

Education Committee Report:

Challenges Facing Schools in Indian Country

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North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and the North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission hosted the first ever Indian Education Advisory Committee Meeting in the Brynhild-Haugland Room of the State Capitol on December 10, 2009.

The purpose of the North Dakota Indian Education Advisory Council is to:

- 1) Advise the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction in educational matters affecting the education of Indian Students.
- 2) Promote equal educational opportunity and improve the quality of education provided to American Indian Students throughout the state of North Dakota.

Dr. Wayne Sanstead, ND Department of Public Instruction and Scott Davis Executive Director of the ND Indian Affairs Commission both gave a welcome and expressed their thanks to all the members for agreeing to serve. They also charged the group to work to overcome challenges and barriers. They offered goals to achieve involvement of tribal leaders and communities in: 1) target schools; 2) professional development; 3) creating inclusive funding; and 4) inclusive career path and vocational funding. Both leaders spoke of children as the future of our state and urged the group to view opportunities and challenges through that perspective.

The composition of the North Dakota Indian education Advisory Council consists of members who are representatives of Indian Education in the state of North Dakota. The membership was selected by the state Superintendent in consultation with Indian Tribes, Indian Organizations and major educational organizations including metropolitan districts that serve Indian students.

Meeting Participants/Members: Dr. Russel McDonald (Candeska Cikana Community College), Mrs. Kellie Hall (Turtle Mountain BIA-Education Line Office, for Mrs. Rose Marie Davis), Roman Marcellias (Superintendent, Turtle Mountain Community School District), Karen Sitting Crow (Tourism Director, Three Affiliated Tribes), Karen Boyd Hartman (White Shield Teacher, representative of the ND Indian Education Association), Pat Walking Eagle (Elementary Principal, Ft. Totten), Dr. John Salwei (Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education Bismarck Public Schools), Dr. Karen Gayton Comeau (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, retired Educator), Martha Hunter (Three Affiliated Tribes Higher Education Administrator), Bob Marthaller (Department of Public Instruction Assistant Superintendent), Bob Parisien (ND Indian Affairs Commission).

Facilitated by: The Consensus Council, Inc.

Core Issue Areas for Discussion: The NDIEAC grouped identified issues according to the following core areas:

I. TEACHER ISSUES:

- A. Certification
- B. Recruitment/retention/mentoring
- C. Housing/on-site/off-site
- D. Specialized subject areas: math, science
- E. Professional development
- F. Strategists (sometimes called "coaches") in special subject areas are emerging to meet the requirement of highly qualified staff.
- G. Tribal colleges need to clarify their role as partners with the ND University System
 - 1. Potential students in and out of Indian Country may be unaware that tribal colleges are open for students of all races.
 - 2. Praxis and other certification testing create barriers to teachers that tribal colleges might be able to address.
- H. Indian Studies requirements – should they be imposed for teaching in Indian districts? Cultural issues are important, especially including sovereignty. Non-native instructors in Native American studies sometimes lead to poor quality instruction.
 - 1. Tribal histories and Resource guides were prepared by DPI regarding each Tribe in North Dakota. These resources are now in the possession of the Indian Affairs Commission and may be underutilized.
- I. Attracting new people to the profession
 - 1. Certification issues
 - a. Praxis
- J. Cultural knowledge and Indian Studies requirements – should non-Natives teach in these areas? Understanding culture is essential to many other parts of the job.

- K. Recruitment/retention/mentoring
 - 1. Growing your own teachers in the community.
 - 2. Tie the profession to a "Teaching and Technology" model or career path.
- L. Housing/ on-site/ off-site
- M. Specialized areas and subjects
- N. Tribal College Role – clarity & awareness
 - 1. Partners with NDUS
 - 2. Open to all students

Comments: Recruitment of highly qualified teachers is a very difficult issue in many American Indian schools. Many teachers have not been successful in the Praxis testing. The Praxis test does not give specific feedback to allow teachers to focus their efforts. The Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) mandates Praxis testing for all teachers seeking certification in ND. United Tribes has had some success in preparation for the Praxis test. For example, math, and to some extent, reading are areas of special need for proactive efforts. Why Native student teachers are having trouble with the Praxis tests is an important question. Repeated certification and recertification via Praxis may be an unnecessary barrier for teachers whose work is not relevant to individual subjects of the Praxis test. There is a desire among many urban schools as well as reservation schools to increase the share of Native American teachers.

A shortage of teachers being trained exists, especially at the major universities. There may be a need for legislation to support more education programs at, and funding for, Tribal colleges.

A concern was reported that the Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) may not be open to questions from potential teachers, and may show an unfriendly or disrespectful attitude when contacted. The group discussed the history of the ESPB becoming a freestanding agency in response to concerns of the North Dakota Education Association. Some participants indicated that ESPB was more responsive and helpful under the auspices of DPI.

Federal requirements for "highly effective" teachers may create additional challenges. The funding consequences of this new standard under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) might create further difficulties.

The Archibald Bush Foundation (MN) recently made a long-term commitment to increasing the number of teachers trained in best practices. The stated goal is to train 25,000 teachers in MN, SD, and ND over a 10-year period. The NDIEAC may wish to invite the Bush Foundation to explain this process and any opportunities it may create.

Among teachers, the shortage is most acute in certain curriculum areas like math, science, physical education, and special education. Elementary education faces a lesser shortage.

The P-16 Initiative tried to address the interactions of the higher education and K-12 system. The NDIEAC may wish to review their findings at a future meeting.

Some tribal colleges are producing excellent teachers, but more secondary teachers are a critical need.

Rural areas do not necessarily experience the large number of applicants in elementary education that the larger school districts do.

Tribal colleges may need to work on recruitment of non-Native students to diversify the student body. Tribal colleges are open to all, which not all participants knew. The general public is also unaware of this fact.

The state should consider funding supports for non-Native teachers at Native schools similar to funding for Native teachers.

Turtle Mt. Community College is partnering with the Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation through the Little Hoop model to produce local teachers. People in Indian Country may not want to leave their home communities for work. Another model may be a partnership between the Tribal Colleges and the four-year universities to mix local classes with fewer terms taken at the larger campus.

There is a tendency for some Indian school districts to compete for a scarce pool of teachers. Other districts have used dual credit arrangements for one teacher to serve both districts.

Core courses required by NCLB are some of the areas where teachers are the scarcest.

The majority of teachers (71%) in Indian school districts are non-Native.

Creative recruitment of younger teachers may require a further marriage of the disciplines of teaching and technology. This may refute the perception that teachers only use "chalk boards" and make the profession more attractive.

It was reported that the majority of applicants to teach in some schools don't know how many Indian reservations there are in ND. There is an overall lack of knowledge regarding tribal communities in North Dakota by the general public.

An example of "partnering" was offered wherein Valley City State University (VCSU) wanted to partner with the Native American Education Association to increase the number of Native librarians. However, results were few. Recruitment efforts may be limited and not effective. In addition, little interaction with the tribe took place after the grant was received, leaving some to feel treated as less than a full partner in the effort. Native organizations should be fully consulted during grant applications and not just "written in" to grants. They need to be "true, full partners."

Having teachers who commute to the community to teach negatively affects the health of the school and the community. Many Native people actually have to live off the reservation because of the lack of housing. The group asked, what is the role of Tribal Councils in educating

commuter teachers and in the housing shortages? In-services on the culture of the communities seem to help commuter teachers become more effective.

II. TRIBAL COLLEGE ISSUES

- A. Core component of their communities – Education PLUS
 - 1. Economic Development
 - 2. Suicide prevention
 - 3. Diabetes prevention
- B. Greater representation of Tribal community colleges on this Council may be desirable in the future.
- C. Role of Tribal College is “Education PLUS”
 - 1. Economic Development centers of community
 - 2. Income provision for employees
 - 3. Community Efforts
 - a. Diabetes
 - b. Other Health Issues
- D. Funding Needs
- E. Articulation agreements
- F. Elevate involvement of Tribal colleges
- G. Partnerships with NDUS in place – could grow over time
- H. Better interface between tribal community colleges & NDUS for transfers, credits, etc.

III. PUBLIC POLICY/LEGISLATIVE CHANGE ISSUES

- A. Curriculum development will take time.
- B. Mandates such as Power School.
- C. ESPB designation outside DPI was legislative change.
- D. Tribal History/Resource Guides

- E. Power School & Information Systems – Waivers
- F. ESPB Admin @ DPI? Where is the best fit for American Indian schools?
- G. Interim Committee Meetings

Comments: The Power School database system has been mandated by recent ND legislation. This is a concern for Indian schools in terms of avoiding duplication of existing BIA mandated systems. The Native American Student Information System (NASIS) is mandated by the BIA for funding of schools. Native schools also use the STARS system for other reporting to the state. It is uncertain if this was a recommendation of the Education Improvement Commission. The group was uncertain what is needed to get waivers to the Power School mandate.

IV. CULTURAL ISSUES.

- A. Resources such as the Culture and History publications, above.
 - 1. 1970's Inside the Hoop documentation
- B. Sovereignty & Jurisdictional Issues
- C. Accuracy of Cultural Information & Curriculum Development
 - 1. Tribal Approval?
 - 2. Clearing House model – share with all interested – well maintained.
- D. Study the Successes – Why does it work? (E.g., HMS Middle School)
 - 1. What is reasonable & portable/transferable?
- E. Holistic approaches among American Indian cultures sometimes lead communities to think of schools as “one stop shops” for all services related to children.

V. CHALLENGES PARTICULAR TO INDIAN EDUCATION

- A. Socioeconomic
- B. Administrative –
 - 1. Power School vs. (STARS) State Automated Reporting System vs. (NASIS) Native American Student Information System
 - a. There may have been a waiver in HB 1400 (2009); (funding was scattered)

C. Poverty

1. Workforce changes
2. Paradigm shifts
3. Intergenerational Issues; Gaps in Transmission of wisdom and knowledge; flow of information from the younger to the older as well vice versa
4. Barriers to repatriation of enrolled members to home communities
5. Data including 2010 census
 - a. Available data P-16, Growth Model
 - b. Desired data

D. Transitory living

E. Housing

F. Safety

Comments:

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has been an issue, particularly for schools with high populations of Indian students. Participants asked if growth models have been taken into account. Again, the NDIEAC requests a copy of the AYP/NCLB report, and a presentation explaining it. The group discussed the disproportionate representation of American Indian schools among those scoring the lowest in NCLB measures.

The group discussed data and assessments to capture social issues, including the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), administered by the North Dakota Department of Health and the Department of Public Instruction. The NDIEAC discussed the cultures most at risk in ND society – American Indians – and how improving their status will improve the overall status of all North Dakota citizens.

Jurisdictional conflicts of law exist regarding compulsory attendance. North Dakota compels attendance until age 16, whereas most Tribal laws require attendance until age 18. Enforcement at the same school can vary depending upon whether the family lives on or off reservation land.

Rural and urban schools see poverty having a very negative impact upon American Indian students and their education. Transitory living is also seen as having a negative impact upon American Indian students.

Expulsion of students in one district can often lead to problems for another district that accepts the student. Often behavioral needs are left unaddressed due to all the transition. Some districts do not accept students that have been expelled, under any conditions. (This is especially relevant with homeless children under the McKinney-Vento legislation.)

VI. FULL PARTNERSHIP

A. Tribal & State

1. What does the State want from the Tribes?
2. Social Services
 - a. By the School
 - b. Traditional Providers
 - 1) Indian Health Service (IHS)
 - 2) County
 - 3) Public Health
 - c. Something New
Wraparound?

B. Tribal & Federal

1. Funding adequacy

C. Multi-College

1. Tribal, NDUS etc.

D. Colleges & K-12

VII. TECHNOLOGY & DEVELOPMENT

A. Remote Learning

1. Online/hybrid model

Desired Outcome: The group reviewed pending issues for the NDIEAC to consider. These included building relationships and capacity among all of the partners. The group recognized the importance of advisory bodies in educating Legislators and other policy makers.

It was suggested that the NDIEAC should improve academic performance on the whole continuum, from pre-school to graduate schooling. Also, members suggested the NDIEAC develop a focus and emphasis among all of these issues that can be reported to policy makers in a useful and influential way.

Summary Comments: Participants were asked to provide a summary comment regarding the meeting process and discussion. The comments are as follows:

- Met my expectations. Honest & open.
- Making a difference.
- Looking forward to the process and I will offer what I can.
- Excited to be a part of this historic event.
- I was nervous about fitting in but felt very comfortable with everyone.
- NDIEA – some parallel concerns and I hope to find some conclusions.
- I have excitement because the group is vested and has good expertise producing efforts.
- Applaud ND for the opportunity and hope for continued support.
- Great things happened today.

Other Initiatives:

A Drop-out Prevention Summit will be held in Minot for American Indian Serving schools on February 25, 26 2010. The planning group put together an outstanding event in which you will have the opportunity to:

- Collaborate with fellow educators of Indian students to identify research and actions that support dropout prevention specific to Indian students
- Create action plans to assist your school team in addressing this critical need
- Learn from informed leaders in the area of Indian Dropout Prevention such as:
 - Greg Darnieder, United States Department of Education
 - Dawn Mackety, Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning
 - Don Kaiser, ND Department of Public Instruction
 - Rose Marie Davis, ND Bureau of Indian Education
 - Mark Berntson, ND Education Association
 - Cheryl Kulas, formerly with the ND Indian Affairs

Partners Include:

ND Department of Public Instruction	ND Indian Affairs Commission	ND Education Association
North Central Comprehensive Center	BUENO Equity Assistance Center	McREL
ND Bureau of Indian Affairs	Independent School District, Red Lake, MN	US Department of Education