or not feel safe.

With teens, it does get trickier to monitor their time spent online. They will need and want privacy. This is normal as they are learning to be independent. Talk to them about what is safe and what is not safe about being online. Assure them that they can always come to you if something doesn't feel right to them online.

The internet is a tool that is used in school, work, and socializing. It is best to teach your kids how to be safe online instead of banning them from the internet. Being able to use the internet and computers effectively is a skill that will serve your kids throughout their lives and professional careers. Kidshealth.org has some other online suggestions for kids to be safely online: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/net-safety.html?WT.ac=ctg#cathome>

Be gentle with yourselves during these unusual times and ask for help if you need it.

Sugt'stun Word of the Day



Sugt'stun Word of the Day. Source: "Nanwalegmiut Paluwigmiut-Ilu Nupugnerit, Conversational Alutiiq Dictionary, Kenai Peninsula Alutiiq."

Resources

Chugachmiut Heritage Preservation

Llangarlluni: Becoming Aware has cultural classroom materials available for free about the Chugach Native People. These materials are based upon Elders' knowledge and experience.

Resources include:

- Lesson Plans
- Heritage Kits
- Sugt'stun Language Teaching Tools
- Artistic Craft Activities
- Video Stories and Demonstrations

The materials are online: <https://chugachheritageak.org/>

A Fall Poem

November Night

Like steps of passing
ghosts,

The leaves, frost-crisp'd,
break from the trees
And fall...

~ Adelaide Crapsey

Community Voices

In this issue and our next issue, we will be highlighting some of our interviews with Elders about their educational experience.

Elders' Voices

Our team at Chugachmiut Education has reached out and invited Elders to talk with us about education in their communities. We have asked questions about their own educational experiences as well as their observations about education in their communities today. We have received an incredible response, and are creating an oral history collection so that the Elders' words can be saved and shared.

In reflecting on their school days, some Elders remembered how certain instructors attempted to make them feel ashamed of their identity. When Diane Selanoff (Valdez) was in elementary school, she recalled a teacher telling her first grade class that the children were going to burn. “[They] told stories like one of these days -- poof, you’re all just going to be sitting here and I’m going to disappear... to heaven. And you guys are all sinners so you’re going to die,” Diane Selanoff remembered. “And it was like, wow, we’re being taught that in first and second grade. It was their way of kind of doing conversion.”



Diane Selanoff



Pauline Demas

Other Elders remembered how teachers prevented students from expressing themselves in their Native language in school. “I did not hear Sugt’stun in our school at all. We were not allowed to speak it,” Pauline Demas (Nanwalek) remembered when describing her early days in school. She even remembered being punished when she didn’t understand instructions in English. “I got in trouble for that. For not understanding or asking questions in English.”

The experiences that Diane and Pauline remembered were not out of the ordinary. In missionary classrooms, supposedly “civilizing” Alaska Native children by making them feel ashamed of their culture was commonplace. In the late 1800s, the U.S. federal government established day schools in Alaska villages that promoted a strict “English-only” policy. The consequences of these policies have been felt over generations. Sperry Ash (Nanwalek) spoke about this legacy in a speech at the 29th Annual Bilingual Multicultural Education/Equity Conference: “We lack the control to try things our way. Everything about the borough school in our village permeates with the attitude ‘we know what’s best for your kids.’”

Despite facing many obstacles, most of the Elders had many positive memories of school and enjoyed the opportunity to grow. Jean Huntsman (Port Graham) enjoyed going to school because she liked learning new things. She described how she felt “happy to go to school and learn my numbers and my ABCs and painting.” Anesia Metcalf (Port Graham) shared how her work ethic from school translated well to when she studied at a culinary school in Seward. “I did like going to school. [In] later years when I went to school for the health aid food service I liked it, I never missed a day in Seward when I went to culinary school.”

Community Voices

Other Elders remembered forming close relationships with their teachers which made school a fun place to be. Dean Katelnikoff (Tatitlek) loved her school in Chenega. “The teachers were always pleasant and willing to teach us one on one if we needed it. That’s what I like because like in the cities and good-size towns you can’t do that,” she told us. Diane and Pauline also found school fulfilling in various ways. “I got to learn history of the world. One of my favorite subjects in school was English,” Diane Selanoff shared. Pauline Demas remembered that when she was a little girl she loved singing and poetry, interests that have stayed with her to this day.



Dean Katelnikoff



Patience Faulkner

Patience Faulkner (Cordova) told us, “I ended up with teachers that actually inspired me. They made the topic whatever it was enough for me to be curious about how the world operated, and from that I read a lot and was constantly interacting with people for something, I was always curious, and I’m still learning all the time.”

Many of the Elders also shared how important the education that they received from their community was to their development as people “Everything I really learned in school was me me me me, but I learned from grandma and grandpa and from mom that when you harvest your first animal you’re supposed to distribute it to the Elders and to the needy.” Bill Smith (Valdez) shared with us. Mark King (Cordova) recalled fishing with his father until he was around twelve years old, before eventually becoming a fisherman himself. He told us that he learned early on from his family and community that “If you wanted something, you had to work hard to get it.”



Mark King

Diane Selanoff told us “Education has only helped in the form of paperwork to provide jobs but school can’t teach ethics or values or any of that. It’s taught at home and by your community.”

Today, all of the Elders that talked with us are educational leaders in their communities. They have dedicated countless hours toward promoting the Sugpiaq and/or Eyak education of youth. Almost every single Elder has mentored kids, contributed to community knowledge projects, or visited school classrooms to share their stories and knowledge with the next generation. Keep an eye out for our next newsletter to learn more about the Elders’ life experiences and when the complete recordings of the interviews will be available!



William F. Smith Jr.

Do you have a story that you want to share? Do you know an Elder who we should interview? We want to hear from you. Please feel free to reach out to Andrea at andrea@chugachmiut.org and she would love to connect with you.

Quyana and thank you for sharing with us!

Guiding Our Work

We acknowledged the cultural values of the seven Tribal communities within the Chugach Region and we have adapted six of them to guide our work in education. We think these values below are important to the work we are doing.



Contact Us

We welcome your ideas and suggestions! Feel free to reach out to our team with ideas, opinions, or suggestions. We look forward to connecting and talking about how to help our children succeed!

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Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, State Tribal Education Partnerships (STEP). STEP's purpose is to promote increased collaboration between the Tribal education agencies, State educational agencies, and local educational agencies that serve Tribal students.

Pekllartukut Allingurtun, We Work Together | Grant Award: S415A190005 | State Tribal Education Partnerships 84.415AA
United States Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202