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ABSTRACT

Executive Order 13096 gave the U.S. Department of Education the responsibility for developing a research agenda for American Indian and Alaska Native education. The Department established a working group composed of various government agencies and American Indian groups, committees, and associations, that solicited ideas and comments from Native and non-Native educators and researchers. This report focuses on the educational research topics determined by the working group to have the highest priority over the next several years. Several basic premises and assumptions permeated both the research literature and the suggestions made to the working group: the need for research to focus on success, to respect tribal sovereignty, and to be sensitive to tribal differences; the need for detailed national data; and suggestions concerning methodology and researchers. The priority research topics are presented within six general categories: 1) educational outcomes of American Indian and Alaska Native students; 2) Native language and culture; 3) teachers, schools, and educational resources; 4) American Indian and Alaska Native students with special needs; 5) early childhood educational needs of Native children; and 6) educational standards and assessment. Each category includes general statements about the state of current knowledge, a presentation of the priority research topics along with examples of specific study questions, and suggestions for research activities and specific studies. An appendix includes Executive Order 13096 and lists of members of the interagency task force, research working group, and expert committee. (Contains 63 references.) (TD)

American Indian and Alaska Native Education Research Agenda

Research Agenda Working Group

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American Indian and Alaska Native Education Research Agenda

Introduction

The U.S. Department of Education, under the direction of a Federal Interagency Task Force, was given the responsibility for developing a research agenda for American Indian and Alaska Native education in response to Executive Order 13096, American Indian and Alaska Native Education. Section F of the Executive Order requires the development and implementation of this agenda to improve the educational achievement and academic progress for American Indian and Alaska Native students. The Executive Order specifies further that the education research agenda will:

1. Establish baseline data on academic achievement and retention of American Indian and Alaska Native students in order to monitor improvement;

2. Evaluate promising practices used with those students; and

3. Evaluate the role of native language and culture in the development of educational strategies.

This report responds to the Executive Order. It summarizes the current state of research and describes the research topics that should be given the highest priority at the federal level for research to be conducted over the next several years. Running throughout the discussions of the research topics are considerations of appropriate research methods and approaches and the clear demand from Native[1] educators, leaders, and parents that researchers develop information that can be applied now.

In January 2001, the Secretaries of the Departments of Education and the Interior submitted a "Comprehensive Federal Indian Education Policy Statement" to the President in response to one of the requirements of Executive Order 13096. The Policy Statement, which had been approved by their agencies as well as by the Federal Interagency Task Force established by the Executive Order, highlights the importance of high-quality research and information:

> The Federal agencies will develop comprehensive baseline data concerning the effectiveness of Federal efforts to improve the educational achievement and progress of American Indians and Alaska Natives and encourage the creation of new knowledge regarding best practices and the impact of Native language and culture on the education of American Indians and Alaska Natives (Federal Interagency Task Force, 2001, p. 4).

The Policy Statement included five implementation steps; the fourth step is –

[1] In this report, Native is used interchangeably with the phrase American Indian and Alaska Native. Indian or Alaska Native is used separately when the reference is specific, and quotations from other authors frequently use Indian interchangeably with Native.

> Federal Agencies shall report data and conduct studies related to the education performance and progress of American Indian and Alaska Native students that are of high quality and provide appropriate benchmarks and measurable objectives for improving the six goals of the Executive Order (Federal Interagency Task Force, 2001, p. 5).

This research agenda report follows a notable line of other reports that made their recommendations and left their influence on researchers and educators. In 1997, a large number of Indian organizations and individual tribes pressed the federal government to develop a comprehensive Indian education policy. In the preface to their "red book," they reminded the federal government:

> The history of Indian education has been difficult. The Meriam Report (1928) and the Kennedy Report (1969) documented the failure of formal education and called for more Indian involvement, control, and relevancy in the educational process. The Indian Nations At Risk Task Force (1991) recognized "twenty years of progress during the 1970-80s, but concluded that Indian communities were "nations at risk" educationally. The White House Conference on Indian Education (1992) reached similar conclusions and made specific recommendations for improvement (Comprehensive Federal Indian Education Policy Statement, March 1997, p. i).

Developing the Research Agenda

The development of the research agenda was assigned to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) and Office of Indian Education (OIE) by Executive Order 13096. These offices established a working group to carry out the assignment. The working group's members represented major offices within the U.S. Department of Education and, through a Memorandum of Understanding, also included the Office of Indian Education Programs of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior. Other members of the working group included representatives from the Administration for Native Americans (within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), National Indian Education Association (NIEA), the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), and the Native American Rights Fund (NARF). The working group established an Expert Committee composed of representatives from OERI's National Educational Research Policy and Priorities Board (NERPPB) and from the National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE).

The objective of most of the working group's activities was to identify a limited set of high-priority research topics that could serve as a framework and guide for federally sponsored research over the next decade. The working group solicited ideas and comments in general from Native and non-Native educators and researchers, and the group specifically sought suggestions for high-priority research topics. In all, the working group gathered well over three hundred unique suggestions, which were subsequently organized in terms of their central focus, combined and recombined along common themes, and refined based on information gathered from other working group activities

Deciding which research topics to emphasize involved listening carefully to several hundred people, reading and summarizing the research literature, and analyzing federal data collection activities. Ideas and comments were solicited at a series of Regional Partnership Forums, which were convened by the Interagency Task Force, at a National Research Agenda Conference sponsored by the working group, through a tear-off comment page on a project brochure, through a visitor comment page on a web site developed by the working group, and through attendance at numerous national and regional meetings of Native educators and researchers. In addition, four papers were commissioned on central issues from noted Native researchers, and two other respected Native researchers were tasked with developing a literature review. Federal data collection systems were reviewed to determine their status and utility for addressing research priorities.

The purpose of the research agenda project was to identify research priorities, not to list the universe of possibilities, so the sorted and combined list of suggestions was distributed for several review iterations by all working group members and the expert committee to assign priorities. The final set of topics was discussed in a series of focus groups with educators and Native parents. The chief loss from the process of winnowing down from a large number of potential topics to just a few is that, inevitably, some of the unique details of people's suggestions get sifted out in the search for common strands.

One of the most significant themes that emerged from researchers, educators, and parents in Indian country was an eagerness to see research translated into practice. A consistent recommendation to the federal government was to fund research that focuses on effective educational practices and ways to implement them.

Organization of this Report and Sources for Other Project Materials

The balance of this report focuses on the education research topics determined by the working group to be the highest priority for research efforts over the next several years. That discussion begins with several basic premises and assumptions that appeared to permeate both the research literature as well as the suggestions made to the working group. The larger portion of the report consists of presentations of the priority research topics. They have been organized within six general categories: (1) educational outcomes of American Indian and Alaska Native students; (2) Native language and culture; (3) teachers, schools, and educational resources; (4) American Indian and Alaska Native students with special needs; (5) early childhood educational needs of Native children, and (6) educational standards and assessments. The discussion within each category begins with general statements about the state of current knowledge, continues with a presentation of the priority research topics along with examples of what could be termed specific study questions, and concludes with suggestions for suggested research activities and specific studies. The report's appendix includes Executive Order 13096 and lists of Interagency Task Force, research working group, and expert committee members.

This report summarizes the working group's conclusions. Details about the working group's activities and copies of most of the products resulting from them can be found on the web site that was developed for the project and that now serves a larger role in disseminating research on American Indian and Alaska Native education. For example, that site contains the papers commissioned for the project, summarizes the National Research Agenda Conference,

provides the literature and federal data systems reviews, and presents several iterations of the research topics and questions suggested to the working group. The research agenda web site, which is now supported by the Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools (CRESS), can be found at www.indianeduresearch.net. The site also contains numerous links to other sources of information and to organizations active in American Indian and Alaska Native education.

Basic Assumptions and Premises

This research agenda proceeds from a set of basic assumptions about conducting research in Indian country. These assumptions are divided into two groups. The first group is basic premises, which we have termed major underlying themes, as to how research on American Indian and Alaska Native education should be approached; the second is concerned with premises about the research methods that should be used.

Major Underlying Themes

Research should include a focus on success. While understanding the educational and social barriers facing American Indian students is important, too often research has focused solely on "deficits" within Native communities. At present, educators and administrators are eager for information about best practices. Examples of educational success abound in Indian country and future research should attempt to understand and disseminate the essential elements of successful schools, programs, pedagogy, and curricula. Certainly this does not mean that researchers should seek only good news. For one thing, studies of successful practices carry with them the implicit recognition that some practices are not successful, and those unsuccessful practices should also be identified as part of larger efforts of school reform and improvement. For another, good research often requires comparisons and controls, even when the purpose is to identify and validate best practices.

Most of the research on American Indian and Alaska Native students has been conducted by non-Native researchers and, historically, has been permeated by a perspective that American Indian and Alaska Native culture is somehow less sophisticated and valued than euro-centric culture. Thus, when American Indian and Alaska Native students do not perform as well on some measures as do white students, the fault is laid at the feet of their Native culture – not the schools. Sometimes the fault is ascribed to the "learning style" of American Indian and Alaska Native children, a concept distinct from "culture" but related to it. It is not clear from the literature, however, that the distribution of American Indian and Alaska Native children on measures of learning style differs greatly from that of other children. One of the primary ways this cultural perspective colors the research is through the implementation of standards and assessments for American Indian and Alaska Native students that focus on the educational goals of the larger society, without also incorporating the perspectives of Native communities and parents.

A recurring theme in the American Indian and Alaska Native education research literature is that measures of academic success – particularly standardized tests – provide misleading indicators because they are based on assumptions of the majority culture. As evidence, critics of standardized measures point to particular items that are simply unlikely to

be known by children from rural Native cultures. The point is not always made, however, that such items are not necessarily valid measures, nor is it clear that Native children lack the competence to answer such items provided that they have had the opportunity to learn about them.

Researchers must respect tribal sovereignty. Federally recognized tribes maintain sovereignty over many of their activities. How sovereignty has been defined has varied through time, with the current era being one in which Native peoples have strongly promoted their rights, and the federal government has sought to accommodate them. Public and political support for Native curricular and instructional approaches has wavered back and forth throughout American history (Lomawaima, 1999; Szasz, 1999; Tippeconnic & Swisher, 1992). Researchers, Native or non-Native, need to respect tribal rights and work actively with the tribes and villages to conduct research in such a way as to be responsive to local concerns and to seek to produce findings that can be used locally.

When research is conducted on American Indian or Alaska Native students within tribal or village settings, it is essential that the researchers involve and gain the active support of the community. This would include tribal review of research designs and instruments, as well as access to final data. Increasingly, tribes are asserting their rights in this area, and many have developed formal or informal research regulations or policies governing research. Whether or not such policies exist, the involvement of native communities in the research process will help ensure "high-quality research guided by locally meaningful questions and concerns" (Lomawaima, 2000, pp. 14-15). When research includes Native American children as a focus in large-scale studies, such as when national samples are augmented with additional Native children to permit separate analysis, it may be impractical to seek to work with each tribe. In these situations, researchers should seek the advice and support of such groups as the National Advisory Committee on Indian Education and work closely with the Office of Indian Education Programs (U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs) and the Office of Indian Education (U.S. Department of Education). Ideally, in these cases, experienced Native researchers should be part of the study teams. However, expertise should remain an essential basis for research decisions and for inclusion on research teams.

Respecting tribal sovereignty also does not mean that researchers should fail to incorporate where appropriate what has been learned from studies of the education of non-Native children or of Native children in other tribes or communities. On one hand, it is not clear under what circumstances research conducted on students in general can be validly applied to American Indian and Alaska Native students because of the unique circumstances faced by Native students. On the other hand, it also is not clear that research on students in general cannot be validly applied to American Indian and Alaska Native students in most circumstances.

Research needs to be sensitive to tribal differences. Considerable cultural, linguistic, economic, historical, and social differences exist among the Native peoples of North America. Further, there are important differences in legal standing between federally recognized and unrecognized Indian tribes and between American Indians and Alaska Natives. Proposed research should take the fact of these differences into account, especially in designs for large-scale studies that will involve multiple tribes and villages.

National studies that seek to explain differences among students need to go beyond offering a single "American Indian or Alaska Native" choice on the race/ethnicity item. In particular, those studies should seek detailed information about the social and economic conditions within which the student was raised, find out whether the student has at least one parent who is a registered tribal member, and ask for the name of the tribe.

Where the student has lived and for how long also may be important background information that may reinforce or reduce the importance of tribal identity. Most Native children do not attend a school on a reservation at any given time. In 1997-98, according to the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Common Core of Data, about 534 thousand American Indian or Alaska Native students were enrolled in public elementary or secondary schools. The Office of Indian Education Programs of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (U.S. Department of the Interior) reports fewer than 10 percent attend reservation schools, with about 50 thousand students in 185 schools in 1998-99. In fact, the majority of American Indian and Alaska Native students attend public elementary or secondary schools where they are in the minority. According to NCES' Common Core of Data, 46 percent of Native students attend schools where minorities make up more than half the enrollment, and only 28 percent attend schools where Native children are in the majority. Mobility rates are high, moreover, and a student attending an urban school one year may be in a tribal school during the next year and then in a public school near the reservation after that. Family mobility varies by reservation, with – as examples - 27 percent of Navajo reservation, 41 percent of Osage reservation, and 57 percent of Agua Caliente reservation residents in 1985 not living in the same house in 1990 (Census of Population and Housing, 1990).

Research Methods and Issues

Determining what to study, where, and how is politically and ethically charged. Certainly the history of educational research involving American Indian and Alaska Native students and their communities has predominately been directed by outsiders and, even if not the intent, has often focused on "deficits" rather than strengths. To a certain extent, of course, educational research in general has tended toward the negative by emphasizing standardized test scores, which can almost always be better than they are. But the situation in Native communities has traditionally been more extreme in that outsiders frequently have looked not only at achievement and other measures of performance, but have selected norms for comparison based primarily on students from middle class, non-Native American backgrounds.

Of equal concern is that too much of the research on Native students and schools has had limited applicability outside the situation and context that was studied because samples have sometimes been very small or were selected from a unique population. This situation is certainly not unique to research involving the education of American Indians and Alaska Natives, but the field clearly needs more large-scale studies involving generalizable samples if it is to provide optimal guidance about the nature of problems and the suitability of potential solutions. Further, research has focused on the roughly 10 percent of Native students who attend reservation schools or the approximately 17 percent who attend off-reservation schools where American Indians or Alaska Natives are in the majority. The educational experiences of most Native children have not been extensively studied. One of the most important observations to emerge from the process leading to this research agenda is that more resources

need to be applied to this area, and some of those resources need to be concentrated on larger and more inclusive studies than have been possible in the past.

Detailed national data are needed. Most of the research on Native students takes advantage of the clustering of many of them in or near reservations, whether in BIA-funded schools or local public schools, and less emphasis is placed on the substantial proportion who live in areas where there may be few if any other Native students in their classes. Although concentrating on schools on or near reservations has made it possible to study phenomena such as "learning styles" in isolation, it also may have made Native students look much more alike than they are. Further, locally focused studies that find Native students performing at lower levels than members of other racial/ethnic groups are often conducted in schools with inexperienced teachers, crumbling buildings, and few resources. More widely based studies, or simply studies with sufficient cases to take other explanatory variables into account, could have the effect of largely eliminating or attenuating associations between academic outcomes and race/ethnicity.

There have been several deliberate attempts to learn more about Native students and their schools from a national perspective in the last decade. The Schools and Staffing Surveys conducted by NCES have, since the mid-1990s, made it possible to look at schools with high proportions of American Indian and Alaska Native students in detail, and the report cards submitted to OIEP by BIA-funded schools provide a wealth of data about school-level resources and aggregated student outcomes. However, at the national level, major studies usually cannot allocate their resources to obtaining adequate data on American Indian and Alaska Native students to enable anything more than combining Native students into the "other" race/ethnicity category. Recent exceptions have been the National Longitudinal Study of Schools (NLSS) and the Early Childhood Longitudinal Surveys (ECLS). NLSS is a U.S. Department of Education study that examines the effects of school reforms; it includes an augmented sample of 110 schools with relatively high enrollments of Native Americans. ECLS, supported by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), consists of two parallel studies; the first, ECLS-K (for kindergarten cohort) follows a sample of children from about age 3, and ECLS-B (for birth cohort) follows children from birth. ECLS-B includes an augmented sample of Native American children, but ECLS-K does not. In addition, NCES' National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), because of its large sample sizes and, since the early 1990s, state-specific samples, permits fairly detailed analysis. However, even those large-scale surveys and assessments do not permit inter-tribal comparisons, and the sample sizes do not often allow other breakdowns of Native children.

Existing data address some arguably important education outcomes, particularly academic achievement in reading and math and educational attainment, but there is a larger set of educational outcomes – academic and non-academic – that is poorly covered now. New data may be needed when existing data systems are not based on large enough samples of American Indian and Alaska Native students or particular outcomes are not included. The Department of Education should consider conducting a large-scale descriptive study of Native education that would gather sufficient data on students, families, educators, and schools to permit statements about what conditions at each of those levels are associated with one or more outcomes. Such a study would be the first comprehensive effort to look at these questions together since the national study by Fuchs and Havighurst in 1972.

Definitional issues should be resolved by American Indian and Alaska Native tribes. Accurate identification of Native people is an important prerequisite to conducting valid research, and tribes should take the lead in resolving these contentious issues. One of the problems faced by national surveys is that they usually call for self-reported race/ethnicity information. The bases on which individuals make judgments about themselves are not clear. This ambiguity parallels the ambiguity of blood quantum and other measures for determining tribal membership or eligibility for federal programs. For educational research, a fundamental concern is accurate specification of the population of interest; that has not been the case for most national studies that involve American Indian and Alaska Native students. For many studies, such as those of Native children in schools on reservations or in Alaska Native villages, self-identification or identification by teachers or staff is a reasonable procedure. However, when studies call for comparing schools on their proportions of Native students or for comparing children based on race/ethnicity, merely using self-identification or teacher/staff identification is inadequate. At the least, for students (or others) who indicate "American Indian or Alaska Native" on a form, there should be a follow-up question on tribal enrollment or village residence.

Research on Native students should involve researchers with demonstrated knowledge of Native culture(s). There is a growing cadre of highly qualified American Indian and Alaska Native researchers, academics, and graduate students interested and trained in education research. These individuals have important skills and perspectives to bring to bear on educational and research issues related to Native communities. Federal agencies should encourage the continued growth in numbers and in the levels of knowledge and expertise of this group to help ensure the availability of researchers who can demonstrate an understanding of the cultural contexts of the proposed research agenda, and agencies should encourage Native researchers to participate actively in these studies. For example, a research structure and approach that make good sense in many situations is to have local Native researchers conducting research within their own tribal settings as part of multi-site, single-design studies administered nationally. Such a structure ensures sensitivity to local culture and conditions and can permit valid inter-tribal comparisons.

Research quality should receive a high priority. The Federal Interagency Task Force's Comprehensive Policy Statement on Indian Education calls for "studies related to the educational performance and progress of American Indian and Alaska Native students that are of high quality..." (Federal Interagency Task Force, 2001, p. 4). High quality requires adhering to accepted research standards and, in cross-cultural research, a key standard is knowledge of the culture and language of the groups whose institutions are being studied. Contractors and grantees conducting research proposed by this agenda should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of American Indian and Alaska Native culture(s) and languages(s) wherever appropriate. In judging proposals and evaluating research on American Indian and Alaska Native education, adherence to accepted research standards and a demonstration of an understanding of cultural contexts of the proposed research should both be weighted heavily.

Generalizable research findings are needed. American Indians and Alaska Natives have been studied extensively by Native and non-Native researchers using ethnographic techniques suitable for small concentrated populations, but what aspects of those studies may be generalized is not clear. This is the case because of differences between and among tribes, villages, eras, living conditions, and other local characteristics. Single case ethnographies can

provide valuable information about behaviors and outcomes within a specific context, but our overall level of knowledge may be better served by multi-site studies. The key concern is not the nature of the data collection method, but the power, precision, and generalizability of the sample. When "case studies" are conducted of single entities or a small number of them, whether schools, communities, or reservations, they should use methods to ensure that the findings are valid and generalizable.

A clearinghouse focused on Native education is needed. Currently, the results of research related to American Indian and Alaska Native education are gathered and summarized by the Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools (CRESS), operated by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory. The visibility of their Native education activities needs to be increased, which could be accomplished through simply adding a parallel, "virtual" clearinghouse devoted to Native education. Such a move would send a clear signal to American Indians and Alaska Natives that their education issues are recognized as being important and are not simply a subset of the issues faced by students in rural or small schools.

The clearinghouse on Native education should also be assigned responsibility to identify baseline data on outcomes and track changes. Some of this would involve serving as a data repository for national assessments and large-scale studies, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress, Census reports, and ongoing surveys by the Indian Health Service, the Office of Juvenile Justice, and others to permit one-stop access by researchers to basic information. The clearinghouse should also be proactive in seeking information from non-federal sources, such as state assessment results, about the outcome status of Natives. The data from all sources would be disseminated through digests and other clearinghouse publications and by posting data and linkages to data sets on the world wide web. The web site created by the working group, i.e., www.indianeduresearch.net, and now managed by CRESS, could be used for this purpose.

Research Priorities for American Indian and Alaska Native Education

The priority research topics are presented in this section organized within six general categories. The categories are (1) educational outcomes of American Indian and Alaska Native students; (2) Native language and culture; (3) teachers, schools, and educational resources; (4) American Indian and Alaska Native students with special needs; (5) early childhood educational needs of Native children, and (6) educational standards and assessments. The current status of research related to each general category, based on the literature review and other working group activities, is briefly summarized first. Then the priority research topics are listed along with examples of several study questions. The study question examples are there to illustrate the range of specific questions that could be raised for the research topics; they should not be viewed as precluding finding answers to other study questions related to the research questions.[2] Several suggested studies conclude the discussion for each category.

[2] Many more possible study questions are presented on a topic-by-topic basis on the working group's web site, i.e., www.indianeduresearch.net.

Educational Outcomes of American Indian and Alaska Native Students

The literature suggests that, on average, American Indian and Alaska Native students tend to demonstrate lower achievement levels than members of other groups. NAEP results for fourth graders show that American Indians and Alaskan Natives score below basic levels in reading, math, and history. Other differences exist between the American Indian and Alaska Native population and the general population in educational attainment. For example, while approximately 75 percent of the total population had a high school degree or even more education in 1990, this proportion was approximately 66 percent for American Indians and Alaska Natives (Census Bureau, 1990). American Indian and Alaska Native students are also less frequently college bound, and their SAT and ACT scores are lower than national norms (Swisher & Tippeconnic, 1999, p. 297).

Several factors can be advanced to account for these differences. Poverty rates among American Indians and Alaska Natives are higher than among the general population; in female-headed households, for example, the poverty rate was 50 percent for this population, while it was 31 percent for the entire population in 1989 (Census Bureau, 1990). Providing educational services in rural areas is subject to numerous problems including poor access to services, limited resources, transportation problems, and under-utilization of existing resources. Moreover, because most American Indian and Alaska Native students attend public schools where they may be in the minority, rather than those supported by the BIA, their cultural and linguistic differences are frequently overlooked. Indeed, according to much of the literature, the central issue underlying the educational disparity is the poor fit between the tribal or village culture of Native American students and the western culture of school systems. This pervades many aspects of education, and can include culturally biased curriculum, teaching methods, and assessments and tests.

More importantly, researchers also have found that American Indian and Alaska Native students can compare favorably with the members of other groups. Students appear to do particularly well in situations where the students' culture is valued, or where Native parents are actively involved. Two studies illustrate these points.

> LeVeque (1994) conducted a two-year case study of Native student educational attainment in an urban public school and found that Native students did as well or better than the district mean on standardized tests, their dropout rate was only 10 percent, participation on the honor roll was 30 percent, 90 percent graduated from high school, and at least 36 percent of the students pursued postsecondary degrees after graduating. Although the sample is too small and restricted to generalize beyond the case, the patterns were consistent within the school and were also supported by related findings. For example, Native students were found to participate equally in the regular school programming received by every student, there were no observable differences in patterns of interaction with school personnel, overall behavior was indistinguishable from other non-Native students, and none of the Native students spoke their Native language. One of the key findings in LeVeque's study was the notion of parental choice. Parents of Native students who succeeded in the largely Anglo community "choose" to assimilate and adapt to mainstream standards. These same parents were also actively involved in developing cultural programs that "positively identified Native students as Native Americans and assisted parents in recapturing and

redefining what it meant to be a Native American in an off-reservation setting" (p. 18). Because of the limitations of this study, it should be replicated on a much larger sample of students across schools in several settings.

Huff (1997) cited a study comparing tribally controlled, BIA, and public schools. Comparing the educational aspirations of high school seniors at tribal schools, BIA schools, and public schools, 74 percent of the tribal schools' seniors expected to attend college at some time in the future, while just 68 percent of the seniors at BIA and public schools planned to go to college. Moreover, tribal school students scored higher on achievement tests than the BIA students. "Indian-controlled schools succeed because they function with the culture, norms, and traditions of Indian communities and subsequently engage parents as formidable allies in the educational mission" (Huff, 1997, p. 53).

Several themes emerged from reviewing the literature, discussing the issues with experts in the field, and considering the range of suggested research questions. These include:

- Educational outcomes should be considered broadly, encompassing such traditional outcome measures as academic achievement and educational attainment, but also special education placement rates, secondary education program enrollments, community participation, substance abuse and delinquency rates, Native language and English language competencies, health and fitness levels, and other measures of the outcomes of American education. Whenever practical, representatives of individual Native communities and parents should play significant decision making roles in determining which outcomes are most important to them, and they should be involved in determining which outcomes to measure in evaluations or research projects.

- By tracking measures of educational outcomes over a two-decade period, it may be possible to establish trends that will, in turn, permit more accurate attribution of effects between general societal changes and specific programs and reforms. After all, school-based formal education is not the only thing going on in the lives of Native children, their families, and their tribes or villages. The past two decades have seen changes in communications, employment opportunities, residential options, public and individual health issues, and many other areas that probably have affected educational outcomes.

- Comparisons of educational outcomes within the population of American Indian and Alaska Native students may be very useful. For example, comparisons could be based on school governance, proportion of Native students in a school, urban or rural residence, tribal affiliation, etc. Because of the uniqueness of the American Indian and Alaska Native population in America, comparisons to other racial/ethnic groups may not have much value, but comparisons on the basis of other demographic variables, such as poverty levels, may help explain the outcome patterns noted for Native students. It is important to know how American Indian and Alaska Native students rate on measures of educational outcomes, but it is also important to understand the reasons why some of them rate higher than others. Some of those reasons probably include differences among individuals, such as physical health, aptitude for and interest in schooling, and living conditions, opportunities and life experiences. Other

reasons certainly may include educational programs, school conditions, levels of teacher experiences, and instructional resources.

- Substantial resources have been devoted to developing and implementing new education programs, reform initiatives, teacher-training programs, assessment systems, and other changes that have improving students' status on educational outcomes among their goals. Short-term gains are frequently noted, but often the promising practices that appear to produce them are not evaluated over the long term. Further, educational approaches that look good on paper or in lab settings may never be implemented as designed, so they are never really evaluated at all. Finally, even when they are adequately assessed, there are few mechanisms for efficiently transplanting the effective practices to other settings, especially to isolated or rural schools.

Priority Research Topics

The table on the following page presents four priority research topics for this general category of educational outcomes for Native students. It is important to reiterate that these topics are at about the same level of priority, i.e., none is inherently at a higher priority level than another. For each research topic, several examples of possible study questions are provided. The examples of study questions are not meant to limit or define the scope of the priority topics, rather they suggest the range of study questions offered by informants throughout this project.

Suggested Studies

We need to know much more about the current status of Native students on a range of outcome measures and about the individual, family, community, classroom, and school factors that explain differences among students. Such information is essential to finding effective solutions to recurrent shortfalls by some students on some measures. The studies suggested in this section would help find those solutions by addressing the priority research topics.

- The Department of Education should conduct a large-scale study of Native education. The study would gather data from Native students, their families, and their schools, and the study would place those data within the contexts of the communities in which the students live. The purpose of the study would be to describe the educational experience of Native students in sufficient depth and with sufficient scope to permit comparisons among students of different tribes and different demographic and cultural backgrounds. While it is not realistic to expect representative samples of students from each federally recognized tribe, it is possible to structure a sample that would ensure adequate coverage of 8-10 major regional tribal groupings with roughly similar cultural heritages, e.g., Southeastern, Northern Plains, Pacific Northwest, Alaskan Aleuts, etc. Such a sample also would ensure adequate coverage of BIA and tribal schools, public schools with Native enrollments of 25 percent or larger, and Native-focused public charter or private schools.

Educational Outcomes for American Indian and Alaska Native Students

Priority Research Topics	Examples of Possible Study Questions
Status of American Indian and Alaska Native students in terms of academic achievement, and status changes in the last two decades.	What are levels of achievement on standardized assessments (e.g., NAEP) for American Indian and Alaska Native students by grade level/age, state, type of school (public, tribal, BIA), and tribe, and how have those levels changed over the last 10 years? 20 years?
	What factors influence American Indian and Alaska Native student achievement (personal characteristics, mobility rates, attendance rates, language proficiencies, test factors, school programs, support services, etc.)?
Status of American Indian and Alaska Native students in terms of educational attainment, and status changes in the last two decades.	What are levels of attainment for American Indian and Alaska Native students by state, type of school (public, tribal, BIA) and tribe, and how have those levels changed over the last 10 years? 20 years?
	What is the drop out rate among American Indian and Alaska Native students, and what factors (personal characteristics, mobility rates, attendance rates, language proficiencies, grade retention rates, programs, support services, etc.) are contributing to the drop out rate?
	What are rates of postsecondary matriculation and graduation for American Indian and Alaska Native students by state, type of secondary school (public, tribal, BIA), field of postsecondary study, type of postsecondary institution, and tribe?
	What factors influence American Indian and Alaska Native students' educational attainments and graduation rates (personal characteristics, family characteristics, motivation, mobility rates, elementary-secondary grade retention, high school program, postsecondary field of study, programs, support services, etc.)?
Status of American Indian and Alaska Native students on other education-related outcomes, such as job skills and readiness, health and fitness, substance abuse, etc.	What is the status of Indian and Alaska Native students on health-related measures such as teenage pregnancy rates, substance abuse, participation in sports or active recreation, etc.?
	What are delinquency rates for American Indian/Alaska Native students, and how have those rates changed over the last 10 years? 20 years?
	To what extent do American Indian/Alaska Native students participate actively in the lives of their communities? What are levels of civic awareness and participation?
Best practices and reform models that have been demonstrated to be effective in enhancing academic achievement, attainment and/or other education-related outcomes of American Indian and Alaska Native students.	How is student achievement affected when curriculum and instruction are guided by locally authenticated, aligned content standards and student performance assessments incorporate high expectations based on tribal history and culture?
	What are effective practices for reducing the American Indian and Alaska Native drop out rate and for serving those whom have already dropped out?
	What drug and alcohol prevention programs or counseling services are successful in decreasing failure and drop out rates among Native populations?

Students would be sampled by classroom in the sampled schools, and they could be selected from grades 4, 8, and 12 (the same grades used by the National Assessment of Educational Progress) to gain a rich cross-sectional perspective. Data from schools would include information about teacher backgrounds and other characteristics, instructional methods and resources, family support and involvement, and Native-focused activities and curriculum. In addition to asking parents about attitudes toward schooling in general and about their children's schools in particular, parents would also be asked about their mobility and reasons for moving, language backgrounds and patterns of use, attitudes about the importance of preserving their language and culture, and the goals they see for their children. Community-level information would include availability of informal Native education opportunities as well as basic economic and demographic data. Analysis would be both within level, e.g., relationships among gender, course-taking patterns, and educational aspirations, and across levels, e.g., school-level support of parent activities and students' attitudes toward school.

- The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which is supported by the National Center on Education Statistics (NCES) is generally recognized as the single best source of information at a national level of what our children know. Native students, when their results are broken out at all, usually have a lower average rank on the scales than students from other racial ethnic groups. Several re-analyses of NAEP would provide more useful information than those average scale scores: (1) information about the distribution of Native students on the scales focusing on how many score in the top range, with subsequent work to identify the high scorers' distinguishing characteristics; (2) how the scale score distribution has varied through time and across subjects; (3) how scale scores vary based on teachers' ratings of the student's English-language competencies; school-level measures of poverty (e.g., free and reduced price lunch), and similar school and student variables included in the NAEP analysis files. Another useful study would be to conduct an item analysis of NAEP reading or other content tests to determine their potential validity as measures of educational achievement for students raised in multicultural environments.

- With a specific oversampling of the Indian population funded through a supplement provided by the Office of Indian Education, the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort will provide a valuable resource for understanding the relationships among health and nutritional issues, family characteristics, and early educational experiences (e.g., Head Start) and readiness for and initial success in school. The data sets from this NCES study will begin to be available in 2003. Until then, the Kindergarten cohort baseline data sets are available including restricted files that explore special education issues and the effects of participation in Head Start. Although the Kindergarten cohort data sets do not include an augmented sample of the Indian population, they will provide useful data on high-poverty, rural populations. Both cohorts would be excellent sources for graduate student and faculty research and analysis grants.

- Research needs to be conducted to identify proactively the characteristics and experiences that contribute to the academic success of Native students. One possibility is to analyze data from NCES' National Postsecondary Student Aid Study

(NPSAS), which contains some information about background characteristics as well as data about how the students are paying for college. Although the number of Native students each year is too small for detailed analysis, it is possible to pool Native students from several of the surveys and compare their characteristics to those of Native students overall. Similar analyses could be conducted with another national survey conducted annually – the American Freshman survey -- by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California-Los Angeles. This survey collects outcomes data such as grades, SAT scores, and study habits, along with financial aid and family background data. Another possibility is to conduct intensive surveys with American Indians and Alaska Natives who are successful, with appropriate case controls or comparison groups. For example, surveys could be conducted with members of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) or with members of the National Indian Education Association. While these intensive surveys cannot be used to answer general questions about success in school, they could provide insights about whether the characteristics or experiences that correlate with success as measured by membership in professional organizations have changed through time and whether some of those characteristics can be made part of the educational experiences of Native children.

- The reasons for dropping out of school can be explored through the data sets of the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS:88), which began with a cohort of 8th graders in 1988. Follow up surveys for this NCES study were conducted in both grades 10 and 12, and special efforts were made to track school leavers, both those who moved to other schools and also those who dropped out. The dropouts were administered a questionnaire focused on their reasons for dropping out. The numbers of Native students in the baseline and first two follow up surveys are large enough for detailed analysis of student-level, family, and school data in a search for the reasons for dropping out of school.

Native Language and Culture

Probably no subject in this field generates more interest and discussion than the idea of structuring education for American Indian and Alaska Native students around the concepts and language that lie at the core of tribal or village culture. This might involve much more than adding an instructional module here or there or providing high school students with a Native language elective, rather it may require treating formal and informal education holistically. Research generally supports the premise that students do well when their culture and language are incorporated into their education.

There appear to be at least two approaches in the views of educators and parents about the proper role of Native language and culture in the school. The first perspective, which generally appears in situations where the tribe or village controls the school and all or nearly all the students are local, is that the tribe's or village's language and culture ought to be pervasive and structure the overall educational experience. This perspective does not exclude having the students master English or the subject matter that is expected of students in majority culture schools, but it puts a premium on local ways of knowing. The second perspective appears where Native students are not in the majority in the schools and Native parents are only one strand among the voices seeking to shape the school's approach. In this second perspective, the objectives appear to be more limited although no less important; that is, the school should respect the cultures of its Native students, support and promote the search by Native students to understand who they are in a multicultural world, and provide opportunities for those students and the students from other backgrounds to learn about Native languages and cultures. The goal in this second perspective is to increase or maintain the students' attachments to their own culture and, thereby, strengthen their sense of self-worth and personal value. A corollary goal of the second perspective is to teach non-Indian students about Indian cultures and history, and to instill respect for these cultures.

Researchers have not focused on long-term outcomes for Native students who are educated in situations where their languages and cultures structure their overall educational experiences. This is largely because there are very few situations of Native language and culture-based education that have been in place for long, and also because such longitudinal studies can be very expensive and difficult to manage. Neither has there been sufficient research on how to undertake the reconfiguration of the education system that would be needed to reach the point where Native culture and language are at the base of education, particularly in the face of the opposition of some parents, educators, and others in the community. Further, although Native culture may have some elements that are both widespread across tribes and villages and that also set American Indians and Alaska Natives apart from white culture, it is not certain which of those common elements are most important educationally, particularly in settings, such as urban schools, where children from many tribes and many non-Native cultures may share the same classroom.

A renewed focus on American Indian and Alaska Native self-determination has resulted in a resurgence of political efforts to reestablish the role of traditional ways of living and communicating in the educational system (Association of Community Tribal Schools, 1996; National Indian School Boards Association and Bureau Effective Schools Team, 1998; Tippeconnic, 1999; Yazzie, 2000). Two notable publications in the early 1990s -- Indian Nations at Risk: An Educational Strategy for Action (October, 1991) and the Final Report of

the White House Conference on Indian Education (May, 1992) -- identify as a national priority the need to retain Native language and culture as central elements in educating Native youth (Demmert, 1994). Despite those political judgments, Deyhle and Swisher (1997) maintain that, until recently, most education research has actually contributed to efforts to do away with the application of Native language(s) and culture(s) in schools and Native communities.

The political sentiments have had some research support, although much of the research has been limited in applicability because it has relied on small or unique samples. Willeto (1999) documents that the retention of traditional cultural traits does not hurt students' chances for academic success. In her study of 451 Navajo youth in 11 schools on the Navajo reservation, she found that students who participated in Navajo traditional activities and spoke the Navajo language did as well academically in school as those who were more assimilated and participated less. Specifically, she found no support "for the argument that traditionalism had a negative effect on academic success of Navajo young people" (p. 13). Her findings echoed those of Cummins (1996), who reviewed the literature on minority education and found that students with a strong sense of cultural and personal identity were more likely to have academic success. Cleary and Peacock (1998) interviewed 60 teachers of Indian students and interpreted these interviews as confirming the conclusion that traditional culture has a positive role, rather than a negative or no role, in developing academically successful Indian students.

There is also some research evidence that language and cultural concerns can affect non-academic learning outcomes for American Indian and Alaska Native students that extend beyond the classroom to have a positive influence on the community. No single study has had sufficient size and scope to be individually persuasive; however, when taken as a whole, the studies suggest that when the schooling process promotes language and culture, it can be one of several important components that enable American Indians and Alaska Natives to foster the personal growth necessary to engage in sustainable community and economic development (Edwards et al., 1994; Freeman et al., 1995; Pewewardy, 1998). Further, these studies have provided support for tribal school personnel and Native community leaders to advocate for Native language and culture as being properly at the heart of preparing youth to lead productive and meaningful lives (Batchelder & Markel, 1997).

There was anecdotal evidence presented at the National Research Agenda Conference and during the focus groups that not all Native parents support the view that schools have a role in teaching Native language and promoting Native culture. These parents reportedly believe that devoting scarce school time to those topics means less time is spent by their children on learning what they will need to know to survive in the white man's world. How widespread this contrary perspective actually is and under what circumstances it arises are unknown, but the perspective does appear to be the view of a minority.

In summary, while there is some evidence that educational reform in Indian country benefits from the use of culturally appropriate curriculum and instruction oriented to meet the needs of Native students, much of the literature describes small studies that are not generalizable, and too little has been done in the field to avoid potential bias from publishing only the good news. Further, the studies of language and culture are often conducted without looking for alternative explanations and the relationships of curriculum change to other factors. Despite the possible benefits of language and culture in school reform, it is unlikely

any measurable impact will be made over time unless teachers are adequately trained, quality curricula are developed, and sufficient funding is secured to develop sustainable programming (Demmert, 1994).

Several themes emerged from reviewing the literature, discussing the issues with experts in the field, and considering the range of suggested research questions. These include:

- There is not a single, commonly shared view as to what is meant by "relevant language and culture." Different individuals may have very different views about "how much" or "which elements" is necessary to create a culturally relevant learning environment, and those individuals' perspectives may vary based on the situations faced by a given set of children.

- It is particularly important to ask whose culture or whose language is to be the base of a culturally relevant learning environment. There are hundreds of tribes and villages within the country and, while they may share many cultural characteristics, the language differences among them can be great. For American Indian or Alaska Native students who attend school on their reservations or in their own villages, the issue is how to balance their own language and culture with that of the larger society. For American Indian and Alaska Native students attending schools off the reservation and especially in cities, the issue expands to how to incorporate languages and cultural themes appropriately into an English-language, majority culture situation. This becomes more complicated when several distinct tribes or villages are represented and even more with the presence of international cultures in the school.

- In the dispersed system of American public schools, it is not always clear where power or authority resides in different situations. Individual schools, local districts, state education agencies, courts at various levels, and agencies of the federal government have overlapping responsibilities. For schools on reservations, however, the predominant questions of power and authority revolve around shifting notions of tribal sovereignty and the nature of the trust relationship of the tribe with the federal government. The past few decades have seen tribes gaining more power over their schools, and one key result has been an upsurge in interest in reformulating the educational experiences in tribal schools based on tribal culture and language.

- Some Native languages are no longer used, and their last speakers may have died. Others may have only a few speakers remaining, and the languages are primarily used in rituals. Still others, of course, thrive with thousands of speakers. An emerging issue is, when a tribe has sanctioned the effort to seek to revitalize its language, determining what is an appropriate role for schools to take in helping bring it back to life. Only when that issue is addressed is it appropriate to ask about what methods in schools are effective in doing so.

Priority Research Topics

The table on the following page presents two priority research topics for this general category of Native language and culture. It is important to reiterate that these topics are at about the same level of priority, i.e., neither is inherently at a higher priority level than the

Native Language and Culture

Priority Research Topics	Examples of Possible Study Questions
Effects on educational outcomes for students and schools of incorporating American Indian and Alaska Native language and culture into the school curriculum.	What are the various meanings of the concept "relevant language and culture" and who defines the meaning within or for schools?
	What is the status of the incorporation of Native languages and culture into American Indian and Alaska Native education?
	How many American Indian/Alaska Native students speak their Native language in the home, by grade level, type of school, tribe, community characteristics, etc.?
	How many American Indian/Alaska Native students receive at least some of their instruction in school in their Native language, by grade level, type of school, state, tribe, community characteristics, etc.?
	How does the use of Native language and culture within the school influence reservation and off-reservation American Indian and Alaska Native youth in their educational attainment, self-perception, social and cultural identity, and career choices?
	What effect does the implementation of discrete Native studies and language curriculum units have on American Indian/Alaska Native students' academic performance, attendance, and self-esteem?
Best practices demonstrated as effective for implementing a culturally relevant learning environment, and identification of factors that serve as barriers or facilitators for implementation.	What have we learned from the experience of the Maori in New Zealand and Native Hawaiians in establishing language and cultural immersion programs, and is it appropriate to generalize the information?
	What are the best ways to incorporate culturally relevant (and that take American Indian/Alaska Native diversity into account) materials and methods into off-reservation schools?
	What are effective approaches for providing cultural support to American Indian and Alaska Native students in multi-ethnic, multi-cultural schools?
	What are effective approaches for use by non-Native teachers for utilizing Native language and culture as part of their daily instruction?
	What are effective approaches for overcoming the barriers to incorporating Native language and culture in the classroom? How do those approaches differ depending on school governance, local history, and other factors?

other. For each research topic, several examples of possible study questions are provided. The examples of study questions are not meant to limit or define the scope of the priority topics, rather they suggest the range of study questions offered by informants throughout this project.

Suggested Studies

To understand how schools have responded to requests either to place Native language and culture at the heart of the educational experience or to demonstrate support for and respect for them calls for large-scale descriptive studies to capture the big picture and also for more focused studies that look at a relative handful of communities and schools.

- The large-scale survey suggested in the discussion of studies for educational outcomes also could gather substantial information to address priority research topics related to language and culture. In particular, that study would identify the types and pervasiveness of Native language and culture in the curriculum and permit correlational analysis with school and community characteristics and with Native parents' attitudes toward and involvement with their children's education. Particularly interesting analyses would look at the relationships among tribal homogeneity of the student population, the racial/ethnic characteristics of the teachers, and the extent of Native language and culture pervasiveness in the learning environment.

- Comparative case studies of schools with large Native enrollments would permit detailed understanding of the dynamics of creating and maintaining community/tribal support for Native language and culture initiatives in the school. A series of case studies, using a common research design to permit cross-case analysis, would look at a sample of BIA schools, tribal schools, public schools with 25 percent or higher Native enrollments, and Native-focused private or charter schools. The school sample also could be divided to represent elementary, secondary, and k-12 schools. In addition to observing classes and other activities, and interviewing teachers and school and district administrators, the researchers would be responsible for gathering local data on student performance, reviewing local policies and agreements, and meeting with parents and tribal/community leaders. One outcome of this study would be a set of models or options for other schools to consider, and a logical follow up to this study would be to fund the replication of particularly promising models and conduct formative research of start up and implementation at the new sites.

- There is continuing value in understanding particular events and situations where tribes, villages, or other Native communities seek to reform their educational system. Focused case studies or even random assignment research designs could be employed to understand the local barriers and facilitators of change and the effects of new initiatives. Such studies should be undertaken with the full cooperation of the affected community and should ideally incorporate local Native researchers whenever possible. Such studies could prove particularly valuable if reform efforts by several different tribes were studied using parallel methods during the same time period.

Teachers, Schools and Educational Resources

What happens to young people as students ultimately depends on their encounters with their schools, individual teachers, the curriculum and materials, and how those encounters relate to their own capabilities, interests, motivations, and experiences. There is little disagreement that many American Indian and Alaska Native children, whether they live on reservations, in small villages, or in major urban areas, attend schools that lack resources, are in need of repair, and are overcrowded. Many of the teachers of these children are not from their own communities, and large numbers are inexperienced and teach in the schools for only a year or two. According to data from NCES' Schools and Staffing Survey, 1993-94, fewer than 0.8 percent of the nation's public school teachers are American Indians or Alaska Natives (compared to about 1.1 percent of the students), and they are less likely than white or African American teachers to have advanced degrees or certificates and are more likely to be in their first ten years of teaching.

Native students in small rural secondary schools may have very few electives or advanced classes available to them. For example, according to transcript data summarized as part of NCES' 1998 High School Transcript study, Native high school students earned fewer Carnegie units than members of any other racial/ethnic group in mathematics, science, and foreign languages. The more advanced the classes (e.g., mathematics beyond algebra or science beyond general introductions), the greater the disparities. Further, commercially available classroom materials are likely to reflect lives far removed culturally and economically from the ones they experience on their reservation or village.

Teachers, Native as well as non-Native, are frequently blamed for the comparatively lower performances and attainments of Native students, although they are rarely credited for the successes achieved by most American Indian and Alaska Native children. Among the criticisms aimed at teachers in comments made at the national research agenda conference and during the focus groups are that many of them are non-Native, they are often relatively young and inexperienced, they do not stay at the school for long, they have little contact with the local Native community, they usually do not understand Native culture in general and the culture and language of the children they are teaching in particular, and they hold negative stereotypes about the capabilities of Native learners.

Recruiting and retaining teachers to teach in rural American Indian and Alaska Native communities is a long-standing problem. Inexperienced teachers and teachers faced with new situations need time to learn and adjust, and the high rate of teacher turnover in reservation schools contributes to educational problems in these schools. In addition, staff turnover creates a loss of institutional memory that can help maintain successful teaching practices and prevent the repetition of past mistakes. A similar problem exists with reservation school administrators. The scope of the problem can be seen from Plank's (1993) study of Navajo schools where he reported a yearly teacher turnover rate ranging from a low of 25 percent to a high of 57 percent, with 77 percent of the new teachers getting no orientation to Navajo education. Self-reported data from BIA schools suggest that teachers in reservation schools have made significant strides in the last few years. For example, between the 1996-97 and 1999-2000 school years, the percentage of teachers who were technologically "proficient" or "advanced" grew from 39 to 67 percent (Office of Indian Education Programs, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2001).

Widely accepted strategies to improve American Indian and Alaska Native student learning outcomes include increasing the number of Native teachers and increasing the number of teachers, Native as well as non-Native, who are properly trained to meet the needs of Native students (Banks, 1999; Indian Nations at Risk Task Force Report, 1991; Pavel, 1995, 1999b; U.S. Department of Education, 1995, 1997; White House Conference on Indian Education, 1992). As is the case for most areas of research on Native education, most of the studies that have been conducted about teachers have involved small samples and possibly unique situations. Nonetheless, the studies tend to express some consensus. Teachers' knowledge of Native language and culture can positively influence schools, students, and communities (Friesen & Orr, 1998). A properly trained teacher could develop trusting relationships with students (Paradise, 1994) and make the difference between promoting negative stereotypes and portraying realistic and empowering views of Native peoples (Brophy, 1999). Based on their experiences with the University of Alaska's Cross-Cultural Education Development Program, Lipka et al. (1998) recommend increasing the number of minority teachers, helping them form support groups, involving elders and other community members in those groups, and establishing ties to other groups, including indigenous educators elsewhere and even to mainstream teachers once the local community has a clear educational agenda mapped out.

The increasing demand for but very short supply of Native teachers requires a concerted effort similar to addressing the need for more minority teachers nationwide (Lewis, 1996). One way this need is being addressed is through a new program funded through the Office of Indian Education's (OIE), U.S. Department of Education, professional development program to provide support for Native Americans to become certified teachers. Through OIE's "Indian Teacher Corps" initiative, 1,000 Indian teachers over a five-year period will be trained to take positions in schools that serve schools with significant Indian student populations.

It is important to continue to investigate programs that prepare teachers to improve the learning outcomes of American Indian and Alaska Native youth. Too often, however, the need for more and better-trained teachers can be accepted as a panacea that does not address the systemic structures that create unacceptable classroom environments for Native students and their teachers. Both Native and non-Native teachers probably would benefit from educational reform that encompasses the need to address systemic issues within the school, community, and society.

Several themes emerged from reviewing the literature, discussing the issues with experts in the field, and considering the range of suggested research questions. These include:

- Turnover appears to be high among teachers and administrators in schools serving large proportions of American Indian and Alaska Native students. It is important to understand the factors that account for this (e.g., geographic isolation, relative pay, self-perceptions of ineffectiveness, school resources, etc.), so that strategies to counter high turnover will be correctly targeted. It is also important to investigate further the relationships of staff turnover to student outcomes, since much of the presumed negative effects are based on just a few small studies.

- Recent initiatives to expand the number of American Indian and Alaska Native teachers should be observed carefully not only to understand better the incentives that work to draw new individuals into the profession, but what it takes subsequently for them to stay in the profession and in the schools that need them.

- Many teachers in schools serving large proportions of American Indian and Alaska Native students are not from the communities they serve. Although teacher-training processes in general are well documented, the specific processes through which teachers are trained to work with children from Native communities are not. Further, there is little research on how new, non-Native teachers can be supported and mentored effectively once they are in their schools.

- The conditions faced by schools on or near reservations or Alaskan villages parallel those faced by many small, resource-poor, rural schools. It is important to ensure that the general problems faced by small, rural schools in terms of programs and resources are considered, especially for the schools that enroll large proportions of American Indian or Alaska Native students.

- The school may be seen by many Native Americans as an alien institution forced upon them by the majority society with assimilation as its goal. For large numbers of American Indians, their experiences with school involved being uprooted from their families to be sent to a boarding school where their language and customs were denigrated. Against this backdrop, schools on or near reservations often find it difficult to get parents involved in the school or the formal school-based education of their children.

- More work is needed to identify the characteristics of urban schools serving American Indian and Alaska Native students that are related to achievement and attainment. In particular, researchers should look at charter schools that are established for Native students as well as at other public or private schools with high (i.e., 25 percent or higher) Native enrollments.

Priority Research Topics

The table on the following page presents three priority research topics for this general category of teachers, schools, and educational resources. It is important to reiterate that these topics are at about the same level of priority, i.e., none is inherently at a higher priority level than another. For each research topic, several examples of possible study questions are provided. The examples of study questions are not meant to limit or define the scope of the priority topics, rather they suggest the range of study questions offered by informants throughout this project.

Suggested Studies

The priority study topics in this area revolve around teachers and generating effective parent involvement. For teachers, the issues are recruitment, retention, and training. The large-scale survey suggested to address some of the priority study topics for educational

Teachers, Schools, and Educational Resources

Priority Research Topics	Examples of Possible Study Questions
Effective methods for developing, recruiting, and retaining qualified teachers for schools with large American Indian or Alaska Native enrollments.	What are the characteristics of teachers in reservation schools and in off-reservation schools with high enrollments of American Indian and Alaska Native students?
	Which methods are most effective for recruiting and retaining qualified teachers to work at schools with high American Indian and Alaska Native student enrollments?
	How can states and districts support and motivate members of the Native community, particularly those now serving as classroom aides, to enter teacher-training programs?
	In what circumstances, if any, should teacher qualifications differ for Native and non-Native teachers in schools serving large proportions of American Indian and Alaska Native students?
Effective and replicable teaching approaches, models, etc. for enhancing outcomes for American Indian and Alaska Native students.	What aspects of pre-service and in-service development activities are most effective in preparing and supporting teachers in working with American Indian and Alaska Native students?
	What instructional practices have been demonstrated to be effective in helping American Indian and Alaska Native students achieve academically in reservation, off-reservation, and urban schools?
	What are the relationships between levels and types of resources available in schools serving American Indian and Alaska Native students (by school governance and locale) on staff stability, parent and community involvement, and other school and student level outcomes?
	To what extent and for what purposes are distance/remote learning methods used in schools serving American Indian and Alaska Native students, by grade level, type of school, community characteristics, and tribe?
Best practices for promoting positive parent or community involvement in schools serving American Indian and Alaska Native students.	To what extent are parents of American Indian and Alaska Native students involved in their children's schools, and how does the extent of parent involvement vary by grade level, school governance, percentage Native enrollment, teacher, administrator, and community characteristics, and tribal differences?
	To what extent are American Indian and Alaska Native communities involved in their children's schools and how does the extent of community involvement vary by grade level, school governance, percentage Native enrollment, teacher, administrator, and community characteristics, and tribal differences?
	What are some barriers that limit collaboration between schools and community based organizations? What are some factors that enhance and strengthen collaboration?
	How do the various governance entities responsible for the education of American Indian/Alaska Native students, particularly in tribal or BIA schools, work together?

outcomes and Native language and culture would also be useful for this category. Other suggested studies involve case studies to describe best practices and reanalyses of U.S. Department of Education data sets.

- The characteristics, educational backgrounds and other professional qualifications, experience, training, etc. for teachers can be addressed through a large-scale descriptive study. In part, the Indian School Teacher Questionnaire used in the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) provides much of this information, but without the additional information from students and families, the relationships between teacher variables and other variables cannot be explored.

- An ongoing concern is the quality and content of pre-service training provided by schools of education to prospective teachers. A series of case studies of schools of education in states with large numbers and large percentages of Native students (e.g., Alaska, Arizona, Montana, etc.) would assess the content of training related to understanding the cultures and languages of Natives in the state, the requirements for learning that material, and how those factors related to state requirements for certification and district hiring practices. The schools of education would be selected to be broadly representative of the institutions in the affected states, and data collection would include policy and requirements reviews, course content reviews and class observation, and interviews with faculty, students, and a small sample of teacher-recruitment personnel in school districts with high Native enrollment percentages.

- It is easy to say there should be more Native teachers. The statement begs the questions, however, of how to interest talented Native high school students to consider and prepare for postsecondary education, how to help students in poverty pay for that education, how to expand support for tribal colleges and universities, and how to support cultural minorities within large institutions. Further, once a Native teacher begins her/his career, it is essential to find out what districts and schools do to retain that teacher. One approach to answering these questions is to conduct a retrospective survey of current and former Native teachers to learn their motivations and supports. Another is to identify school districts that appear to be effective in promoting the post secondary option for their Native students and/or in hiring and retaining Native teachers and then conduct open-ended interviews to identify hypotheses about best practices that could subsequently be tested using more focused methods.

- As a general rule, parental involvement in their children's education and their schools tends to be associated with more success on outcome measures for students and for their schools. For Native parents, especially American Indians, however, schools have not always been seen as community institutions, and some parents do not feel welcome. Further, because of the shortcomings of the formal school-based education received by many Native parents, they are not in position to help their children or model behaviors. Through the large-scale descriptive study, schools that report being successful in promoting active parental involvement (and where the parents tend to agree), should be selected for case studies to describe their methods.

- The Office of Indian Education is currently conducting the "Pilot Sites Initiative," in which resource needs are being identified in nine schools. As needs are identified,

agencies that can help meet the needs are involved. It would be useful to collate the information across sites so that overall resource needs and the abilities of agencies to meet them can be estimated. To refine the estimates of needs, national data could be used either from the large-scale descriptive study proposed in prior sections or NCES' Schools and Staffing Survey.

American Indian and Alaska Native Students with Special Needs

American Indian and Alaska Native students appear to be over represented in special education and compensatory/remedial classes and under represented in classes for gifted or talented students. The reasons for these patterns may include inappropriate assessment tools, factors related to the nature of the schools attended by American Indian and Alaska Native students, prejudice or other unjustified expectations, learning styles of American Indian and Alaska Native students, a higher incidence of disability, or others. Because special-program assignments that are made early in schooling may have significant effects on decisions made later by and for students, it is important to understand the representation patterns more fully.

Stone and Gridley (1991) studied test bias and found a significant possibility of over- and under-prediction of academic achievement for American Indian and Alaska Native students, suggesting that Native students might be referred to special education programs at proportionally higher rates than white students as a result of misclassification. Wright, Hirlinger, and England (1998) surveyed 128 public school districts in Oklahoma that had at least 1,000 students and at least five percent Indian student enrollment and found that American Indians were significantly over-represented in programs for low-achievers and under-represented in gifted programs. Results from NCES' Schools and Staffing Survey in 1993-94 found that about 10 percent of Native students received special education services in schools with 25 percent or more Native enrollment, which is roughly the national rate. At the same time, 17.5 percent of the students in BIA schools were in special education (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). Data reported by BIA's Office of Indian Education Programs for the most recent years have generally indicated that between 8,000 and 9,000 students in BIA schools (16-18 percent of the total enrollment) were receiving special education services.

A survey by Faircloth (2000) of schools with 50 percent or higher Native enrollments found that principals were particularly concerned with the need for effective models for use with Native students with disabilities. In part, this was seen as reflecting the larger need for validated, effective models of education for Native children in general (Tippeconnic, Faircloth, & Stout, 2000).

Several themes emerged from reviewing the literature, discussing the issues with experts in the field, and considering the range of suggested research questions. These include:

- Many American Indian and Alaska Native students are not fluent in standard English. As a result, written assessments used for screening or confirming the need for special services may not produce valid results. It is important to determine the extent to which the disproportional representation patterns in special and compensatory programs are a function of poor measurement tools.

- It also is important to investigate the referral processes leading to formal assessments to determine whether teachers' expectations of performance tend toward downplaying the strengths of American Indian and Alaska Native students and emphasizing any weaknesses. Prejudice in the classroom may be rare or common (the non-research literature on Native education often asserts that it is pervasive), but the effects of any prejudices should be identified so they can be corrected.

- Native students do not appear to be over-represented in special education in most schools; rather, Native students in BIA schools appear to account for much of the over-representation.

- Native students are under-represented in gifted and talented programs and it is important to explore the reasons why. High poverty schools, especially rural schools, tend not to offer such programs. Low expectations of teachers may also be a factor.

- Some students, of course, do have disabilities or other conditions that qualify them for special education programs, and some students are gifted or talented by almost any definition. It is important to find out if the students who should be in the special programs are indeed identified and served and if the services are appropriate and of high quality.

Priority Research Topics

The table on the following page presents two priority research topics for this general category of Native students with special needs. It is important to reiterate that these topics are at about the same level of priority, i.e., neither is inherently at a higher priority level than the other. For each research topic, several examples of possible study questions are provided. The examples of study questions are not meant to limit or define the scope of the priority topics, rather they suggest the range of study questions offered by informants throughout this project.

Suggested Studies

The studies to be conducted in this area range from assessing the validity and instruments commonly used in confirming special education needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students to a study of BIA schools to understand why they identify such large percentages of Native students for special education. In addition, work being conducted by the U.S. Department of Education in this area should be monitored. For example, a current study sponsored by the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs is exploring the relationships between lack of fluency in standard English and assignment to special education classes. This Descriptive Study of Services to Limited English Proficient Students replicates a study of the same name completed early in the 1990s. As another example, the Office of Special Education Programs is gathering information on the nature of disability and percentages of students served by race/ethnicity.

- The apparent over-representation of American Indian and Alaska Native students in special education in BIA schools can be studied through surveys or on-site interviews. The first step is to determine the range of the percentage of Native students served in special education based on the annual "report cards" submitted to BIA by the schools. Second, three or four pairs of schools – one high percentage, the other low, but that otherwise are as similar as possible - could be selected for further study. Either through detailed, open-ended telephone interviews or short site visits, differences in

special education assessment tools or procedures could be identified. Instruments or procedures that are related to very high or very low placement rates should be

American Indian and Alaska Native Students with Special Needs

Priority Research Topics	Examples of Possible Study Questions
Personal, social, and educational characteristics of American Indian and Alaska Native children in special, compensatory, and gifted or talented education programs, and best practices for valid assessment of special needs.	What are the causes of disproportional Native student representation in programs for students with special needs (e.g., student characteristics – such as learning styles, invalid assessment practices, teacher beliefs and practices, etc.)?
	Are Native students with special needs identified and served in appropriate programs?
	What are effective policies, procedures, and practices for appropriately identifying Indian students with disabilities?
Effective practices for working with American Indian and Alaska Native students with special educational needs.	What are effective approaches for teaching American Indian and Alaska Native students with disabilities, and to what extent are teachers currently using these approaches?
	Are alternative education programs available to meet the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students who have not been successful in mainstream schools? What are the characteristics of successful alternative education programs?
	How are teachers prepared to work with American Indian and Alaska Native students with special needs?
	How are the Bureau of Indian Affairs/Office of Indian Education Programs, the United States Department of Education, tribes, and states preparing or influencing the preparation of teachers and administrators to implement the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act effectively?
	To what extent are gifted and talented programs available to Native students?

evaluated in detail to determine the possibility that they may be responsible for assignment errors. A somewhat similar study, but using the Common Core of Data to identify schools for the project, could be conducted in public schools. For this similar study, however, a useful target would be placement in compensatory programs or gifted or talented education programs.

- Sometimes commonly used assessment tools contain subtle biases that can lead to assignment errors. It would be useful to conduct detailed psychometric and linguistic analyses of instruments that are widely used to screen or place Native students in special programs.

- Data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) should be examined for relationships between prenatal exposure to alcohol and subsequent learning difficulties.

Early Childhood Educational Needs of Native Children

American Indian and Alaska Native children appear to be less prepared on average to begin their first years of school than children in other American racial/ethnic groups. Although national studies of early childhood and school readiness have not included large enough Native American samples to provide a comprehensive picture, small-scale education studies and research in other fields suggest that poverty, relatively poor health and well-being, limited English proficiency, and lack of access to resources disproportionately affect American Indian and Alaska Native children.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2000) reported 69 percent of Native American women received prenatal care during the first trimester in 1998 compared to 83 percent of women nationally. The CDC also reported that the rate of sudden infant death syndrome, which is the leading cause of death for Native American infants, was over twice that of white, Hispanic, or Asian infants, and that Native American infants were 3 times as likely as the general population to die from an accident, and 4 times as likely to die from pneumonia or influenza (CDC, 2000). According to the Indian Health Service (IHS, in 1993, the death rate of American Indian children aged 1 to 4 was 2.2 times larger than for all races, and 2.5 times larger than for white children, with accidents as the leading cause of death for Native children at a rate 2.9 times as high as all children (IHS, 1997).

In addition to health-related factors, which are closely tied to high levels of poverty and rural residence, many Native children also enter school with low levels of English proficiency. According to the 1993-94 Schools and School Staffing Survey, about one-third of the Indian students in BIA/tribal schools spoke a language other than English in their homes, and a similar percentage was identified as having limited English proficiency (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1997). A report of the Department of Education (1999) entitled *Start Early, Finish Strong* indicated that children from high poverty areas are coming to school with vocabularies of approximately 3,000 words compared to their counterparts from affluent homes who come with 20,000 word vocabularies. According to the 1993-94 Schools and Staffing Survey from NCES, about 2.1 million students (about 5 percent) are limited English proficient.

Many studies have demonstrated that early childhood programs are linked to substantial improvements in cognitive, social and emotional development, and can give low SES children some of the opportunities to prepare for school that higher income children have (Gomby et al., 1995; National Research Council, 2001). Research in early childhood programs has shown the importance of comprehensive programming, which meets social, emotional, physical, and cognitive needs (Nissani, 1990).

Several national programs target the disadvantages faced by young Native American children. Head Start provides a wide range of services to low income preschoolers. Head Start places importance on education that is individualized for the community served; health, including immunizations, medical, dental, mental health, and nutritional services; parent involvement, and social services. As of May 1997, American Indian Head Start had 131 funded grantees, located in 25 states. Many are tribally operated, and integration of Native language and culture into the curriculum is encouraged. Even Start has shown positive outcomes on measures such as "parental expectations for children's academic success, and

enhanced utilization of other community, social, health, and education services" (Barnett, 1995). The tribal Even Start program combines adult literacy, early childhood education, and parenting education services for parents and their children from birth through age seven for Native American families (U.S. Department of Education, 1997).

Three themes emerged from reviewing the literature, discussing the issues with experts in the field, and considering the range of suggested research questions. These include:

- There appears to be little question that the conditions and experiences of early childhood affect children's readiness for and subsequent success in elementary and secondary education. Young Native American children appear to rank lower on most measures of school readiness than the children of other racial/ethnic groups, although comprehensive national studies have not delineated the full relationships among background factors, readiness levels, and school success for American Indians and Alaska Natives. Further, while national programs such as Head Start have operated on reservations for years, it is not clear what early childhood services are available to the large majority of Native children who live off the reservation and how or whether they are adapted to the unique needs of those children.

- Public health data for Native American children suggest widespread problems possibly stemming from a combination of inadequate service availability and lack of knowledge and awareness of healthful behaviors. The data, on low rates of prenatal care, for example, could stem from both causes. Further, the data suggest there may have been insufficient efforts to provide wellness education to school-aged children and their parents that would, for example, lead to more Native women seeking prenatal care or greater attention by parents and other adults to sources of potential accidents, at least through time. At the same time, it is not clear from the data whether the public health problems are primarily reservation-based, rural in general, or also occur in towns or cities.

- American Indian and Alaska Native children's transitions from early childhood programs (or no program at all) to kindergarten or the first grade appear to be more difficult than for the average American child, although there is certainly reason to believe that any limited English child from a resource-poor family and community would face many of the same problems.

Priority Research Topics

The table on the following page presents two priority research topics for this general category of early childhood educational needs. It is important to reiterate that these topics are at about the same level of priority, i.e., neither is inherently at a higher priority level than the other. For each research topic, several examples of possible study questions are provided. The examples of study questions are not meant to limit or define the scope of the priority topic, rather they suggest the range of study questions offered by informants throughout this project.

Early Childhood Education Needs of Native Children

Priority Research Topics	Examples of Possible Study Questions
Status of infant and pre-school-age American Indian and Alaska Native children on school readiness domains.	How are Native children's health and well-being related to rural (reservation and non-reservation), suburban, small town, large city, etc. residence? How does this relationship compare with the overall population?
	How must early childhood programs be structured so that they foster the fundamental skills that children are expected to have when they enter school?
	How effective are early childhood programs and activities for Native American children in promoting readiness for school?
Programs and services available for infants and pre-school-aged American Indian and Alaska Native children.	To what extent do Indian children and their families in reservation, rural, urban, and other settings have early childhood education opportunities available to them?
	How can a network of tribal early childhood programs that addresses issues, resources, and action plans be organized?
	What early childhood education programs and activities appear to promote effective use of English as a second language?
	How can early childhood programs accommodate American Indian and Alaska Native children with disabilities?
	What methods are effective in promoting health and wellness among American Indian and Alaska Native families?

Suggested Studies

The National Education Goals Panel (1997) identified five independent domains that collectively make up school readiness. These include (1) physical well-being and motor development; (2) social and emotional development; (3) approaches toward learning (such as curiosity, cooperativeness, and persistence); (4) language development, and (5) cognition and general knowledge. In general terms, the research that is needed should address the current status of Native children within those domains and identify effective practices for helping those children move successfully past the barriers into a successful school career.

- The most significant study for this topic is already underway. The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) is being conducted for NCES. This longitudinal study will track 15,000 children from birth during the year 2000 (and actually a bit before) through the end of the first grade. The Office of Indian Education provided supplementary funding for an augmented sample of more than 1,000 Native children. NCES is gathering data related to each of the domains identified by the National Education Goals Panel, and its study contractor is working with Tribal governments and other Native organizations to ensure sensitivity to local issues and to follow local data collection requirements. Data from the baseline survey should begin to be available in 2003, and it should prove invaluable for Native researchers who seek to untangle the interrelationships among personal characteristics, family background, community, early childhood services, and success in making the transition to school. These data should be of particular use for faculty and graduate student research.

- ECLS-B is gathering extensive information about the characteristics of young children during the years they pass from infancy through the first grade. It would be valuable to conduct parallel research on programs that appear to be particularly successful in helping young Native American children make successful transitions into formal schooling. These could be identified either through the characteristics of the programs themselves (i.e., Head Start programs based on proportion of Native enrollment, use of Native language, etc.) or based on secondary evidence of their success (e.g., high proportions of American Indian and Alaska Native students rated as performing well in early elementary grades). Case studies, with appropriate case controls or comparison groups, would be an appropriate method, with the focus being on identifying effective practice.

Educational Standards and Assessments

Throughout the country, students – Native and non-Native -- are facing an unprecedented series of high-stakes tests to determine their levels of proficiency on academic standards established at the national, state, or local level. Although the assessments are often formally designed to rate schools or teachers, it is the students who are tested, and news accounts frequently focus on their successes or failures rather than those of their institutions or instructors. Further, many of the assessments do directly affect the students; successfully moving on to the next grade or graduating may be a function of how well they do.

The purpose of setting standards and assessing performance is not to punish children; rather it is to ensure that educators are accountable for the product they are providing. When students do well, the results are considered strong evidence that educators are doing their jobs well, and when the students do poorly, then they are being let down by the educational system. Fox (2000) sees the emphasis on standards and accountability as a significant lever for improving education for Native children; the risk is that the students will get blamed for the failures of the systems that are – presumably – set up to benefit them:

> The standards-based reform effort can help to improve Indian education with new standards and assessment; however, as has happened in the past, the game of blaming the victim may occur. In order for this reform to really work for Indian students, schools must see themselves as accountable for providing the educational program and support necessary for Indian children to meet the standards. States and the Bureau of Indian Affairs must see themselves as accountable for providing the technical assistance, training and support that schools need for them to improve instruction and provide the educational program that students must have to meet the standards (Fox, 2000, p. 9).

The standards set for American Indian and Alaska Native students and the assessments used to measure them can depend on the type of school they attend. BIA-funded schools may use a standards and assessment system developed at the national level, or they may choose to use the system developed by and for the state in which the school resides. Public schools usually do not have the option of selecting among systems and have to use the one approved for their state or district; thus, American Indian and Alaska Native students, their parents, and their advocates in these schools also have no choice. It is not clear to what extent representatives of American Indian and Alaska Native communities or tribal governments were involved in deciding upon the standards and assessments to be used in their states or why some BIA-funded schools have opted to go with their state's system rather than the national one. It is also not clear, of course, what the differences for Native students and their schools will be in the long term as a result of those decisions.

The literature recommends that educational reform be systematically addressed in the classroom – over a sufficient period of time and with sufficient resources - to meet the learning needs of Native students. With the recent emphasis on statewide standards, it is becoming particularly important for Native educators to decide how to assess the performance of their students (Fox, 2000). There seems to be considerable agreement on the importance for teachers to be aware of potential cultural and language factors when assessing academic achievement in the classroom (Banks, 1997). Fox (1999) explains that "we must try new

methods of assessment that are being created, including the Learning Record, a system adopted by BIA-funded schools, and we must evaluate proposed methods to find the best ways to assess the learning of Indian students" (p. 162). Cultural bias (due to not factoring in Native language and cultural issues) is to be avoided "to ensure the cultural validity and reliability of information obtained" (McInerney, 1998, p. 1)

Three themes emerged from reviewing the literature, discussing the issues with experts in the field, and considering the range of suggested research questions. These include:

- It is unclear what unintended effects high-stakes testing programs will have on students, particularly American Indian and Alaska Native students or others from similarly high-poverty, language minority, or culturally isolated groups. Particularly when the tests are used to restrict grade promotion or secondary school graduation, the high stakes could serve to motivate some and discourage other students.

- Developing standards and assessment systems is also one of the ways communities can make their views known about what they feel are the important goals of education. Some American Indian and Alaska Native communities have taken advantage of the situation to establish their own standards and procedures for assessing them, but many others have not, including American Indians in urban areas.

- Assessments may focus primarily on basic skills attainment – the lowest common denominator of educational outcomes – or they may seek to measure students against a metric of what they should know. In this context, American Indian and Alaska Native educators and tribal leaders call for including Native language and culture in the curriculum; it is not clear how those elements can be assessed as part of a larger assessment process.

Priority Research Topics

The table on the following page presents two priority research topics for this general category of educational standards and assessments. It is important to reiterate that these topics are at about the same level of priority, i.e., neither is inherently at a higher priority level than the other. For each research topic, several examples of possible study questions are provided. The examples of study questions are not meant to limit or define the scope of the priority topics, rather they suggest the range of study questions offered by informants throughout this project.

Suggested Studies

The purpose for establishing and implementing standards and assessment systems is to make educators accountable for what children learn. When students do not perform up to the standards established for them, the focus should turn to finding what aspects of the educational process are not working. Sometimes, of course, the assessment tools themselves are accused, and other times, the students are blamed. Because of the importance of the current emphasis on implementing high-stakes testing, it is important to find out school, district, state, and – in the case of BIA schools – federal responses to poor performance.

Educational Standards and Assessments

Priority Research Topics	Examples of Possible Study Questions
Characteristics of standards and assessment systems for schools with large enrollments of American Indian and Alaska Native students that are effective in improving performance and address the unique needs and situations of those students.	How much variation in standards is there across schools with large American Indian and Alaska Native enrollments, and what standards and assessment systems are used with most American Indian/Alaska Native students?
	What can we learn from the implementation of the "Alaska standards"?
	Which assessments and tests have been validated with an American Indian and Alaska Native student population?
	To what extent and in what circumstances are American Indian and Alaska Native students receiving appropriate standards-based instruction?
	How are the purposes and goals of education defined by parents and tribal governments? How do these purposes compare to the outcomes of education codified in existing standards?
	What are appropriate report cards or evaluations for schools and teachers serving Native students? How have BIA schools implemented the "Learning Record" approach to assessment and what are the implications?
	What is status of schools with large Native enrollments, including BIA-funded schools, with regard to sanctions as a result of lack of progress toward meeting standards?
	What are the major differences between assessments and standards systems developed by and with input from Native educators and those developed by non-Native educators?
Best practices for implementing standards and assessment systems for schools with large enrollments of American Indian and Alaska Native students.	To what extent is it necessary to consider various levels of acculturation within communities and schools, so that standards are flexible enough to accommodate all students?
	Are professional development (including in-service and pre-service) programs for administrators and teachers focused on standards and assessment processes?
	To what extent and how are Native communities, tribes, villages, etc. involved in developing and implementing standards and assessment systems?
	What impacts have tribal codes of education or tribal departments of education (e.g., Rosebud, Navajo, etc.) had upon the development, implementation, and evaluation of standards and assessment systems?

- A descriptive survey of a sample of schools with high Native enrollment percentages would be useful to obtain perspectives on what content and performance standards are in place and what assessment procedures and instruments are being used. The schools would be selected from several states with relatively large Native percentages, from BIA schools as well as regular public schools and private or charter schools. The survey would also collect several years' data – to the extent such data are available – about percentages of students in the school, by race/ethnicity, who did not meet the standards and what impact these percentages have on dropout rates. The survey would also request information about steps taken by the schools to improve the performance of low-scoring students.

- It would be useful to obtain and disseminate information about practices used in some schools with high Native enrollment percentages that appear to make a substantial difference in promoting high performance on high-stakes assessments. Case studies should be conducted in high-performing schools or schools that have shown marked improvements, with appropriate comparison schools, to identify what factors are associated with success.

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Appendix

1. **Executive Order 13096**
2. **Interagency Task Force Members**
3. **Research Working Group Members**
4. **Research Agenda Expert Committee Members**

1 Executive Order 13096

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For immediate Release
August 6, 1998

EXECUTIVE ORDER 13096
AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE EDUCATION

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, in affirmation of the unique political and legal relationship of the Federal Government with tribal governments, and in recognition of the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Goals. The Federal Government has a special, historic responsibility for the education of American Indian and Alaska Native students. Improving educational achievement and academic progress for American Indian and Alaska Native students is vital to the national goal of preparing every student for responsible citizenship, continued learning, and productive employment. The Federal Government is committed to improving the academic performance and reducing the dropout rate of American Indian and Alaska Native students. To help fulfill this commitment in a manner consistent with tribal traditions and cultures, Federal agencies need to focus special attention on six goals: (1) improving reading and mathematics; (2) increasing high school completion and postsecondary attendance rates; (3) reducing the influence of long-standing factors that impede educational performance, such as poverty and substance abuse; (4) creating strong, safe, and drug-free school environments; (5) improving science education; and (6) expanding the use of educational technology.

Sec. 2. Strategy. In order to meet the six goals of this order, a comprehensive Federal response is needed to address the fragmentation of government services available to American Indian and Alaska Native students and the complexity of inter-governmental relationships affecting the education of those students. The purpose of the Federal activities described in this order is to develop a long-term, comprehensive Federal Indian education policy that will accomplish those goals.

(a) Interagency Task Force.

There is established an Interagency Task Force on American Indian and Alaska Native Education (Task Force) to oversee the planning and implementation of this order. The Task Force shall confer with the National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE) in carrying out activities under this order. The Task Force shall consult with representatives of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and organizations, including the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) and the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), to gather advice on implementation of the activities called for in this order.

(b) Composition of the Task Force.

(1) The membership of the Task Force shall include representatives of the Departments of the Treasury, Defense, Justice, the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, Energy, and Education, as well as the

Environmental Protection Agency, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the National Science Foundation. With the agreement of the Secretaries of Education and the Interior, other agencies may participate in the activities of the Task Force.

(2) Within 30 days of the date of this order, the head of each participating agency shall designate a senior official who is responsible for management or program administration to serve as a member of the Task Force. The official shall report directly to the agency head on the agency's activities under this order.

(3) The Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education of the Department of Education and the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior shall co-chair the Task Force.

(c) Interagency plan.

The Task Force shall, within 90 days of the date of this order, develop a Federal interagency plan with recommendations identifying initiatives, strategies, and ideas for future interagency action supportive of the goals of this order.

(d) Agency participation.

To the extent consistent with law and agency priorities, each participating agency shall adopt and implement strategies to maximize the availability of the agency's education-related programs, activities, resources, information, and technical assistance to American Indian and Alaska Native students. In keeping with the spirit of the Executive Memorandum of April 29, 1994, on Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments and Executive Order 13084 of May 14, 1998, each participating agency shall consult with tribal governments on their education-related needs and priorities, and on how the agency can better accomplish the goals of this order. Within 6 months, each participating agency shall report to the Task Force regarding the strategies it has developed to ensure such consultation.

(e) Interagency resource guide.

The Task Force shall identify, within participating Federal agencies, all education-related programs and resources that support the goals of this order. Within 12 months, the Task Force, in conjunction with the Department of Education, shall develop, publish, and widely distribute a guide that describes those programs and resources and how American Indians and Alaska Natives can benefit from them.

(f) Research.

The Secretary of Education, through the Office of Educational Research and Improvement and the Office of Indian Education, and in consultation with NACIE and participating agencies, shall develop and implement a comprehensive Federal research agenda to:

(1) establish baseline data on academic achievement and retention of American Indian and Alaska Native students in order to monitor improvements;

(2) evaluate promising practices used with those students; and

(3) evaluate the role of native language and culture in the development of educational strategies.

Within 1 year, the Secretary of Education shall submit the research agenda, including proposed timelines, to the Task Force.

(g) Comprehensive Federal Indian education policy.

(1) The Task Force shall, within 2 years of the date of this order, develop a comprehensive Federal Indian education policy to support the accomplishment of the goals of this order. The policy shall be designed to:

(A) improve Federal interagency cooperation;

(B) promote intergovernmental collaboration; and

(C) assist tribal governments in meeting the unique educational needs of their children, including the need to preserve, revitalize, and use native languages and cultural traditions.

(2) In developing the policy, the Task Force shall consider ideas in the Comprehensive Federal Indian Education Policy Statement proposal developed by the NIEA and the NCAI.

(3) The Task Force shall develop recommendations to implement the policy, including ideas for future interagency action.

(4) As appropriate, participating agencies may develop memoranda of agreement with one another to enable and enhance the ability of tribes and schools to provide, and to coordinate the delivery of, Federal, tribal, State, and local resources and services, including social and health-related services, to meet the educational needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students.

(h) Reports. The Task Force co-chairs shall submit the comprehensive Federal Indian education policy, and report annually on the agencies' activities, accomplishments, and progress toward meeting the goals of this order, to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sec. 3. Regional partnership forums. The Departments of Education and the Interior, in collaboration with the Task Force and Federal, tribal, State, and local government representatives, shall jointly convene, within 18 months, a series of regional forums to identify promising practices and approaches on how to share information, provide assistance to schools, develop partnerships, and coordinate intergovernmental strategies supportive of accomplishing the goals of this order. The Departments of Education and the Interior shall submit a report on the forums to the Task Force, which may include recommendations relating to intergovernmental relations.

Sec. 4. School pilot sites. The Departments of Education and the Interior shall identify a reasonable number of schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and public schools that can serve as a model for schools with American Indian and Alaska Native students, and provide them with comprehensive technical assistance in support of the goals of this order. A special team of technical assistance providers, including Federal staff, shall provide assistance to these schools. Special attention shall be given, where appropriate, to assistance in implementing comprehensive school reform demonstration programs that meet the criteria for those programs established by the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1998 (Public Law 105-78), and to providing comprehensive service delivery that connects and uses diverse Federal agency resources. The team shall disseminate effective and promising practices of the school pilot sites to other local educational agencies. The

team shall report to the Task Force on its accomplishments and its recommendations for improving technical support to local educational agencies and schools funded by the BIA.

Sec. 5. Administration. The Department of Education shall provide appropriate administrative services and staff support to the Task Force. With the consent of the Department of Education, other participating agencies may provide administrative support to the Task Force, consistent with their statutory authority, and may detail agency employees to the Department of Education, to the extent permitted by law.

Sec. 6. Termination. The Task Force established under section 2 of this order shall terminate not later than 5 years from the date of this order.

Sec. 7. General provisions. This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person. This order is not intended to preclude, supersede, replace, or otherwise dilute any other Executive order relating to American Indian and Alaska Native education.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

THE WHITE HOUSE,
August 6, 1998.

2 Interagency Task Force Members

Executive Order 13096 established an Interagency Task Force to oversee the planning and implementation of the order. The Task Force membership includes representatives from federal departments and agencies. It is to confer with the National Advisory Council on Indian Education and consult with representatives of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and organizations.

Michael Cohen (Co-chair)
U.S. Department of Education

Kevin Gover (Co-chair)
U.S. Department of the Interior

Maria Hernandez
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Gerald Gipp
National Science Foundation

Marcia Warren
U.S. Department of Commerce

Jane Stutsman
National Science Foundation

Cynthia Johnson
Corporation for National Service

Marc Brenman
U.S. Department of Transportation

Bob Ray
U.S. Department of Defense

Lynda de la Vina
U.S. Department of Treasury

David Beaulieu
U.S. Department of Education

Michael Springer
U.S. Department of Treasury

Anni Whatley
U.S. Department of Energy

Vicki Thornton
U.S. Department of Energy

Ted Key
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

Marlene Regelski
Environmental Protection Agency

Jackie Johnson
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

Patricia Lee-McCoy
Department of Health & Human Services

William Mehojah
U.S. Department of the Interior

Marlene Echohawk
Department of Health & Human Services

Mark Van Norman
U.S. Department of Justice

John Cheek
National Indian Education Association

Tim Jaranko
U.S. Department of Justice

Melody McCoy
Native American Rights Fund

Anna Goddard
U.S. Department of Labor

Jack C. Jackson, Jr.
National Congress of American Indians

Charles Archambault
U.S. Department of Labor

3 Research Working Group

David Beaulieu
Office of Indian Education
U.S. Department of Education

David Boesel
National Education Library
U.S. Department of Education

Joyce Caldwell
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education

John G. Chapman
Budget Service
U.S. Department of Education

John Cheek
National Indian Education Association

David Cleary
Budget Service
U.S. Department of Education

Brian Colhoff
National Indian Education Association

Thomas M. Corwin
Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Tim D'Emilio
Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, U.S. Department of Education

Grace Duran
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education

Lorraine Edmo
Office of Indian Education Programs
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U.S. Department of Education

Charles Geboe
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U.S. Department of the Interior

Dalton Henry
Bureau of Indian Affairs
U.S. Department of the Interior

Jack Jackson
National Congress of American Indians

Aura Kanegis
National Congress of American Indians

Edith McArthur
National Center for Education Statistics
U.S. Department of Education

Melody McCoy
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Eileen O'Brien
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education

Heather Rieman
Budget Service
U.S. Department of Education

Ken Ryan
Administration of Native Americans
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Karen Suagee
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education

Victoria Wright
National Congress of American Indians

4 Research Agenda Expert Committee

The research agenda Expert Committee provides advice to the working group. The Committee is made up of representatives from the National Advisory Council on Indian Education and the National Educational Research Policy and Priorities Board.

Rosemary Ackley Christensen
National Advisory Council on Indian Education
Green Bay, WI

Kenji Hakuta
National Educational Research Policy & Priorities Board
Stanford, CA

Robert W. Marley
National Educational Research Policy & Priorities Board
Wichita, KS

Janine Pease Pretty on Top
National Advisory Council on Indian Education
Crow Agency, MT

Sherry Red Owl
National Advisory Council on Indian Education
Mission, SD

Rick St. Germaine
National Advisory Council on Indian Education
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
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