

INTENT TO DEVELOP CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

Please complete all of the information required on this form. All intent forms for establishing a charter school must be received by August 1 of the year prior to the date of intended implementation. For further details see the following documents:

A. KPBSD Board Policy and Administrative Regulations on charter schools. B. State of Alaska DEED charter school web site and application form. C. Charter school guidelines and application procedures.

1. Name of Charter School: **Tulen (The River Will Flow) Charter School**

2. Contact person for this application

Name: **Kyle McFall**

Mailing address: **Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus**

12271 Kenai Spur Highway

Kenai, AK 99611

Telephone: **(907) 335-7254**

3. Academic Policy Committee Membership - Include on a separate page the name of the members of the Academic Policy Committee. For each name specify whether the person is a student, parent, teacher, or employee (other than a teacher).

4. Attach to this intent form a brief description of the mission and goals of the charter school being proposed.

5. Prepare and include a narrative description of the organization, operation, and educational program of the charter school.

NOTE: Upon receipt of the intent form the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District administration will arrange for a meeting during which the content of this intent form will be discussed. It is recommended that the discussion meeting is concluded before the person(s) developing the charter school begins to complete the application form.

Return this intent form to:
Superintendent of Schools
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
148 N. Binkley Street
Soldotna, AK 99669

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KENAITZE INDIAN TRIBE

3. The following people will serve on the Academic Policy Committee for the Tulen Charter School:

- Bernadine Atchison – Chair of the Kenaitze Tribal Council
- Katie Archer Olson - Community Member and Co-Director of K-8 Teacher Education at Alaska Pacific University
- Jennifer Williams - Dena'ina Language Institute Director
- Diane Bernard - Early Learning Administrator at Kenaitze Indian Tribe
- Kaylee Gorrod - Dena'ina Language Teacher Apprentice and Parent
- Chantilly Bayes - Dena'ina Language Teacher Apprentice and Parent
- Kyle McFall - Education Director at Kenaitze Indian Tribe

4. The mission statement of the Tulen Charter School is:

- To provide a culturally based, academically rigorous education that empowers duhdeldihen (“students”) to succeed in today’s world by embracing Dena’ina traditional values, language, and culture, and to develop responsible community members who are critical thinkers, compassionate, and committed to living the Dena’ina culture.

The goals of the Tulen Charter School are:

- Integrate Dena'ina language, values, and culture into the school curriculum starting in the first academic year, with ongoing assessments and adjustments to ensure effective language learning.
- Recruit and train qualified instructors to become language speakers in Dena'ina, develop language learning resources, and establish regular language practice sessions and cultural activities.
- Provide an academically rigorous education through the utilization of integrated STEAM activities and curriculum.
- Foster a strong sense of identity and pride rooted in Dena’ina cultural traditions and values through engagement of families and community partners.
- Develop and implement place-based curriculum that incorporates traditional ecological knowledge, outdoor and experiential learning, and environmental stewardship activities.
- Maintain small class sizes that emphasize relationship based practices where the curriculum meets the student.
- Implement on-going student progress monitoring assessments to inform instruction

and make data-informed decisions.

- Establish an intergenerational mentorship model where students provide guidance to peers to create a sense of community and support while developing leadership skills for all students.
- To address historical and intergenerational trauma by empowering Dena'ina practices that foster healing.

5. Narrative of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe and its educational programs:

Kenaitze Indian Tribe (Kenaitze, “the Tribe”) is a federally recognized Indian tribal government reorganized in 1971 under the statutes of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, as amended for Alaska in 1936. The Tribe’s service area comprises the communities of Kenai, Soldotna, Sterling, Nikiski, Ridgeway, Kalifornsky, Kasilof, Funny River, and Cooper Landing—a geographical area that spreads across more than 15,000 square miles of rural Alaska. Tribal facilities are located in Kenai, Alaska, near the ancestral fishing grounds of the Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina (“People of the Kenai River”, Kenaitze) people, where the Kenai River empties into Cook Inlet. Kenaitze’s mission is “to assure Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina thrive forever,” serving 2,023 Tribal Members and approximately 4,740 Alaska Native/American Indian (AN/AI) residents of the central Kenai Peninsula; the total population living within the Tribe’s service area is nearly 35,000 people, the majority of whom are of European descent. In 2019, the Tribe established a dedicated Education Division—our Tribal Education Agency (TEA)—and the Tribe currently operates an array of educational programs for families with children ranging in age from prenatal infants to high school and beyond. These programs include Early Head Start, Head Start, and Alaska Native Education Early Learning; Yusdich’ qich’ul (Dena’ina phrase meaning “there is firelight”) tutoring and special education services; Yaghanen (“the good land”) afterschool programming, summer cultural education camp opportunities, and scholarships for teens and young adults matriculating into post-secondary schools; and Tinitun (“Pathway”) College and Career Readiness Project intended to provide college and career exploration opportunities and intensive advising for local AN/AI youth in middle and high school. Further, the Tribe completed construction of the full-service 62,500 sf Kahtnuht’ana Duhdeldiht (“the Kenai River People’s Learning Place” or “Ed Campus”) facility in 2022, which centralized Education programs to ensure a safe space and continuum of support for learners of all ages, with design features that include a library, specialized age-based early-learning classrooms, indoor-outdoor playground, community meeting space, and office space for Education staff. The completion of this Campus represents a major step toward Kenaitze’s long-term 2025 Community Goal Kahtnuht’ana Hqeldihch, “to develop and implement a Tribal Education System.”

In the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD), like many majority-White districts, considerable disparities persist between mainstream and minority (AN/AI) student cultures; the Alaska System of Academic Readiness (AK STAR) standardized assessment data show that AN/AI youth in the district are 144.27% more likely than their White peers to not be considered proficient or advanced in grade-level standards in

English/Language Arts (ELA, 16.67 to 40.72%) and 131.86% more likely to not be considered proficient or advanced in grade-level standards in Mathematics (18.33 vs 42.5%). The individual poverty rate for AN/AI persons within the KPB is 22 percent, more than double the Borough's overall 10 percent figure. Children growing up in poverty are particularly likely to enter school with deficits in social-emotional readiness. Based on the high number of impoverished and low-income families living in the Tribe's service area, the need to include consistent language and culture programming is high. An increased focus on culturally derived interventions and a trauma-informed educational environment is needed to address engagement, motivation, identity, behavioral, and other educational development issues in childhood before becoming lifelong problems. Fostering a positive sense of cultural identity is an important protective factor for developing resiliency, better preparing children to meet the challenges of growing up in today's world, and diminishing negative influences of poverty on cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development indicators. As a means of mitigating these disparities, students have access to an array of Kenaitze education and other services, including but not limited to the following:

- **Tutoring Services**—all youth involved in the program will have the opportunity for side-by-side, in-class support provided by a Culture Instructor from the Tribe's Education division. In addition to homework help, supports will include organizational assistance, social-emotional learning strategies (e.g. brain breaks), mentoring, and positive behavioral interventions as needed.
- **Educational Fishery and Harvest Shop**—operated through a joint permit with the neighboring Salamatof Tribe, the Fishery sets two nets along the Kenai, Kasilof, and Swanson Rivers, where up to 8,000 salmon are permitted to be harvested each year in order to supplement local Tribal diets. Traditional harvesting and fish-cleaning is practiced, and fish are stored for distribution to low-income residents via the Na'ini Food Cache, and for meals at the Tyotkas Elder Center. The Fishery is also utilized by Yaghanen Youth Programs during summer fish camps to allow Tribal elders to impart the importance and traditions of net fishing with Tribal youth.
- **Yinihugheltani Project**—Yinihugheltani ("respect for oneself and spirit") is a project with the vision to end substance misuse and suicide among Native Youth, to empower, inspire, and support healthy and successful lives. Yinihugheltani includes a comprehensive Suicide Prevention and Postvention Plan that incorporates insights and recommendations from behavioral health staff, community leaders, and youth for increased resilience in the face of community challenges.
- **Ts'ıłq'u Circle**—this alternative justice model allows for the resolution of conflict and mediation in a traditional, structured Circle format that is individualized and focused on honoring the dignity of all parties involved in the peacemaking process. The Tribe's Youth Tribal Circle allows for minors involved in harmful behavior and/or the juvenile justice system to be diverted away from further involvement with the courts and into an environment that promotes traditional Dena'ina values of honor and respect, humility and truth, love and compassion, and spirituality and unity. Ts'ıłq'u ("coming together as one") Circle also accepts sentencing referrals from the Alaska State Court System in support of statewide efforts to reduce prison populations for AN/AI and other community members.

- Dena'ina Language Institute — Department at Kenaitze developed to support Dena'ina language, culture, and traditions to ensure the Kahtnuht'ana thrive forever. Initially recognized as the Dena'ina Language and Culture Revitalization Project (DLACRP) in 2016, then in 2021 was established as the Dena'ina Language Institute (DLI) department at Kenaitze, the DLI currently teaches KIT staff as well as offers classes for the community, translation services, recording and transcription, along with language and culture curriculum development. The DLI works with elders and first-language speakers to support the mission: Restore, Revitalize, Reclaim, and Enact the Dena'ina Language and Culture.
- Yaghanen Youth Programs—originally serving as Kenaitze's substance use prevention and intervention programming, Yaghanen (“good land”) Youth Programs focus on activities that encourage school-aged Tribal and other AN/AI children to strive toward high standards for academic achievement, foster respect for all people and cultures, and develop the life skills necessary to succeed in the modern world—all through a safe and positive atmosphere for youth development. These programs include the Ggugguyni Native Youth Olympics, which highlights the development of individual physical, mental, and spiritual well-being; Jabila'ina Dance, which promotes Dena'ina language and culture through song and movement; Del Dumí/Chuda Cuya Drum, which encourages sobriety, respect, and pride through traditional drum songs; and an array of Fish, Moose, Harvest, and Archaeology camps, which emphasize cultural preservation, subsistence, traditional practices, and healthy life skills.
- Tinitun College and Career Readiness Center—Funded by the FY22 Native Youth Community Projects (NYCP) grant program, Tinitun (“pathway”) provides quality, highly individualized college and career coaching for approximately sixty (60) AN/AI 6th-12th grade students annually, ensuring they receive the ongoing support of trusted, culturally responsive adult educators as they age through middle and high school, and the early portion of adult life at a post-secondary institution or as part of the local workforce. Participating youth receive extensive supports including career exploration workshops, internship opportunities and connections with local businesses, hospitality and summer job training at the Ed Campus, financial assistance and stipends for program completion, and highly tailored, individual goal and progress monitoring from their assigned Advisor.
- Kenaitze Early Learning serves infants, toddlers and pregnant women/families (Early Head Start) & three to five year olds (Head Start) —Ch'anikna (“love for children”) is one of the Tribe's most important traditional values. Kenaitze's Early Head Start and Head Start program emphasizes family support and involvement, healthy lifestyle habits, and traditional Dena'ina culture, language, and core values. Our Early Head Start serves 40 infants & toddlers including 8 pregnant women/families and our Head Start programs serve 57 preschool aged children each year, providing access to dental and health screenings, nutrition services, and culturally enriched daily activities. Funding sources include Federal grants from the Department of Education (ED) and Administration for Children and Families (ACF), as well as from State-derived sources.

Kenaitze has extensive experience operating a wealth of programs that serve Tribal, AN/AI, and other historically disadvantaged members of the community. Programs housed

in the Tribe's Na'ini ("bravery, courage") Family and Social Services Division are primarily funded through US Department of Justice (DOJ) grants awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) and the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), helping to address domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual assault (DVSA); as well as offering child assistance, intervention, and assessments. Kenaitze's Qiz'unch' ("the right way, truth") Tribal Court hears a wide variety of cases including child protection, domestic violence, and other civil matters. Primary Care, Behavioral Health, and Wellness services available at Dena'ina Wellness Center (DWC) are funded through a compact with the Indian Health Service (IHS), and from grants awarded through the Alaska Department of Health (DOH) and US Department of Agriculture (USDA) among other sources. In spring of 2016, Kenaitze reopened its Tyotkas ("Auntie's Place") Elder Center, serving over 145 Tribal Members ages 55 and older by providing support in areas of nutrition, transportation, recreational activities, and abuse prevention. Housing Programs are funded primarily through Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act (NAHASDA) and Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) allocations, including Safe Home Renovations; Elder's Emergency Repair, Sanding, and Snowplowing; Transitional, Student, and Emergency Housing; Market Rate, Subsidized, and Rental Vouchers; as well as custodial/ maintenance services for Tribal facilities.