



Office of Education
615 Stedman Avenue- Ketchikan, AK 99901
(907) 228-9365 Phone
www.kictribe.org

Saxman City Council
2841 S Tongass Hwy
Ketchikan, AK 99901

March 14, 2024

Dear Saxman City Council,

Ketchikan Indian Community's Tlingit Language Team has started an initiative to rename Ketchikan's middle school to, Kichxáan Héeni Middle School. We chose this name because the school sits next to this historic creek and would be Ketchikan's first name change using a traditional place name. We are reaching out to Native Corporations, Councils, School Districts, Elders, Clan Leaders, and organizations in various communities for support of this initiative.

The initiative is an effort to reintegrate traditional place names to the land and start revitalizing language on a different level. The initiative has sparked much conversation and questions—providing opportunity to share about the creek's origin with Naa.aa ádi and its history, the creek being gifted to Gaanax.ádi Yan Wulihashi Hít, and the totem poles that have stood next to it.

It has been a long-time interest of the Tlingit Language Team to not share *only* cultural knowledge, but *place-based* knowledge—Kichxáan's indigenous history: where kwáan borders are, which clans resided on this land, and the *original* names of the land. We are optimistic about reintegrating traditional place names all around the island. Part of the reintegration needs to include the history.

If you have any questions or would like to find out more about our initiative please contact us via email at lmilnedewitt@kictribe.org or phone (907) 228-9487. We look forward to hearing from you!

Gunalchéesh, Háw'aa, Ndoyackshn. If you or anyone you know are willing, please provide a letter of support addressed to Ketchikan Indian Community Tlingit Language Team.

Sincerely,

Xáa Tooch Sonya Skan
Education & Training Director