

BRISTOL BAY NATIVE ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 310
DILLINGHAM, ALASKA 99576
PHONE (907) 842-5257



Tribal Councils
Served by BBNA:

- Aleknagik
- Chignik Bay
- Chignik Lagoon
- Chignik Lake
- Clarks Point
- Curyung
- Egegik
- Ekuk
- Ekwok
- Igiugig
- Iliamna
- Ivanof Bay
- Kanatak
- King Salmon
- Kokhanok
- Koliganek
- Levelock
- Manokotak
- Naknek
- New Stuyahok
- Newhalen
- Nondalton
- Pedro Bay
- Perryville
- Pilot Point
- Port Heiden
- Portage Creek
- South Naknek
- Togiak
- Twin Hills
- Ugashik

2/24/2026

To: School Board Members

I'm reaching out again to talk about BBNA's Head Start program competing for students with the DCSD pre-k program. As you know from my letter last year (included here in case you're new to the SB), Head Start has had successful collaborations in the past with DCSD in providing pre-school services, and successful current collaborations in providing services to children with special needs. Head Start is a widely respected, research based, federally funded program designed to help children and their families prepare for the K-12 system. What makes Head Start different is that not only do we provide a classroom experience for students, but we are also working with families, to ensure they have what they need to thrive.

Head Start also understands that for students to learn, they must be healthy. Head Start requires hearing, vision and developmental screenings within the first 45 days of starting the program, within 90 days, all students must complete a physical and dental exams. Meals are cooked here on sight from scratch, and the nutrition regulations are even more strict than the school lunch program requirements. Head Start also has a bus with built-in-age-appropriate safety restraints. The bus always has an aide to help students get buckled in properly, we also pick up students either at their homes or as close to them as possible.

BBNA's Head Start program is funded to serve 80 students (16 in each of 5 classrooms, 2 in Dillingham, the others in the villages), and we receive \$1,807,130.00 to provide Head Start services. That works out to \$22,589 per student per year. We are currently serving 71 students, the loss of those 9 slots could lead to a loss of \$203,302 to the program, which would cause the closure of at least one classroom. This under enrollment is due in part to students enrolled in DCSD's pre-k program.

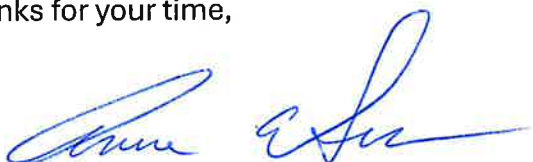
Dillingham doesn't have enough students to merit 2 pre-school programs, current census data indicates approximately 26 pre-k students for the fall. We have identified 15 of them, between our waitlist and current students in the 3-year-old classroom. Additionally, as you all know very well, staffing has become increasingly difficult since COVID. It just makes sense for us to work together to build a strong program, rather

than struggling to keep 2 programs up and running. I realize that DCSD wants to have a full day, full week program and I would be open to that if we can staff it appropriately and still meet the Head Start Performance Standards.

We live in a community with minimal resources, and we want the same thing, for our students to be ready for Kindergarten and reading on level by third grade. The only way to pull this off is to have a strong pre-k program which prioritizes qualified teachers and wraparound family support services. This is something we can do if we work together!

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have questions or need clarification. I'm also available to come to a work session to talk about Head Start services or participate in planning sessions.

Thanks for your time,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anne Shade", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Anne Shade

Bristol Bay Native Association

Child Development Department Director