



**A Call To Action:
Increasing Opportunities for
Native American Student Success**



Report of Native Education Advisory Group Convenings



Convenings Facilitated and Documented by Indigenous Collaboration

Indigenous Collaboration is a Native American-owned and woman-owned business based out of Denver CO, dedicated to the empowerment and rejuvenation of Indian Country. We have helped organizations address and come up with solutions for a gamut of issues by delivering a process and methodology that allows people to touch on all the thresholds of a productive conversation. Indigenous Collaboration is motivated to bring our processes to any group who is ready to talk honestly about the situation they are in and where they want to go.



This Report Prepared by Echo Hawk Consulting

The mission of Echo Hawk Consulting is to help to create new platforms, narratives, strategies and investment that can help to catalyze transformational change for and by Native Americans. It partners with Native American, philanthropic and diverse multi-sector partners to move hearts and minds and drive institutional, policy and culture change. Echo Hawk Consulting works with its clients and Native communities to support the advancement and investment in Native-led and community-driven strategies to support social justice, tribal sovereignty, holistic health, social, economic and cultural development in Native American communities. Crystal Echo Hawk (*Pawnee*) founder and President, was recently recognized by the National Center for American Indian Economic Development as its 2018 "Native American Woman Business Owner of the Year."



Convenings of the Native Education Advisory Group and This Report Sponsored by the Bush Foundation

The Bush Foundation invests in GREAT IDEAS and the PEOPLE who power them. Established in 1953 by 3M executive Archibald Bush and his wife, Edyth, the Foundation encourages individuals and organizations to think bigger and think differently about what is possible in communities across Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and the 23 Native nations that share the same geographic area.

To learn more, visit www.bushfoundation.org.



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Native Education Advisory Group Report

LETTER FROM BUSH FOUNDATION Native Nations Activities Manager

CARLY BAD HEART BULL

Han Mitakuyepi (Hello My Relatives),

Native people have always had a process for successfully educating and raising their children long before the advent of western education. It was a system based upon the sacredness of the child, rooted in connectedness and highlighting the natural talents of the individual, which in turn strengthened family and community. Despite this fact, huge amounts of resources and energy have been invested in eradicating the healthy foundations of Indigenous communities in favor of systems that don't place the child and Native cultural worldviews at the center. At the Bush Foundation, we see the importance of making investments and supporting creative problem solving in education systems that work for Native peoples. We have learned that investments must reflect and revitalize structures and systems that are relevant for Native children and their respective communities. However, most current educational models disconnect students from their cultural identity and have not produced desirable outcomes. Within the Bush Foundation's region, graduation rates for Native students are well below their peers both locally and nationally. This is unacceptable.

That is why at the Bush Foundation we invested in bringing together community experts from across the region to learn from and create an opportunity to amplify their voices, wisdom, and vision for the future of Native education. The Native Education Advisory Group convened throughout 2017 for an in-depth review that examined the past, identified the current state of Native education, and mapped out a vision for the future. The collective dialogue was rich and expansive, visionary and strategic, critical and hopeful. The information that was collected from the Native Education Advisory Group was incredibly valuable to us and will continue to inform our work in education moving forward. We also recognize how beneficial this knowledge could be to inform those who are already interested in learning how they can better support Native students and especially those who need to be.

This is a report on the Native Education Advisory Group's perspectives, insights and recommendations. It includes contextual information and framing provided by our partners at Indigenous Collaboration and Echohawk Consulting (including Dr. Teresa Peterson, a member of the Native Education Advisory Group). It is also a call to action for stakeholders across sectors to share, invest, and engage.

It calls on us to make investments that better support and advance promising models and innovative strategies to overcome the systemic challenges facing Native students.

The Bush Foundation is honored to help provide this platform to amplify the voices and expertise of the Native Education Advisory Group. Our goal for this report is to increase the number of stakeholder investments that support meaningful change and the amount of educational opportunities for Native children, families and communities.

Wopida tanka (with immense gratitude),

Carly Bad Heart Bull (*Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe*)

IN ORDER TO BETTER SUPPORT NATIVE COMMUNITIES, THE BUSH FOUNDATION PARTNERED WITH NATIVE EDUCATION ADVOCATES TO GAIN VALUABLE INSIGHTS ON HOW TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR NATIVE CHILDREN AND STRENGTHEN THE REGION.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The guiding goal of the Bush Foundation Education Initiative is to make the region the national leader in providing individualized education that meets the needs and ambitions of all students. The Foundation invests in efforts to make education more relevant for all students in terms of who they are, how they learn and what they want to do.

In 2017, the Bush Foundation convened the Native Education Advisory Group (the Group) made up of experts from across the region. The 14 educators, administrators, researchers, evaluators and tribal, state and community leaders were recommended for their knowledge, experience, leadership and reputation as innovative thinkers. The Group encompassed educators, administrators, researchers, evaluators, and tribal, state, and community leaders. Their collective perspective and experience spans five decades, and their areas of expertise include; curricula development, standards and assessments, policy development and advocacy, tribal and state leadership, grassroots organizing, teaching, and accreditation development, compliance, and certification.

The Group met quarterly in 2017 throughout the region. Locations for these meetings included St. Paul, Minnesota, Rapid City, South Dakota, and Cannon Ball, North Dakota on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. Indigenous Collaboration, Inc facilitated the meetings.

The goal of this project was to learn from regional experts in the field of Native education about community-based ideas and approaches to effectively increase educational opportunities for Native students. The main objectives of the Native Education Advisory Group were to;

- 1.** Create an opportunity for the Foundation to learn from, and with, others about ideas and approaches for increasing educational relevancy and improve outcomes for Native students;
- 2.** Document the insights gained by the Group and share these insights with other advocates in a public report; and
- 3.** Inform and guide the Foundation's education strategy moving forward.

Learning from language speakers and cultural leaders, educators, and administrators, the Group provided a unique opportunity to identify best practices from the community. The advocates were able to use their own experiences to illustrate the history of Native education, identify barriers Native communities continue to face, and also share their hopes and desires for a brighter future for Native students. By focusing on Native students in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and the Native nations in the region, the Bush Foundation hopes to support grassroots advocates and programs to increase educational opportunities for Native students.



The Group recommends allies and stakeholders find opportunities to:

- Influence internal and external decision-making;
- Establish centers for training to explore innovation and implement change;
- Own and promote positive messaging; and
- Guide Native-driven data collection to reframe current reality and empower future possibilities.

Specific recommendations for the Bush Foundation include:

- Compile, publish, and share the Group's input, publishing the report, and sharing the report across the tri-state region;
- Develop and share an inventory of the incredible work of organizations and programs that have provided cultural, instructional, and career-relevant education to Native students; and
- Explore and identify organizations or stakeholders who can assess and explore the findings and recommendations of this report.

Additional recommendations and action items have been provided by the Group in this report and are by no means exhaustive. It is the hope of the Group, and of the Foundation, that

allies and stakeholders of the Native community use this report to inform and guide initiative and programs that support Native students.

By listening to the voices and expertise from the Native community and those in the field of Native education, the Bush Foundation is now better informed to take action. The Bush Foundation is working closely with the Group to move forward on some of their recommendations and is looking forward to further conversations with partners and allies to discuss the important findings and recommendations of this report.

The Group invites you to explore, learn from, and commit to advancing opportunities that foster the success of Native education.



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This report provides the insights and recommendations of the Native Education Advisory Group. Each section encompasses the insight and knowledge of the collective group to provide a better understanding of the past, present, and future of Native education.

History of Native Education (Pages 8)

Provides historical context necessary to understand the impact of the first 100 years of Western education imposed upon Native communities. This dark history of education, and the devastation of the boarding school era, continues to impact Native education. The Group identified landmark events and legislation that impacted Native education systems and illustrates the landscape of the time.

Current State of Native Education (Pages 15)

Describes the positive trends, accomplishments, advantages, and innovative strategies being implemented in Native communities. It provides a snapshot of the current education rates of Native students in our region, highlights shining examples, and sheds light on the investments, resources, and partners of community-driven education strategies.

Future State of Native Education (Pages 19)

Outlines a 2027 Vision for Native education. It draws upon the imagination and optimism of the Native Education Advisory Group

to identify opportunities for Native educational success and positive long-term community outcomes. Strategies for the future focus on providing Native students the opportunity to identify their strengths. By utilizing these strategies, we can support healthy, self-reliant tribal nations.

Critical Barriers and Conflicts (Pages 21)

Identifies four foundational conflicts that distract and impede the realization of the practical vision.

Recommendations of the Native Education Advisory Group (Pages 23)

Identifies priorities and strategies that will lead to increased educational outcomes and provides allies and stakeholders with specific recommendations for advocacy and engagement.

Call to Action and Conclusion (Pages 26)

This section delineates the recommendations of the Group and provides subsequent actions advocates can take at both the personal and collective level.



HISTORY OF NATIVE EDUCATION

The complexities, and systemic consequences, of the early experiences of Native communities with Western education continues to impact the current state of Native education. The Native Education Advisory Group has experienced, and their families have experienced, the generational trauma of boarding schools- the impacts of this era are not outlined in this report, but more information can be found from the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition.

While the Group focused on Native education from the 1970s until present day, a brief background of the earlier history is provided below as foundational information for a better understanding of the role and impact the U.S. government and American educational policies had on Native students, their families, and our communities.

There were nearly 350 government-funded, church-run Indian Boarding schools across the US in the 19th and 20th centuries.

- *The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition*

Background

As early as 1819, after the passage of the Indian Civilization Act, the U.S. Indian wars, and the implementation of forced relocation policy, the U.S. federal government mandated the education of Indians. The goal of the education imposed on Native communities was forced assimilation (i.e., the removal and change of a person's cultural identity to another dominant identity). This process was carried out through the use of Indian boarding schools. This era began in the 1860s and lasted well into the 1960s.

The Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, built in 1879, is one of the most well-known schools of this era and was the first off-reservation boarding school. The school, and the countless others like it, sought to systemically reprogram children through cultural genocide. This approach was best summarized by the words of the school's founder, "Kill the Indian, Save the Man." These schools targeted the removal of cultural languages, traditional and spiritual practices, and more devastatingly, removed children from their homes, families, and community. Indian children were often sexually, physically, and emotionally abused. Survivors of the boarding school era endured mistreatment, neglect, and torture for speaking their language. Children who returned home often were unrecognizable by their own families and Native communities were forever changed.

Many children died while in boarding schools and never returned to their families.

This era and the trauma endured by the generations of children who were impacted - including members of the Group and their families have led to post traumatic stress, intergenerational trauma, and created and fostered a deep distrust of Western educational systems.¹ Native healing initiatives are underway across many Native communities.

During, and after, the Boarding School Era, many reports and policies attempted to identify the atrocities and inadequacies of the system of education imposed on Native communities and offered solutions in an attempt to 'fix the Indian problem'. The following are examples of some of these efforts:

1928: Meriam Report²

This report was the result of an independent investigation. The report criticized the quality of Indian education received by students in government funded and run schools, and identified

1. National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition: <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/>

2. The Institute for Government Research Studies in Administration (1928). The problem of Indian administration. The John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, Maryland.

other unacceptable reservation conditions. In alignment with Progressive Education policy of that era, the report stressed the negative effects of non-reservation boarding schools and emphasized the importance of family and community life for Native children-especially those of younger ages. The report discouraged further building of off-reservation boarding schools. While the report recognized the harm endured of federal policies towards Indians, the role of assimilation policies within the schools remained unaddressed, allowing them to continue.

1934: The Indian New Deal, Indian Reorganization Act, Johnson O’Malley Act (JOM)

The Meriam Report had a significant impact in shaping the Indian New Deal of 1934, which provided certain rights to Indians. During the same year, Congress also passed the Indian Reorganization Act and the Johnson O’Malley Act (JOM). Each law attempted to solve problems identified in the Meriam Report. The Indian Reorganization Act attempted to address the issues of poverty on reservations. The JOM Act in turn, authorized the U.S. Secretary of the Interior to enter into contracts with states

to fund the education of Indian students. Unintentionally, this attempt to transfer the responsibility of educating Native students from the federal government to states created another layer of complexities and challenges that continue today.

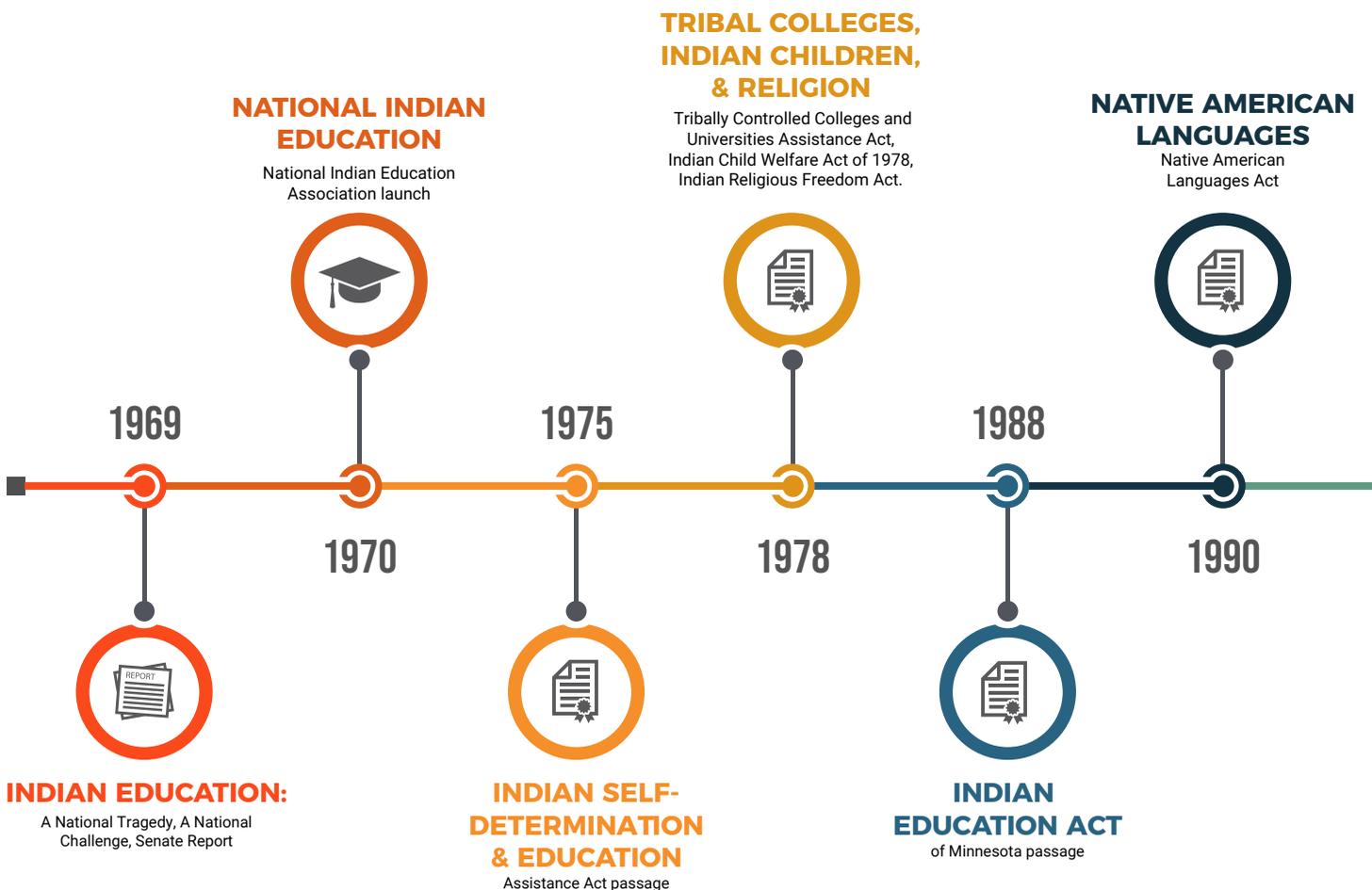
Summary

Indian education policies have historically been developed as attempts to address what the United States has coined the ‘Indian problem.’ Some policies have been considered enlightened ideas given their place in history; others constitute cultural genocide as defined by the United Nations. Unfortunately, Native communities have endured a long history of tests and trials from federal educational policies-these solutions have largely been imposed, rather than the result of true collaboration.

For further information to understand the complex history and policies of Indian education, visit Education Week, A History of American Indian Education³ or Native Nations in American Schools: The History of Natives in the American Education System.⁴

3. <https://www.edweek.org/ew/projects/2013/native-american-education/history-of-american-indian-education.html>

4. Native Nations in American Schools: The History of Natives in the American Education System: <http://www.niea.org/our-story/history/native-101/>



The Last 50 Years

The history of the boarding school era is directly correlated to the current realities of Native education. Understanding this history is important when identifying and navigating the current educational landscape. Being well-versed in this history will provide some insights into the work, people, and communities advocating for Native students.

Before identifying the current conditions of Native education, the Native Education Advisory Group completed a scan of each decade, beginning with 1970. The group described what the education system looked like, identified its impact on community, and discussed the key allies, partners, and advocates during this period. This scan was an important step to understanding what, how, and who shaped the history of education and provided insights into the current systemic barriers Native education faces.

Below, each era is briefly summarized as a snapshot of the education landscape during that time and provides examples of activity within that era. As we view and understand the past fifty years, it is evident the ever-shifting policies and systemic

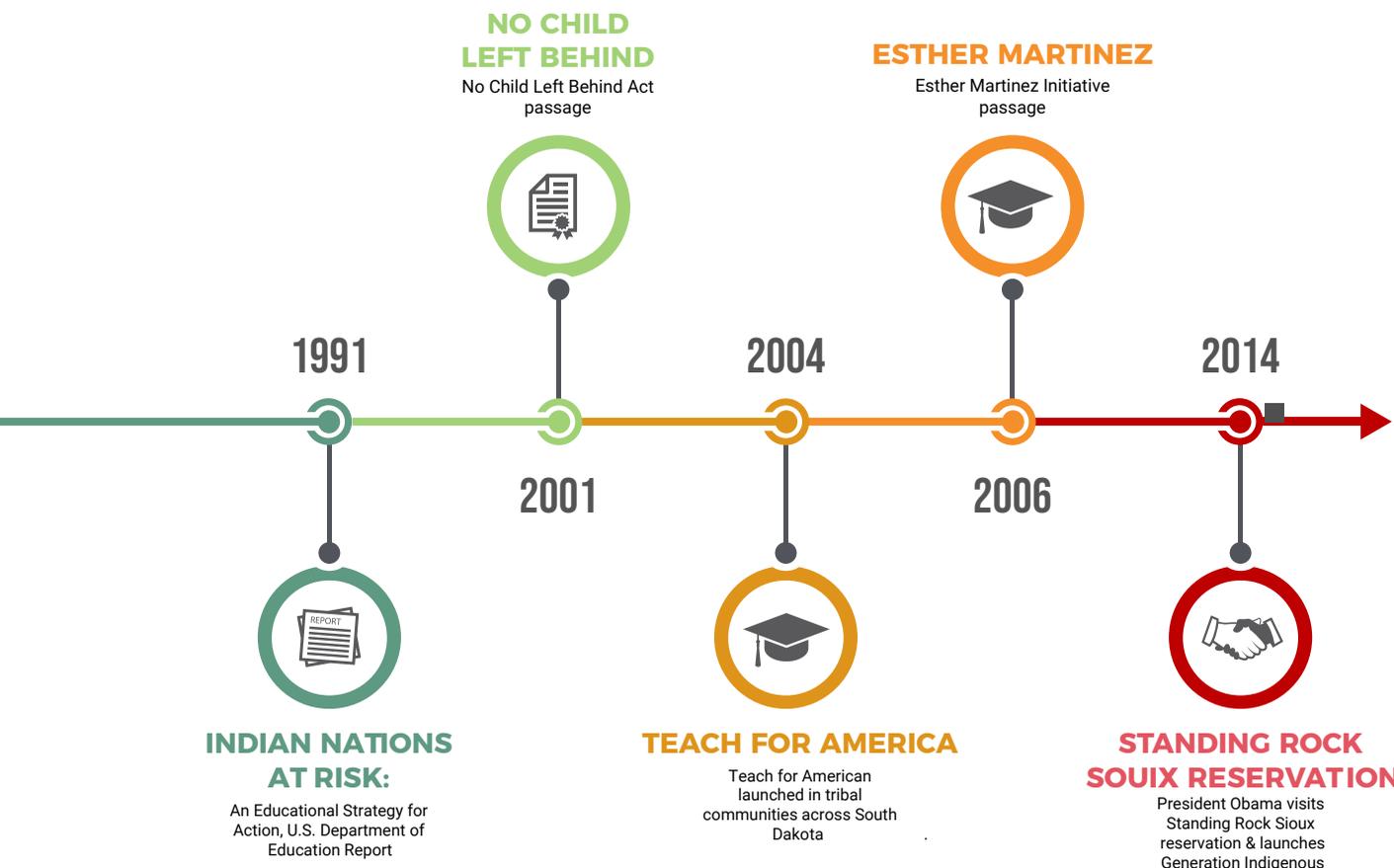
“Our schools have failed to nurture the intellectual development and academic performance of many Native children.”⁵

Indians At Risk Task Force

challenges presented in these eras inundate Native education. The need for Native-led efforts and the growing trend and support for culturally-based education are key to increasing opportunities needed for the success of Native education.

1970s. During this era, significant policies were precipitated on the heels of community activism, including the American Indian Movement. Policies grounded in self-determination were

5. Force, I. N. A. R. T. (1991). Indian nations at risk: An educational strategy for action. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.



Our schools have failed to intellectual development performance of many Nat



passed during this time. Legislation included the Indian Self-Determination & Education Assistance Act of 1975, which called for Indian Parent Advisory Committees among other requirements. A 1969 Senate report "Indian Education: A National Tragedy - A National Challenge" acknowledged the improper philosophy of federal education policy towards Indians and its role in poor academic performance. The report called for parent participation and Indian community control of education. Further, it identified the need for cultural and linguistic relevance within education programming. Innovative projects included the Rough Rock Demonstration

School, on the Navajo reservation, which became the first Indian-controlled school and Red School House, an accredited Indian-controlled school in Arizona.

1980s. This era began attempts to implement and institutionalize localized policy and programming. The Johnson O'Malley program shifted towards parent-driven cultural programs for students. In Minnesota alone, four Bureau of Indian Education schools formed, state-funded language and culture programming were initiated in schools, and a unified tribal voice on Indian education rose through

the creation of the Minnesota Indian Education Association. Today, most Native students attend public schools, with only approximately 7% attending government-run schools through the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). Of the BIE's 183 schools, 130 are tribally-controlled under Public Law 93-638 Self Determination contracts. Tribes also began exercising tribal sovereignty in Indian gaming with disputes settled in the Supreme Court. While this era spurred progress through increased Indian programming, the role of institutionalization also resulted in self-oppression (e.g., conflict over resources between urban Indians vs reservation).

to nurture the t and academic ative children.



To learn more about BIE schools, visit the Bureau of Indian Education website.⁶

1990s. This era provided opportunities for Native peoples to be decision-makers, teachers, and leaders. Victories included;

- The creation of teacher training pipelines like the Minnesota Indian Teacher Training Program;
- Increased support for higher education opportunities such

as the Minnesota Indian Scholarship Application Program and the Native American Preparatory School;

- More opportunities for Native students to solve tribal problems with the creation of programs like the Tribal Resource Institute for Business Engineering & Science; and
- The development of education codes by tribes and tribal

consortiums, examples include the Rosebud Sioux Tribe and the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly.

Despite Native communities gaining a more prominent voice and taking policy, programming, and leadership roles, a report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education, indicated similar failings from previous reports. The report concluded, 'schools have failed to nurture the intellectual development and academic

6. Bureau of Indian Education: <https://www.bie.edu/Schools/index.htm>



performance of many Native children, as is evident from their high dropout rates and negative attitudes towards school.⁷

2000s. This era is largely defined by the standard-based education reform through the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which proved restrictive and punitive. NCLB resulted in teacher burn-out due to its emphasis on testing and accountability and furthered the Native community's negative feelings towards public education system. This dissatisfaction fueled many Native-led grassroots efforts to break away from existing systems and provided a renewed energy to implement culturally-based education and promote language revitalization. This movement included the formation of the Native American Community Academy (NACA) in New Mexico in 2006. NACA, as well as tribes and Native communities, are utilizing the public charter school system to support culturally-based education.⁸

Following community-led efforts, outside investments from allies encouraged the Native community to focus on performance testing. The adoption of Common Core standards was incentivized through Race to the Top grants, further emphasizing accountability and performance testing.

However, state and federal legislation began to emphasize the importance of culturally-based education and tribal sovereignty. Some of the policies and laws that reflect the support of these efforts include:

- + Esther Martinez Initiative: a Federal law passed in 2006 emphasizing Native languages as the primary means of instruction instead of bilingual programming or pull-out language courses.
- + Minnesota Mandates Teaching of Native History: Passed by Minnesota legislature in 2007, the law requires Dakota and Anishinaabe content within all academic standards.

- + South Dakota Indian Education Act: Passed, in 2007, this Act mandated the development of course content for curriculum and coursework in South Dakota American Indian history and culture. This resulted in the development of the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings and Standards. For more information go to the South Dakota Indian Education Office website.⁹
- + North Dakota Native American Essential Understandings Project: Launched by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction in 2015. For more information go to the North Dakota Indian Education website.¹⁰

In more recent years, additional interventions and measures supporting culturally-based education indicate promising trends. Some examples include:

- + Mandating the role of Minnesota Office of Indian Education Director by state statute;
- + The development of Dakota/Anishinaabe Language Certificate Program at the University of Minnesota; and
- + The passage of Senate Bill 82 - Native American Achievement Schools Grant Program in 2016 by the South Dakota legislature. It provides grants for up to three schools that demonstrate commitment to increasing student success through building cultural identities, encouraging academic perseverance, supporting the development of the whole child, and encouraging student leadership skills.

7. Force, I. N. A. R. T. (1991). Indian nations at risk: An educational strategy for action. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

8. Sovereignty in Education: Creating Culturally-Based Charter Schools in Native Communities": <http://www.niea.org/for-students/charter-schools/>

9. South Dakota Passes Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings and Standards: <https://indianeducation.sd.gov/ocetisakowin.aspx>

10. North Dakota Native American Essential Understandings Project: <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/SchoolStaff/IME/IndianEducation/Essentialunderstandingproject/>



CURRENT STATE OF NATIVE EDUCATION

To support an environmental scan of the current state of education, the Native Education Advisory Group identified accomplishments, strategies, and innovations taking place in Native communities. Themes within this work include: Native led initiatives; increased understanding of the systemic complexities; movements built upon solidarity and unity; strengths in cultural and linguistic knowledge systems; and brilliant innovative Native leadership.

The Group identified basic data and determined trends, both positive and negative, through the environmental scan. Tribal communities continue to experience disproportionately negative outcomes when analyzing rates in public education, social indicators, and health. It is important to remember this data only provides a snapshot to the current reality of education but does not explain the systemic factors that created, and continue to contribute to, these rates. Data presented without historical context will not provide stakeholders with an understanding of the systemic complexities that have shaped, and continue to regulate, education policies and programs of Native students. Data, when viewed isolated from history, only perpetuates stereotypes and generalizations of Native students and in no way addresses the strategic direction needed and desired by Native families and communities.

Approximately 92% of Native students, nation-wide attend public schools. While literature indicates that Native students in public schools outperform those in BIE schools, it often comes at a cost, with less cultural knowledge.¹¹

In Minnesota, the Native American students make up 1.7% of the total student population; in North Dakota, 8.8%, and South Dakota, 11.3%. Yet, across the board, graduation rates for Native students in our tri-state region remain far below their peers and even when compared with American Indians in the U.S.¹² Furthermore, math and reading scores at or above proficiency levels were exceedingly less than their white peers in all three states.¹³

Challenges and Strengths

The Native American Education Advisory Group is acutely aware of, and has personal experience with, the challenges Native communities and students face in their education. However, the Group was also aware of the positive strategies that lift and support efforts that continue to strengthen and support powerful and significant strides within Native education. These positive strategies indicate an ever-growing movement of Native-led efforts that build upon tribal sovereignty and the strengths of Native communities and their knowledge systems.

Challenges

- Communities experiencing a significant shortage of Native teachers.
- Schools continue to receive inadequate levels of Federal funding.
- Reservations continue to combat high unemployment rates.
- Philanthropy continues to decline.
- A disproportionate number of Native children are in the child welfare system.
- Methamphetamine and opioids continue to devastate tribal communities.
- Native students and communities experience prevalent incidents of stereotypes and institutional racism.
- Continued disengagement between parents and families and the education of their children in the current education system.
- The generational gap continues to grow and persist.
- Social media negatively impacts Native youth.

11. <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/studies/2012466.pdf>

12. US Department of Education 2014-15 regulatory adjusted cohort graduation rates, Ed.gov

13. The Nation's Report Card, National Assessment of Educational Progress, www.nationsreportcard.gov

Strengths

- Native nations continue to rebuild.
- American Indian standards requirements have been passed in states such as Minnesota, South Dakota, and North Dakota.
- Tribes are taking an active role in exercising their food sovereignty.
- Native population rates continue to increase.
- Early childhood development initiatives continue to focus on language and culture.
- A growing awareness of alternative education systems within Native communities.
- An Increase in the number of Native-held elected and decision-making positions.
- Support and implementation of Native language revitalization efforts.
- Meaningful tribal consultation processes enacted.
- Increased awareness of Native voice in social media.
- Increasing solidarity and activism advocating for Native communities.
- National conversations on tribal issues after the massive protests at Standing Rock.
- An increase in the number of language immersion nests and schools

How Native Innovators are Capitalizing and Leveraging Positive Trends

The Native Education Advisory Group identified innovators that are capitalizing, and leveraging, on current trends that strengthen tribal sovereignty. These trends include the reclamation of language and cultural identity across intersecting sectors including; environment, food, health, and education. This small, but growing, group of Indian education innovators are accessing opportunities within, and outside of, the education system to further their work. These innovations are building momentum, inspiring others, and creating a ripple effect within and around our Native communities.

Recent Regional Progress

Some examples of innovative programs include:

The Bdote Learning Center¹⁴: An elementary K-7, public charter school located in Minneapolis, MN. It is a place-based, year round, Dakota and Ojibwe language immersion program in an urban setting. students' learning is place-based and experiential. Students are immersed in rigorous, active, interdisciplinary learning projects, often involving learning outside of school walls. Curriculum content is tied to the geographical surroundings of the school, the local history, landscape, ecology, and Native languages and cultures.

Bug O Nay Ge Shig School¹⁵: Founded in 1975, the school was started in response to parents' concerns that public schools were not meeting their children's academic and cultural needs. Since that time, the school has transformed its role into a magnet school which serves over 200 Native students living on or near Leech Lake Reservation. The schools guiding goals include integration of culture and production of Ojibwe speakers. The school is operated by the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, and is federally funded through the BIA. Due to lack of adequate funding, the school functioned for years in a converted pole shed with multiple facility issues. Strong, persistent leadership and community advocacy eventually led to a \$12 million allocation of federal funding for the recent building of a new school.

The Lakholiyapi Wahohpi Wichakini Owayawa Program of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe¹⁶:

This program serves children ages 3-8. To exercise more freedom, the program for the 3 and 4-year-olds is established as a daycare, yet functions as a pre-school. The program for 5-8-year-olds has been established as a private state-approved school. Housed within the Sitting Bull College, the site maintains an authentic language immersion environment that is supportive of rapidly increasing language acquisition of teacher candidates.

Cansayapi Wakanyeza Owayawa Oti¹⁷:, a recently opened Dakota immersion Early Head Start and pre-school program that has the support of several partners in the Lower Sioux Indian Community. The learning environment provides education, health, nutrition, social and other services to children and families, while Dakota language and lifeways drives the learning environment.

14. The Bdote Learning Center: <http://www.bdotelearningcenter.org/>

15. Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School: <http://www.bugonaygeshig.org>

16. Lakholiyapi Wahohpi Wichakini Owayawa Program: <http://wotakuye.weebly.com/programs.html>

17. Cansayapi Wakanyeza: <http://www.myklgr.com/2018/08/01/lower-sioux-indian-community-opens-first-dakota-language-head-start-program/>

Timeline: Accomplishments 2016-2018

- Minnesota increased Indian Education funding to \$18 million.¹⁸
- Commission for Oceti Sakowin Accreditation (COSA) formed.¹⁹
- South Dakota passes the ParaPro Scholarship Program²⁰ & Achievement Schools Program.²¹
- Every Student Succeeds Act requires tribal consultation.²²
- Native youth inspire activism by running 2,000 miles to Washington DC to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline.²³
- Further development and implementation of the SD Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings and the ND Native American Essential Understandings.²⁴

Despite the current state of Indian education nationally, there are innovative efforts being implemented within the region. The trends of the last two years provides support and increases Native voice, Native-led efforts, and strengthens tribal sovereignty as we continue to look for opportunities to increase the academic success of Native students. Native education allies can learn from, and be encouraged by, successful innovators and should look to build upon these innovative examples to increase the number of sustainable Native education opportunities and programs.

By reflecting on learning environments, methods and techniques, and best practices and models, we can support our students by learning who they are, how they learn best, and what they aspire for their futures.

We must understand the challenges innovators still face and heed their advice to further our collective vision for Native education.

18. 2015 MN State Law: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2015/1/Session+Law/Chapter/3/>

19. Commission for Oceti Sakowin Accreditation (COSA): <http://www.cosa-tribal.com/index.html/>

20. SD Parapro scholarship under 2016 SD Legislature Senate Bill 81: <https://indianeducation.sd.gov/ParaprofessionalsScholarships.aspx>

21. SD Achievement under 2016 SD Legislature Senate Bill 82: <https://indianeducation.sd.gov/NAASGP.aspx>

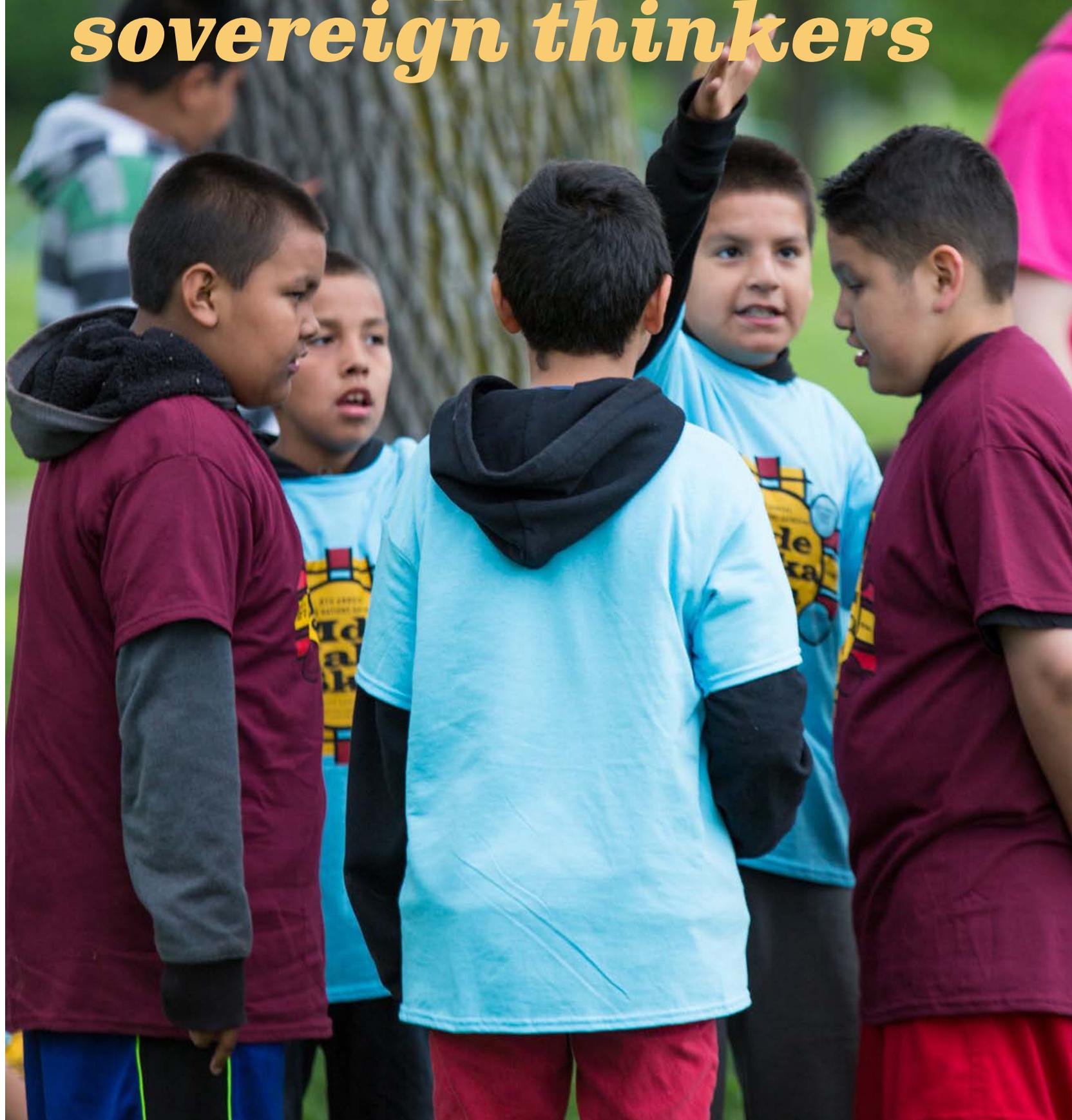
22. ESSA 2015, Public Law 114-95 requiring tribal consultation: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1177/text>

23. Youth runners: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/31/magazine/the-youth-group-that-launched-a-movement-at-standing-rock.html>

24. ND Essential Understandings: <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/SchoolStaff/IME/IndianEducation/Essentialunderstandingproject/>

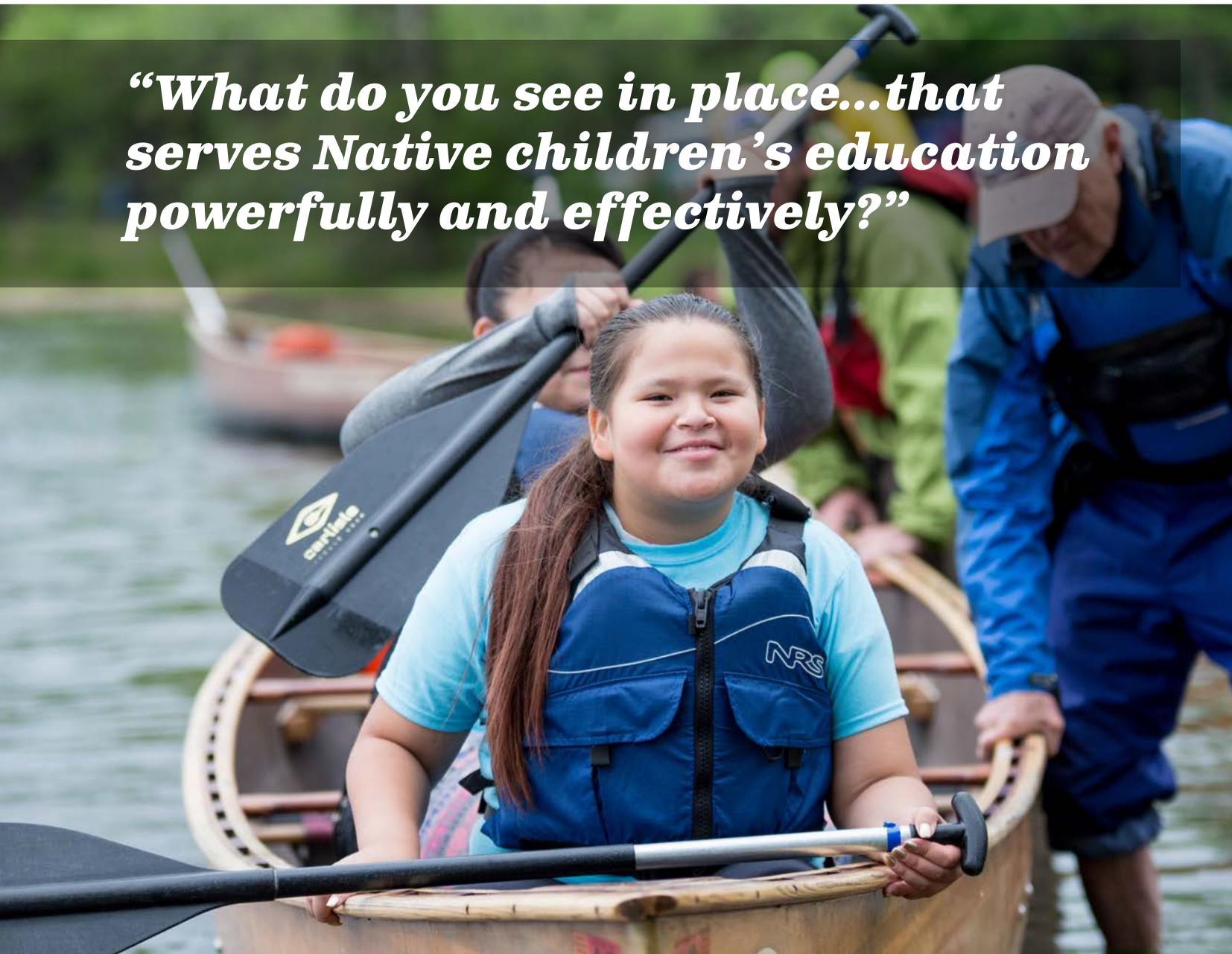


Fluent speakers, sovereign thinkers



FUTURE STATE OF NATIVE EDUCATION

“What do you see in place...that serves Native children’s education powerfully and effectively?”



What if we could build upon the existing positive trends and realize a new vision for Indian education?

The Native Education Advisory Group imagined what Native education could look like in 2027 and how to build an education system that serves our communities. To develop a vision, the Group was asked, what do you see in place in 2027 in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota that serves children's education among the 23 Native Nations powerfully and effectively?

The Group developed statements that captured elements of a collective vision of what is needed to serve children's education powerfully and effectively years from now. Those statements include:

- Solid foundation of supports to ensure capacity to grow.
- Education unlocking and nurturing the inner spirit of our people's love of life and learning.
- We define success and flex our sovereignty
- Tribal languages are pervasive – protecting all families and communities and connecting all to our way of life.

Each of these statements are needed to move toward an education system that encompasses: abundant resources, freedom from constraints and helping all human beings find their strength and who they're meant to be.

The Group determined for this to work any action must be centered on a vision of healthy tribal nations that are self-reliant.

Some of the brainstormed actions included:

- Increasing the number of Native teachers;
- Establishing an endowment fund for Native language immersion students and second generation language learners;
- Creating multi-generational and cooperative learning classrooms where Native languages were spoken;
- Ensuring students have access to culturally-appropriate learning spaces;
- Utilizing place-based experiential learning outside of the classroom;
- Developing programs that produce fully fluent language speakers;
- Establishing classrooms that are grounded in Native values;
- Encouraging teachers to play the role of connectors to community knowledge and problem-solving; and
- Encouraging family and community participation in a growing and giving education community.

Vision 2027

Consensus Vision Statements

The following statements represent the Group's consensus after discussing the individual elements of the Vision. These Vision Elements capture the Group's insight on their collective intent in each arena.

Towards Abundant Resources & Freedom From Constraints

Solid Foundation of Supports to Ensure Capacity to Grow

Towards Healthy Tribal Nations That Are Self-Reliant

Tribal Languages Are Pervasive - Protecting All Families & Communities & Connecting All To Our Way Of Life

We Define Success & Flex Our Sovereignty

Towards Helping All Human Beings Find Their Strengths & Who They're Meant to Be

Education Unlocking & Nurturing The Inner Spirit of Our People's Life & Learning

CRITICAL BARRIERS & CONFLICTS

To identify the critical barriers and conflicts obstructing and impeding the 2027 Vision, the Native Education Advisory Group was asked, what are the obstacles to realizing the vision?

What are the obstacles that block our communities, allies, and systems from mobilizing, implementing or advancing innovations and efforts to secure the quality of education we want?

The Group uncovered the critical barriers and conflicts within approaches to Native education that continue to impede the Vision. The daily challenges Native communities face are compounded by a continuous cycle of challenges and conflicts that impede progress. This cycle is inextricably linked to the history of Indian education and the resulting intergenerational trauma that is prevalent within our communities.

Four primary conflicts stand in the way of realizing a new vision for Native education. Until we acknowledge and address them, Native education will continue to be devalued, unchanged, and opportunities will remain limited. Native communities and Native education allies must personally and collectively address these conflicts in order to break the cycle that holds us back from realizing the Vision.

- 1. Internalized Devaluing of Culture.** For the past 150 years, Native students have been educated by others and we have not defined success in our own terms. We have internalized the devaluing of our cultural linguistic contribution and expertise – impeding possibilities because of fear of risk and failure.
- 2. External and internal forces drive decision-makers to maintain status quo.** Misaligned grant goals, resources, and uncoordinated efforts between partners and policies do not bring about long-term change. There is a persistent fear of losing, or changing, what has already been built in laws, programs, advocacy, and curricula which limits Native opportunity.
- 3. The over-identification with “poverty thinking” and a disconnect from cultural identity.** Disconnection from Native cultural identity leads to dysfunctional behavior, resulting in distrust of Native cultural norms and replication of external systems. Native communities follow the lead and orders of others and are unsure of how break away and liberate our minds. Solutions are not based on our own cultural values and models, they are instead based on the cultural values and models of other communities.
- 4. There is an unbalanced prioritization between standards and culture.** A misunderstanding of the importance of integrating our cultural way of life in education continues to be pervasive. Education leaders do not have the exposure and skills to balance and apply cultural identity and educational sovereignty. There is a need to educate policymakers, state and federal education departments, administrators, and decision-makers (i.e., those creating standards) of the importance of understanding and practicing culture.

Our cultural knowledge systems and ways of educating provide a foundation to the unique cultural identity of our people—they serve as the underpinning to our children’s sense of belonging and provide

connectedness and purpose to love life and learning. To realize our vision of increasing opportunities for Native education, we must acknowledge and strategically address the persistent cycle that is holding us back.



***Imagine a long-range future
that inspires and motivates,
progressing over time.***

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NATIVE EDUCATION ADVISORY GROUP

What ACTIONS can be taken to begin to address the challenges and launch progress toward the Vision?

After setting the Vision and identifying the barriers, the Native Education Advisory Group identified and prioritized strategic directions and discussed and developed actions that would launch the effort. The Group looked across systems connected to education and compiled a list of actions needed. The group identified two-year strategies and prioritized them in order to effectively overcome barriers and produce adequate critical mass in the effort. These strategies include priorities that are reachable and provide stability in order to achieve the Vision.

The Native Education Advisory Group made the following four recommendations of strategic directions over the next two years. While the group recognized and acknowledged that all actions and strategies are significant in the effort to move ahead, they determined the priority, order, and level of effort and resources crucial to making significant strides and support sustainability of the work.

The strategies are rooted in the values of:

- » Investing in Native-led and determined actions;
- » Reclamation of cultural knowledge systems and ways of being;
- » Changing the narrative from deficit-thinking to focus on the resilience of community;

- » Broad, systemic, and inclusive engagement, partnerships and connections;
- » Curiosity and healthy risk-taking; and
- » Personal and collective responsibility for the future.

Influencing Internal & External Decision-Making.

This strategy requires substantial effort and resources to break through the systemic challenges. Actions identified within this strategy require individuals and institutions with power, resources, and influence to make critical investments and decisions to launch and set a path that aligns with the Vision. This strategy is required to increase opportunities in Native education. These actions include:

- Educate decision-makers on the importance of cultural-relevant education and implementing state-wide tribal history and culture curricula;
- Train funders and policy makers on the importance of local history, language and culture;
- Provide technical assistance for policy creation or change;
- Invest in groups working on culturally-aligned accreditation, certification, and standards; and
- Ensure employers value cultural expertise with equitable pay scales.



Establishing Centers for Training to Explore Innovation & Implement Change.

The actions within this strategy require individuals and institutions to support investments and provide resources to invest in the reclamation of cultural knowledge systems that historically have guided and sustained the health and vibrancy of tribal communities. The actions within this strategy require personal and collective commitments from Native families, communities, and tribal leadership to reclaim, practice, and integrate tribal

languages and cultural teachings in classrooms. These actions will nurture the resiliency of Native communities. This strategy is required to challenge the status quo and set a new path for increasing opportunities in Native education. Actions include:

- Normalize cultural values and teachings in early childhood education;
- Design workshops and innovative training centers on learning models that support cultural, instructional, and career relevance;

- Provide support for family tribal language and culture learning and summer language institutions; and
- Create multi-generational leadership programs.

Owning & Promoting Positive Messaging.

The actions within this strategy require individuals and institutions of power to support investments and resources to change the national mind-set towards Native education. This can be achieved by focusing on positive messaging and lifting up the voices and expertise of Native people. This strategy requires investments and resources be grounded in place - as our traditional and cultural knowledge systems are based on our connection and relationship to land. Actions include:

- Publish and highlight success stories and knowledge holders of culture-based initiatives;
- Promote and acknowledge positive community role models;
- Develop land-based learning opportunities; and
- Provide presentations on education alternatives.

Guiding Native-Driven Data Collection to Reframe Current Reality & Empower Future Possibilities.

This strategy provides lift and stability, assuring distance in the trajectory of this work. This strategy requires investment and resources that provide Native-led definitions of success and evaluative measures. This is required to maintain authenticity of the work and ensure Native communities continue to value their own cultural and linguistic contributions and expertise. Actions within this strategy include:

- Conduct and publish longitudinal data collection on cultural-based educated students;
- Create events and opportunities to analyze problems from a cultural lens; and
- Support research, evaluation, and data collection by and for Native communities.



CALL TO ACTION

There are three goals identified by the Native Education Advisory Group for the region.

1. Identify opportunities and actions that can be accomplished by individuals.
2. Provide clarity on collective actions that must be implemented on a broad scale.
3. Gain clarity on the work and investments of the Bush Foundation and to provide recommendations for future investments.

This section provides answers to critical questions like:

- » Who are the people and groups that make up the stakeholders?
- » Who needs to be brought into this work?

The Group brainstormed who the individuals, organizations, and entities are that should be brought into this work to advance the Vision. Next, the Group identified and categorized potential stakeholders within the context of the strategies. They defined specific actions of advocacy and engagement to contribute to the collective priorities and vision for Native education. Finally, they associated actions with the stakeholders, creating a call to action.

Stakeholders

The Native Education Advisory Group identified the following sectors that influence decision making or hold needed resources (e.g., human, financial, technical)

Organizational Stakeholders:

- » Tribal, State, or Federal Governments
- » Philanthropic Organizations
- » Education Stakeholders
- » Media
- » Grassroots Organizations

Further, the group identified specific stakeholders that have influence in decision-making and/or the ability to commit to investments and resources.

It is critical to the health of the region to invest in increased opportunities for Native students.

STAKEHOLDERS CAN TAKE MEANINGFUL ACTIONS TO ADVANCE PRIORITIES INCLUDE:

- » Tribal Leaders
- » Funders
- » Educators
- » Administrators
- » Policymakers
- » Parents
- » Youth

A PERSONAL & COLLECTIVE CALL TO ACTION

The Group identified the role stakeholder groups have in bringing about quality education. They delineated actions needed to be taken by stakeholders and individuals to meaningfully advance the priorities for Native education. The Group organized the actions based on what stakeholders had the greatest ability to most effectively carry out the action.

The Group considered the capacity, expertise, and authority the stakeholders hold in community as they made their decisions. The categories below include a brief description that describes the call to action and identifies which stakeholders must be involved.

INSPIRE CHANGE

The Group acknowledged all stakeholders have a role in inspiring change and increasing opportunities in Native education. This report can serve as a vehicle to initiate awareness and provide opportunities for dialogue that expands the understanding of the need for change. Increasing awareness and engaging partnerships to advocate for changes in policy and decision-making that effects Native education can be initiated by those with resources. Stakeholders can support the Vision by:

- » Sharing this report in order to raise awareness;
- » Exposing & promoting alternative education ideologies (e.g., individualized learning, Indigenous education); and
- » Convening partners across sectors (e.g., states, educators, tribal leaders).

CENTRALIZE & SUSTAIN CAPACITY BUILDING & TRAINING

Stakeholders within educational institutions and authorities; tribal, state, and federal governments; and independent resources (e.g., philanthropy, non-profits) have a role in centralizing and sustaining this work. Action is needed to build out capacity, provide training, and invest in resources. Stakeholders should consider providing support that sustains growth and that align with cultural-based models. Stakeholders can support the Vision by:

- » Creating an online portal of resources (e.g., funding, innovative models, technical supports);
- » Developing national and statewide initiatives that support the Vision;
- » Providing trainings on individualized learning for all Native nations;
- » Creating a training and resource center for success indicators; and
- » Adopting policies that support sustainability and growth.

LEARN FROM & EXPLORE RESEARCH and MODELS

Family, grassroots organizers, and communities are primary stakeholders to learn from and explore research and models. This action is primarily rooted in growing language speakers. The work of the primary stakeholders identified above can only take place if additional stakeholders (e.g., philanthropy, non-profits) are investing in culturally-based models, programs, evaluation, and research. Media amplifiers (i.e., those that have the ability to broadcast results) are needed to communicate the effectiveness and document the effort of investing in promising models. Stakeholders can support the Vision by:

- » Translate and transmit information across stakeholders;
- » Creating, supporting, and growing language speakers, teachers, families;
- » Supporting strength-based research (vs deficit);
- » Studying and learning from positive trends (e.g., food sovereignty movement);
- » Commissioning longitudinal studies of innovative models; and
- » Supporting promising models to sustain the effort.

GROW & INFLUENCE NETWORKS

The Group identified three sectors of stakeholders that have the capacity and resources (e.g., human, financial) to grow and influence networks. These stakeholders include: independent resources (e.g., philanthropy, organizations, institutions); tribal, state, and federal government leaders; and media amplifiers. These stakeholders have the ability to further the Vision by communicating needs in order to advance Native education opportunities and engage their networks to further support the initiative. Stakeholders can support the Vision by:

- » Creating and crafting communications for this work;
- » Identifying and convening those who want to know more, those who are ready to implement, and those that have already started implementing; and
- » Creating new partners for this initiative with other networks and movements.

ENGAGE YOUTH

Native youth, and groups and organizations that work with and have the potential to engage youth, are primary stakeholders in implementing actions that actively and authentically increase youth participation and engagement. This action area was rooted in the growing movement to provide authentic leadership opportunities for youth. Stakeholders should focus on:

- » Providing leadership opportunities for youth in education (e.g., policy advocacy, fellowships);
- » Supporting and nurturing youth in effective culturally-based after school programs; and
- » Including youth in the creation and implementation of strategies.

The action steps provided by the Group are clear steps individuals and organizations can take to support and provide a collective investment in increasing Native education opportunities. Collectively, these next steps create a pathway and vision for moving forward. By following these steps, we can continue to grow and foster opportunities for Native communities to support the education of their citizens and community members.



CONCLUSION

Does your work inspire change? Does it support capacity building and training to centralize and sustain this work? Revisit the list of action items and determine your individual commitment and investment in actions. Meet, network, convene, and collectively commit to invest and act.

A Call to Action from the Native Education Advisory Group

The Native Education Advisory Group challenges stakeholders across our region to make Native education a priority. Stakeholders are invited to share this report with colleagues, elected leaders, and with family and friends. By identifying what action items you can accomplish, you can help improve education outcomes for Native students.

This report should inform and influence all stakeholders, across sectors and boundaries. This is a call to share, act, invest, and advocate for Native education. By investing in and prioritizing Native education, we can ensure Native communities, teachers, schools, and students have a voice and are at the helm of decision-making that drives strategies, models, and ideas.

The group invites allies and stakeholders to join in supporting efforts to provide a culturally-based education for Native students. Together, we must build a solid foundation of advocates to ensure that education systems are reflective of the students they serve in order to increase the opportunities for success for our Native children, families and communities.

Photos in this report provided by Minneapolis Public Schools, the Bush Foundation, Dawnee Lebeau, and Ryan Red Corn.



SHARE - ACT - INVEST

You can access more information on the Bush Foundation's education initiative and this report online at <https://www.bushfoundation.org/education-initiative>.

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