

Voices of Native Educators:



Strategies that Support Success of Native High School Students

The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing 3.2 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired teachers, and students preparing to become teachers.

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National Indian Educational Association

NIEA advocates and assures optimum educational opportunity that is based on tribal cultures, enhancing tribal sovereignty, and maximizing participation in the education of American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian people.

NIEA promotes appropriate educational services to be provided with sensitivity to individual, tribal, and cultural values wherever American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian learners reside, utilizing the most effective method including those methods to meet special needs.

NIEA coordinates and cooperates with tribal and other organizations to provide future directions, increased communication, and effective leadership in education, cultural, social, and economic development for American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians.

NIEA advocates communication and effective Indian leadership throughout Indian country for the purpose of promoting educational research, educational advancement, educational development, and to implement the ideal of NIEA.

National Education Association

We, the members of the National Education Association of the United States, are the voice of education professionals. Our work is fundamental to the nation, and we accept the profound trust placed in us.

Vision

Our vision is a great public school for every student.

Mission

Our mission is to advocate for education professionals and to unite our members and the nation to fulfill the promise of public education to prepare every student to succeed in a diverse and interdependent world.

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The National Indian Education Association, a 501(c) (3) organization, was founded in 1969 to support traditional Native cultures and values, to enable Native learners to become contributing members of their communities, to promote Native control of educational institutions, and to improve educational opportunities and resources for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians throughout the United States.

The National Indian Education Association's (NIEA) mission is to support traditional Native cultures and values, enable Native learners to become contributing members of their communities, promote Native control of educational institutions, and improve educational opportunities for American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians. NIEA is the largest and oldest Indian education organization in the nation and advocates for, provides technical assistance to, and renders policy support wherever necessary to accomplish its mission.

NIEA is honored to partner with the National Education Association in creating *Voices of Native Educators: Strategies that Support Success of Native High School Students*. This seminal work is a compilation of the stories of student success as told from the perspective of Native educators who have had a hand in creating and observing the circumstances which gave rise to them. It is intended to capture and organize these 'best teaching practices' so that we may share them with teachers, school administrators, parents, Native learning communities, and policy-makers so that they all may learn what is most effective in instructing and engaging Native students. Our hope is that we will be able to build upon this knowledge and use it to better understand how to increase student engagement and academic achievement while informing educational reform at all levels.

The stories of success contained in this report are both timely and relevant to the national conversation about how to boost student achievement, high school graduation rates, and teacher preparation to reform Native education. At NIEA, we know that a holistic educational process aligned with the culture, language, and values of the students being taught is the best approach to achieve these objectives. We believe that *Voices of Native Educators: Strategies that Support Success of Native High School Students* is an important resource in informing these discussions and spreading this message to a broader audience.

We look forward to your review of this report and to the creative ways in which you may choose to use it to improve the academic achievement of Native students in your communities.

Sincerely,

Colin Kippen
Executive Director
National Indian Education Association

Voices of Native Educators:

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True to its founding principles, the National Education Association believes that every student in the United States has a basic right to a great public school education, regardless of background, race, or ethnicity. NEA also believes that this work cannot be done alone.

Achieving the goal of a great public school for every student requires the broad support and involvement of everyone—students, families, legislators, business and government, and others. Most importantly, NEA recognizes the need to strengthen and expand these relationships to broaden support for public education.

In a joint effort to boost student achievement and graduation rates for American Indian and Alaska Native students, NEA partnered with the National Indian Education Association on *Voices of Native Educators: Strategies that Support Success of Native High School Students*.

We hope policymakers and educators will use this resource as a guide to what works. We know that when we incorporate Native cultures and languages into the curriculum, student motivation skyrockets, and performance improves. And we know that when we bring elders into the classroom, and engage American Indian and Alaska Native parents, discipline and attendance improve, and everyone benefits.

This report provides valuable insight into the major issues affecting American Indian and Alaska Native learners and promising practices to improve student attitudes toward school, improve attendance, and impact graduation rates.

Our Association, representing 3.2 million educators across the nation, is proud to share this collective wisdom, because when we say “a great public school for every student” we mean every student.

Sincerely,

Dennis Van Roekel
President
National Education Association

Voices of Native Educators:

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes a conversation that took place in April of 2010 in Washington, DC regarding high school reform and Native American, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian students. The meeting was co-sponsored by the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) and the National Education Association (NEA). The meeting was attended by a broad sector of Native educators representing various tribes across the U.S. mainland, Alaska and Hawaii. The purpose of the meeting was to elicit ideas from the participants regarding best practices for improving the success of Native students enrolled in the nation's high schools. The conceptual framework that organized the meeting and this report was provided by the Campaign for High School Equity in a report titled "A Plan for Success." In this document six policy directives were outlined that are intended to support the transformation of secondary schools. The task for the participants of the NIEA/NEA meeting was to support the policy directives with examples from Native communities.

A core belief of the convening organizations was that the best practices implemented in Native communities as they work towards increasing opportunities for Indian adolescents are of value to non-Indian educators, and to Native educators that have not yet experienced success at the secondary school level. This report highlights such practices in an attempt to promote meaningful conversations across communities engaged in

secondary school renewal. The following themes emerged from the conversation that took place regarding best practices:

- ▷ Culturally based education is valued across Native communities and viewed as essential to improving educational outcomes for Native students.
- ▷ Building relationship between Native and non-Native communities is critically important in moving forward a policy or programmatic agenda on behalf of Native students.
- ▷ Native students succeed when provided with a nurturing environment in which adults engage them individually and are persistent in monitoring progress of students and maintaining open lines of communications.
- ▷ Tribes need to have greater autonomy in managing education of students in tribal schools.
- ▷ Tribal communities want to engage public school officials in meaningful conversations about what it takes for Native students enrolled in secondary schools to succeed.
- ▷ There are a number of school reform strategies that can be adapted to serve Native students in tribal, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) funded schools. There are a few examples in this report of such broad based school reform strategies designed for "all students" but equally effective for Native students.

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Part I: Purpose of the Report

This report highlights strategies presented by the educators attending the meeting cited. The intent of this document is to describe how these Native educators are addressing a myriad of challenges in their communities and are succeeding in creating opportunities for Native high school students.

The document focuses not on the challenges, but on solutions. It highlights strategies and interventions that are successful for Native students. The practices presented herein are offered from the perspective of Native educators who are deeply engaged with these students and know the communities in which the students live. Although NIEA realizes that context matters, the organization is interested in accenting approaches that are adaptable and can be taken to scale.

This is especially important since 93% of all Native students are enrolled in public schools that may not be within the control of Native communities.

The report also contains a number of personal stories of Native adolescents whose lives have been changed by a relationship with an adult or as the result of a powerful experience during their high school years. These stories are interspersed throughout the document and aligned to the policy priorities. By including these stories, our intent is to show the importance of connectedness and relevance in the lives of young Native people.

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Part II: Brief Description of Educational Status at High School Level

Despite significant investment by the private and public sectors to reform or reinvent high schools, the performance of high school students on national measures of achievement remains relatively low or stagnant. Specifically, performance of 17-year-olds on the NAEP assessment in both reading and mathematics has increased by one point in reading since 1971 and two points in mathematics since 1973.

In addition to performance, an important indicator of the degree to which high school students are moving successfully toward a college or career path is the graduation rate. The data show that for linguistic and cultural minorities the graduation rates are lower than they are for white students. Specifically, for the 2005/2006 school year, the graduation rate for white students was 76%, for Asians 78%; for African Americans 51%, Hispanics 55%, and American Indian students 50% (NIEA, 2009). Thus, ethnic and linguistic minority students are not succeeding relative to their white and Asian peers. American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian students, in particular, are most at risk.

The focus of this report is American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students. Almost all indicators of success for these students are disturbing: Native students are less likely to have completed a core academic track; they also have higher absentee rates, are subject to frequent suspension from school, and are less likely to graduate on time. Moreover, in some

communities, Native adolescents are involved in substance abuse activities. In addition, reports have concluded that Native students are not supported at the classroom level, and feel alienated from the dominant culture.

The underlying causes of these challenges for Native adolescents are multifaceted. Some factors are associated with the students' home life, while others stem from a lack of support from the school community. This is particularly the case with the issue of affirming Native students' traditional Native language, history, and culture. Moreover, as is the case for many students of color, Native students are enrolled in schools with inadequate human and material resources. This is the case whether they attend tribal schools, Bureau of Indian Education schools, or the public schools which serve the majority of Native children.

Native students not graduating from high school matters because students who drop out of school are more likely than high school graduates to live in poverty, be unemployed, experience poor health, and run a risk of being incarcerated. Moreover, there are negative social and economic consequences that accrue to the students, the communities in which they live, and society at large.

Source 1: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 1973–2008 Long-Term Trend Mathematics Assessments.

Source 2: National Indian Education Association, (2009). Graduation rates of Native Students.

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Part III: About the Campaign for High School Equity (CHSE) and NIEA/NEA Involvement

Because there is a desire to support the success of all high schools students, and particularly students of color, a coalition of organizations representing communities of color formed the Campaign for High School Equity (CHSE). A core belief of the membership is that insight can be gained by incorporating the knowledge and perspective of communities of color. CHSE coalition members met and discussed the problems and solutions for students of color who are poorly served by the nation's high schools. The outcome of the analysis and deliberation is a set of recommendations aimed at effecting changes that will better serve these students. The report generated, organized the recommendations into six major policy areas:

- 1) Make All Students Proficient and Prepared for College and work**
- 2) Hold High Schools Accountable for Student Success**
- 3) Redesign the American High School**
- 4) Provide Students with the Excellent Leaders and Teachers They Need to Succeed**
- 5) Invest Communities in Student Success**
- 6) Provide Equitable Learning Conditions for All Students.**

As noted above, a core value of the coalition is that of giving visibility and voice to communities of color regarding the problems and solutions that

affect their lives. To realize this goal, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) and the National Education Association (NEA) convened a meeting of distinguished educators from the American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian communities. The meeting took place in April, 2010. The objective was to elicit ideas about resources, programs, and strategies that have been found to be effective in working with Native high schools students in BIE, tribal, rural, or public schools.

Creating the conditions in which Native high school students can thrive is not just a function of quality teaching; it also requires ensuring that high school leadership actively promotes values of fairness, equity, and social justice, and eliminates practices that support elements of discrimination against students from challenging home circumstances. Thus, improving outcomes for Native students is a function both of the implementation of the types of strategies and practices described below and of the elimination of deficit thinking, which is possible through ongoing conversations and professional development.

Voices of Native Educators:

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Part IV: *Make All Students Proficient and Prepared for College and Work*

There are a number of strategies that support this policy priority, including raising expectations, strengthening the rigor of teaching in the content areas, public reporting of outcome data, parent engagement, and cultural relevance. The following are examples of practices highlighted by Native educators.

Strong Preparation in Core Subject Areas at the High School Level

Researchers from the **University of Northern Arizona** conducted research on first- and second-year college students to identify factors that contributed to Indian students' success. Based on a review of high school transcripts, exit interviews, and surveys, researchers found that those Native students enrolled in high schools in which the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Science, Technology, Math and Engineering (STEM) initiative had been implemented were more successful during college than those students attending non-STEM focused high schools. The STEM approach includes a comprehensive strategy for strengthening the teaching of math and science. All components of the educational delivery system were internally coherent and aligned—standards, instruction, curriculum, and assessment. The courses emphasized critical thinking skills, creative writing, problem solving, and strategic planning. These courses challenged and engaged the Native students. As noted by one

of the participants, "it keeps kids at the edge of their seat." In addition, the Native STEM program established a professional development network of teachers who received training on teaching according to rigorous standards, on the use of the instructional and supplementary materials specifically developed for the program, and on assessment. At the operational level, the initiative built in added supports to ensure success in overall implementation in schools. Educators asserted that the focused STEM approach provided the structure Native students needed. For example, it guided the students' decision making regarding career choices. This was contrasted with a general high school curriculum (shopping mall approach), which provided so many options to students that they often chose the least-rigorous path.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Program is more rigorous than the regular HS general education program. Many Indian students don't see themselves as high achievers and consequently they opt out of these classes. At **Cleveland High in Portland Oregon**, the counselor works closely with the classroom teachers to plan opportunities for students to visit the International Bacabriette (IB) English classes. With exposure Native students feel more comfortable considering and enrolling in an IB program. However, this strategy can only be used in schools that offer the advance classes in the first place.

Working with a National School Reform Model

An approach that was effective in preparing Indian students for college and improving achievement of Indian students is the **High Schools that Work** (HSTW) initiative, sponsored by the Southern Regional Education Board. This model is being implemented in 30 states and 1,200 high schools throughout the nation. The primary goals of the program are to improve high school students' achievement and increase graduation rates among students in participating schools. This program provides a rigorous curriculum in the core subject areas. In 2002, the program was implemented at **Plummer Worley High School in Idaho**, and enjoyed success. This was the first Native school that used the HSTW model in the country. Several strategies were used to create opportunities for success, including "school within a school," tutorial services, Wednesday night school, and Saturday school, along with staff mentoring, whereby staff were assigned to a specific number of students for the school year. In addition, the school provided students with intensive supports, such as one on one tutoring.

After a number of years, the school achieved success. It met the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) achievement standards in mathematics and language arts, and was recognized by the Southern Regional Education Board as a Golden Award Winner. It is particularly noteworthy that the school excelled given the challenging circumstances of the community in which these students lived. These are high-poverty communities where the dropout rates are very high.

Dual Enrollment and Advanced Placement

Dual enrollment and advanced placement programs are two highly successful approaches for

introducing and preparing students for college and increasing the college-going rate. School reports demonstrate that students who participate in dual enrollment programs have a greater chance (75%) of enrolling in college than those who do not participate. The **Center for Native Education (CNE)** funded by the Gates Foundation primarily serves American Indian students and over the years has been very successful in accomplishing its core mission, which is to encourage schools, colleges, tribes, and urban tribal organizations to build culturally infused college-level course curriculum for students to take while in high school. The Center for Native Education currently supports fifteen schools that have implemented an early college model for Native youth in seven states. Since CNE's inception in 2002 and gathering data since 2006, school reports show over 500 Native students have graduated prepared for college and with dual credit. CNE's rate is 80% compared to a national rate of 57% for Native students. Seventy one percent of those graduates go on to institutions of higher education. Moreover, a number of students have been able to accumulate sufficient college-level credits to meet the two-year degree requirement while in high school or shortly thereafter. The dual enrollment program benefits not only the student but the college partner that offers the opportunity because students, as well as their families and friends, are more likely to enroll at that college to complete a degree.

This opportunity is also easily afforded to students attending the **Blackfeet Academy in Browning, Montana**, which is located on the campus of a community college.

Advanced placement courses provide students with an opportunity to access college-level courses while in high school. Unfortunately, less than 1% of Indian high school students are taking advanced placement

classes. This is partly a function of mutually reinforcing barriers—insufficient numbers of students performing at grade level, and schools not offering the courses due to a lack of prepared students.

David

As Narrated by Chris Meyer

David is going to be a junior at a four-year college this fall. His journey began about four years ago. David became a father at a young age. His first child was born when he was only 17. At the end of his junior year of high school, David wanted to enter a dual credit program. His school counselor would not allow it because he did not meet the state requirement. He had a learning disability and he was on an IEP, so she said no.

David came to the **Cour d' Alene tribal education department** and asked to go full-time as a dual credit student at North Idaho College. That meant he needed to move off the reservation in order to attend college and finish high school in another school district.

We'd never had a full-time dual credit student up to this point, and David wanted full financial support from the tribe. It meant a huge expense to the department: paying his tuition, his books, plus a monthly living stipend.

David graduated from high school. He will finish his two-year degree in May and become a junior in a four-year college. This is a young man whose counselor told him he was not capable. He's learned to advocate for himself and to come in to the department when he needs assistance.

At 19 years old, he's a father for the second time. He has taken full responsibility for a very young family, and has completed two years of college already. It's been said many, many times that our work is about providing opportunities. That's what we did. We always have the attitude that we can and will

support our Native students.

David is just one of many that have now benefited from the dual enrollment program. The district never thought of our students as being very bright or capable until the tribe stepped up and asked the district to run this program. Advocating for students and helping them to advocate for themselves is very critical.

Pre-College On-site Exposure:

The Native Trio programs have a long history of preparing students for college. They work with students at the middle school level and guide them through the transition process to high school and to college. The approach is particularly useful to minority and culturally diverse students who may live in communities in which the norms and expectations of the home community differs from that of the dominant cultural pattern of the college setting. The program provides mentoring opportunities and individual attention to students that makes them feel valued, connected, and respected. At the University of Idaho, it provided high school students with useful information about a number of relevant topics, such as academic and nonacademic expectations at the college level, and personal responsibility. For example, students are taught that the prodding and cajoling they experience at the high school level does not occur as adults at the college level. They are also taught to distinguish between the informal interpersonal communication style of language used with family and friends, and formal communication style typically used when talking with college professors. This was a very useful component of the TRIO program in Idaho, which was specifically tailored to the Indian students.

Native Youth Leadership Summit

The **Northwest Native American Youth Leadership Summit** is for high school students entering grades 9 through 12. It is a week long, and is held at a different university in **Washington State**. It is intended to expose Native students to a university campus, because too many Native students have never been on a college campus. They're kind of fearful.

This summit is done in partnership with a local tribe and the host university. The cost is about \$30,000, because all the expenses for the students to attend are covered. As part of the application, students have to write an essay stating why they think they should come. They need to know that this isn't a regular summer camp, and that they will actually work about 16 hours a day.

The Summit's theme is always an issue that is pertinent to the tribes in Washington State. One of the themes was House Bill 1495, encouraging school districts to work with the local tribes and focusing on tribal sovereignty. At the beginning of the Leadership Summit the students are told that the projects that they do will be used in the development of the Washington State tribal sovereignty curriculum.

Students are grouped into six teams with a team leader who is always a Native college student. The college and high school students seem to be able to relate to each other. All the teams have to do a project around tribal sovereignty, but it's up to them what they want to do. The only requirement is they have to do an oral presentation, use technology, and do research, and work as a team and learn a traditional song.

The other part of the Summit is that they all have to learn a traditional song. We bring the elders in to teach them a song. They only have four or five

hours to learn a song. Each student, when they first get in there, is kind of shy, but by the end of the Summit, they're all singing this song. Then we gift them a handmade drum so they can go home and learn their own tribal songs.

This is a culturally based education system with Native role models who work with students. The students study things that are relevant to them. They feel engaged and motivated to work. They feel like they can get up and talk and not feel threatened. They're contributing to the community and the greater good of Indian people.

Yakama Student

As narrated by Denny Hurtado

One of the students who came to the Northwest Native American Indian Youth Summit was a Yakama student. He was a borderline gangbanger and ready to drop out. On the first day, his body language was very defensive. He was like, "You're not going to touch me. I'm just here, you know. I'm just here checking it out, seeing what's going to happen."

Every student has to do two oral presentations for their team. So this Yakama student got up the first time that they had to talk and he couldn't speak. He was too scared. So his team picked him up. In a regular high school setting, students would probably make fun of him, but our students were respectful. All of them feel really safe in this environment. They feel loved, respected, and there's a lot of trust. So, he couldn't do the presentation the first time. When they did the final presentation, he got up there and was really scared too, but the second time the Yakama student got up; he felt a responsibility to his team. He felt trusted and knew that people weren't going to make fun of him. His presentation was really heartfelt. He said "You know what? I have a lot of brothers and

sisters out there that are gangbangers. If I had a school like this to come to, I would come, and so would they.”

Every year after that, he came to the Summit. He actually told his mother, “I want to go to this, because it’s about who I am. It’s about something I want to learn about. It makes me feel good about myself and that I’m doing something for my community.”

Culturally Based Education

Culturally based education (CBE) has proven to be successful at supporting academic achievement, engaging students, and keeping Native students in school. It is viewed by many educators as an essential component in the education of Native students at all levels. This approach infuses the history, values, and language—or ways of knowing—of Native people into the contents of the curriculum, the language of instruction, the delivery of instruction, and the interaction with Native students.

The teaching of culturally based education starts with the development of standards and, subsequently, the curriculum. Culturally based standards are rigorous and grounded in Native ways of knowing and believing. Educators in the state of **Alaska** were among the first to use a cultural approach in the development of standards. The standards were developed with input from educators and elders throughout the state. Cultural standards have been developed for students, teachers, curriculum, schools, and the community. The standards have served as a model

for other communities in the states of **Montana, Hawaii, Washington, and Oklahoma.**

In **Hawaii**, staff at the Kamehameha schools has recently completed a second round of standards development addressing Native Hawaiian history and culture, and focusing only on educators. The standards are organized around nine pathways to knowledge, called Ala Ike. The team is using this development process as a vehicle to engage the State Superintendent of Education in conversations about informing the way the State writes its standards. There are no reservation schools in Hawaii, and the majority of Native Hawaiian students are taught in public school settings. To promote the success of the Native Hawaiian students, the team works closely with the state department of education.

Hawaii State Department of Education has had great success with the voyaging curriculum, which focuses on Native peoples’ voyaging travels across the Pacific using the stars and the sun as their compass. At the classroom level, the curriculum is integrated with the teaching of trigonometry and calculus. The infusion of these topics has resulted in the modification of the instructional schedule. Students are taken out of the school building to explore the environment in the way their predecessors used to explore the environment.

Culturally based education (CBE) is not just an issue of teaching content, it is also about teaching the Native language of the students in the process of instruction. The **Navajos in Arizona** have been teaching content to their students in the Navajo language. They have shown success in raising student achievement in the content areas as the students acquire and retain their Navajo language skills. They have developed a Navajo language fluency assessment that is used to determine placement at the preschool and kindergarten

levels. Similar assessment development and instructional efforts have been initiated in **Hawaii**, **Alaska**, and the **Ojibwa tribe in Minnesota**. Researchers at Western Washington University have documented this work, which focuses on the role of traditional knowledge and systems of education in communities serving American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students.

Integrating Native Culture throughout the Curriculum

Widely acclaimed curricula tied to state standards are those used in Washington State, Hawaii, and Montana. In **Washington**, staff in the Indian education state office led the effort to develop culturally based curricula and resources that could be infused into all grades and curriculum taught to all students in the state. This has made it easier for non-Indian teachers to teach topics focusing on Native peoples in the region. In addition, staff at the state department of education are currently involved in an effort to encourage districts to work with tribes to develop tribal culture and government curriculum. The state office, in collaboration with local communities, has developed a Web-based tribal sovereignty curriculum for grades 4-12 which is being piloted in some schools. If adopted, it will be integrated into the existing statewide curriculum. The culturally based curriculum can be integrated into social studies at the elementary level, Washington State history at the middle level, and U.S. History and world contemporary problems at the high school level. Progress in the development of this effort is attributed to the positive relationship between the tribes, the state, and the school districts.

The **Edmond School District in Oklahoma** offers high school level courses in Native American Literature, Native American Expressions and a Native Arts class. Classes were implemented by

the Indian Education program twelve years ago as a way to teach Native history, culture and artistic expressions from a Native perspective at the high schools. The courses are also taught at **Boulevard Academy**, the district's alternative school. Classes are offered as an elective and/or humanities credit. The course includes a wide representation of native writers from various states. In addition, the Indian Education program has partnered with tribes to start Native language programs. Classes are held in the language of the Osage, Otoe, and the Muscogee Creek tribes. Although initially designed for students, parents and grandparents also attend. In addition to the language classes being taught on the same evening, other activities scheduled include group tutoring and singing classes for young men. This has been a successful component of the program because students have taken it a step further by participating and competing in state language competitions. Students have also been invited to share their language and culture at schools, conferences and state events. The language, knowledge and skills learned from students are evident and are seen in the student's self confidence as a result of their participation for the last four to six years.

Motivation to pursue a college education is one of the benefits to students when exposed to culturally based education. This is the position taken by educators in **Hawaii**, who maintain that at the elementary level, CBE has increased the relevance of schooling, literacy skills, and attendance for Native Hawaiian students. At the secondary school level, educators are using project-based and culturally based learning as a way of deepening student engagement and involvement with their communities. Students work on projects that improve their communities and through this process gain an understanding of community needs. As a result, they become committed to improving the well-being of the

community, and view higher education as a means for accomplishing that goal. Staff are seeing an increase in participating students' interest in attending college.

Jimmy

As narrated by Robin Butterfield

Jimmy was a highly gifted Native student, with tremendous untapped talent. He was a voracious reader who devoured books. During his eighth-grade year, his mother became very concerned because he wanted to drop out of school. Ironically, one of the issues pushing Jimmy towards dropping out stemmed from an attempt by the school to engage him by having him give oral presentations at his high school American history class.

Jimmy was attending a middle school that was across the railroad tracks from the high school. Since Jimmy was clearly gifted and motivated, his middle school sent him to the high school for some classes. In one of his classes, Jimmy was asked to stand up and give a report, which he refused to do. He refused because he didn't like his Social Studies teacher, whom he felt was neither interesting nor engaging. Jimmy also felt that the teacher was giving Native information which was inaccurate, based on Jimmy's independent readings.

*Jimmy was invited to join the **American Indian Leadership Academy (AILA)**, which gathered students one full day a month for four to five months. The AILA was a journey, not a one-time event. It worked with kids multiple times because people don't change behavior with a one-shot intervention. Jimmy's sister, who had already dropped out, also came and participated in the program. Students were asked to join the AILA, not on the basis of their prior success, but on the premise that the AILA could offer students a new kind of support.*

The Leadership Academy provided Jimmy an opportunity to get rid of some personal baggage, in a safe environment where he realized his experience was not unique or debilitating.

*Some of the AILA kids went to **Camp Odyssey in Oregon**. It was a diversity camp in which students from all over the state were invited to participate. Every day, the students tackled one area of diversity. I've heard students say, "When you usually go, you may cry on the last day." In this camp, the kids cried every day. It was a very emotional and powerful week, with many opportunities to reevaluate negative experiences based upon different forms of discrimination and bias.*

On the last night, we had a celebration in which the students performed. Our Indian students performed cultural dancing, but Jimmy wasn't a dancer. He came up to me and said, "I want to do something." I said, "Okay, well, what do you want to do?" He said, "How about if I tell a traditional story?" I said, "Oh! Do you know a traditional story?" And he said, "Well, I think I'm going to do this one that I have in mind." I said, "Great! That's great."

I had not heard his story before, but Jimmy got up in front of about 100 students and adults and told a beautiful, traditional story. Here's a student who didn't want to stand up in class, but in front of a hundred really diverse students from across the state, he told this beautiful story.

The next morning, when the students were boarding the bus, Jimmy came over, threw his arms around me, and hugged me really hard. He said, "Thank you so much." Jimmy finished that school year. That unique program helped him stay in school.

There were four strategies that I thought contributed to his success. First, we provided a cultural context in which he could use his skills to shine. He seemed motivated when he was engaged in culturally relevant activities. Second, it was important for him to feel part of a community that

had a peer norm emphasizing educational success. Third, there were adult role models that countered some of his negative stereotypes about what it meant to be Indian. He needed those positive adult role models. Lastly, there was a context that gave him motivation to succeed. Previously, he had had lots of people who were giving him similar positive messages, but the motivation to participate was never there before.

Preparing Students for Work: Career Awareness and Readiness

Chief Leschi is a tribal school in the state of Washington that spans grades pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. The school has developed portfolios for its students starting at the 7th grade. **Chief Leschi** staff realized the importance of starting at the middle school level since at this stage few students think about career paths. They have developed a curriculum that initially places emphasis on self-awareness topics and then gradually shifts the emphasis to career development. The goal is to help students understand the connection between school and careers after graduation. The approach is modeled after a state program titled “Navigation 101,” which Chief Leschi staff modified to make it more appropriate to middle school students. The curriculum starts at the 7th grade and goes up to the 12th grade. Following the first year of implementation adjustments were made to the curriculum for a smoother transition leading up through high school.

Emphasis in the middle school lessons support a theme of “Who am I? Finding my path.” The 7th grade emphasis centers on the importance of being a successful Native student. In 8th grade, students will begin to learn the steps to

independence. This is important as students’ transition to the credit earning portion of high school and the importance of meeting graduation requirements.

The early high school years teach about “Where am I Now? Identifying my Quest.” Ninth grade lessons inventory students’ strengths, interests and challenges. The 10th grade students learn about the importance of taking on responsibility. Upper classmen focus on “Starting my Journey” with 11th grade students learn about making choices while the 12 grade embarks on the future.

By teaching concepts early, students are more engaged in their education and understand the importance of education. It is important that students understand who they are, where they want to go, and know how they want to get there. Preliminary outcomes have increased Native student awareness around the importance of good grades, behavior and attendance. Exemplary work samples are kept and maintained by students in their portfolio. Parents are even more involved in student education when this information is shared with them by the student in student-led conferences.

Use of Portfolios

Portfolios were cited by several speakers as a planning tool and way of monitoring progress toward career development and high school graduation. On the Cour d’Alene reservation, the Tribal Education Department (TED) uses a portfolio system to track student progress along the high school education pipeline. The data system stores information about various dimensions of student academic and nonacademic life at each grade in high school.

The TED conducts educational and financial audits each semester to ensure that students

are progressing as expected. At the school level, the high school coordinator monitors student movement along each of the dimensions. In the academic realm, there is information about academic performance and changes in students' course schedules. The personal development dimension holds data elements on student participation in clubs, and comments regarding the students' sense of self-efficacy and level of financial literacy. There is a health and wellness component that contains information about student participation in health activities, training, athletic programs, certification programs, and cultural activities. Finally, there is a database that captures students' career-related activities.

Coeur d'Alene also has a career awareness program for high school students who serve as a source of potential workers for the tribes in five occupational areas: law enforcement, business, medicine, natural resources, and education. It includes job shadowing, job search and application, and job interview skills. The summer program component provides students with an opportunity to develop work skills and soft skills.

Support for Title VII Indian Education Programs

The Edmond Public School district in Oklahoma also uses a portfolio system to maintain information on students' career and academic development. The Indian Education program prepares students for success in the workplace by offering workshops on higher education topics that include setting goals, resume writing, interview techniques, attire for the work setting, and essay writing. In addition, starting with students at the 8th-grade level, the Indian Education program provides flash drives for students so their work can be updated and copied during their high school years. Students with

computer access are also provided with periodic updates on scholarships, essay competitions, and other opportunities in which students may participate. This has enabled students to easily access information regarding career development and other personal documentation. Communication through computers is a tool used for letters of recommendation, nomination processes and class work assignments.

The district also convenes a statewide Indian Youth Career Day. This statewide event is the result of partnerships with metro Indian Education programs and a University that hosts the event on their campus. Last year, it was attended by 500 Indian students from school districts across the state and Kansas. At this meeting Indian professionals were invited to discuss their particular area of expertise with the students. Universities, Tribal colleges, Indian organizations, tribal education programs, military branches and other educational entities set up their booths so that students may access their information. This statewide event includes the host schools of Anadarko, Mid Del, Oklahoma City, Norman, Moore and the Edmond Indian Education programs.

Mentoring programs

Edmond District has initiated a career mentoring program called, "Professional Internship" at the high school level that gives students an opportunity to "shadow" a teacher or other professional in order to learn about the nature of the work in a given career. Once the student graduates, they can access internship opportunities at the school or other venues. The staff maintains contact with the students and continues to support them as they move forward along their chosen career path. As a part of the requirements, students are active for ten weeks

with the program and have at least 80 hours of site mentoring, plus their class time for the semester. At the end of the semester, students are required to do a presentation to their class. One particular student who interned with the Indian Education Program made a power point presentation detailing her many activities she participated in for the semester. She also indicated how she had to educate the high school students about Indian education and tribes in general. As a part of the internship, many hours were volunteered as she worked with our program's activities and services. She assisted classes being taught under the direction of Indian Education staff. She graduated from Edmond and attends Haskell Indian Nations University. She completed hours for an Associate Degree and has been admitted into the Indigenous and American Indian Studies program for her Bachelors Degree. She continually keeps in touch with program staff by email and visits on occasion when she is home. Her plans are to work in the field of Indian Education or an Indian museum.

At Edmond, during the Johnson O'Malley (JOM) summer program, high school students may volunteer as Teacher Assistants for the program. This allows high school students to return to the JOM program during the summer and help the K-8th grade students participating in the program. Students that volunteer are exposed to a variety of lessons and skills that are taught during this program. The high school students receive volunteer points which helps enhance their scholarship opportunities. The volunteer work is coupled with a Higher Education Workshop at which students are asked to write about their volunteer experience and what it entailed. This brings out the skills that students learned, how they worked with younger students, and being student role models.

At the **Blackfeet Academy**, in Browning, Montana, an alternative Native school for high school-aged youths, students are exposed to various careers through service learning and by partnering with Opportunities, Inc., a program funded by the Workforce Investment Act. The program places students in various jobs sites in the community, which enables them to learn job-related skills and gain needed financial assistance. Finally, the service learning program has been instrumental in building student self-esteem through training in community organizing skills.

Kyle

As narrated by Nikki Hannon

*The **Blackfeet Academy** serves approximately 30 students. We have daily contact with our students, allowing us to build strong relationships. We love our students unconditionally and help them find their purpose by creating a culture of respect.*

To come to the Academy students must have dropped out, be at risk of not graduating, and be referred by a counselor. After the counselor refers, the students have to apply and interview. Students need to know if the Academy is a good fit for them, and we must know they want to be there.

Kyle went through this process. He wanted to be there. He came in as a senior, so we knew we had only one year to work with him and we already had a connection. We ran a summer wilderness adventure program in which we identify at-risk students. Kyle had attended the summer program four years earlier.

Kyle was on an IEP, but it wasn't for learning disability. Kyle had Asperger's. Kyle was the first student any of our staff had ever encountered with Asperger's. Part of our philosophy is to give kids a chance to come in with a fresh start, so we did some professional development to learn more about Asperger's.

Our students come in with a lot of discipline issues, academic baggage, and personal baggage. We try to create the space for them to come in and check it all at the door. We give them an opportunity to redefine themselves.

Kyle had a lot of discipline issues. He was very disconnected from the regular high school. He had outbursts and was a very angry kid. I knew about Kyle's family background. There was no dad in the picture. The mother was with an alcoholic abusive boyfriend, and the grandpa had committed suicide. In my mind I thought, "No wonder he's angry."

The whole year with Kyle was a really interesting journey. Though I'm not a licensed therapist, I work closely with psychologists. Kyle came to my office daily to rant and rave. The rants started with just general angry teenage angst, but Kyle's rants went beyond my expertise. I don't know what the kid's IQ was, but he was highly intelligent. He was also an amazing artist.

I remember one rant in particular. We have a front desk secretary who always has a smile on her face. In one of Kyle's rants, he came into my office and began ranting about the fact that everyone at school was so happy. In that moment I realized that the environment we create is so supportive, that this particular student actually found it offensive.

However, Kyle began to feel safe and to trust the staff. He connected really well to a couple of other highly functioning peers. Once we identified his strengths, we could teach from them. Most of my work with him was one-on-one. I was trying to help him switch some of his core beliefs; to help him shift his self-perception. Self-esteem came up a lot in our conversations. I tried to get him to realize he was highly intelligent and talented.

Kyle's turning point was in April, when we selected him to go to South Dakota for the Native Youth Journalism Career Conference. All of our

positive affirmations came together for Kyle once he was at this Career Conference. He had a true fresh start at the conference. He met some peers who didn't know his background. They wanted to be his friend. When he came home, he said, "You know what I learned there? I learned I was cool."

By May, Kyle had a prom date. His self-esteem began to show. He became a more approachable individual. He got a girlfriend by the end of the school year, which for this kid was a major feat. He ended up moving with her to North Dakota, where he enrolled in Job Corps.

He came home last Christmas and was a guest presenter in front of our current students. We asked him, "How did you get over your fear of leaving the reservation?" His response to the rest of our students was, "Well, eventually I just had to get on my big boy shoes and do it." That's exactly what they needed to hear.

Kyle's doing really well. Kyle is one of our success stories. All our staff recognized this beautiful individual who came into our building with talents and strengths. But, he had seen none of that in himself before. The only things he had heard about himself from ground up were, "You're a weirdo. You're different. We're afraid of you."

Creating a fresh start means some information must be on a need-to-know basis. When we tell students we love them unconditionally and will help them find their purpose, they're not always responsive. I learned that from Kyle. But you have to stick it out. You hang in there with them, and they can come full-circle.

Voices of Native Educators:

STRATEGIES THAT SUPPORT SUCCESS OF NATIVE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Part V: Hold Schools Accountable for Students Success

The key strategy identified as critical to holding high schools accountable for the success of students is to put in place an accountability system that collects and publically reports disaggregated data on performance, graduation rates, and teacher qualification. In addition, the use of data to drive decisions, the use of appropriate student assessment tools, and the use of school wide school improvement tools are effective means of achieving this objective.

Use of School Wide Data Teams

The use of data teams has been very useful to the staff of the **Tate Topa Tribal School, in North Dakota**. This is a K-12 tribal school that had been classified as “in need of improvement” but has experienced gains at the elementary and middle school levels. The school has met the AYP standards in reading and math at the elementary and middle school levels. The high school level has been particularly difficult because of a high absentee rate. Nonetheless, the leadership expectation is that achievement outcome will improve given that staff and students have high expectations of themselves. The success experienced by the school can be attributed to several factors. One factor is the creation of data teams. These teams monitor the progress of students from the early grades to the high school level. They track indicators of success such as attendance, test scores, and success on their respective 90 Plans for each school level. One data team was instrumental in identifying weaknesses

in the educational services delivered at the early childhood level. Students were not learning to read by the 3rd grade, and lacked readiness skills. Consequently, by the time they reached the 9th grade students were three years behind grade level.

The data teams were formed after leadership staff participated in the University of Virginia School Turnaround Specialist Program. The two-year program is designed to support school leaders’ efforts to turn around low-performing schools. Data-informed decision making is a key component of the program. They engage staff in a number of activities, including onsite and offsite training, seminars, coaching and extensive reading regarding school reform. Tate Topa leadership attributed the success of the school at the elementary and middle school level to their involvement with the program, but more so to the buy-in from the staff.

As part of the restructuring process at **Hawthorne High School, in Arizona**, the data team retreats engage the staff in a discussion about data as a planning tool to improve instruction. Student results on the statewide Assessment Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) are used to plan-specific interventions at the classroom level. Moreover, teachers are tasked with developing lesson plans that address the particular weakness of the individual Native student. This process holds teachers accountable for their instruction.

Tracking Student Success

The **Wellness Center at Coeur d' Alene** has a longitudinal data system, or pipeline, similar to the State Department of Education's pipeline, that keeps data on students from Kindergarten through adulthood. At The Wellness Center, data is kept on high school students, freshman through senior year. If they drop out, they are still monitored to see if they completed their GED. The Center keeps records on student attainment of a two-year degree, four-year degree, graduate school, and professional degree. Students are monitored semester by semester and for longer periods of time. There is a checklist to make sure that the students move from one segment of the pipeline to the next.

The Center provides a waiver for college students, as part of their application process. Reports on the progress of the students are submitted to the Tribal Council at the end of each semester.

The staff looks at the data from a financial perspective and an educational perspective. The educational goal is to keep moving students from one section of the pipeline to the next—from high school to their GED or to college. There are multiple interventions in place to make sure that students are progressing along the educational/career path as expected. From a financial standpoint, the tribe is able to see where the gaps in services exist and where the dollars need to be shifted, and to determine the steps to be taken to more effectively use the Center resources. The tracking system is critical in allowing staff to audit their program financially and educationally every semester.

Staff at the **Kamehameha Schools in Hawaii** use an electronic portfolio system that allows the team to collect and report real-time information on every class. Parents have direct access to grades, attendance, and behavior data. This has

made teachers very accountable to every parent with a child in their classroom. The team had to do a lot of professional development on how to communicate with parents. As a consequence, there has been an increase in the number of parents coming to school to check on their child's welfare. The parents are asking about the socio-emotional side as well as academics. A counseling piece has been added to the portfolio system, so parents are getting information about the child's socio-emotional behaviors. Moving to an electronic system has effectively increased their teachers' accessibility and accountability.

School Accountability and Culturally Based Education

There is a North Central Accreditation office NCA (accredits schools and districts) that operates under the **Navajo Department of Education**. They are working to institutionalize everything they do in order to operate more like a State Department of Education. The concept is to create a Tribal Department of Education that will also be responsible for all schools including Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) grant schools. This is one layer of accountability that the Navajo Nation has implemented which enables the nation to insert some cultural compliance issues in the NCA accreditation process.

Part VI: Redesign the American High School

This policy priority focuses on the ways in which high schools can be re-organized to ensure the academic success of a diverse student population. Strategies that work for all students generally, but also benefit Native students include multi-agency supports to students, extended learning opportunities, classroom coaches, access to computers, and consistent standards of practice in placement of students in special needs programs.

Total School Reform and Native Students

Chief Leschi Middle and High School is located in Puyallup, Washington. The middle/high school serves 300 students with representation by more than sixty tribes. Prior to the implementation of school reform ideas adapted to fit the student population, the school was faced with a number of problems, including low graduation rates, high absenteeism, low parental involvement, high teacher attrition, and poor student performance. With new leadership at the helm several changes were initiated that have turned around the culture of the school and are producing positive outcomes.

Leadership action is guided by a systemic reform framework that has helped staff to critically examine every aspect of school operation. Rooted in this framework is the practice of using data to set goals, measure progress, and improve instruction. Over a seven-year period, the

school leadership and staff have identified and successfully dealt with barriers that prevented them from meeting the overall mission of the school—academic success of enrolled students. Key components to the turnaround strategy at Chief Leschi are the following:

A Culture of High Expectation

To address the issue of deficit thinking or low expectations, the **Chief Leschi School** provides leadership training to its staff. One problem that was particularly vexing to the staff of the school was disruptive behavior among some students. There was a zero tolerance policy at the school, but leadership did not want to apply it as initially conceived, whereby students were pulled out of the classrooms and sent home. Instead, leadership redefined “Zero Tolerance” to keep students **in** school. Leadership sought to eliminate the deficit thinking frame among staff and instill a core building philosophy that staying in school is in the best interest of the students. Extensive training was conducted to reverse the viewpoint of the staff. At the same time, students were introduced to standards of acceptable school behavior and periodically reminded to ensure that they were internalized.

Transparent Standards of Behavior

The school developed a tiered system of student standards of behavior that outlined expectations

and consequences for noncompliance. Data was reviewed identifying areas of concern. The concerns were categorized into levels of misbehavior.

- ▷ **Level 1** misbehaviors are worked on by the classroom teacher or the staff member present.
- ▷ **Level 2** misbehaviors are those repeated behaviors which may need the involvement of more support staff and a plan or intervention is put into place.
- ▷ **Level 3** misbehaviors are direct office referrals and reflect unsafe or illegal activity.

Interventions are then put into place with the students. Students may also be placed on contract which range in structure depending on the level of concern. General contracts address good attendance, a minimum grade point average and the expectation of attending school and not being disruptive to the educational environment. Other contracts may address specific concerns of drug, and alcohol usage and the access to appropriate support resources. Others may address unsafe behaviors if warranted regarding safety and gang related concerns that could disrupt the educational environment. Students and staff both learn about levels of misbehavior and interventions. These are specified in individual student contracts.

Positive Relations with Families

Evaluation of current practices was reviewed to ensure that accessibility to the school was accommodating and not intimidating for parents. For instance, entire multi-disciplinary teams would meet with a parent significantly outnumbering a parent creating a potentially intimidating setting. Sometimes school staff would sit on one side of the table with the family on the other. Changes were made to the physical set up of a room; staffs were called in as necessary instead of all at once.

Knowing that both parties wanted what was best for the student, the message was conveyed that we are all coming around a table to make the best decision for students and not sitting across the table from one another. These changes put parents at ease and consequently they were much more likely to return in the future.

Support Struggling Students

Finally at Chief Leschi School, students not meeting expectations are closely monitored and are gradually introduced to more challenging material as their skills strengthen and knowledge of content increases. Those below grade level are placed in double blocks of math and/or reading. Students on grade level have more flexibility in the courses available to them, such as PE, video production, and culinary arts.

Similarly, the **Edmond School District** convenes after school group tutoring. Teachers are available to tutor in all subject areas, with higher Math being a target area. Students may also have individual tutoring sessions. Indicators used for measurement include grades, test scores, attendance and a pre and post Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) score. Monthly logs indicating accomplishments and attendance are recorded to show student growth. Coordination, communication, and consistent attendance are crucial for the success of the program.

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Garrett
As narrated by Allen Tsinigine

Garrett came to us at 15 years of age. Normally at 15 you are a sophomore in high school, but he was barely an 8th-grader in middle school. At 13 he left his boarding school for disciplinary reasons. Garrett's mother was a single mom. She got tired of being called by the school every day, so, she just

withdrew him from school at 13-1/2. He didn't attend school at all until he came to us at age 15.

By the time Garrett came to us, he had very basic reading, writing, and math skills. He was automatically put on a 504 plan, but he needed much more help.

We have a school-based intervention team that helps students transition from middle school to high school. It's a support team that helps not only the student, but the parent as well. Through a 21st Century and Safe Schools Grant, the team is provided with a school security officer. We also have three counselors on the transition team, one at each grade level. The team is called the Watch Group. There are times when families can't afford school supplies. There are kids who come to school raggedy, wearing the same clothes over and over again. We look out for them and find money to buy them school supplies or some nice clothes.

The transition team worked to help Garrett move on to high school, even though he functioned at a 5th or 6th-grade level. The team worked with him the whole school year.

At **Page Middle School** when a referral came in from a teacher for Garrett, the Dean of Students pulled the teacher, the student, and the mother immediately. They all needed to sit down together in order to help Garrett. They all needed to hear all sides of the story. Garrett's mother needed to know and support what was going on in that classroom, and what actions brought about the referral. A plan was developed to help Garrett understand his choices and his responsibilities. For his actions, there were consequences. Garrett's mother and the Dean talk on a weekly basis to keep tabs on him and his grades. Because of the additional support, Garrett walked in the promotion ceremony at the end of the year and transitioned over to the high school.

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A School Wide Coherent Curriculum and Close Attention to Teaching and Learning

At **Chief Leschi** the teaching and learning process is transparent. Teachers do not have the option of closing the classroom door and "going at it alone." Instead, all same-grade teachers are teaching the same curriculum and coordinating appropriately with their peers. There are ongoing observations of classroom practices to assess fidelity to implementation of specific interventions. Because there is close monitoring of student performance and teacher practice, shifts in implementation are identified early and supports are provided to teachers. For example, instructional coaches are deployed when teachers seem to be struggling with particular interventions.

Redesign of the High School Additional Examples

New leadership at **Pine Ridge High School** in South Dakota is tackling a number of challenges that made it difficult for the school to successfully serve its students. Although the school is small (about 500 students), it is understaffed, limited in funding to attract new teachers, and facing student behavioral challenges such as alcohol and drug abuse. Nonetheless, the principal had a good relationship with the parents and was optimistic about the future of the school. The new leadership embarked on a school improvement strategy that included the following:

The Response to Intervention (RTI) approach was a three-tiered instructional delivery system that was tied to the students' level of performance based on statewide test results. Students in Tier 1 (basic or proficient level) were placed in a 90 minute block in reading ; tier 2 students (below basic) received an additional 30 minutes of reading block (total of 120 minutes), and tier 3 students,

who were significantly below basic and on an IEP, received another 30 minutes of reading (total of 150 minutes). This approach will be implemented in the 9th-grade freshman academy.

Addressing Student Substance Abuse

Leadership dealt with some of the issues related to safety by having only one entrance to the school, applying a consistent and fair discipline policy, creating “peace agreements,” and helping students to learn to talk through issues. In addition, an incentive program was in place for students who met the following requirements: on honor roll, have an attendance rate of 90%, and no record of misconduct. Students could earn up to \$70 per quarter in gift cards and experience field trips to Rapid City. Given the isolation of the community, this was a motivating factor for students.

Databased Decision Making

The database used by the **Pine Ridge high school** was the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) Native American Student Information System (NASIS) which is a good system of collecting data at the school level. It enabled the staff to track attendance, as well as behavior problems which in the past school year declined by 65%. Attendance itself was up by 10%. Leadership used data to monitor implementation of programs and to document problems. These indicators combined with the performance data provided leadership with information to guide decision making, particularly as it related to the academic program.

Response to Community Members

Community involvement was a strength of the new leadership. The principal knew how to work with the community. A number of activities were initiated to engage the community in the life of the school, including bingo night, Christmas fair,

Halloween night, and talent shows. The talent show was filmed and shown on the local TV station. In addition, the Parent-Teacher conference format was changed in response to parent concerns that some teachers were not present during scheduled meetings and parents had to look for them. All conferences were held in a single location in the gym and parents liked the new format.

Maximize Instructional Time

At the **Tate Topa school system** in North Dakota, staff used the “bell to bell” teaching approach to address some of the behavioral problems they encountered in this high-poverty, low-performing school. “Bell to bell teaching” reduces the breaks between classes. Previously, during these transition periods students were engaged in unacceptable behaviors, such as skipping the next class, teasing, and bullying in the hallway of the school. The flow of the school’s schedule ultimately contributed to poor achievement by reducing instructional time. With the implementation of the new approach, teachers are prepared to teach at the indicated time and students understand that at school learning is a serious matter requiring intensity and high expectations in terms of achievement outcomes. Leadership asserts that it is only through high energy and output on everyone’s part that schools such as Tate Topa will be turned around and be able to maintain the effort.

A. Support a Variety of Learners

There are a variety of strategies that schools can use to provide additional supports to Native students including providing financial help, summer school programs, computer- based courses, and independent studies. All of these options are ways of giving students an opportunity to make up credits.

In an attempt to prevent students from “falling through the cracks,” education programs, specifically in the **Edmond School district in Oklahoma** have implemented programs for high school students called, “Star Program”, “Soar Program” and “Project Hope”. The Star program is for high school students who did not score well on high stakes tests or are failing classes and are recommended by core teachers. Students are placed in classes to improve skills working on a computer based program called Odyssey Ware. The plan is to have students in for one semester and back on their feet. There is also a career side of the program with students focusing on career choices. Tutoring is also made available for students to help them meet the achievement standards as measured by the Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test. This test measures students’ progress in mastering Oklahoma’s Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS). The Soar and Project Hope programs are other alternatives for students to earn credits and graduate. The programs are self paced and students are required to attain a number of credits in a certain length of time to move forward. Boulevard Academy is the alternative school which is another option for students. These interventions are designed to prevent students from not graduating.

Staff use various ways of working with at risk students to help them succeed. For example, in one school district collaboration between the penal system and the school enabled a young man on probation to work with supportive staff in the district. Over a short period of time, he developed an interest in audiovisual tools and with support from the district staff was able to make this area a career option. This opportunity changed this young person’s life path.

Also, some Tribes are rewarding students for their high-achieving scores. **The Choctaw Nation**

Of Oklahoma has a program called. “The Star Program”, which provides gift certificates for Choctaw students who obtains grades of A’ and B’s and/or have perfect attendance. The program was initially designed for students residing in their tribal jurisdiction area, but was expanded, so that Choctaw students in any state are eligible to receive the recognition for high performance.

Develop School-Based Standards; Restructure the School Calendar

The desire to align the culture of the school with that of the community has led to innovation in implementation of school policies. In some communities the student attendance policy has been modified to allow students to be absent for 2-3 days to accommodate a family or community events. For example, they accommodate students attending funeral observances for a family member. In this community, the tradition of laying a person to rest takes three days, which is not the same in a non-Indian community. Thus, the school developed its own standards and procedures for addressing these events. Nevertheless, the student is expected to make up for missing lessons.

Similarly, in **Alaska**, rather than applying the suspension-expulsion policy in ways that place the student further behind, educators are working with the community to place suspended students in community service projects. Students who are placed in “in-school” or “out-of-school” suspension perform community service and remain accountable for completing homework assignments.

The White Mountain and San Carlos Apache tribes in Arizona, in partnership with community leaders, have developed innovative ways to implement truancy codes. One such activity includes visiting the students’ home to talk with families and the students themselves about the

long-term detrimental effect of truancy. They have also developed a video that is currently posted on the Arizona Department of Education’s website.

Recognizing that school attendance policies are not always informed by community cultural norms, the **Blackfeet the school district in Browning, Montana**, is now revising its attendance policy to allow for differentiation in absences based on clearly articulated standards. The pending policy will make distinctions between absences that have “make-up privileges” from those that do not, thus ensuring that the system is flexible, yet not misused by the students.

An example of inconsistency between school norms and that of the Native community occurs during the whaling or hunting season in **Alaska**. Because whaling is a subsistence activity essential to the survival of the community, children are trained early to this way of life. Therefore, during the hunting season few students are in school. Similarly in **Idaho**, some schools are considering restructuring the school calendars to accommodate families during salmon running season. It is the custom of the Native community to participate in the salmon-catching activities. Many young Native students are torn between practicing a cultural tradition and being in school during this season.

Chelsea

As Narrated by Mary Jane Oatman-Wak Wak

I mentor a little Nimipuu girl named Chelsea. I’ve seen this young girl grow up dancing on the Powwow Circuit. She just turned 17. Chelsea has a lot of emotional issues that are a result of growing up with an absent father and a mother who is a recovering cocaine addict. Her family has always been in Boise. Although they’ve never lived on the

Reservation, they return home regularly. Chelsea has been in several different credit recovery programs.

Last year, Chelsea’s mother called me shortly after her brother passed away. She said, “I got a call from the school that we need to meet. Chelsea is going to lose all of her credits for the semester because she was out too many days during the funeral. Can you attend this meeting with us? If they do this to her, I know she will not graduate.”

I attended that meeting and became a part of her IEP team. At the table, I had the sense that the school was telling the mother decisions that had already been made about her daughter. It was not a collective effort to find alternative ways to help Chelsea earn credits.

At the meeting, I was walking a very fine line between my professional and my personal connection to this student. In Chelsea’s case, I felt that my role was to be there as a fellow tribal member and as a family liaison. Still, I knew that the school folks knew that I was also a professional working for the state.

So I sat there and listened to them talk about the decisions that they had made for Chelsea. Chelsea’s mother explained how many days she had missed and why she had missed them. The response from the principal was, “Well, I see here that you have seven missed absences for this so-called funeral.”

I listened and listened because I wanted to get the big picture. Then, I addressed the group. “Are you all church-going folk?” They nodded. I said, “I imagine that your congregation has between 2,000 and 5,000 folks. And when you lose one of those people, it’s hard on the whole congregation. Is that right?” They agreed. Then I said, “Now, can you imagine being a part of a tribal family, a tribal community where you lose family members on a weekly basis?” I said, “Now, you see where the conflict comes in with young Chelsea here. It’s her duty as a tribal citizen to pay respect to those

families. It's expected. So it's hard for me to sit back and listen to you make these decisions when she is trying so hard." The principal said, "Will you write a letter for her file so that we can work on getting her these credits so that she can finish out this school year?" I said, "Yes, I will do that for her."

It was in that meeting that I realized that we don't have enough liaisons to serve and advocate for our People living in urban communities. We don't have the hub of tribal resources and tribal education departments. We need more folks who could intercede and advocate for urban tribal families.

I also realized that it was not just going to be enough for me to serve as a liaison only on that day. Chelsea and I talk almost daily now. Chelsea's still on the fence. She's still struggling to find a reason to want to go to school.

Over the summer, Chelsea told me she wanted to take a photography class, but couldn't afford the materials and fees. It made me realize the barriers she faced just to take a class. I said, "Well, you can use my camera if you want. I have a couple of lenses and filters and all that stuff." I sent her along with my old film camera. In photography, she has found a passion and a gift. It all comes full-circle. She has taken so many beautiful pictures of my sons. She's able to give back to me as much as I've given to her.

We need more people who want to build these types of relationships with our kids. We need advocates who are willing to stand up to somebody like the administrator who was talking down to Chelsea's mother. We need to do a better job of educating non-Native administrators not to see culture as a crutch. There are administrators who see culture as something that Native communities fall on as an excuse, when we all know that Chelsea was where she needed to be, with her People. We need to advocate against schools telling Native students, "We're making the decision for you that you will not succeed." I know in my heart if I was not in that

room that day, Chelsea would not be in school.

B. Support Multi-agency Delivery of Services

Non-academic support services address barriers to student learning that are not within the span of control of the school community. Given the challenges faced by tribal schools and by public schools serving large numbers of Indian students, it is crucial that students have access to nonacademic support services (psychological, health, child services, and courts). These services can be delivered in an integrated manner by any of the support agencies. However, it is most effective if delivered at the school using a wraparound services approach, which has been used very successfully in Native schools.

The **Orofino School District in Idaho** is an example of flexible use of resources to serve the emotional needs of enrolled Native students. Leadership was able to use Title I funds to hire a social worker to assist students with social-emotional issues rather than assign this task to the guidance counselor. By rethinking the way the services were paid and delivered, the school was able to address the emotional and mental health needs of the Native students while freeing up the academic counselor time to perform the needed career-related services.

Converting the high school to a "community school" is advocated by Native educators as an

effective way of delivering services to communities faced by multiple challenges. An integrated multiservice approach is particularly helpful in rural communities where there is great distance between students' home, the school, and location of agencies providing needed services.

The **La Conner School, on the Suquamish reservation** in Washington State, is an example of a school that has transformed itself into a community school by being open during nonschool hours and offering a range of services, such as presentations from speakers in the region, numerous events for students, dual-credit college-level classes for adults, and access to computers to assist with resume writing and other job search tasks. The impact has been more trust and cooperation between school and community.

Another strategy to make schools more relevant to students is to break up large schools into small learning communities where the student population does not exceed 500 students. While the benefits of this approach do not accrue exclusively to Indian students, they are particularly meaningful to Native students because the small learning community approach is more suitable to the Native way of thinking and learning.

John

As narrated by Shirley Tuzroyluke

John is 100% Inupiaq from a village along the Northern Alaskan coast. At over six feet tall, John is taller than everybody else in his village. He is almost 18.

John has changed schools about three times a year since 7th grade. He is a junior, but he has gaps in his transcripts and he was about a year behind in credits. Despite his absences, he had a GPA of over 3.0 and had passed all his high school

graduation qualifying exams.

John enrolled in the RAISE Program, a community-based program within a Native-owned nonprofit health corporation. The program was developed on the belief that engaging youth at an early age builds capacity, gives participants work experience, and introduces them to health-related careers. The program primarily supports academic success through leadership, personal, cultural, and career development.

At the time he enrolled in the program, his academic progress was at a complete stand-still. We developed an Integrated Care Team for John, based upon his unique needs. John's team was composed of program staff, his uncle, probation officers from the village and from Anchorage, clinicians, and John's worksite supervisor/mentor.

We met with his teachers to strategize how to support his success. In the first meeting, the terms the education staff used to describe John included: "He does not initiate." "He requires constant prompts." "He's not motivated." "He does not engage." This was puzzling to us because, although he was quiet, it was clear that he was intelligent and observant. He was a very, very acute observer who processed the world through his observations. I think this is an example of the need to ensure that there are Native people serving Native students. We were aware of cultural differences in John that others saw as a deficit.

In the RAISE program's cultural strands, students share stories that reflect the richness of their cultural knowledge. Through these stories, we learned that John was taught to hunt when he was quite young and learned not only to survive, but thrive on the northern tundra. The question for us became how do we work with someone who achieved a high degree of self-sufficiency in one of the harshest climates on earth?

To address his credit deficiency, we set up a supervised study environment in a computer lab. We established a benchmark and invited John to

voluntarily report his own progress. Encouraging John to self-report marked a change in how he viewed our involvement in his life. Now he has taken control of the output, he's pushing his own limits. He is trying to beat his own record.

One day, John started coming to work wearing one of those big furry hats with the flaps. We gave him an "accommodation" for eccentricity. We just let the situation alone. It wasn't until we finally said, "You're at work. You're going to have to take your hat off," that we found out that in school kids were making fun of his ears. John's very, very quiet and sensitive. They were making fun of his ears, so he was wearing the hat. We found out at school that he was the one who was set aside. So we went to the school, and we said, "This is not only his issue. It's the issue of the students." The behavior needed to be addressed by the school on their site. Doing that changed his perception of how we were involved in his life.

Along with other students in the program, John was given an opportunity to join a group that was to attend the NIEA's Close-Up program. All students had to earn no less than three credits by our departure deadline. He earned 3.5 credits.

Community service is an integral part of the RAISE program. Students also learn traditional leadership skills, starting with how to introduce themselves within the norms of their culture. They participate in youth advisory councils and learn to do presentations and workshops about their experiences.

So far this year, John has earned five credits. He earns additional credit in work-study. He's a file clerk in our Employee Health Department. In this job, the supervisor works with him twice a week mentoring him and teaching work skills. He has also applied to a program called the Rural Alaska Honors Institute. We're awaiting word on that. He's applied to the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

When John came into the program, he said he

was going to be an auto mechanic. Last week, we had a special program. When John's turn to speak came, he started with his traditional introduction. Then he told what he accomplished this year. When it came to his career choice, he stated "Lawyer." He then turned to me and simply stated, "I'm going to make it."

Voices of Native Educators:

STRATEGIES THAT SUPPORT SUCCESS OF NATIVE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Part VII: Provide Students with Excellent Leaders and Teachers

Much has been written about the value of improving the quality of leaders and teachers in all high schools, but particularly those with significant enrollments of poor and linguistically or culturally diverse students. Strategies to improve the human capital include professional development, a variety of incentive programs, a recruitment program to attract diverse teachers, and the creation of a pipeline that draws from local communities. All of these strategies have been successful in various communities. Best practices in Native communities aimed at improving the quality of teachers and teaching are highlighted below.

Attract Teachers to Reservation or High Native Enrollment Schools

A lingering problem in Indian communities is attracting and maintaining teachers. This is a problem in schools located in rural communities that are geographically isolated. However, it is also prevalent in **Hawaii** where the communities are less isolated. In Hawaii, the pattern has been for teachers to work in schools for one or two years and then leave. Most of the teachers come from the continent (U.S. mainland) and the turnover rate is 50% to 70%. In addition, some of the teachers are not a good fit for the community because they lack an understanding of community cultural norms and behaviors. Staff turnover engenders instability, interrupts implementation of best practices, and disrupts

the positive relationship that students establish with their teachers. Thus, the challenge for Native communities and public school officials is to reverse this pattern.

A number of incentives have been used in various communities to attract or keep teachers in schools. While financial incentives are useful, they are not always the key motivating factor for teachers. Leadership can attract quality teachers by articulating a compelling vision of the work to be performed in a given school. Such is the case in a school in **New Mexico** where the principal recruited teachers to work for half the pay given to teachers in other schools. In this school the leadership has taken time to work with the new teachers and teach them about the culture and language of the Indian community. Consequently, very impressive innovative work is taking place at this school. For example, a previously retired math teacher developed a lesson on the Anasazi tribe's use of mathematics during the period the Anasazi inhabited the Chaco canyon area (Northwest New Mexico). The students derive great pride in knowing the accomplishments of their ancestors while they learn trigonometry and calculus concepts.

Promoting and developing a cadre of principals and teachers from the community is another strategy for addressing the issue of high teacher turnover in Native communities. The **Lewis and Clark State College's American Indian Student**

Leaders of Excellence (AISLE) project is an example of a program specifically designed to increase the number of Native Americans working in Native communities. This is a teacher training program that provides financial and academic support to Native students interested in teaching or other careers in education. Upon completion of the program, teachers are placed in Native communities. A graduate of this program is the high school coordinator at the Coeur d'Alene reservation in Northern Idaho.

Navajo Boy

As Narrated by Leon Oosabwe

Relationships, trust, belief, self-esteem, support, and role models: those are things that all educators, teachers, Principals, and Superintendents must have in Indian Country for their kids to survive.

A kid comes out of the Luka Chuka Mountains. He's in 8th grade and he goes to a big high school on the Navajo reservation that has 600 students. He's in special education. He barely speaks English. He's unsure of himself. He comes from an impoverished area out in the sticks.

He goes to high school classes. He wants to play sports, so he tries out for the basketball team, but he doesn't understand the coach's instructions because he doesn't understand English very well. So, the coach gives him a buddy who speaks English and Navajo. The buddy tells him what the coach is saying in Navajo and what the plays are. He always has that kid by him telling him what the coach is saying.

This goes on for two years, three years, through to his senior year. During that time the coach requires the team to have night practices, but the Navajo boy has no way to get home. He has no place to stay, so the coach invites him to stay at the trailers where the coaches live. The coach

has a wife and two kids. The boy learns about relationships by watching the coach's family interactions. He learns how to get along with people during those four years.

He learns self-esteem. He sees that somebody believes in him and is trying to teach him morals and values. Keep in mind; this is a boy in special education who doesn't understand English. As he is playing sports, he learns how to get along with other kids, mostly other Navajo kids, as well as white kids and Hispanic kids.

His senior year he becomes the captain of the basketball team. He still struggles with the English language, but with the support of his teammates, the school, and his coach, he makes it to his senior year. The Navajo boy graduates from high school.

This coach is rather tough and has high expectations of his kids. This coach knows what this Navajo boy is going through because he went through it at a public school back in Oklahoma back in the 60s. As an Indian kid going to a 4A public school, the coach learned about bias, prejudice, and poverty first-hand.

*The Navajo boy goes on to Haskell, where he plays basketball. He gets help because he's a special education student. He graduates from college and comes back to the reservation. He goes up to the **Window Rock School District**, where he presents himself. His former coach is coaching there. He asks the boy to be his Assistant Coach and to be a special education teacher. The board wants to meet him. When he is in front of the board they ask him a couple questions in English. He answers in English.*

Then the board begins talking amongst themselves in Navajo. The Navajo boy is sitting there and they're discussing him in Navajo. As soon as they're through, they ask him a question. Oh, did I tell you he is black? They're talking Navajo in front of him, and he answers them back in Navajo.

I don't know if you know of this kid. He's real popular on the Navajo Reservation. His name is Thomas Johnson. He was my basketball player. He was the kid I had at home whom I taught. Today he's a teacher at Red Rock Day School which is a little school over in Luka Chuka Mountains towards Ship Rock.

He had somebody who believed in him. He had an adult he trusted and who taught him to believe in himself. His self-esteem improved because somebody pushed him, motivated him, taught him about life. He had someone to teach him about things that he could not learn at home because his mom was a single mom.

Many of the Indian students need this kind of support. I know one kid who's a business manager for the school. Another one is the personnel director. Four of the kids are now principals in the Navajo Reservation.

If you provide support to any Indian kid in the United States, if you give them trust, relationships, a role model—they're going to be successful. They may not be teachers and lawyers, but they might be mechanics or laborers. If you can just give them support and have somebody who believes in them, they'll not just survive, but thrive.

Develop a Process for Selecting Effective Teachers

Hawaii has developed a three-part process for determining the capability of a teacher candidate to work with Native Hawaiian students. The first part is the development of a job description that lays out expectations regarding the lens with which to work with Native Hawaiians, specifically the importance of incorporating Native ways of knowing, believing, and operating. The second part consists of an essay in which the candidate is asked to discuss his or her understanding of culturally based education. In addition, the candidate is asked to teach a

lesson to a class of Native Hawaiians students. This component of the process enables the decision makers to see how well the candidate relates to the students. Finally, the third piece is unique in that it brings the community elders into the teacher candidate interview process. This is based on the belief that elders can discern the level of commitment and true character of the candidate. Native Hawaiian educators assert that the process has been effective in weeding out people who are not good candidates for schools with Native Hawaiian students.

Recruiting Native Teachers

Hawaii has started 21 Teacher Prep Programs at high schools in various communities. The intent of the programs are to recruit Native students into the fields of teaching, counseling, and secondary school administration. It is a collaborative effort of the **Kamehameha schools and the Hawaii Department of Education**. One aspect of the recruiting at the high school level is to engage students in project-based learning. This has helped students see the connection between their project work and career. Students expressing interest in pursuing a teaching career receive academic mentoring as they transition from high school to community college, or to a four-year institution. Counselors at the college level monitor the progress of the students to ensure that they persist in the accomplishment of their objectives.

Another component of this program is targeting Native Hawaiians who are already in the system, to encourage them to move into administration. This is collaboration with the Department of Education and the major universities and colleges of the state. The universities have crafted a program that focuses on courses generally taken by students going into administration, but also focuses on such topics of particular interest and

importance for Native teachers as culture-based education. Over a 10-year period the team from Kamehameha has seen a gradual increase in the number of Native Hawaiians going to school and obtaining a four-year degree—from 7% to 17%.

Deepening Community Base Education (CBE) through Professional Development

Once non-Native teachers are hired to work in a school with a significant number of Native students, the next step is to provide professional development to ensure understanding of tribal history, cultures, and the languages. While there is variability in how this is accomplished across the various Native communities, most tribes focus on these areas. The proceeding summaries address strategies Native communities use to build capacity of teachers to work with Native students.

The training of non-Native and Native teachers by the **St. Regis Mohawk tribe** (New York and Canada) starts during orientation with a tour of the reservation and an introduction to appropriate pronunciation of Mohawk names. Like the process used by the Mohawk tribe, new teachers at the **Browning Alternative Native high school in Montana** participate in an orientation and tour of the reservation as a means of introducing them to the culture and language of the community.

In **Montana the “Indian Education for All”** legislation mandates the teaching of Native culture which necessitates curriculum development and training so that all students are exposed to the history and culture of the tribes in the state.

In **Hawaii** a team from the **Kamehameha Schools** is working with the State Department of Education (DOE) to ensure that Hawaiian students survive and thrive in public schools. The program is called Kahua. The effort is funded in

part by Kamehameha Schools and funds from Title II of ESEA. Originally, Kahua was meant to be an induction process for new teachers. Now it is a whole school professional development process. Kahua is based on three primary values that resonate throughout the Native community: relationships, *sense of place*, and *identity*.

Sense of Place

The program primarily focuses on helping teachers understand Hawaiian students. Kahua comes from an indigenous Hawaiian standpoint. Non-Hawaiian teachers are educated about the school and community with whom they’re going to be working and living. Teachers need to have a sense of place. They must have an understanding of where native Hawaiian students come from in order to be able to help them.

Building Relationships

The second piece of Kahua involves *building relationships* with local youth. Children don’t thrive when they know that their teacher or school administrator just doesn’t care. They can also become seriously combative if they see you as an outsider. They can become rough students; pop your tires and the like. But, if a teacher can build a trusting relationship, they’ll be good.

Identify

The third part of Kahua is *identity*. Identity is the real crux of the program. The staff identifies key cultural and ethnic components that are important to the students in affirming their identity. The conversations focus on curriculum building from the standpoint of starting with the children’s knowledge base and epistemology. Teachers are discouraged from starting with outside information. This has been a crucial piece in changing teacher attitudes and practice in the classroom.

Kahua is a year-long process. Teachers have an academic mentor and a community mentor. The community mentor is a little unique because most induction processes in the United States don't have a community member to support the teacher in understanding the place and the people who live in that area. Like the process of hiring, the program employs the elders or Kapuna to be community mentors for these teachers. Finally, the team has developed a teacher observation tool that examines how the culture-based education practices are applied at the classroom level. The tool is being considered as a statewide model for observing teacher practice. As noted by one of the implementers, "this effort has created a cadre of teachers that are skilled in culture based education using an indigenous Hawaiian approach to teaching and learning."

Kahua

As narrated by Walter Kabumoku

This is the story of a young lady from New York who came over last year, and who was in the focus group we used for data collection. Her first reaction to my question, "So how did Kahua go last year for you?" was, "I absolutely hated it." The first reason she gave was, "I absolutely hated to come in on a Saturday for professional development. My first year, I was burnt out. I needed my Saturdays for myself. Why the heck did I have to come to this stupid Kahua thing?" The second reason was that she didn't understand why she needed to learn about building relationships. She thought teaching was an objective process. She thought she could stand back, throw the spiel out; the kids would get it, and she'd move on. Of course, we all know that's not the case, but she thought there was no need to reach out to parents. Like many new teachers, she thought she could turn to the Dean

of Students and say, "It is your problem. It's not my problem." That changed last year. She thought that she didn't need the knowledge base of the community folks to help her with in-class projects.

Relationship was not a part of her psyche as a teacher. She is in special education where these things are even more important than for a mainstream generalist. She didn't really buy into the concepts of "sense of place" or "identity."

This past February she had a 16-year-old young lady in her class. This gal is the eldest of six. She had to get up in the morning, get all the younger kids prepared for school, and then go to school herself. She came to school late every day. The girl had a teacher who didn't go through the Kahua process. The teacher kept marking her late, and couldn't be bothered with any explanation. So, this young lady came in to see the teacher from New York. She was upset and complaining about the teacher who marked her late. So the teacher from New York got her some water, calmed her down, and asked why she was upset. The student tells her about the first-period teacher, "Oh, she from the Mainland. She this white lady from the Mainland. She no understands me, okay. You know, she don't understand me." Our kids don't always speak Hawaiian, but they do speak a Pidgin English.

Now this gal from New York is looking at her own skin, and she's thinking to herself, Gee, I'm from the Mainland. But our young student was thoroughly upset and went on to explain that in the morning, "I got this to do, this to do. I got to send this kid here. Ah, man, I wish people would understand me." So the teacher from New York, who went through Kahua, responded, "Wait a minute. Don't you realize that I'm from the Mainland?" And the young girl turned around. She said, "Hey, miss, you not like her."

At that moment, it dawned on the teacher why she was in Kahua. What she learned was that relationships are extremely important. She learned that in order to reach kids, they have

to trust you. She also learned that her ability to communicate with this young woman was because she was receiving training about the local language. She didn't speak pidgin well, but she could understand her kids. That was important. Lastly, she understood that this young lady had responsibilities because of her birth order as eldest child. Those three pieces became very important to the survival of that child.

As I was sitting there doing this focus group, this New Yorker said, "You know, I hated Kahua for all it taught me and for all it pushed me to do. But in the end, now I realize I really needed something like that." I wanted to tell the story because it is a success story for a teacher and for a child.

The **Idaho** math project is another example of a teacher training initiative that incorporates elements of a culturally based curriculum into the content learned by the teachers and activities in which they are involved. This is a statewide professional development initiative, funded by the state, directed at veteran teachers. Although the goal of the initiative is to teach teachers how Native students learn math successfully, the program presents topics such as culture and cognition as a means of individualizing instruction and infusing relevance to the learning process. In addition, a cadre of regional trainers provide classroom support to teachers on assessing and working with struggling Native students. Teachers have responded positively to the program, particularly those in districts with the highest number of Indian students.

In **Washington State**, the state education office plays a key role in facilitating regional conversations between teachers and local Indian tribes. The cultural exchanges are both a professional development opportunity and a means of strengthening the relationship between the tribes

and the non-Indian community. The sessions are sponsored by the **Washington Teachers Association and the Washington School Boards Association**. The topics addressed are chosen by the tribes and the presenters are tribal members, in some instances the tribal chief. At one session the Suquamish tribe focused on tribal sovereignty and the history of Indian education. Additional cultural exchanges are planned with the Tulalip tribe and the Port Angeles tribes. The importance of these meetings lie with the opportunities they provide for non-Native teachers to gain a deeper understanding of the history and culture of the students they teach. In addition, these exchanges help to improve relations between the tribes and the school districts, which in the past have been contentious. Disagreements have surfaced regarding a number of issues, including tribal concerns about the treatment of Indian students and whaling rights of Native people in the northwest region. But, the cultural exchange meetings have reduced antagonism between the lower Awa tribe and district residents over the issue of whaling in the region.

Informal Means of Building non-Native Teacher Understanding

At **Edmond School District**, in Oklahoma, Native educators take the opportunity to share their knowledge with their non-Native educators. On holidays such as Columbus Day and Thanksgiving, they provide additional readings focusing on the Native perspective of these events. These efforts are coordinated with the district wide curriculum coordinator. There are also informal ways of informing the thinking of non-Native teachers, such as planning site visits to the Oklahoma History Center, the national parks, and visits to Indian communities such as the Osage Nation. A one-day professional development opportunity at the Osage Nation was scheduled, where tribal

leaders and community members discussed issues of sovereignty, culture, and the history of the Nation and its relationship to the federal government. Participating teachers were educated from Osage perspectives. This session was highly informative and teachers were exposed to first hand cultural accounts from those presenting. This is just one of several professional development days that have been coordinated for teachers. The Indian Education office maintains cultural teaching tools that are provided to teachers in the form of lesson plans, books, and audio visual tools.

Another positive approach in Oklahoma is the establishment of the **Oklahoma City and metro areas Indian Education Consortium**. Monthly meetings are designed to educate and inform Indian Education directors from large school districts about newly developed programs and services for Indian youth that will benefit the urban Indian students. This partnering and working relationship with the consortium has been very educational. Presentations have included: Gates Millennium Workshop, Chokka' Kilimpi' Family Youth and Services program from the Chickasaw Nation, OKC Boathouse, Association of American Indian Physicians and others. This consortium is also the planning committee for the statewide Indian Youth Career Day.

Creating Supportive Working Condition for teachers

At **Chief Leschi School**, leaders recruit teachers from local teacher training universities, specially reaching out to graduates who are Native. Once the teachers join the school community, everything possible is done to ensure that the novice teachers are successful. This is because there is a school-wide reform strategy that guides teacher practice, leaving limited opportunity for uninformed guesswork which often does not support student

achievement. Specifically, the school has a school wide curriculum, discipline policy, evaluation tool, and management practices that relieve teachers of the burden of figuring out what to do on an individual classroom level. Teachers having difficulties are supported via in-house mentoring. Support is provided in areas such as classroom management, time management, and implementation of the school wide curriculum. Given the investment that occurs in preparing teachers to work successfully, the leadership wants to ensure that effective teachers stay at the school. Consequently, they have created a career ladder system that provides increases in pay as teachers move from the classroom, to being an instructional coach, and even administrative positions.

Focus on Improving Instruction in Key Subject Areas

Leadership at the **Tate Topa tribal school in North Dakota** decided that, in order to turn around this low-performing school, they needed to focus on a few strategies and implement them with a high degree of fidelity. They decided to focus on literacy and to improve the teaching of reading. At the elementary level, teachers were implementing a variety of reading approaches that collectively did not result in academic success for the students. Leadership found that some of the teachers did not know how to teach reading. Consequently, leadership decided to adopt a single reading program, Literacy First, for the whole school, and support its implementation through intense professional development. This reading program had been used by the Navajo Nation with success. Although at Tate Topa the teachers needed to be retrained, school leadership was resolute in using this school wide approach to teaching reading. Given the short period of time of implementation it is too soon to see results at the classroom level. Nonetheless, staff are

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Part VIII: Invest Communities in Student Success

beginning to see promising signs—increased test scores, improved attendance, reduced disciplinary referrals, and generally improved satisfaction on the students' part.

Strategies that support this policy recommendation include creating and supporting multilingual parent centers, providing more support to community-based organizations, improving access to community-based resources, and creating partnerships with the Native community and tribes.

Schools that successfully serve Native students engage parents, tribes, and the local community in the programs and activities of the school. However, few schools have been able to establish such a relationship with Native communities. In many instances the tribes are not welcomed by the school authorities, and the students are not always well treated. Thus, there needs to be a change in paradigm. Tribes need to feel part of the school district and the relationship with the tribe has to be meaningful—there must be genuine opportunities for tribal members to provide substantive input. Below are examples of improved relations between tribes and the local school community.

Building the Relationship

To improve the relations between the school district and Native communities, the **Salmon River School District in New York** created the

position of ombudsman. This person works on the resolution of a problem at its initial manifestation, before it becomes a source of conflict in the community. The ombudsman also functions as an advocate for the students when they are faced with a disciplinary hearing.

There are semi-annual meetings with the school board and the education committee, which includes a member of the community. In the interim period, there is ongoing communication as needed to ensure that information is shared and the relationship is sustained. Over the years, the **St. Regis Mohawk tribe** has been able to reach agreements with the district and the state in conversations regarding culturally based education and certification of Native language teachers by the tribe. There are other signs of positive outcomes in relationship between the Indian community and the broader non-Indian majority, such as flying the tribal flag along that of the country flags (U.S. and Canadian), use of Mohawk language, and non-Native teachers not shortening the names of the Mohawk students and correctly pronouncing the names. The non-Native teachers have recognized that to do so is a show of respect for the Mohawk people. Over time they have accepted the legitimacy of the concerns expressed by the Native community and are moving forward to address them.

Partnerships with Tribal Governments

Developing partnerships with tribal governments are of mutual benefit for several reasons. In communities in which American Indian, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians are a significant number of the overall population, there is an understanding of the economic advantages of working with the tribes. Some of the tribes have significant resources that can be leveraged to improve school infrastructure or support professional development. Thus, these partnerships serve the interest of all stakeholders. Such partnerships are taking place in various communities:

In **Alaska**, with the opening of the offshore lease possibilities, there are delegations of oil companies executives traveling to small villages. These executives will want a workforce that can manage their resources, which means working with stakeholders in the areas, including the local Native communities.

The **Coeur d'Alene Tribe** and leaders of other tribal nations have developed a strong relationship with six universities and colleges. The tribal leaders are on formal advisory committees and meet with the President and Provost of each institution twice a year to discuss issues of mutual interest. In addition, there are formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOU's) between the tribes and the university, and this creates a vehicle for the tribal chairmen to present their agenda to the University administration. The response by the administration is partly driven by the recognition that the Coeur d'Alene is the largest employer in the region one, and that the Nez Perce Tribe is the second largest employer in their region. As such, they are contributing to the state's economy. Moreover, as potential employers, the tribes are well positioned to outline the types of skills college

graduates must acquire in order to meet their needs as potential employers. Conversely, the tribes have been able to gain access to historical documents regarding the Plateau Tribes and to have a Native American house on campus; and there are plans to establish a degree in Native American Studies. Also, at the request of the tribes, the University of Idaho has a liaison with access to the President of the University.

A similar collaborative relationship exists between the **Mohawk** tribe and several of the colleges in the vicinity of the community, one which may lead to the establishment of a tribal college. Also, agreements have been made between **Oklahoma** University and the Indian communities in the state that have led to the planning of joint events, such as the Indian Youth Career Day at the University, at no charge to the communities.

Other partnerships cited are those in Washington State between school districts and the **Suquamish community** in the Southern coast, and the tribes on the eastern part of the state and the college in that region. The schools in the eastern region work very closely with the colleges. The college administrators are partly motivated by the desire to increase enrollments at their respective universities. It has become a mutually advantageous relationship for both communities.

A school district in southern Idaho is exploring the development of a Memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the **Shoshone-Bannock Tribe** and their local school district. The decision to enter into the MOU was based on an assessment of limited resources at the district level and the recognition that the tribes can contribute to efforts that enhance the learning opportunities of students served by the district.

Many of the tribes have become more sophisticated in authorizing and disbursing tribal

dollars to school districts. Rather than responding to an open-ended request from districts, they are limiting the use of funding to areas such as professional development that focuses on culturally based education.

The Board Members of a school district, in **Arizona**, reaches out to the community by traveling to different reservations and convening Board meetings on-site. This gives community members an opportunity to provide input to the Board regarding pending policies. These meetings with the community are attended by school administrators, who report on school-level initiatives.

Collaboration with Tribal Education Departments

Tribal Education Departments (TED) are the equivalent of state education agencies (SEAs) in terms of functions and responsibilities. Like the SEAs they monitor program implementation, provide funding to local schools, and promote replication of best practices. School districts collaborate with the TED in a number of ways.

For example, in Idaho, the **Lapwai School District** invites the TED staff or tribal leaders to join hiring panels for key leadership positions at the district level. In addition, the Lapwai tribe has developed a partnership with the school district to support the development of district wide culturally based curricula and for the subsequent training of teachers. In addition, the tribal education department and the superintendent of the Lapwai reservation school district have been able to leverage tribal resources to establish a parent resource center. The superintendent, a non-Native, is managing a school district in which the students are 85% Native. The tribe is interested in seeing him succeed in strengthening the services delivered to Indian students at the school and

ultimately raising the achievement levels of the students.

With high levels of poverty and geographic isolation, a parent center can provide needed resources such as in-house tutoring, computer labs to support student learning, and other resources for the families. The computer lab might be loaded with math software that provides access to live interactive tutors. This is helpful to parents in supporting their children academically.

Culturally based education helps close the academic achievement gap for Native students. The institutionalization of the approach has been most successful in communities in which non-Indians have been supportive, and the Indian communities have vigorously advocated for its integration into the state or local school curricula. Such was the case in **Washington State**, where MOUs were signed by the State Board of Education, Washington State School Directors Association, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the 29 tribes who wanted to focus on development of tribal history, culture, language, and government curriculum. There have been protocols established between the tribe and the school, state, and legislature. These have all been important mechanisms for advancing culturally based education, and tribes have been instrumental in effectuating the changes in state or district policies.

Parental Involvement

The **Wellpinit** District in Idaho has developed a parent contract that obligates parents to become active supporters of the child's education by attending parent-teacher conferences or volunteering at the school for 20-30 hours per month.

Another variation on the contract notion is to require a sign-off by students and parents. The contract is subsequently used to hold the student accountable for adhering to the terms of the contract. This is done through dialogue with the students about specific actions that they agreed to carry out as they moved through high school grades.

Similarly, the principal of **Selawick School**, which is 80 miles east of Kotsebu the Bering Sea in Alaska, came up with a novel idea of motivating parents to attend the parent-teacher conferences. The staff decided to raffle off extra barrels of oil. In this low-income community oil is a highly desirable commodity given the high cost of fuel. Parents who had never visited the school started coming, and attendance at the meetings has increased from 20% to 90%.

As is the case in many schools, at **Chief Leschi**, parent involvement was low and only parents of the high-performing students attended the meetings. To increase parent involvement, the staff planned student-led conferences during which students presented results of their tests, grades, career paths, and community involvement. When parents were not available the students presented to another significant adult or to the principal of the school. Seventy percent of the parents came to student lead conferences, 18 percent of the students presented to a significant adult in the absences of their parent. Traditionally 30 percent of the parents attended conferences and this year 88% had a parent or significant adult involved with a student's education. In a single year, this innovation has resulted in the doubling of parental involvement at the school.

The parent committee of the **Edmond Public School District in Oklahoma** helps teach the young men how to sing around the powwow

drum and have taught students other cultural components such as learning how to do beadwork, make shawls, and play, "hand games". Through parental involvement with students, singing, knowledge about the history of songs, and the different types of songs from tribes are taught. Classes will continue for the next school year and talk about starting a drum group has been expressed. As a result of students learning "hand games", students have taken their teamwork efforts and have challenged other metro school district Indian Education programs in a tournament style hand game competition. Thus far, at least six school districts have participated. Based on a visit and observations a school board member was impressed with the collaboration that was taking place on community nights with Indian students and their families.

At **Cleveland High School in Portland, Oregon** students are grouped into cohorts. Each cohort has staff assigned and with a common planning time. Each cohort is made up of three teachers, one counselor, and a special education educator. A parent meeting is organized at the beginning of the academic year (September) at which time parents are introduced to the high school requirements. The organizing topic of the meeting is "what will it take to be successful at the high school level." Parents often do not know that every half credit the student falls behind has to be made up. Parents are encouraged to pay attention to what is going on with their high school age student and to be fully informed by communicating with teachers via e-mail. They are advised to ask questions about the students' assignments. Finally, every student has a 4 year plan that lays out what they should be prepared to do on a yearly basis.

Kiana

As narrated by Sydna Yellowfish

There's a Lakota student named Kiana who came down into Oklahoma. I've known her since kindergarten. When we have new students who come into our school district, no matter what tribe they are, we try to find out a little bit about who they are. It is important to know that we were trying to establish a relationship with that family right away. Throughout the years we've seen them grow.

For this student the mother married and had siblings and the student moved along pretty good through elementary school.

Then in middle school things started happening with this young woman. Sometimes if our Indian children don't have that connection with somebody in the community, they are going to get lost in our public school system. This particular student started spiraling a bit out of control. Her home situation changed. There was a divorce taking place. She and her siblings moved away to New Mexico for a while. They stayed with grandparents for a little bit. Then they came back to us.

All the while, the grandparents were still there in our area. We kept up with the kids. The grandparents would say, "I think they're coming back." So I said, "Just let us know when they do." When they did come back to our school district, Kiana was behind on high school credits to graduate.

Since we are housed at the Alternative School Site, we were able to initiate the paperwork. We were able to provide some information to the administrators and to the guidance counselors. Kiana initially didn't want to go to the Alternative School. We visited with her and her mother, and we talked about her choices. She chose to come to the Alternative School where we were able to

see her every day. She was able to come into our office to have a soda pop or just to say hello.

Establishing a relationship with her had begun many years earlier in the elementary school. She was able to confide in us. She was able to trust us. When she wanted our advice, we were able to be there.

We have a Native Expressions class, in which students complete a tribal project. The students can choose to do their project on any one of some 560 tribes. Or, if they are of another cultural background, they can choose to do that. One of the things that occurred while Kiana was doing her tribal report really helped her self-esteem. She took it upon herself to share her tribal dance with the whole school. She's a Jingle Dress dancer. She went to our Principal and our teacher and said, "I want to share this with our students. I want to share my culture."

She danced at the assembly by herself. We assisted by making some little posters with a picture of her advertising the assembly. It was really a self-esteem boost for her. She reestablished herself in our school district, and was able to get her grades up to A's and B's.

We also took her to the Unity Conference that was held in Oklahoma City where she was able to see other Indian students. We also encouraged her to be a part of our Indian Youth Career Days. We bring 500 Indian students in from the state to see Indian role models in their respective careers. Our Indian education students want to see other Indian people succeeding. They come away with a belief that if another Indian person can do this or that, then I can do it as well.

After all the support, in January, Kiana was ready to go back to her home school. I said, "Kia, this is what's going to happen. You're going back into the mainstream school. Be sure to make good choices. You're going to have peer pressure again."

We continued to monitor her after she went back to the regular school site. I sent an email to her regular school teachers just reminding them of the support we offer. The teachers reported that she maintained A's, B's, and a C and continued to progress well. She got on the school soccer team and she also became Tribal Princess.

We have high expectations for Indian students in our school district.

We tell every student that despite divorce, alcoholism, drug addiction, or even homelessness, with the proper resources to help them, they can become productive citizens. It may not be college. It may not be vocational skills or they may go into the Armed Services. These Indian kids need to know that somebody is going to be there to try to assist them with whatever goals they choose to have.

Again, this happened just by us keeping in contact with the mother, the father, the grandparents.

Part IX: Provide Equitable Learning Conditions

This recommendation focuses on disparities in allocation of resources. Schools that serve low-income students or students of color tend to be low resourced, which affects their ability to hire and keep quality staffing, improve facilities, and purchase instructional materials and other classroom equipment. Strategies to address this barrier included directing school improvement funds to secondary schools, developing alternative school finance formulas, and appropriately funding services to ELL students.

Access to External Resources

It is often the case that communities are denied funding because they submit poorly written applications to the funding source (state or federal government). These communities do not have the resources to hire independent grant writers, yet they have challenges that could be partly addressed with additional funding. One means to address this problem is to convene technical assistance sessions during which a knowledgeable organization reviews the applications prior to submission. In addition, state agency officials can provide the public and tribally operated schools with a list of all state federal flow-through dollars for which they are eligible. The document should specify whether the types of flow-through dollars are at the district level, competitive grants, and

state funds, contact person, deadlines, and other requirements. Work on planning and writing can also come from the state.

On July 1st, 2010 in the state of Oklahoma, HB 2929 became effective. This act will be known as the **“Oklahoma Advisory Council on Indian Education Act”**. The purpose of the Act is to recognize the unique relationship that Oklahoma enjoys with the Indian tribes located within the state and how Indian tribes play a pivotal role in the educational system of the state in light of this special relationship. This act will establish the Oklahoma Advisory Council on Indian Education. The purpose of the Council is to promote culturally relevant learning environments, educational opportunities and instructional material for Native students enrolled in the public schools of the state. This has been a vision that has been held by Indian educators for several years and with hard work the accomplishment has been achieved.

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Part X: Recommendations

These recommendations were culled from the participants' observations regarding the challenges they face as they attempt to improve outcomes for American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian students:

- ▷ Parents of 8th grade students going into the school level should be provided with training so that they can better understand how the high school works. Parents don't understand that once students start to fall behind, that they may not be able to graduate. This workshop should be repeated often at the middle and high school levels.
- ▷ Researchers, states and U.S. Department of Education (USDE) need to address the issue of sample size. Because Native students represent a small percent of the overall student population, they are often left out of major studies when the results are aggregated to the state or national level. Because of the small sample size no subgroup reports are generated. Nonetheless, at the school level there is information about the educational status of Indian students. Local research should be supported in order to capture the experience of Indian students at the local level. All federally funded studies should be required to report on AI/AN/NH student as they do for all other groups.
- ▷ High Schools should provide an advocate for Native students to prevent them from being lost in the system. They need someone to validate, support and mentor them. High School is overwhelming to many Native students particularly those that are confronted with challenges at home. These students just stop going to class and eventually "disappear" from the school.
- ▷ Compensation is an important issue. Teachers should be paid what they are worth.
- ▷ It is important to recruit teachers from a diverse background and ideally focus on training and recruiting more AI/NH/AN teachers.
- ▷ Building Relationships with tribal communities are important and should be continuously reinforced.
- ▷ Professional Development programs directed at teachers and principals should focus on culture and core content, but also on issues such as equity, fairness, and social justice.
- ▷ Make graduation of AI/AN/NH a priority among federal agencies and tribes providing renewed financial support to such an initiative.
- ▷ Require professional development of staff at all levels regarding AI/AN/NH culture, value, and history to reduce the negative attitudes and behaviors of non-native personnel towards Native people and communities.
- ▷ Conduct environmental scans/surveys among staffs and Native students to gather information about how welcome AI/AN/NH students feel in school.

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Part XI: NEA 12 Point Dropout Prevention Plan

Here is a 12-point action plan developed by NEA that includes the most promising actions supported by experience and data.

1. Mandate high school graduation or equivalency as compulsory for everyone below the age of 21. Just as we established compulsory attendance to the age of 16 or 17 in the beginning of the 20th century, it is appropriate and critical to eradicate the idea of “dropping out” before achieving a diploma. To compete in the 21st century, all of our citizens, at minimum, need a high school education.

2. Establish high school graduation centers for students 19-21 years old to provide specialized instruction and counseling to all students in this older age group who would be more effectively addressed in classes apart from younger students.

3. Make sure students receive individual attention in safe schools, in smaller learning communities within large schools, in small classes (18 or fewer students), and in programs during the summer, weekends, and before and after school that provide tutoring and build on what students learn during the school day.

4. Expand students’ graduation options through creative partnerships with community colleges in career and technical fields and with alternative schools so that students have another way to earn a high school diploma. For students who are incarcerated, tie their release to high school graduation at the end of their sentences.

5. Increase career education and workforce readiness programs in schools so that students see the connection between school and careers after graduation. To ensure that students have the skills they need for these careers, integrate 21st century skills into the curriculum and provide all students with access to 21st century technology.

6. Act early so students do not drop out with high-quality, universal preschool and full-day kindergarten; strong elementary programs that ensure students are doing grade-level work when they enter middle school; and middle school programs that address causes of dropping out that appear in these grades and ensure that students have access to algebra, science, and other courses that serve as the foundation for success in high school and beyond.

7. Involve families in students' learning at school and at home in new and creative ways so that all families—single-parent families, families in poverty, and families in minority communities—can support their children's academic achievement, help their children engage in healthy behaviors, and stay actively involved in their children's education from preschool through high school graduation.

Monitor students' academic progress in school through a variety of measures during the school year that provide a full picture of students' learning and help teachers make sure students do not fall behind academically.

9. Monitor, accurately report, and work to reduce dropout rates by gathering accurate data for key student groups (such as racial, ethnic, and economic), establishing benchmarks in each state for eliminating dropouts, and adopting the standardized reporting method developed by the National Governors Association.

10. Involve the entire community in dropout prevention through family-friendly policies that provide release time for employees to attend parent-teacher conferences; work schedules for high school students that enable them to attend classes on time and be ready to learn; "adopt a school" programs that encourage volunteerism and community-led projects in school; and community-based, real-world learning experiences for students.

11. Make sure educators have the training and resources they need to prevent students from dropping out including professional development focused on the needs of diverse students and students who are at risk of dropping out; up-to-date textbooks and materials, computers, and information technology; and safe modern schools.

12. Make high school graduation a federal priority by calling on Congress and the president to invest \$10 billion over the next 10 years to support dropout prevention programs and states who make high school graduation compulsory.

<http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/dropoutguide1108.pdf>

Also, readers may want to check the resources and strategies available in NEA publication, *Preventing Future Dropouts, An Advocacy and Action Guide for NEA State and Local Affiliates*.

Part XII: Participants' Biographical Sketches

Leslie Butterfield (Winnebago/Chippewa) has over 35 years of experience in education. She is currently a high school Vice Principal at the Cleveland High School in Portland, Oregon, which is a large (1,500+) comprehensive high school. She has served as a high school administrator in two other urban high schools as well as in a high school that served incarcerated young men. Prior to working as an administrator, Leslie worked as a high school English teacher in five large schools. In addition, she taught English and Reading in alternative programs (including the AnyWay school on the Menominee Reservation), Adult English classes to Native parents, and Communication skills to Noncommissioned Officers for three years while living in Germany.

She served as a career and high school completion counselor in Hermiston, Oregon, and was the Indian Women's' Mentoring Program Coordinator for three years. In addition, she was the high school specialist for Native high school-age youth for Portland Public Schools. While teaching English, she volunteered to be the Indian Club Advisor for both Roosevelt High School and Oregon City High School. Ms. Butterfield has extensive experience working with Indian

adolescents, particularly on dropout prevention and credit recovery programs.

Robin Butterfield an enrolled member of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, with ancestry also from the White Earth Ojibewa Tribe of Minnesota, has over 40 years of experience as an educator. She currently works as a Senior Program Specialist Quality Schools Programs and Resources in the National Education Association. Before working at NEA, Ms. Butterfield held the position of Professional Development Specialist at the Center for School Improvement within the Bureau of Indian Affairs, located in Albuquerque, New Mexico. While there, she managed the contracts for 13 Tribally Controlled Community Colleges and state universities and provided staff development to BIA-funded schools. She has worked at the classroom level in tribal and public schools in Wisconsin; coordinated the Salem-Keizer Indian Education Program at the district level in Oregon; served in the position of Indian Education / Civil Rights Specialist for the Oregon Department of Education for nine years; and worked at two different regional educational technical assistance centers, the Northwest Regional Educational

Laboratory, in the Research and Development for Indian Education Program, and the Gonzaga University Indian Education Technical Assistance Center III. She currently works for NEA.

Ms. Butterfield has written publications focusing on parental involvement, curriculum development, teacher training, and multicultural education. She has served in many leadership capacities at the state and national level, has been elected President of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), and was elected to serve five 3-year terms on the NIEA Board of Directors.

Most recently Ms. Butterfield was appointed by President Obama to serve on the National Advisory Council on Indian Education. Ms. Butterfield has delivered hundreds of workshops on a wide variety of topics; has created a leadership program for Indian middle and high school-aged youth, and has a broad network of individuals and organizations in the American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities. She is the proud parent of three children, all of whom have graduated from the University of Oregon.

Robert Cook was the principal of Pine Ridge High School and was there one year. He is a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, or Lakota. Before becoming principal of PR HS, he was a teacher for 18 years. He received the Milken National Educator Award in 2005 and was named NIEA Teacher of the Year in 2006. In 2008, Robert was named one of 125 most accomplished alumni of Black Hills State University. Most recently, he was appointed by the President of the United

States to serve on the National Advisory Council on Indian Education

Lucy Dafoe has 17 years experience in public and tribal schools. She is Pauquachin First Nations. Currently, Ms. Dafoe is the Principal at Chief Leschi School in Puyallup, Washington. She has worked with Chief Leschi Schools for ten years. Responsible for 300 students, she has overseen both behavioral and academic reform and improvements. Graduation rates and daily attendance have increased while student achievement continues to improve. Building strong relationships with students and staff while maintaining high expectations have been one among many keys to her success.

Lucy received the award for Middle School Principal of the year 2009 from the Bureau of Indian Education. Chief Leschi School has been recognized nationally for the 21st Century after school program. Lucy presents each year on a diversity panel for incoming administrators' at the University of Washington, Tacoma and has presented at the College Board's National AP Equity Colloquium.

Nikki Hannon is the student support advisor at the Blackfeet Academy, in Browning, Montana, an alternative Native school that serves students from the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. Prior to this position, she was the school's Learning Coordinator. Mrs. Hannon has a Harvard Master's degree in Education, with a specialization in risk and prevention among adolescents.

Deny Hurtado (Tach-Mi-acH-t3n) is an enrolled member of the Skokomish Indian Tribe, and a resident of the Skokomish Reservation. He has spent the past three decades advocating for Indian rights and Indian education, and recently helped develop the Northwest Native American Reading curriculum, which focuses on the Drum, the Canoe, and Hunting and Gathering. He is a co-author of "Reading First, Literacy and American Indian Students," which is being prepared for publication, and also is finalizing a paper on a "Culture Based Professional Development Model" for educators. Mr. Hurtado has a Bachelor's degree in Social Science and a Lifetime Secondary Teaching Credential from the California State University at Sacramento, and a Master's degree in School Administration from the California State University at Humboldt. He has been the Indian Education Director for Washington State's Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the past 10 years and works with all the 29 Tribes in Washington State.

Before being appointed to the Indian Education Director's position, he was the Upward Bound Director at the Evergreen State College for

nearly seven years. Prior to that, he served as President of the Northwest Association of Special Programs for three years, which represents the TRIO programs in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska. He has held various positions on the Skokomish Tribal Council for the past 17 years including Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and General Council President. He also serves as the Co-Chair of the Native Nations Institute, International Advisory council with the University of Arizona. Currently, he is the Chair of the Native American Advisory Board at the University of Washington, and serves on the College Spark board, National Indian Education Association Board of Directors, and the Western region college board.

Walter Kahumoku is a Native Hawaiian with over 28 years in education. Mr. Kahumoku works as a Director of professional development at the Kamehameha Schools, a nonprofit trust in Honolulu. Mr. Kahumoku is also an adjunct professor at the University of Hawaii. He has worked in the area of teacher education, professional development, and administration.

Julia Lara has over thirty years of experience in the field of education, K-12 and higher education. The most recent has been as President of JLara Educational Consulting, LLC. In this capacity she managed various contracts focusing on the Education of ELL students or interventions designed to improve delivery of instruction for students in public schools. Prior to her most recent work experience, she worked at the

office of the Deputy Mayor for Education in the District of Columbia as the early childhood content specialist. For over 20 years, she held various assignments at the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) including Director of the Division of State Services and Technical Assistance (SSTA), center director, program director, and senior project associate. As Director of SSTA, she supervised over 30 professional and support staff and over 12 projects. Key areas of strength include: program management, policy research, analysis and writing, fundraising, and establishing and maintaining networks of state officials, researchers, community members. Ms. Lara was the lead staff on over six projects in various content areas of education including education and assessment of ELL students, high school reform, early childhood, special education, school reform and education of students enrolled in low performing schools.

In addition, she was the director of the Council's Native American, Alaskan and Native Hawaiian Project. The project brought together educators, federal education officials, chief state school officers, and members of native communities for the purpose of working collaboratively on promoting improvement in educational outcomes for native students. Finally, Ms. Lara has written extensively on matters related to the education of English Language Learners and students enrolled in low performing schools.

Joe Martin (Navajo) has been a school superintendant for several years. Mr. Martin was an Assistant Superintendant as well, and spent several years as a high principal and assistant principal, primarily in the Tempe Union High school District. Mr. Martin is committed to creating stronger relationships between schools and communities. He also feels passionate about creating small tribal schools.

Chris Meyer is a member of the Coeur'd Alene tribe and is currently the Tribal Education Director. She has been in education for 35 years; 25 of which have been in Indian education and the other 10 were as a professor at a private Presbyterian college in Spokane, Washington.

Mary Jane Oatman-Wak Wak (Nez-Perce) Serves as the coordinator of Indian Education for the State Department of Education in Idaho, and sits on the NIEA board of Directors as President elect. Ms. Wak Wak is committed to language revitalization and has worked with low-income communities in both high schools and at the Idaho Department of corrections. More recently, Ms. Wak Wak has worked with Idaho State University. There, she co-wrote a research paper focusing on local policies and practices that are harmful to Indian Children.

Leon Ossahwe is a member of the Seneca Nation in Oklahoma. Currently he is the Principal at a Hawthorne High School, in San Simon, Arizona. Before moving to Arizona, Mr. Ossahwe

had 20 years of classroom experience on several reservations. Mr. Ossahwe also worked for both the Nevada and the Arizona Departments of Education.

Chief James W. Ransom is a member of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council. For the past 32 years, Chief James W. Ransom has worked in various capacities for the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and community of Akwesasne, New York. In June 2007, Chief Ransom was elected to a third consecutive term on the St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council.

Chief Ransom has had an interest in education for the past 18 years. He has served as a member of the Parent Committee for the Akwesasne Freedom School and helped establish the Friends of the Freedom School, Inc., as a nonprofit arm of the school. He served a five-year term on the Salmon River Central School Board, the primary public school system serving the Tribe. He has served two past terms as President of the Tribe's Education Committee and he remains a Committee member. He also holds the Tribal Council portfolio for education. Chief Ransom has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from Clarkson University, as well as an Associate's Degree in Civil Technology from Canton Agricultural and Technical College. Chief Ransom is also a member of the Board of Trustees for Clarkson University, a position to which he was appointed last year.

Wayne Trottier has over 29 years of experience in education. Dr. Trottier is a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, which spans the states of North Dakota and South Dakota. He has held various positions in the field of education, including those of teacher, school principal, coach, athletic director, and school superintendent. He holds several degrees from the Universities of South and North Dakota. Currently, he is Superintendent of Schools of the Fort Totten Public School and of the Tate Topa Tribal School in Ft. Totten, North Dakota. The latter is a K-12 school composed mostly of Native American children whose home economic and social circumstances place them at risk of school failure. Dr. Trottier is highly committed to education generally and the education of Indian students in particular. He is determined to make a difference in the lives of these students.

Allen Tsinigine is a member of Navajo tribe in Arizona. He currently works as the Dean of Students at Page Middle School. Mr. Tsinigine taught elementary school and vocational education to adults and high school dropouts for over 20 years. Mr. Tsinigine is committed to addressing problems with students in middle school and helping them to transition smoothly into high school.

Shirley Tuzroyluke (Tlingit) is a Program Manager for the RAISE Program, an SCF-funded initiative designed to bring the next generation of Alaska Native and American Indian leadership into the organization. She has worked with at-risk Alaska Native and American Indian adolescents in Anchorage for over 30 years; 15 of those years have been working with Native youths enrolled in public high schools. She has worked primarily with Alaska Native nonprofit organizations advocating on behalf of Alaska Native students.

Willie Wolf is a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. He currently works with an early college High School program at Antioch University. Mr. Wolf has over 35 years' experience in education. He has worked with the National Indian Education Association, developed a leadership module for the Nation Indian School Board Association, and worked with the Indian Upward Bound Program at the University of Minnesota. Additionally, he has experience as a teacher and has worked with the American Indian Science Engineering Society. Mr. Wolf holds an MPA and a Masters in Education degree.

Sydna Yellowfish is the Edmond Public Schools Indian Education Coordinator. She oversees the Title VII and Johnson O'Malley programs for the district. She is a certified school counselor and teacher for Native Expressions and Native Literature classes. She has worked with the Edmond School district for 25 years. She is Otoe Missouri, Osage, Pawnee, and Sac Fox. She was recently selected as Oklahoma Native American Woman of the Year by the organization Changing Winds Cultural Society.



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