


**PALUWIGUM BEKSDID SUGT'STUN AGGAGOTATUGUUT**

**PORT GRAHAM'S SUGT'STUN WORKERS PLAN**

By  
Marleah Makpiq LaBelle

RECOMMENDED:

  
Jenny Bell Jones

  
Roy Mitchell

  
Charlene Stern

  
Judy Ramos

Advisory Committee Chair

  
Jennifer L.L. Carroll, Chair

Department of Alaska Native Studies and Rural Development

PALUWIIGUM BEKSDID SUGT'STUN AGGAGGTATUGUUT  
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By

Marleah Makpiaq LaBelle, B.A.

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## Abstract

This Sustainability Plan was written for the Native Village of Port Graham for their language program, Tamamta Litnaurluta. The Native Village of Port Graham, a federally recognized tribe that serves the Sugpiaq people of Port Graham, Alaska, received a three-year language immersion grant from the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) to provide language instruction for students ranging from Head Start through the 12th grade. The ANA grant will expire at the end of the 2015-2016 school year. This Sustainability Plan provides programmatic recommendations for the Native Village of Port Graham to consider for continuing Tamamta Litnaurluta beyond the life of the grant. The Sustainability Plan includes a funding plan, which contains grants the Tribe can pursue, and a sustainable income plan that address possible scenarios for the operating costs of the language program.

Research Methodology:  
Community Perspectives on the  
Sustainability of Tamamta Litnaurluta the Sugt' stun Language Revitalization Program for  
the Native Village of Port Graham  
Marleah LaBelle  
University of Alaska Fairbanks

### Abstract

Tamamta Litnaurluta is a Sugt'stun language revitalization project of the Native Village of Port Graham. Sugt'stun is an endangered language and the few speakers who remain are elders in their 50s, 60s and 70s. The Native Village of Port Graham, a federally recognized tribe that serves the Sugpiaq people of Port Graham, Alaska, received a three-year language immersion grant from the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) to provide language instruction for students ranging from Head Start through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The ANA grant will expire at the end of the 2015-2016 school year. The focus of this graduate research project was to gather input from community members on what the Native Village of Port Graham could do to make the Sugt'stun language program more sustainable. The findings from six semi-structured interviews with Port Graham leaders and community members were subsequently incorporated into a Sustainability Plan. The two central findings of this research were the urgent need for a) Sugt'stun language classes for parents and the entire community and b) the Sugt'stun language to be used throughout the community rather than just at the school.

### About the Researcher

My mother was born and raised in Port Graham with Sugt'stun being her first language. I did not learn to speak Sugt'stun since I was born and raised in Anchorage and my mother chose not to teach or speak Sugt'stun in the home with the exception of a few words. As a child, I traveled to Port Graham regularly and continue to travel there each year as an adult and mother of two young children. Being a tribal member of the Native Village of Port Graham, I have a strong connection to the place and the people.

Traveling to Port Graham as a researcher however was a new phenomenon. I experienced anxiety and apprehension worrying that the participants, many of whom are my relatives, would not be open and willing to discuss their experience with the language program with me. Internally, I struggled with fears that I would not be accepted by Port Graham since I did not live or grow up there. Much of the anxiety had to do with my role in this research as both an "insider" and "outsider".

Smith (2012) discussed this notion of insider versus outsider research at length:

At a general level insider researchers have to have ways of thinking critically about their processes, their relationships, and the quality of richness of their data and analysis. So too do outsiders, but the major difference is that insiders have to live with the consequences of their processes on a day-to-day basis for ever more, and so do their families and communities. (p. 138)

Smith also discussed how there are multiple ways of either being an insider or outsider in specifically indigenous contexts. While I may feel like an outsider because I was not born and raised in Port Graham, nor do I live there currently, I am in fact an insider in many ways. As a tribal member with matrilineal connections to Port Graham, I

continue to stay connected with the community and have chosen to enroll my children into the Tribe. A driving factor in my decision to focus this project on the Native Village of Port Graham was that I wanted to give back to our community.

### **Ownership**

This project was completed in partial fulfillment of my Master of Arts degree in Rural Development at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The larger goal, however, was to produce something of use to the Native Village of Port Graham as they plan for the future of Tamamta Litnaurluta. Since this is a project of the Native Village of Port Graham, transcripts of the interviews and the resulting Sustainability Plan will be submitted to the Tribe. The Sustainability Plan is intended to be a living document to be used at the discretion of the Native Village of Port Graham. It is also my hope that the Sustainability Plan will be of use to interested graduate students and communities.

### **Limitations of Study**

There are several limitations in this study. First, traveling to Port Graham from Anchorage is very expensive and therefore I was only able to complete one trip to conduct interviews. Traveling to Port Graham more regularly could have lessened some of the barriers and limitations that I experienced. Communicating with the Tribe via email or the telephone, for example, was not the most ideal method of gathering information and it often took several weeks to receive requested materials and information. It also would have been helpful to see first hand the limitations of the employees of Tamamta Litnaurluta. In the real world, the administration, teachers, and elders are people who have their own lives and families that could encumber the day-to-day administration of the program.

There were other stakeholders involved with Tamamta Litnaurluta who would have added to the data tremendously. Due to conflicting travel schedules, there were many people that I was unable to interview including an elder/master speaker, the program coordinator, the curriculum developer, the language editor, and the program evaluator. Additionally, the consultants, the curriculum developer, Sugt'stun editor and the program evaluator all live in different communities. In hindsight, I should have traveled to Port Graham during a time when they were holding a workshop or planning session so that I could have interviewed more stakeholders. Additionally, during interviews, I stuck closely to the prescribed questions yet in reflection, a less structured conversation would possibly have provided more meaning and insight. Second, while the Sustainability Plan is intended for the Native Village of Port Graham, as the researcher, I have no control over whether or not the Tribe implements any recommendations from the project. A final limitation of this project is my lack of previous experience writing sustainability plans.

## **Background**

Port Graham is a small community on the southern tip of the Kenai Peninsula. Travel is possible via a 20-minute plane ride from Homer or a one-hour boat ride. Port Graham has historically been a small community. According to the 2010 U.S Census, the population was 177 with 71.19 percent identified as American Indian and Alaska Native. The indigenous people of Port Graham are Sugpiat, also known as Alutiit. The Sugpiat/Alutiit occupy the Prince William Sound, the Gulf of Alaska, and the southern tip of the Kenai Peninsula, Kodiak Island and through most of the Alaska Peninsula.

As with most Alaska Native cultural groups, the Sugpiat experience widespread language and identity loss due to forced assimilation attempts by the federal government. Sugpiat who attended regional boarding schools experienced racism and embarrassment about their identity which contributed to subsequent generations of Sugpiat not learning how to speak their first language. Further troublesome is the fact that well into the 1990s, many Sugpiat referred to themselves as ‘Aleut’. Aleut and Alutiit are not indigenous designators but rather what Russian explorers called the people of those regions.

Current generations of Sugpiat children and youth did not grow up in the same boarding school environments as their grandparents and parents. Children in Port Graham today are able to attend Head Start through high school while remaining in their community. They are also not subjected to the same degree of outright racism from teachers, school administrators or other students that their parents or grandparents most likely experienced.

More than 50 years have passed since Alaska’s statehood and the federal government’s explicit efforts to assimilate the indigenous people of Alaska. Today, there are worldwide efforts by indigenous communities to revitalize and maintain their languages. In 2014, the Alaska State Legislature passed House Bill 216 known as the Alaska Native Languages Bill, which recognized Alaska Native languages as official languages of the State of Alaska alongside English. (Alaska State Legislature, 2014).

### **Origins of Tamamta Litnaurluta**

Chugachmiut, a regional nonprofit health organization of Port Graham, is a stakeholder to the maintenance and preservation of the Sugt’stun language. According to a 2010 Chugachmiut Regional Survey Project, 70 percent of respondents from Port

Graham expressed strong support for developing a language program that brings together Elders and youth and can be offered as language credit at the high school level. (Native Village of Port Graham Narrative, 2013, p.2).

During an interview with Pat Norman, the Chief of the Native Village of Port Graham and the Tamamta Litnaurluta Project Director, he described the increasing importance of language and culture during a strategic planning session that the Tribe held with the entire community.

“We’d had a session with the youth, middle-aged parents, staff, and council members. I think there was a combined [document] where everything was put on paper. And from that document, and from the first time from my perspective, I heard that there was an understanding of the importance of language to culture to re-remembering our cultural ways in terms of the language.” (P. Norman personal communication, September 6, 2015).

Norman also reflected upon Port Graham’s prior experience administering a similar ANA grant for Nanwalek, a nearby village. The funding Nanwalek received was for Sugt’s tun language classes in the school and according to Norman, “...since we were involved with that, I saw the benefits of a child talking with a parent on a plane once.” (P. Norman personal communication, September 6, 2015). With building community support and positive evidence from Nanwalek’s own language program, Port Graham recognized the substantial need for a Sugt’s tun language program and took action to revitalize their language and traditional knowledge.

**Tamamta Litnaurluta**

Tamamta Litnaurluta is the Sugt'stun Language Revitalization Program for the people of Port Graham. Tamamta Litnaurluta literally means "we all learn together". The program uses a master-apprentice model where apprentice teachers instruct the language to children and youth while they too learn the language from master speakers. Some of the methods that Tamamta Litnaurluta uses to teach include Total Physical Response (TPR) and Where Are Your Keys (WAYK). TPR is a method of language instruction that teaches language in coordination of physical movement. According to the creator of WAYK Evan Gardner (2014), WAYK is a system of language learning, language teaching, and community language revitalization, which combines proven strategies for language acquisition, community building, and leadership development.

Tamamta Litnaurluta is currently in its final year of a three-year grant from the Administration for Native Americans. The number of people actively involved in Tamamta Litnaurluta is limited. Administering the program is a project director, who is also the Chief of Port Graham. The project coordinator also serves as an environmental health technician. There are two language teachers whose official titles are 'teacher assistant' within the existing preschool Head Start and the Port Graham School with grades Kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. There are two elders who act as mentors to the language teachers since they are master speakers of Sugt'stun. In addition to the staff and the elders, there are consultants who work with the Tribe including a curriculum developer, a Sugt'stun editor, and a program evaluator. In total, Tamamta Litnaurluta has six staff members and three consultants. (Port Graham, 2013).

The two teachers instruct at the preschool Head Start for 30 minutes per day and at Port Graham School for 45 minutes per day. The children in Head Start learn approximately two to three Sugt'stun words per day while the children and youth in Port Graham School learn five Sugt'stun words daily. The curriculum is developed at the beginning of the school year and the teachers instruct based on the established curriculum. If the teachers run into any problems or need help with a Sugt'stun word, they contact one of the elders/master speakers. At the end of the school week, the teachers do a review of the words with the students.

Students avoid losing their Sugt'stun fluency during the summer by attending Tamamta Litnaurluta Saturday camps that incorporate language with cultural activities such as subsistence food gathering. The language program also has classes to teach parents the same material and information that their kids are learning in school.

Throughout the school year, the curriculum developer holds trainings in Port Graham along with the Sugt'stun editor. The curriculum developer lives in Homer and the Sugt'stun editor lives in Nanwalek so both of them have to travel to and from Port Graham in order to participate. The Evaluator also travels to Port Graham during trainings and to observe Saturday camps.

## **Methodology**

According to Randy Stoecker (2013), "Qualitative research has typically involved interviews or document research or observation that the researcher then interprets rather than counts" (p.6). A qualitative research approach enabled me to conduct semi-structured interviews with select community members involved with Tamamta Litnaurluta. The community members who were interviewed include the Project Director,

the Language Researchers/Apprentices, a community member, a parent, and the Chugachmiut Language Program Coordinator.

All of the participants provided suggestions on which parents were the most engaged in Tamamta Litnaurluta and who could provide input on how the language program was working for their children. They also gave names of community members who were involved with the Saturday camps, Chugachmiut's Sugt'stun Summer Immersion Camp, and names of elders who have shown an interest in the effort. From their suggestions, I was able to connect with one of the parents that were recommended by the two language teachers and the project director since she was a language teacher at the Summer Immersion Camp and has children in the Port Graham School.

All of the participants interviewed (with the exception of one) opted to have their name associated with their interview and be listed as a co-researcher in the project. Maintaining the anonymity of the one informant is challenged by the fact that Port Graham is such a small community and the number of the people involved with the language program is even smaller. I have, however, taken great care to help keep this participant anonymous by password protecting the recorded interview and removing the informant's name from interview transcripts.

Wilson (2008) noted the complexity of following the ethics of research as an indigenous researcher stating, "This externally imposed code of ethics did not fit within the axiology of an Indigenous research paradigm. My role as researcher and storyteller necessitated that my own values, beliefs and views be inherent in all aspects of research" (p. 13). Wilson went on to mention that the information or data collected could in effect

lose its power if the information could not be attributed to a specific person. This could be true to a certain degree depending on how much information is being gathered and the depth of the knowledge being shared. It can still have value and importance even if the participant wants to remain unnamed.

The purpose of the interviews was to capture community members' recommendations on what is needed in order for Tamamta Litnaurluta to continue into the future. Questions that were posed during interviews included the following: What makes Tamamta Litnaurluta successful? What are the future goals? What resources or support are needed to keep the language program going? Identifying and building from program strengths and addressing the challenges will help to determine how Tamamta Litnaurluta can be sustained beyond Year Three of their grant from the Administration for Native Americans.

### **Compensation for Participants**

All of the participants were offered \$20 in compensation for taking part in the interviews. The purpose of the compensation was to indicate that the participants are the experts and that they were giving me the gift of their time. Income is scarce in Port Graham and the small gift was meant to ease the burden of taking part in the interviews however the \$20 compensation was offered regardless of where the participant lived.

### **Data Collection**

The Tribe was given two-weeks' notice prior to my site visit to Port Graham. Prior to the trip, I developed research questions that were designated to generate information on the program's successes and needed areas of improvement. The interview

questions were provided beforehand at the request of the project director. Since the interviews took place over the weekend, they were conducted in participants' homes.

While in Port Graham, I attended bingo at the community center and was able to visit with community members. I visited with my aunt, the matriarch of my maternal family, who provided guidance and suggestions for conducting the interviews since she is also an elder/master speaker.

The qualitative interviews were informal with guiding questions to keep the conversation moving. I reviewed the consent forms with participants and explained that they had the option of being named in the study and listed as a co-researcher or to remain anonymous and be attributed as a "community member". If the informant's consented, interviews were recorded and field notes were also taken. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. Visiting with the participants often lasted another 30 minutes.

As a graduate student conducting interviews in my Tribe for the first time, I was nervous about how I would be received in the community. Before each interview, I would visit with the participants and catch up on how they were doing since the last time we saw each other. I explained to everyone that I was not planning on becoming a language program expert nor was I interested in operating or administering a language program. I further explained that I was interested in learning about how programs could be sustained after grant funding is no longer available.

As a Sugpiaq researcher, it was important to explain where I was coming from and my desire to learn about Tamamta Litnaurluta and to hear participant ideas about creating a sustainable program. Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008) explained, "I have situated myself in the research process by giving a detailed explanation of my

background. This is required by the Indigenous axiology and methodology of relational accountability” (p.10).

### **Indigenous Codes of Conduct**

Maori scholar, Linda Smith (2008) refers to indigenous codes of conduct and protocols and how they govern how we act and behave in an indigenous community. Smith stated, “The term ‘respect’ is consistently used by indigenous peoples to underscore the significance of our relationships and humanity.” (p. 125). The term respect is used frequently by Sugpiat of the Chugach region and is a word that is used to describe Sugpiat cultural values. Respect was a protocol that I used as an indigenous researcher, and in turn, the participants showed me respect.

One of the participants had asked me to go to her house in an hour and when I arrived, I noticed that the floor was wet. The interviewee had taken the time to clean her house in preparation of the interview. It was a very kind gesture and one that showed respect. At another participant’s house, the family invited me to stay for tamuq (dried fish) following the interview. To tamuq is to all sit at the table together and eat dried fish with seal oil or Canola oil with soy sauce and garlic salt. It is something that you do with people and is a form of bonding. To invite someone to tamuq with you is a great sign of respect.

As mentioned, all of the interviews took place in the participants’ homes. Other people including the participants’ family, other visitors, and spouses were often present while interviews took place making the environment casual and relaxed.

The questions that were asked of the parent were slightly different than those asked of the teachers, project director, or community member. Some of the parent

interview questions included what their recommendations were for the program and what their hopes and dreams for the future for their children were. The questions for the teachers and the administrators were more focused on what is working programmatically and what are some of the resources that the program needs. The questions for the parents focused more on how they feel and the emotions and behaviors of their children.

The program hopes to have more parental involvement so interviewing a parent was crucial. Parents play a key role in learning Sugt'stun since children need to be able to hear the language at home and not just at school. During the interview with a parent, I shared the days and times of the parent classes, which was apparently the first time this parent had received that information. This finding seems to point to the need for improvement in communicating and sharing information about the program with parents.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Content analysis was used to analyze the transcripts of the interviews. While there were multiple questions that were asked during the interview with all of the participants, the questions were specifically on Tamamta Litnaurluta and did not ask any questions unrelated to the language program.

A more 'indigenous' approach to this research project would have been to utilize a participatory research framework where the Port Graham community would have helped to create the interview questions and assist in analyzing the data. This preferred method would have been challenging since I live in a different town.

This research project also used the project based research cycle. Tamamta Litnaurluta is in the final year of their grant and I wanted to explore what is necessary to

keep the language program going into the future. This research project tackles two of the phases of the project based research cycle: diagnosing and prescribing.

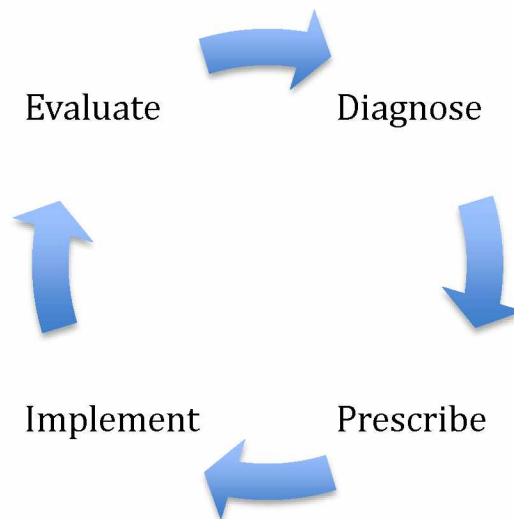


Figure 1: The Project-Based Research Cycle (2013). This figure explains how at anytime in a project, research can be applied to create change.

Through analyzing the interviews, I was able to identify key issues facing Tamamta Litnaurluta. According to Stoecker (2013), by diagnosing something that needs an understanding; you can create a needs assessment for something that needs to change. The interview questions were designed with the information that is needed to diagnose what areas of the language program need improvement.

From the interviews, the first issue that came up with both of the teachers was that there was very little participation from parents and the community when it came to parent language classes and the Saturday camps. Yet when I shared the information about the parent classes with one parent during an interview, the parent was unaware that parent classes were being held. From the program's perspective, parents are not engaged and are uninterested in supporting the language program, but at least one parent in the small

community was unaware of the classes which creates an opportunity to increase and improve communications from the tribe with the rest of the community.

An issue that came up with both of the teachers and the parent was the fact that Sugt'stun is not spoken anywhere in the village except for at school. The parent who was interviewed shared that her younger brother decided to drop out of the Sugt'stun learning sessions. When asked why he was not in the language classes anymore, the brother said, "Why should I learn it? Nobody around here speaks it anyways". (Personal communication, September 5, 2015). All of the participants reported that they would like to see the language spoken around the community and not just in school or in homes. The children and the youth need to hear the language in more places around the community in order for them to value the language and be encouraged to continue learning and speaking Sugt'stun.

The project director agreed that there needs to be universal speaking and fluency of Sugt'stun. Tamamta Litnaurluta was able to learn from existing language programs including one in Kodiak. The Alutiiq Museum has several language programs for children and youth as well as elders and adult learners. Everyone in the community needs to have the ability to become fluent in order to fully support the students and to ensure Sugt'stun continues to be spoken.

Based on the feedback of the community member interviewed, the children and the youth seem very interested in learning about subsistence foods and how to process them. While Port Graham relies predominantly on a subsistence economy, parents or other family members do not often teach or show the younger generation how to live a subsistence way of life. The process of teaching and showing the younger generations

how to process subsistence foods speaks to how children were taught traditionally. This was viewed as a positive aspect of learning culture and language that the community member appreciated and would like to see more of.

Both of the teachers and the project director mentioned the need for funding to keep Tamamta Litnaurluta going into the future. The project director had a strategy in mind as to how they should approach seeking additional funding which included collaborating more with regional organizations such as Chugachmiut and Chugach Alaska Corporation. The way that the current ANA grant program is structured, Tribes across the Nation are competing with one another for limited funding. This funding model does not work for region-wide language revitalization and preservation programs. There are seven communities in the Chugach region that could all conceivably have a Sugt'stun language program, and be competing with one another for the same grants.

## **Findings**

The following section outlines key findings of this research. The findings emphasize areas that must be addressed in order for Tamamta Litnaurluta to continue.

*Secured language program funding.* The program is in the last year of the grant and there are no plans in writing about what the Tribe plans to do for future funding requests. When asked about the barriers to teaching Sugt'stun, the primary Language Teacher, Ephemie Dumont, said, "One thing that comes to mind is that we are grant based. So when the grant ends that it's possible that the Sugt'stun language program won't be able to be in the school until we get another grant or one of us gets a teaching certificate to be able to teach in the school". (Personal communication, September 5, 2015).

*Increased community/parent participation.* According to one teacher, “The biggest challenge for the teachers is to keep students interested and the parents involved so they can get to learn some words everyday with the student.” (Personal communication, September 5, 2015). Tamamta Litnaurluta has offered Saturday camps and language classes that are geared towards parents however the whole community is welcome to join. I asked one parent, how the parent classes were going and she expressed that she did not know that there were parent language classes being offered. This could present an opportunity for the language program to re-think their method of disseminating information to parents.

*Certified language teacher.* One of the ways that the Native Village of Port Graham could address the issue of sustainability is through the Kenai Peninsula School District hiring a certified teacher fluent in Sugt’s tun at the Port Graham School. This is a long-range goal since there are no certified teachers living in Port Graham who are fluent in the language which would mean that the Tribe would need to consider either identifying a potential teacher and have them obtain a teaching certificate and a four-year college education degree or recruiting a teacher who is fluent in Sugt’s tun from another community such as Nanwalek or Kodiak.

*Continuation of the summer immersion camp.* All of the interviewees (the teachers, the parent, the community member and the program coordinator at Chugachmiut) shared that the last year of the Sugt’s tun Immersion Camp was a huge success. Chugachmiut also had a language grant from the Administration for Native Americans, which ended the summer of 2015. According to Ephemina, “And the good thing about that is that they had language teachers, Sugt’s tun language teachers, every

year we got more and more language teachers. That's been really helpful at continuing the language. Getting more language teachers involved." (Personal communication, September 15, 2015). The teachers talked about how the immersion summer camp also provided workshops for the teachers. What was not mentioned however is that children and youth are revisiting the language during the summer months when school is out.

*Sugt'stun spoken around the community.* Both the Sugt'stun language teachers talked about the need for the language to be spoken more widespread than just at the school. One teacher shared, "I would like to see the language spoken more at home and in the community more often". (Personal communication, September 5, 2015). Tamamta Litnaurluta's focus was on teaching the children and students in Port Graham. Not planning for an adult learning component was quickly identified as a deficiency as the children caught onto the language. Pat Norman, the Project Director stated, "We need fluency. We can't be speaking English when we're trying to create an environment of getting back to speaking our language." (Personal communication, September 6, 2015). In order for the language to continue into the future, more within the community must speak Sugt'stun.

*Increased elder involvement.* As it is now, the elders are only peripherally involved in Tamamta Litnaurluta as master speakers who teach the apprentices or attend meetings on the language program. Almost all of the informants agreed that they would like to see a greater participation from the elders in the language program. In Sugpiat culture and tradition, we look to our elders as culture bearers and the keepers of our historical and traditional knowledge. In the words of Pat Norman, "We need the elders get together [so] they speak the language so that we're hearing it." (Personal

communication, September 6, 2015). There could however be some hesitation on the part of the Tribe to ask for more from the elders since they have varying degrees of health. As the chief of Port Graham and the project director of Tamamta Litnaurluta, Norman would seem to be the most natural person to seek out the elder's willingness to be more involved.

## **Conclusion**

The Native Village of Port Graham has made great strides in the startup of their language program, Tamamta Litnaurluta. The students in Head Start and at Port Graham School are eager to learn and have continued to advance their fluency with Sugt'stun with each school year. Tamamta Litnaurluta teachers are able to travel to dynamic workshops and master elders provide guidance and knowledge of the language. There are, however, many challenges they will have to tackle as their three-year grant comes to an end.

The parents and middle-aged generations did not learn Sugt'stun in the home and may only have a baseline understanding of the language. In order for the children and students to feel supported in their learning, they need to hear and speak Sugt'stun outside of school. The Sustainability Plan includes the recommendation for an adult learning component and recommendations for having Sugt'stun spoken around the community.

The biggest decision for the Tribe will involve identification of the vital components to keeping Tamamta Litnaurluta as a program in Head Start and Port Graham School. The Native Village of Port Graham received startup funds from the Administration for Native Americans for language revitalization and maintenance and now it is up to them how the language program will be supported in the future. The Sustainability Plan provides scenarios to help them decide what will be included in the

language program. With less state and federal funds expected to be available, communities will have to make due with fewer resources. The Plan will help to frame how Tamamta Litnaurluta can continue into the future and highlight opportunities for program improvement.

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## **APPENDIX A RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Interview questions for the program administrators and teachers:

1. Describe your involvement with the language program.
2. How did the first year of the language program go?
3. Could you tell me about how elders are involved in the language program?
4. Could you tell me about how parents are involved with the language program?
5. How is the community involved in the language program?
6. What are some of the ways that the language program is collaborating with other organizations?
7. What are some of the biggest challenges for the students? And the teachers?
8. What are the goals for the language program after the final grant year?
9. Are there materials or assistance you need to help teach the language?
10. Did you get enough training to teach the language?
11. What are the barriers to operating a Sugt'stun language program?
12. What are the resources needed to operate a Sugt'stun language program in the long term?
13. Where else would you like to see the language spoken?
14. Is there anything you would like to add?

Interview questions for parents:

1. Describe your involvement with the language program.
2. How did the first year of the program go?
3. Do you speak, read or understand Sugt'stun?
4. Do you use the language at home with your child(ren)?
5. Have you noticed a change in your child since they started learning Sugt'stun? (Such as more interest in the language or culture? Or have they become more respectful or exhibited other Sugpiaq values?)
6. Is there anything that has worked well for your child(ren) over the past year and a half?
7. Do you need additional training/assistance to help your children use the language at home?
8. What recommendations do you have to see this program continue on for the long run?
9. What are your hopes and dreams for your child(ren)? And for Port Graham?
10. Would you be willing to contribute time and/or money in the future?
11. Is there anything you would like to add?

Interview questions for elders:

1. Describe your involvement with the language program.
2. When did you learn Sugt'stun?
3. What do you enjoy about being involved with the language program?
4. Have you noticed a change in the children in Port Graham since they started learning Sugt'stun?
5. Has the village changed since the language program started?

6. What has worked?
7. What would you like to see done differently?
8. Is there anything you would like to add?

Interview questions for stakeholders:

1. Describe your involvement with Sugt'stun language revitalization and maintenance efforts.
2. Is your organization involved in the Port Graham language program?
3. Does your organization promote the Sugt'stun language? How?
4. What are some of the ways that your organization could be involved in the Port Graham language program?
5. What are the pros and cons of having a regional language revitalization effort?
6. What language practices worked for your organization?
7. What do you hope to see happen with the Chugach region and the Sugt'stun language?
8. Is there anything you would like to add?

Interview questions for program evaluator:

1. Has the language program made improvements over the course of two years?
2. Are the children learning adequate language skills in the language program?
3. What opportunities are being provided to the teachers to continue their learning of the Sugt'stun language?
4. Is there anything you would like to add?

**APPENDIX B INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

Research Study: Language sustainability planning for the Native Village of Port Graham  
 IRB # 638454-1 Date Approved 5/22/15

Language sustainability planning for the Native Village of Port Graham  
**Consent**

My name is Marleah LaBelle. I am the daughter of Jim and Susan LaBelle. I am a college student doing research on how to make a native language program sustainable. I would like to interview you because you have knowledge on this topic.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. By participating, you agree to the following:

- You will be asked questions and to share a story that involves teaching the Sugt'stun language in Port Graham.
- There are no expected risks to you if you take part in this study.
- You will not directly benefit from this study.
- You will be paid a one-time compensation of \$20.
- You must be 18 years of age or older.
- Your interview will be audio-recorded and will probably take about 30 minutes of your time. The purpose of recording is to capture what you say as correctly as possible. I am the only person that will hear your recording.

Information from this study will be used in presentations and publications. It's up to you whether or not your name appears in this study. Please review options A and B and check one.

     **Option A:** You agree to be identified by name in this study. If you are quoted, you will have a chance to review the text before it's included in a final document. You will also be named as a co-researcher.

     **Option B:** You agree to be identified by a general title (such as "elder" or "community member") in the study. Your name will be removed from all interviews so that no one besides me can trace you to the information you gave.

If you have any questions, please ask now or call me later at 907-317-3543. If you have any concerns about this study, call Judy Ramos at 907-279-2703. The UAF Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a group that examines research projects involving people. The review is done to protect people like you involved in research. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the UAF Office of Research Integrity at 907-474-7800 (Fairbanks area) or 1-866-876-7800 (toll-free outside the Fairbanks area) or [uaf-irb@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-irb@alaska.edu).

I understand the above and agree to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Subject & Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Person Obtaining Consent & Date

# **Paluwiigum Beksdid Sugt'stun Aggaggtatuguut** ***Port Graham's Sugt'stun Workers Plan***



Marleah LaBelle  
University of Alaska Fairbanks

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## Quyanaakcak

Quyanaakcak to all of the Tamamta Litnaurluta staff who were able to participate in the interviews or provided guidance: First Chief/project director Pat Norman, elder/master speaker Mary Malchoff, elder/master speaker Stella Meganack, project coordinator Rita Meganack, Sugt'stun teacher Ephemina Dumont, and Sugt'stun teacher Michelle Moonin. Your insights, knowledge and dedication to the language program were evident. I wish the program many years of success well into the future. I hope to see an annual meeting held entirely in Sugt'stun someday. There is no way I could have written my graduate project or methodology paper without your assistance.

Many thanks to my Sugpiaq mama who endured many phone calls all hours of the day and helped answer questions like, "How do you say (this) in Sugt'stun?" Quyanaakpak to my Inupiaq papa who traveled in this same graduate program and encouraged me and believed in me every step of the way. My parents are an inspiration to me.

My husband has been my anchor and my soundboard these past two and a half years. He has cooked more than his fair share of family meals, drove our daughters to and from school and dance class and has been the main caretaker and nurturer in our family. Quyanaa, my beautiful daughters who have had to navigate life a little without their mama's full attention. Lilani and Julianna, you make mama proud everyday.

Lastly, quyanaakcak to my graduate committee, professors: Judy Ramos, Jenny Bell Jones, Charlene Stern and Roy Mitchell. I've appreciated this process, your feedback and comments, and your guidance. Being a graduate student in the UAF Rural Development program was an incredible experience.

*Purpose: Firmly establish a community-wide environment that supports the learning and revitalization of Sugt'stun, so that it becomes a natural medium of communication in our village.*

*- Port Graham Tribal Council*

## **Executive Summary**

Tamamta Litnaurluta is a language program that the Native Village of Port Graham started in 2013 that provides Sugt'stun language instruction for preschoolers in Head Start and children and youth attending Port Graham School in grades Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The language program is administered by the Native Village of Port Graham through a three-year grant from the U.S. Office of the Administration for Children & Family's Administration of Native Americans Native Language Preservation and Maintenance grant (2013-2016). Sugt'stun is the first language of the Sugpiat people. In Sugt'stun, Tamamta Litnaurluta means 'we all learn together.'

The language program uses a blending of the Sugt'stun curriculum that was developed by the tribal regional nonprofit, Chugachmiut, as well as a method of language instruction that teaches language in coordination of physical movement called Total Physical Response (TPR). Tamamta Litnaurluta also uses a master/apprentice approach to teaching language. The master/apprentice method, developed by Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival, is a teaching and learning method where a fluent speaker is paired with a non-fluent speaker from the same cultural group.

There are two elder/master speakers who provide mentorship and support to two apprentices/language teachers who then teach children. Collectively, there are 34 children in both Head Start and Port Graham School who receive Sugt'stun language instruction for 30 to 45 minutes a day. Assessments have shown that the students are learning the language quickly and are able to progress to the next level. It is expected that some of the students in Port Graham School will be moving onto speaking in sentences in the 2016 spring semester.

The current language grant is going to end August 2016. This Sustainability Plan outlines recommendations that the Native Village of Port Graham can incorporate into their existing program delivery to ensure the program continues beyond the grant end date. The recommendations are based on qualitative interviews with the project director, the language teachers, a parent, a community member, and the Chugachmiut program coordinator. Additionally, this Sustainability Plan for Tamamta Litnaurluta includes a suggested funding plan in order to seek out new funding sources.

## The Organization and its Environment

### The Native Village of Port Graham

Port Graham is located at the southern tip of the Kenai Peninsula and is 20 air miles southwest of Homer and 180 air miles southwest of Anchorage. Travel to the village is possible only by air or water. The economy is a mix of subsistence and a cash economy with some jobs available at the school, the Tribal Council, the clinic and some commercial fishing.



Figure 1: Map of Kenai Peninsula. Port Graham Corporation. (2008).

The Native Village of Port Graham is a federally recognized Tribe that governs the Sugpiat people of Port Graham. The Tribal Council is comprised of five members including a First Chief, Second Chief, Secretary, Treasurer and a Council Member.

According to Chugachmiut, the regional nonprofit of the Chugach region and Prince William Sound region, "The village Council operates a variety of social, cultural and community and economic development programs designed to enhance the quality of life within Port Graham." (Port Graham. (n.d.). Retrieved September 24, 2015.). The Tribe has a tribal administrator, and four additional administrative staff working on Tamamta Litnaurluta to ensure the success of the program. The Native Village of Port Graham has approximately 330 tribal members today. According to the 2010 U.S. Census the population of Port Graham is 177. The median age for Port Graham is 31 and there are only 23 elders in the 62 years and older population.

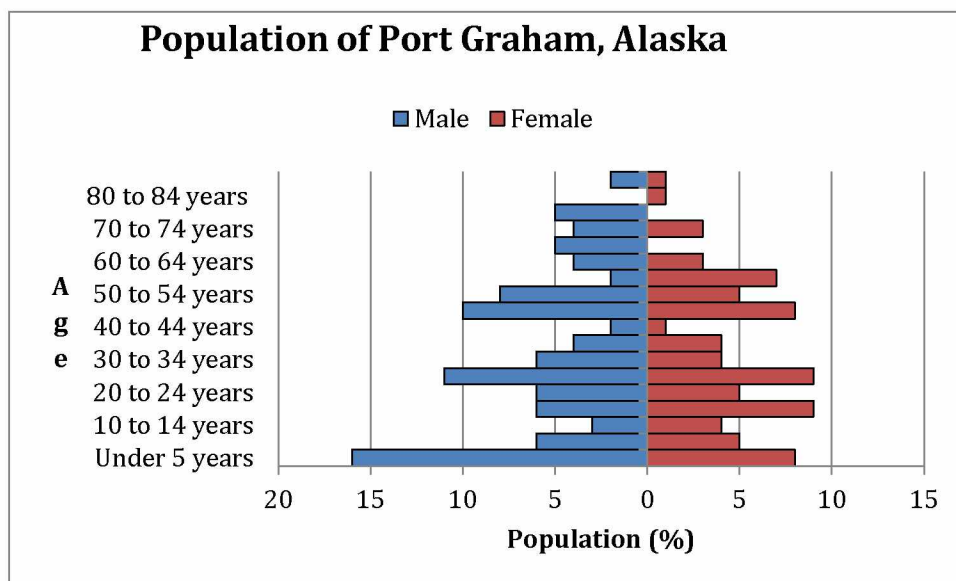


Figure 2: Population tree of Port Graham, Alaska based on 2010 U.S. Census population data.

## The Community Need

There are currently 34 students enrolled in Head Start and the Port Graham School. None of the children or youth from preschool through the 12th grade are fluent in Sugt'stun. Some of the parents and other adults are semi-fluent in Sugt'stun, but there is reportedly little use of the language at home.

In 2013, the Native Village of Port Graham held a strategic planning with the entire village, including the children and youth. During the session, over 70 percent of respondents said that they would support a language program that brought together elders and youth. According to the Port Graham Narrative (2013) to the Administration for Native Americans (ANA), there are eight semi-fluent adults in addition to the 14 fluent speakers of Sugt'stun.

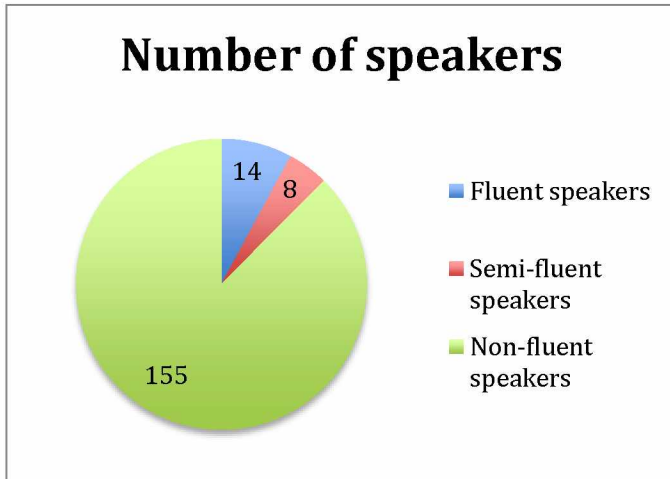


Figure 3: Graph on Sugt'stun fluency in Port Graham, Alaska.

Having Sugpiat children and youth with greater understanding of their cultural

heritage, including knowledge of their Native language, will contribute to the overall health and wellness of the Port Graham community. Language is a large component of culture, and culture is the core of identity. The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs states, "Indigenous peoples have their own distinct languages, cultures, and social and political institutions that are very different from those of mainstream society." (2015, October 30) Retrieved from <http://www.iwgia.org/culture-and-identity/identification-of-indigenous-peoples>. A strong understanding of traditional knowledge, including one's Native language, will help create a strong cultural identity.



Figure 4: Children at Port Graham School learning Sugt'stun.



## **Programs/Services and Social Return on Investment**

The Native Village of Port Graham has managed grants from various federal and state agencies for more than 35 years and has an operating budget of more than 5 million dollars. Tribally administered programs fall within four main service areas: environmental health, community and economic development, social services, and cultural programs. Tamamta Litnaurluta is under the cultural programs service area along with the Johnson O'Malley Program and Traditional Knowledge.

Within each of these program service areas are a variety of activities that are available to people living in Port Graham. This Sustainability Plan focuses on the activities and services as provided by Tamamta Litnaurluta. The language program teaches the 34 children of Port Graham from Head Start preschool through the 12th grade at Port Graham School. There are two teachers that teach the language, two elders who act as language masters/mentors to the Sugt'stun teachers, a project coordinator, and a project director. In addition to the staff, there is a curriculum developer, a contract Sugt'stun editor, and a program evaluator who serve on a contractual basis.

The program delivery is a master/apprentice model where elder speakers act as mentors to apprentice teachers. The apprentice teachers then teach the language that they are also learning to the children and the students in the schools. The two main teaching methods that the program uses are Total Physical Response (TPR) and Where Are Your Keys (WAYK). Consultants have provided guidance and trainings on both of these teaching methods to the masters and apprentices.

TPR is a teaching method that uses coordination of language instruction with physical movement. The concept is that language cannot just be heard and spoken; there needs to be an action to be applied to the language instruction in order for the language to be retained. WAYK uses games and repetition with Native speakers teaching the language to students. Physical movement is also incorporated into teaching the language.

In addition to these two teaching methods, the Tribe has also incorporated Sugpiat culture as a component to learning the language and has held Saturday camps for the children, youth, parents and community members. Past Saturday camps have included a chive gathering field trip, sea otter skin sewing and processing subsistence foods.

## Tamamta Litnaurluta Project Assets

**Facilities:** Classroom space in Head Start and Port Graham School  
Office space at the tribal office

**People:** 14 fluent Sugt'stun speakers  
8 semi-fluent speakers  
2 Sugt'stun teachers  
31 students at Port Graham School  
3 students at Head Start

### Curriculum Materials Inventory:

- Nupugut flash cards
- Nupugut Posters
- Bird poster
- Dry grass
- DVDs
- Storytime in Alutiiq
- Nanwalek Immersion CD
- Echoing Beads
- Sinew Back Bow
- Take Home Books CD
- Nupugut CD
- Gytako poster
- Where I Live poster sets
- Level 2 outdoor survival
- Nupugut posters
- Nupugut flashcards
- Field test draft
- Field test handbook
- ANCSA level 2
- Cultural Expression Level 2
- Health and Wellness level 2
- Living in place level 2
- Subsistence level 2
- Tribe and Community level 2

### Book Inventory:

Nupugut Dictionaries	Alaska Content and
Two Journeys	Performance Standards
Giinaquq	Northern Food Tradition &
Russian America	Health
Indian Fishing	Chasing the Dark
Eyak Legends	The Spill
Chugach Legends	Baidarka
The Way We Genuinely Live	Nupugnerit Alutiiq Dictionary
Looking Both Ways	Looking Back on Subsistence
Crosscurrents North	Level 1 Language Teacher
Between the Tides	Handbook
Peninsula and Kodiak Island	Level 2 Sugpiaq/Alutiiq
Phone Directory 1991	Language lessons
What are Old People For?	2 Level 1 Sugpiaq/Alutiiq
Instructor's Notebook	Language Lessons
TPR is more than commands	Sugcestun/Alutiitstun
Live Action English	Litnaursutait
Akawakangkaq	Sugcestun Igat

Curriculum Backward Design,  
Unit Outline, and Lesson Plans  
Classroom Instruction that  
Works

**Book Inventory continued:**

Traditional Sugpiaq Medicinal  
Plants  
Culture, History, and Heritage  
of the Chugachmiut Level 1  
Alaska Aloud  
Memories of Chenega in  
1940's  
Qik'rtarmiut  
Alutiitstun/Sugt'stun Level 1 & 2  
Lecture Series Handbook  
On the Edge of Time  
Agngu'aqamta (When We  
Dance)  
English Bay and Port Graham  
Plantlore  
Tlingit Moon & Tide  
Instructor's Artfully Easy  
Hunt Alaska  
Saqlaq Soupaq for the  
Sugpiaq/Alutiiq Soul  
Aularnirlua Iganermek  
Learning Experiences  
All Decked Out  
Prehistory of the Pacific Eskimo  
Region

Commercialization and Federal  
Relations of the Chugach

Villages of Port Graham &  
English Bay  
Alaska Native Traditional Toys  
& Games  
The Hunter & the Hunted  
Fireweed #4  
Fireweed 2008  
Fireweed Cillqaq  
Fireweed #1  
Aularnirluta Sugcestun  
Nupuglluta  
Elder/Youth "Get Together"  
Feb. 20, 2004  
An Alutiiq Dictionary for Port  
Graham & English Bay  
Nanwalegmiut Paluwigmiut-Illu  
Nupugnerit  
Outdoor Survival Training  
Alexandrovsk #2  
Chugachmiut Language  
Curriculum Level 1 & 2  
Hunter Information & Training  
Program  
2 Hunter Education Kit  
A Guide to Wildlife Sounds

These assets are used primarily as resources for the Sugt'stun teachers and the master speakers. Some of the materials are visual aids, or cultural materials or visual aids or other media that students are welcome to use.



Figure 5: Tamamta Litnaurluta Saturday Camp. (2014).

## Future Program/Service Recommendations

There is tremendous buy-in and support for the language program from the teachers, program administrators and most importantly, the students. Head Start age children learn approximately two to three Sugt'stun words per day. Children and youth in Port Graham School learn five new Sugt'stun words per day. The students are all still at varying degrees of novice level. At the end of the 2014-2015 school year, most of the students were at the novice high level. At this level of language fluency, the students are still only speaking in simple words and commands. The students are all reaching their goals of increasing in Sugt'stun proficiency. The next level after novice high is intermediate low, which begins to incorporate learning how to speak in sentences and conversational Sugt'stun.

Despite this progress, the only place that Sugt'stun is heard is at the local school. Sugt'stun is not widely spoken in homes or throughout the community. Since elders are the only people who are able to speak the language fluently, it is not common to hear Sugt'stun being spoken at the tribal office, the community center, the clinic, the stores, or any other public place.

Students receive the support they need at school but need additional support from their parents and the community as a whole to continue with their progress. In order to keep the students' interest and excitement for learning Sugt'stun, some short-term and long-term programmatic changes need to be developed and implemented. Attempts were made to address some of these issues including parent language classes and the Tribe recruited for a Parent/Family Sugt'stun Activities Liaison that was never filled. Based on interviews with the teachers, there was little participation from parents for the parent language classes. An interview with one of the parents, however, revealed that they were unaware of the parent language classes or when and where they were held. These following section outlines recommendations based on the interviews and cover areas where there are gaps in services.



Figure 6: Children participating at Sugt'stun parent language class. (2013).

## Short-term Strategies

*"The other part that we recognized is teachers and administrators of the program need to become fluent. We need fluency. We can't speak English when we're trying to create an environment of getting back to speaking our language."*

- Pat Norman, Port Graham First Chief / Tamamta Litnaurluta Project Director

*Speak Sugt'stun.* There must be a real determined effort made for everyone in Port Graham to speak Sugt'stun whenever possible, even if it is as simple as saying "camaii" instead of "hello". Everyone should be encouraged to use the language as much as they can. In this way, the children will see and hear the interactions and be encouraged to speak Sugt'stun building upon what they have learned. Tamamta Litnaurluta staff could lead by example and use Sugt'stun whenever they can and as much as possible. English should be discouraged when the language teachers are teaching in class and when the language masters are working with the apprentices. 100% Sugt'stun during instruction is an important goal.

*"It would be nice to have elders with us. I think it would benefit the students and us. Like seeing a couple elders in there every now and again having conversations with each other in Sugt'stun with the words that we're teaching. So they could hear the word that they're talking about and maybe they'll catch on more."*

- Michelle Moonin, Sugt'stun Language Assistant

*Elder involvement.* Both of the teachers mentioned that they would like to see increased involvement from elders. The elders could be any elder from the community and not necessarily the master speakers who already participate in the program. Some of the ideas that the language teachers shared were having the elders present in the classroom while they are teaching the students. Other ideas included holding elder teas that the students could attend so they could listen to the elders speak in Sugt'stun and tell stories. The local elders are however, in varying degrees of health so this is something that must be encouraged but not pushed. Tamamta Litnaurluta administrators and teachers could bring the topic up with a few elders that they feel comfortable asking and schedule time for them to spend time with the students. This could also serve as an opportunity to teach Sugpiat cultural values.

*"The other programs in the village council use the language program by asking Sugt'stun words for use in their projects. There are plant planks at the walkway. They came to us asking for Sugt'stun words to use in the planks."*

– Ephemia Dumont, Sugt'stun Language Teacher

*Make Sugt'stun visual.* One of the short-term solutions that would not require a large financial investment is to replace signage or create public signage using Sugt'stun words. All signage that is in the public eye such as the Port Graham Tribal office, the Port Graham School, the clinic, the stores, and this could even include signage such as stop signs and any other road signs or public notice signs. Parents have requested labels to place around the house. This concept could be taken to a larger scale with signage inside buildings throughout the community.

There are sign shops in Alaska that could do the signage for Tamamta Litnaurluta. Some of the signage that could be replaced with Sugt'stun words would be bathroom signs, room signs at the school such as the cafeteria, gymnasium, and office. Additional signage could be replaced throughout the community at the Tribal office, center, clinic, and stores. Signage could also be ordered online. The price per sign varies depending on the size of the sign: 10 x 7 - \$15/each, 12 x 18 - \$20.78 each, and 24 x 24 - \$33.74 each. (2015, October 30) Retrieved from <http://www.signs.com>.

*"We're seeing the need for training up the middle group, which is parents and ones that didn't go through the school bilingual programs. We need a parent night and adult curriculum so we're going see if our year three objectives will allow for a adult language curriculum."*

– Pat Norman, Port Graham First Chief / Tamamta Litnaurluta Project Director

*Parental involvement.* Based on the interviews with the teachers and with one parent, there is some communication and information that is not getting to the parents from Tamamta Litnaurluta. Much of the information that gets disseminated is through passive means such as the Tribe's newsletter and at Tribal Council meetings. The language program needs to have a better parent outreach effort. One of the ways Tamamta Litnaurluta could engage with the parents is being included in the parent-teacher conferences. This would require permission from the Port Graham School and Head Start but given that both of the schools are partners of Tamamta Litnaurluta it would seem to be a relatively easy request.

At the parent-teacher conferences, the language program could do face-to-face interviews and ask the parents what days and times would be good to hold

parent language classes. The other questions could include what would they like to see included in the parent language classes and what incentives would get them to attend the classes. It may be that providing lunch or other incentives are required to get parents to begin going to the parent classes but in time, they may find that they enjoy the classes and would be learning the same information that their children are learning. This would help the parent work with their child at home with Sugt'stun language.

One method of getting information to parents is through their children. During the Sugt'stun language class, the students could remind their parents that is a service/activity that Tamamta Litnaurluta provides and encourage their parents to attend the classes. The children have a desire to learn and the children could also pressure the parents into getting involved with learning Sugt'stun.

Another short-term solution could be incorporating homework into the learning of Sugt'stun that would require parents to get involved. The teachers could create homework sheets that require the students to read the words to the parents. Credit would be given if the parents sign the homework. In the interview with the one parent, they expressed that their younger brother dropped out of Sugt'stun classes because no one speaks it in the community. Support and encouragement with learning Sugt'stun needs to begin at home.

*"Now we want to have the elders speaking when they're together so those around them are hearing it. The material that's out there, whether its on CD or tapes needs to be digitized where you can use it on your iPad. We need a place where we can put all of that stuff where people can go and access that. Whether we have it physically at the library copies for check out or on a website where it can be downloaded."*

– Pat Norman, Port Graham First Chief / Tamamta Litnaurluta Project Director

*Media.* Both of the teachers were concerned about the amount of words that the students are learning. TPR and WAYK make learning language fun but it could also become draining for some students who have different learning styles. Uses of video could be incorporated into learning. Videos or recordings of elders speaking in Sugt'stun could be used to help the children and the youth to hear other people speaking in Sugt'stun and not just themselves or the teachers. The elders could be recorded telling stories and match the curriculum of what the students are learning at that time.

All of the students of Port Graham School received iPad minis from the Tribe. Students in Nanwalek also received iPads and they also learn Sugt'stun. Both of the schools could arrange to video chat and have the students chat one-on-one or have the students in each school make a presentation in Sugt'stun. This concept could also be applied with other schools in the Chugach region or even

in Kodiak. This type of activity does not need to be a weekly activity but could be a monthly activity to switch up the routine so that students are able to get some variety in the curriculum.

*"People go to things here if there's prizes."*

- Michelle Moonin, Sugt'stun Language Assistant

*Bingo.* Bingo is a popular activity in Port Graham. The Tribe could decide to hold Bingo entirely in Sugt'stun one night. It could be challenging at first but it would also be an opportunity for the community to learn and remember the language together. Playing would need to be free and the participants could play to win prizes instead of playing for cash. Alternatively, the community could play bingo and the proceeds of playing could go towards the language program.

## Long-term Strategies

*"We hope to continue the program hopefully with another extension or at least participate in the district as the language teacher. Because they have a position with the district for the language teacher but I do not have a teaching certificate to be part of the staff."*

- Ephemia Dumont, Sugt'stun Language Teacher

*Certified teacher.* To ensure that children and youth are able to learn Sugt'stun well into the future, they need to have a certified teacher on staff that can include Sugt'stun instruction in their curriculum. A certified teacher on staff would be able to develop curriculum, teach the children and make sure that the students are improving with Sugt'stun fluency. A potential candidate would need to be identified and would need to get accepted to a college or university that has a bachelor's degree in education and would need to become a certified teacher. Getting a traditional bachelor's degree could take four years or more depending how many classes are taken.

If Port Graham School had someone from their village get a bachelor's degree in education they could be the teacher for the school and have the ability to teach Sugt'stun. There would be no reason for the tribe to apply for grants to teach Sugt'stun since the teacher would be paid by the Kenai Peninsula School District and would be able to create their own curriculum. The Port Graham School could also become a charter school where the students could be in partial immersion with a certified teacher who is fluent in Sugt'stun. Partial immersion schools spend half of their day learning totally immersed in a language and spend the other half of their day in English. Other subjects could also be taught in the second language such as mathematics, social studies, and science.

An undergraduate student attending the University of Alaska Anchorage pays \$4,392 for tuition, \$1,153 for student fees, and \$1,440 for books and supplies each year. A four-year degree would cost approximately \$28,000. This does not include the cost of room or board. However, there are many scholarship opportunities in the Chugach region that would help defray many of these costs. (October 30, 2015). Retrieved from <https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/financialaid/cost-of-attendance.cfm>.

*"Nanwalek is doing really good. They speak it more often than here."*

– Community member

*Tribal Council.* The Port Graham Tribal Council could formally recognize the Sugt'stun language. The Tribal Council could start meetings in Sugt'stun, as much as they can, even if it is only part of the meeting. It would be a way that everyone in Port Graham could be together in one place to hear and speak Sugt'stun. In addition to formalizing the Sugt'stun language, the Native Village of Port Graham could decide to change their official name to their Sugt'stun name, Paluwik. 'Paluwik' means 'gloomy place' or 'a place where people are sad.'

Port Graham was not originally a traditional Sugpiat village. In the 1800s, Sugpiat from villages in the Prince William Sound relocated to what is now known today as Nanwalek. English and Russian explorers found coal in a nearby bay and the Russian American Company established Alexandrovsk. Alexandrovsk went on to be named English Bay, and in 1992, the people decided to change their name to its Sugt'stun name, Nanwalek. But the Tribe changing their name to their Sugt'stun name acknowledged their own cultural heritage and history.

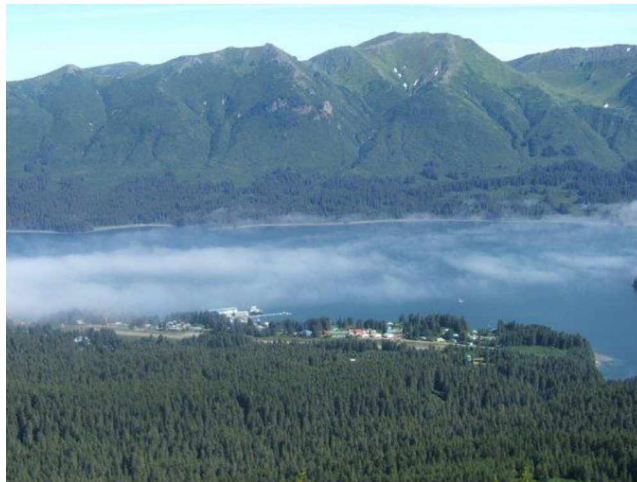


Figure 7: Aerial photo of Port Graham, Alaska. (2008).

## **Benefit to the Community – the Social Return on Investment**

Much of the benefit of the language program cannot be measured in monetary terms. The benefits are Sugpiat children growing up with a strong identity and sense of self. With an understanding of their native language, they will have a strong cultural identity. Due to the assimilation of Alaska Native people, so much of our identity has been lost over time.

With a strong cultural identity, people are able to have better self-awareness. The ability to be self-aware also plays into the overall health and wellness of the person. Interpersonal relationships are better and the person will feasibly have a healthy family and be a healthy person.

Hinton's and Hale's (2008) Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice mentions a summer school for children that the Pueblo de Cochiti of New Mexico provided for their community, "Across the community and within individual families, one can see closer, more intimate relationships growing as fluent speakers take the time to share their knowledge. In short, the children's success is the community's success, and many people are now aware of the need to speak Keres publicly and consistently." (p.81).

In some ways, Port Graham and the Pueblo de Cochiti experienced the same challenges: both communities had few native speakers to draw knowledge from and the fluent speakers who remained were elders. Both communities' tribes had community driven language programs for their children.

Hinton and Hale went on to mention that the Pueblo de Cochiti and leaders made certain that the language programs that they planned are in agreement with their traditional culture, beliefs and values. Teaching and retaining traditional culture will no doubt play a vital role in the success of any language revitalization effort.

There are educational benefits associated with learning a second language. Children who learn a second language typically score higher on standardized tests. They also tend to do better in all other subjects in school. Their ability to learn other languages is also greatly increased.

According to Cloud, Genesee, and Hamayan (2000), "Research has shown that students who acquire advanced levels of proficiency in a second language often experience certain cognitive and linguistic advantages when compared to monolingual students." (p. 3). Students who learn a second language are able to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of how language is used.

## Market Analysis

Tamamta Litnaurluta is the only language program in Port Graham. However, the Native Village of Port Graham does have to compete with other tribes and villages in the region for grants and language program funding. There are seven communities in the Chugach region and there are few funding opportunities available for language revitalization and maintenance efforts. Port Graham also competes with Chugachmiut for the same language and culture grants. This is not an ideal situation since they are all collectively working on the same efforts but for different communities. Any chance that Port Graham can collaborate with Chugachmiut, Nanwalek and other Sugpiat communities they must take the opportunity. Partnering and sharing materials and curriculum would benefit everyone in the long run and they would all share the same collective knowledge of Sugt'stun.

There are 562 federally recognized tribes in the United States. Of those tribes, 229 are in Alaska. The federal government is making efforts to recognize Indigenous languages and the effects that assimilation had on Indigenous peoples. There are many tribes that are working on language revitalization and maintenance efforts and very few grants and funding available to meet all of the need and demand.

There are some adults who still have yet to show interest in Tamamta Litnaurluta efforts. The middle-aged population (ages 45-65) of Port Graham, that may have had to attend boarding school, and/or were not raised with Sugt'stun in the home are resistant to the language program. The numbers of parents who do not participate are more than the number of parents who do.

The generation that had to leave the community for school may never fully support the efforts of teaching, learning and speaking Sugt'stun in Port Graham. One way that could address this issue, is to have a healing session with this age group for them to talk about their experiences with boarding school or having to leave the village to attend high school.



## Sustainable Human Resources Plan

### Current personnel with job descriptions

These are the brief job descriptions of the personnel of Tamamta Litnaurluta. The project director is a .5 FTE and the program coordinator is a 1.0 FTE. The language teachers work approximately three hours a day during the school year.

The contractors/consultants work on an as needed basis:

Curriculum Developer	Provides two trainings per year Revises the curriculum Assists with evaluations
Sugt'stun Editor	Works with the curriculum developer Translates materials
Program Evaluator	Attends the two workshops held per year Provides an evaluation of the program for the year Evaluates project activities

**Project director:** Responsible for overseeing the administration of the project, hiring staff, making contracts, approves travel for consultants and contractors, authorizes travel for project personnel, assures the completion of project products; curricula, language materials, media products; develops and disseminates a PR campaign, provides liaison services with partners, submits quarterly Performance Progress and Financial reports and year end evaluation, attends the ANA post award conference and the annual ANA trip to Washington, D.C. and gives presentations to partners and communities.

**Project coordinator:** This position reports to the project director. The project coordinator is responsible for planning and conducting workshops, working with consultants and contractors, completing project products; curricula, language materials, media products, consults with partners to carry out project activities, provides feedback for evaluation, assists with travel for project personnel, assists in the development of the quarterly reports and final evaluation report and keeps records. Participate in the curriculum development and TPR workshops each contract year to develop materials for parents; set up and deliver workshops for parents. This position also assists in the development and carrying out of Family Saturday Camps each project year; as well as participants in annual evaluation activities.

**Sugt'stun language teacher/language apprentice (2):** Responsible for providing Sugt'stun classes in Head Start program and Port Graham School helping all students to develop the ability to understand and speak Sugt'stun. Teach Sugt'stun and continue to study Sugt'stun proficiency of understanding, speaking, reading and writing. Participate in required trainings. Work with project coordinator on required materials and activities. Teach parent Sugt'stun parent classes. Work with master/elders on Sugt'stun word pronunciations and

meaning. Prepare class materials and carry out curriculum. Evaluate and assess the students' on their Sugt'stun fluency.



Figure 8: Tamamta Litnaurluta elders/master speakers from left to right: Stella Meganack, Mary Malchoff, Jean Huntsman. (2014).

**Master/elder:** Act as a master teacher of Sugt'stun language and Sugpiaq culture for an apprentice/language teacher. Provide guidance to staff and students. Participate in Saturday camps and trainings. Be available to language teachers for language help. Work with teachers, project coordinator and contractors/consultants of the language program.

**Curriculum developer:** Create, develop and facilitate approved curriculum of the Sugt'stun for use in Head Start and Port Graham School. Lead trainings and assist the Sugt'stun editor with materials. Work with the project coordinator and the teachers on implementation of the materials and teaching methods.

**Sugt'stun editor:** Responsible for working with the curriculum developer and translating material into Sugt'stun. Help develop and create language materials for use in the classrooms. Participate in all trainings and provide support to language teachers and master speakers. Help create a language evaluation and assessment of the language for the students for the language teachers/apprentices.

**Evaluator:** Evaluate the effectiveness of the project using triangulated evaluation design that includes formative and summative information based on pre-post language assessment for project staff, students and parents, interviews of project staff, parents and partners, assessment of usefulness of materials developed, assessment of community participation at Saturday camps, and submit quarterly performance reports. Provide a summative evaluation of the project every year.

These are the current staff and contractors who support the efforts of Tamamta Litnamluta. The elder/master speakers are invaluable to Sugt'stun language preservation and maintenance efforts. The language teachers will also need to stay on board in order to continue teaching Sugt'stun in Head Start and at Port Graham School. In the future, the Tribe will have to decide if they want to continue to have a curriculum developer, Sugt'stun editor and evaluator on contract. These functions could still be conducted, but the job duties associated with them would need to be assigned to a staff person. The project director and the project coordinator are also vital positions to the sustainability to Tamamta Litnamluta. The project director provides the overall vision of the language program as well as the oversight and leadership to the program. The project coordinator works with and supports the teachers and the elders. This position makes sure that the program is progressing on their goals for the year as well as provides the communication and information to the rest of the community.

There is one position that is available and that is the Family/Parent Sugt'stun Liaison. Originally this position was meant for a Head Start parent. There were no interested candidates that applied when it was limited to that small scope and the job duties were absorbed by the project coordinator. In 2014-2015, there were only four children in Head Start. The Tribe will need to make the position open and available to the parents of all school-aged children. Much of the communication and information that has been shared has been passive through fliers or through the Tribe's newsletter. Port Graham is small enough that the language program staff would know who would be a good fit for this type of position. The language program staff must become more strategic in terms of who could be hired for this position and ask parents directly if they would be interested.

Training will need to continue as the students continue to progress in their language fluency. The teachers are still learning Sugt'stun, too. Rather than staffing a curriculum developer, the Tribe could look to Nanwalek for help with future curricula. Since 2004, Nanwalek has had a language program in place in their school and their children are at a higher fluency level than children in Port Graham.

## Governance and Leadership

Tamamta Litnaurluta is a project of the Native Village of Port Graham and the governance board is the traditional tribal council. The Port Graham Tribal Council members include Patrick Norman, First Chief; Martin Norman, Second Chief; Agnes Miller, Secretary; Debbie McMullen, Treasurer; Stella Meganack, Member; Melinda Kamluck, Member; and Tania McMullen, Member.

Organization chart of Tamamta Litnaurluta:

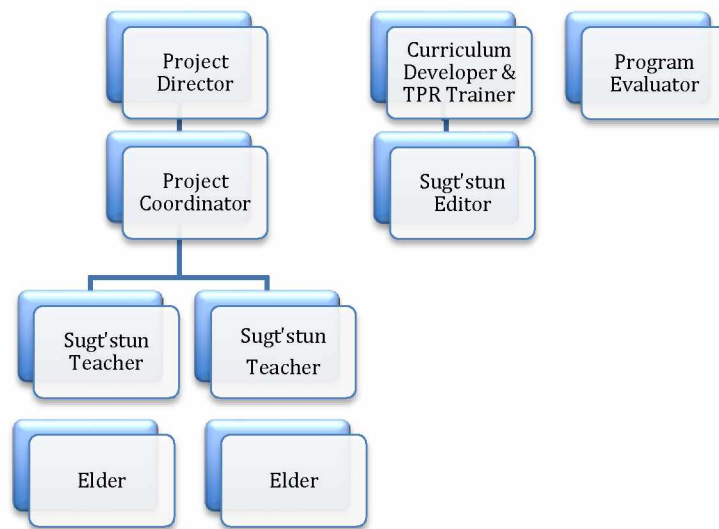


Figure 9: Organization chart of Tamamta Litnaurluta.

In addition to the Tribe, the Port Graham Education Commission was established for Tamamta Litnaurluta when the project started in 2013. When the Commission was created these were the members at the time: Rhoda Moonin, Sugt'stun Master Speaker/Editor; Nancy Kleine, Port Graham School Principal; Jackie Archer, Chugachmiut Head Start Director; Heather Joseph, Head Start teacher; Michelle Hetrick, Head Start Aide; Brian Grieser, Port Graham teacher aide; Patrick Norman, Port Graham Chief/project director and Rita Meganack, project coordinator. The Commission has only met once in May 2014. This commission could play a more active role in the governance and the overall direction of the language program.

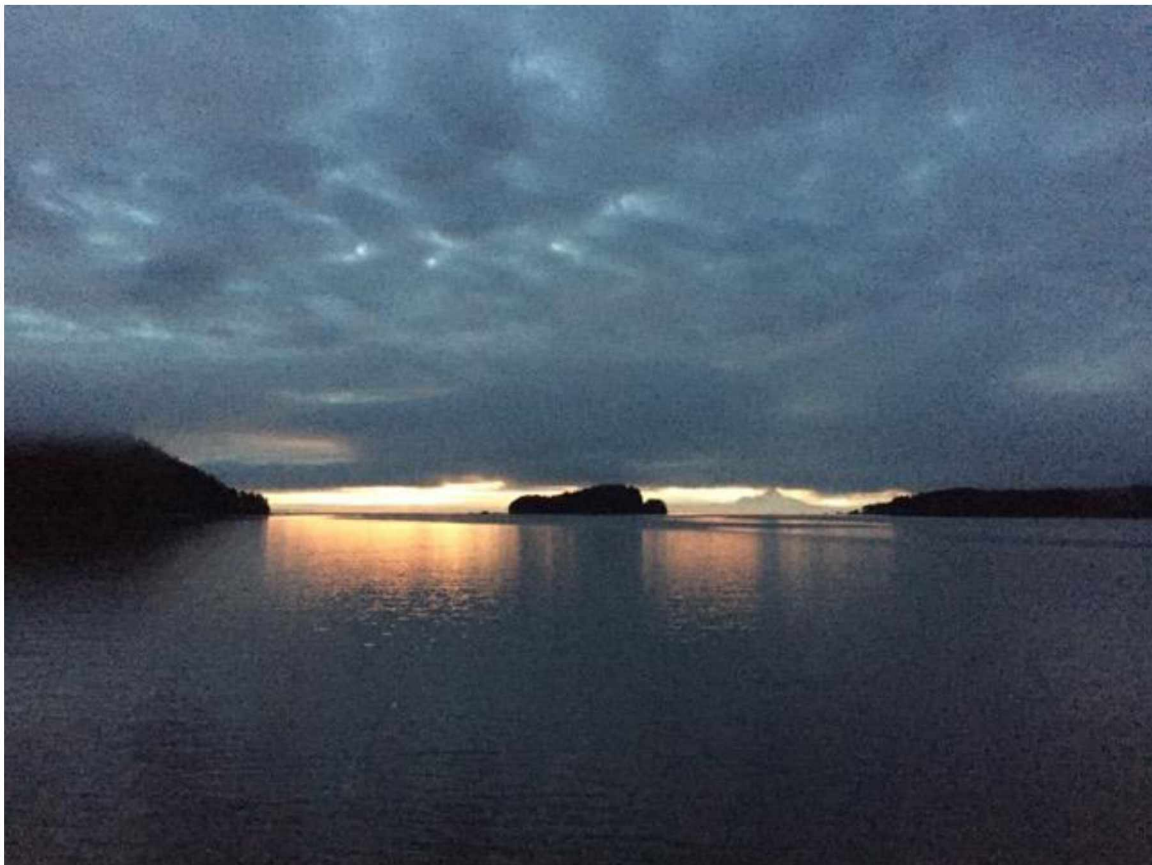
## **Sustainable Income Plan**

### **Current Revenue**

Tamamta Litnaurluta is requesting \$377,480 from ANA for the last year of the grant. While the Native Village of Port Graham is eligible and able to apply for another ANA language grant, there are no guarantees that they will be awarded funding. The ANA website explained that applicants that have received funding from ANA for at least two consecutive projects may not be funded for a third consecutive project.

The Tribe does provide some matching funds for the project director, the early childhood trainer and some fringe benefits. There are also some in-kind donations that are made from the Chugach Alaska Corporation and Port Graham Village Corporation.

Since these are startup funds, it is not realistic that Port Graham has this same level of funding into the future of the language program. The award ceiling ANA language grantees can receive as much as \$300,000 and as little as \$100,00 per budget period. Project periods are in 12, 24 and 36 month periods.



## The Financials

### Current Program Budget

<b>Budget category</b>	
<i>Personnel &amp; Fringe benefits</i>	\$202,708
<i>Contractors/Consultants</i>	\$36,263
<i>Travel</i>	
In-state	\$50,281
Out of state	\$5,499
<i>Supplies</i>	
Classroom supplies	\$5,000
Snacks	\$3,000
Nap mats	\$400
Janitorial supplies	\$1,500
Printing and duplication of material	\$5,000
Leveraged Chugachmiut language materials	\$15,400
<i>Indirect rate 21.25%</i>	\$52,380
<b>Total Requested</b>	<b>\$377,480</b>

## The Proposed/Desired Revenue Mix

Moving forward after the grant end date, the Native Village of Port Graham will need to decide how they will proceed given the potential for no revenue for Tamamta Litnaurluta. The language program is going to file an extension of the program with ANA. They will need to also make plans to apply for additional grants.

<b>Budget category</b>	<b>Scenario 1</b>	<b>Scenario 2</b>	<b>Scenario 3</b>
Personnel	\$101,044	\$61,738	\$45,054
Contractors/consultants	\$24,263	\$4,000	\$4,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$125,307</b>	<b>\$65,738</b>	<b>\$49,123</b>

Scenario 1 includes all of the Tamamta Litnaurluta staff and all of the consultants and the masters/elders. The project director's salary is paid for with or without the grant. These new duties as the project director will be included as part of his existing job moving forward.

Scenario 2 includes the teachers and the elders. The job duties of the project coordinator would need to be split between the project director and the teachers. The ANA grant will need to allow for the employees the ability to learn how to create and develop curriculum. They will need to become self-sufficient and utilize their existing language resources within their own community.

Scenario 3 provides the bare minimum for providing language instruction to the children in Port Graham. At the core of Tamamta Litnaurluta are the Sugt'stun teachers and the elders. In this scenario they would also need to create and develop their own curriculum without the help of a curriculum developer, Sugt'stun editor or program evaluator.

### Funding plan for Tamamta Litnaurluta

Grantee	Application	Deadline	Grant award
Endangered Language Fund	Letter of Inquiry	Apr-16	Less than \$4,000
National Science Foundation Documenting Endangered Languages	Online	Sep-16	\$100,000-\$350,000
Genographic Legacy Fund	Online	April & September 2016	Less than \$25,00
Endangered Languages Documentation Programme	Online	Jan-16	\$15,000-\$200,00
Native Languages of the Americas	Online	Ongoing	Less than \$10,000

It would be advisable for the Native Village of Port Graham to apply for these upcoming grants to continue the delivery of Tamamta Litnaurluta. Assuming all of the grant applications are successful, the range could be as low as \$154,000 or as high as \$589,000. While the program has achieved two and a half successful years of program delivery, there is still much work to do in order to get the Sugt'stun language to a place where it is universally spoken in the village.

## Action Plan

Objectives	Tasks	Measurement	Timeframe	Resources required	Staff person responsible
Speak Sugt'stun	Speak Sugt'stun only during instruction time – no English speaking is allowed	Count how many times a week English spoken. Make new goals for less English each week.	On-going	None	Teachers Elders
Increase elder involvement	Check in with elders in community to see if they'd be willing to spend class time with students once a week.	Have teachers note the students' interest in having elders present. Is it increased and how?	On-going	None	Project director Teachers
Make Sugt'stun visual	Take an inventory of existing signage around the community	Conduct pre and post awareness surveys after signage is replaced.	One month	Monetary investment from tribe or pursue grant funding for this	Project director Project coordinator
Increase parent participation	Develop a plan to increase parent participation. Conduct a survey to find out what could be offered parents to attend a parent class.	Monitor how frequently parents are involved with parent classes. Make it a goal to increase parent involvement for each subsequent class.	On-going	None	Project director Project coordinator Teachers
Community involvement and buy-in	Plan a Sugt'stun only bingo night	Note how many people from the community attended. How was the event received?	Creating bingo sheets and plan for the game itself. Could test the game with the students in the school first.	Cost of materials to create bingo sheets	Project director Project coordinator Teachers

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Measurement</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Resources required</b>	<b>Staff person responsible</b>
Formalize Sugt'stun	Have a discussion item at a tribal council meeting dedicated to the idea of changing Port Graham's name to Paluwik.	Notes are taken during meeting. Take a survey to see how many people are favorable to the name change.		N/A	Project director
Use of media in language instruction	Enlist someone to compile an inventory of all videos and recordings of elders speaking in Sugt'stun. Videotape conversations of elders speaking in Sugt'stun.  Schedule a video chat with another school	N/A	On-going	Video cameras iPads	Project director Project coordinator Teachers

## Conclusion

*"We need to speak it, it needs to be spoken in the home. It needs to be spoken in the village council meetings. The staff should be able to speak it everyday work at the office at our annual meetings. That's my vision is that annual meetings can be held in our language. That we're so fluent again that we can have a full eight-hour meeting in Sugt'stun and we translate into English. But right now it's all in English and we can translate some into Sugt'stun. Let's flip it around. And make English where we have to translate to Sugt'stun and not the other way."*

- Pat Norman, Port Graham First Chief / Tamamta Litnaurluta Project Director

The Native Village of Port Graham has reached successful milestones in the program delivery of Tamamta Litnaurluta. The teachers and the program administrators have worked diligently to ensure the children are receiving appropriate instruction. The students are the champions and the force behind the progress of the language program.

As the students improve their fluency, the program will need to adapt to their advancement and understanding of the language. The vision of holding a Tribal Council meeting entirely in Sugt'stun is attainable and will require the buy-in and support from everyone in the community. In order for Sugt'stun to become mainstream again, it will need to be spoken, heard, read and seen every day.

There are many tough choices ahead for the Native Village of Port Graham for Tamamta Litnaurluta. How the language program is or is not funded or what activities are important will all need to be weighed heavily and thoughtfully. Our Sugt'stun language is an important piece of our culture and a gift from our ancestors.

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