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STATE OF NEW MEXICO

TRIBAL-STATE INDIAN EDUCATION SUMMIT REPORT

Developing Relationships & Partnerships Between Tribes and the State to Ensure Equitable Resources & Quality Education for Native American Students

December 19, 2005

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Executive Summary

More than 300 tribal representatives and educators from across New Mexico met at Ohkay Owingeh (formerly San Juan Pueblo) on December 19, 2005, to discuss ways to improve education for American Indian students in New Mexico. The Summit was a collaborative effort by New Mexico's Office of Indian Affairs, Public Education Department, Higher Education Department, and tribal communities.

Governor Bill Richardson gave the keynote address. He stressed that New Mexico must develop solutions in American Indian education rather than report deficits year after year. Toward that end, he requested a legislative appropriation of $500K to propose solutions for teaching Native children on and off reservations in the state; $2M for Advanced Placement classes for Native American high school students; an expansion of the Lottery Success Scholarship to include students who attend tribal colleges; and Capital improvement projects on tribal lands totaling $2.5M.

The singular challenge facing Indian educators is that achievement, retention, and graduation rates of American Indian students across P-20 levels lag significantly behind state and national norms.

The Summit was organized around four strands, which also structure sections of this report: Early Childhood Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, Higher and Adult Education, and Other Education Issues, which include Urban Indians, Health, and the No Child Left Behind Act. Summit participants generated Challenges and Recommendations in each of the strands.

Introduction

In response to the Indian Education Act, Governor Bill Richardson prompted Tribal Leaders and State Governmental Agencies to convene a New Mexico Indian Education Summit. The Indian Education Act (2003) states:

> The purpose of the Indian Education Act is to provide the means for a formal government-to-government relationship between the state and New Mexico tribes and the development of relationships with the education division of the bureau of Indian Affairs and other entities that serve American Indian students. (See appendix, Senate Bill 115 46th legislature, State of New Mexico, First Session, 2003, Introduced by Senator Leonard Tsosie.)

The Indian Education Act marked the beginning of the development of a formal relationship between tribal governments and the State of New Mexico. The Summit provided an opportunity for participants and stakeholders to address Indian Education issues that range from early childhood to graduate school age levels.

Summit Purpose

The purpose of the Indian Education Summit was three-fold. Each of the state's tribes was to 1) discuss educational issues in a "listening session" before State government officials, 2) submit a position paper that identifies challenges and educational solutions in their communities, and 3) develop policy recommendations that could be shared with New Mexico legislators at the 2006 legislative session.

Coordination

An Indian Education Summit planning committee was formed and co-chairs selected to create a plan to develop relations between New Mexico tribes, New Mexico State Government, and other groups that serve American Indian students. Four co-chairs were assigned to direct the Summit's Planning Committee:

- **Elvie Aquino** – Education Coordinator, Ohkay Owingeh Department of Education and member of the New Mexico Tribal Higher Education Consortium;
- **Penny Bird** – Indian Education Division, Public Education Department;
- **Gil Vigil** – Secretary/Treasurer of the All Indian Pueblo Council; and
- **Maggie George** – Director of Indian Education, New Mexico Higher Education Department.

Five planning committee meetings were held from October to December, 2005, to prepare for the Summit.

Planning committee members developed worksheets for breakout sessions when summit participants would comment on challenges, solutions, and resources for change and improvement. Due to time constraints, the breakout sessions did not

take place. Participants stipulated that the sessions take place at future Indian Education Summits.

Invitations were sent to tribal leaders, administrators, and education directors of the Indian tribes in New Mexico. Additionally, State Education and Health department staff members were invited to participate as audience members. The Cabinet secretaries from New Mexico Department of Indian Affairs, New Mexico Public Education Department, New Mexico Higher Education Department, and New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department were asked to give brief presentations and field questions from the audience. Facilitators were Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo Governor Joe Garcia and Cabinet Secretary for Indian Affairs Benny Shendo, Jr.

Background

New Mexico has 173,483 Indian citizens, who comprise nearly eleven percent of the state's entire population. There are twenty-two Indian tribes in New Mexico: nineteen Pueblos, two Apache tribes (Jicarilla Apache and Mescalero Apache), the Navajo Nation, and a large urban Indian population.

The nineteen pueblos in New Mexico include: Acoma, Cochiti, Isleta, Jemez, Laguna, Nambe, Ohkay Owingeh, Picuris, Pojoaque, San Felipe, San Ildefonso, Sandia, Santa Ana, Santa Clara, Santo Domingo, Taos, Tesuque, Zia, and Zuni. They are located in Bernalillo, Cibola, McKinley, Sandoval, Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, and Taos counties.

The Jicarilla Apache Nation is located in Northern New Mexico near the Colorado border. It has 2,755 tribal members who reside in Rio Arriba and Sandoval counties (Census 2000). The Mescalero Apache Nation is located in Otero County in southern New Mexico. There are over 3,300 enrolled members who reside on 463,000 acres of tribal lands between the White and Sacramento mountains.

The Navajo Nation has more than 298,000 members. About 107,000 members reside in New Mexico (Census 2000). The Navajo Nation includes approximately 27,000 square miles. Its boundaries extend from northwestern New Mexico into northeastern Arizona and southeastern Utah. Navajo tribal members in New Mexico reside primarily in San Juan and McKinley Counties. Three smaller bands of Navajos are located away from the main reservation in Socorro and Cibola counties.

In addition, the City of Albuquerque is home to a large urban Indian population. Twenty-four thousand American Indians from New Mexico as well as many other Indian tribes from across the United States reside in Bernalillo County.

Each tribe is unique. Each is a sovereign nation with its own government, life-ways, traditions, culture, distinct treaty obligations with the federal government, and unique relationship with state government. In this way, tribes are the only ethnic

group in the United States to be members of three polities: tribal government, state government, and the federal government. The uniqueness has been shaped for hundreds of years by relations with Spain, Mexico, and the United States governments.

American Indians trail behind the rest of the country in terms of education, living conditions, family situations, and other socioeconomic indicators. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2.4 million Americans claim American Indian or Alaska Native heritage (U.S. Census, 2006). Of this number:

- About one third of the American Indian population is under the age of eighteen, as compared to twenty-six percent of the total population.
- Among all tribal groups, the Navajo and Sioux have the highest percentages of young people, each with almost thirty-nine percent.
- Almost twenty-one percent of American Indian households are headed by women with no husband present. In Sioux, Pueblo and Navajo households, the percentage of female households was greater than twenty-five percent.
- Most American Indian households speak English as their only language at home. Navajo and Pueblo homes reported higher rates of Native language use.
- Seventy-one percent of American Indians finish high school, compared to eighty percent of the general population.
- Fewer American Indian men (sixty-six percent) participate in the workforce as compared to non-Indian men (seventy-one percent). In contrast, workforce participation of American Indian women is fifty-seven percent which is almost equal to the fifty-eight percent of non-Indian women.
- Almost thirty-four percent of the total American Indian population resides on tribal lands.

Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education programs, specifically pre-kindergarten programs, provide critical academic and social skills for children's success. These benefits extend well beyond preparing young children for kindergarten. Currently, New Mexico does not fully fund a public pre-kindergarten program. In school year 2005-06, New Mexico began to partially fund public pre-kindergarten programs. The State also provides supplemental funding for the federal Head Start program. State PreK funding is focused on New Mexico communities with greatest need and will be fully funded in 2008-2009. The public, voluntary Early Childhood program is for children from six months to three years of age, when they transition to Head Start or a publicly funded pre-kindergarten program, which provides services for three and four year olds. New Mexico serves some 2,400 children in Prek programs for four year olds (includes Public Education Department (PED) and Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD) numbers. American Indian children make up about three-hundred of the public, voluntary PreK total.

What follows are testimonies provided by tribal and State government representatives about what they perceive as challenges in tribal communities and recommendations in early childhood education.

State Perspectives:

Bernie Teba, Dan Haggard, and Rebecca Valentine – New Mexico Children Youth and Family Department: stressed the need for more PreK programs in American Indian communities, technical assistance to tribal communities on PreK initiatives, and involving tribes in the review of PreK funding applications.

Tribal Perspectives

Jacqueline Bird – Head Start Director, Five Sandoval County Tribes: spoke about the need to fund new Prek program facilities and to upgrade old ones. Moreover, funding is needed up front to support tribal early education programs. The current reimbursement method presents difficulties; money is limited and other priorities take away from early childhood programs. She also highlighted a need for professional development among staff members.

Tara Wright and Toni Collier – Mescalero Apache Tribe: explained that the Prek program at their school is a part of the elementary system and housed in the public schools. Better collaboration is needed to transition students from early childhood to elementary school.

Recommendations

- Need for technical assistance for grant writing and other initiatives.
- Provide start up funding for Prek initiatives.
- Professional development training for staff.
- Need funding to upgrade and build new facilities.

- Need to collaborate with public schools regarding student transition.

Elementary and Secondary Education

According to the New Mexico Public Education Department, American Indian students account for about eleven percent of the total public school enrollment. This translates to about 36,000 American Indian students attending New Mexico public schools. The highest concentration of American Indians is on or near reservation boundaries. Gallup-McKinley, Central Consolidated and Albuquerque public school districts have the highest enrollment of American Indian students. Navajo students make up the highest percentage of Indians in public schools with more than seven percent. Outside of northwest New Mexico, American Indian student enrollments are relatively small.

Student Achievement Data

As a part of No Child Left Behind requirements, the State of New Mexico assesses student achievement in Reading and Math for Grades 3-9, and 11 each year. The following graphs provide a snapshot of American Indian Student Achievement in Grades 5 and 8 during the 2004-2005 Academic year (NMPED, 2005). The graphs illustrate American Indian student academic performance on state assessments and provide a comparison to the performance of White and Hispanic students in the state.

In 2004-2005, thirty-three percent of American Indian 5th Grade students scored at the proficient level or higher achievement in reading; forty-three percent scored at the near proficient level; and fifteen percent were at the beginning proficient level. The remaining seven percent not shown on the graph scored at the advanced proficient level. The data show that fifty-eight percent scored below proficient in reading; twenty-two percent were proficient or advanced proficient.

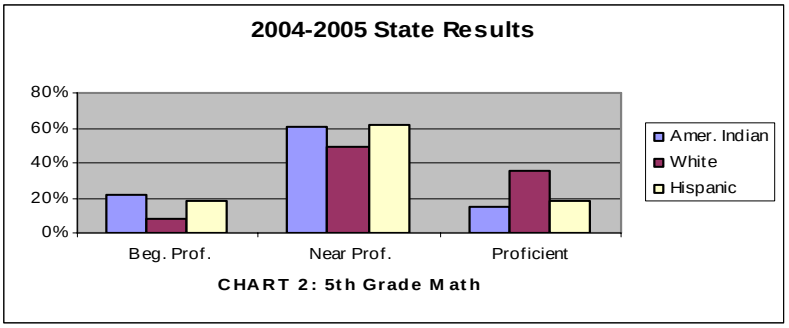
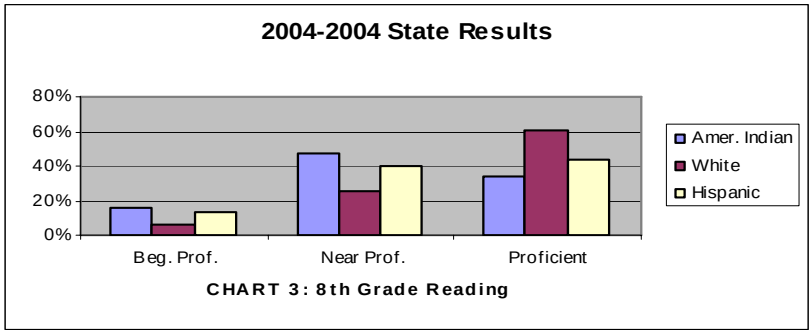


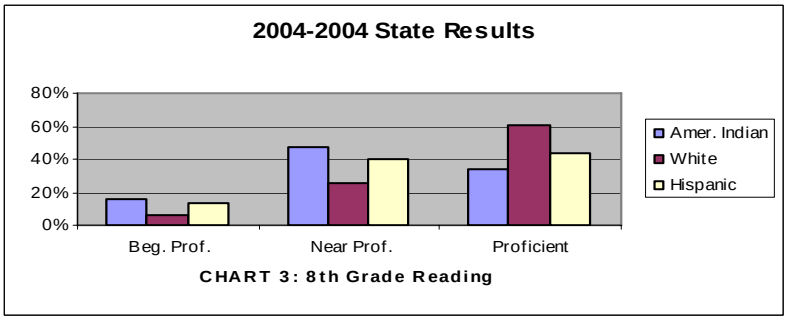
CHART 2: 5th Grade Math

In mathematics, fifteen percent scored proficient, sixty-one percent near proficient, and twenty-two percent beginning proficient. One percent scored

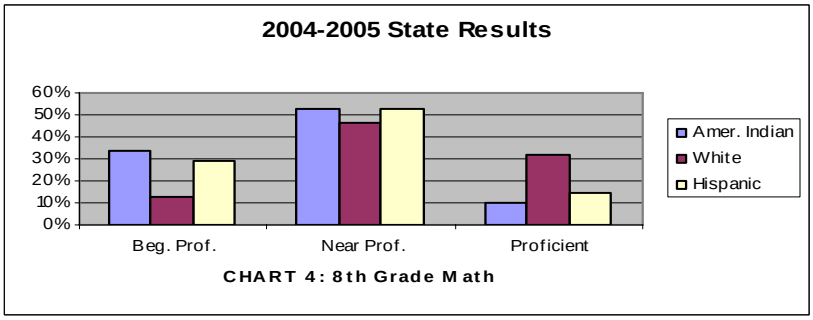
advanced proficient. Eighty-three percent scored below proficiency; only fifteen percent scored at the proficient level or above.



Achievement data for American Indian 8th Grades students are shown in the next two graphs. In reading, sixteen percent scored as beginning proficient, forty-seven percent near proficient, and thirty-four percent proficient. Only one percent scored advanced proficient. Sixty-three percent of American Indian 8th graders are below proficiency.



In mathematics, 34% of American Indian students scored as beginning proficient, another 53% scored as near proficient, and 10% scored as being proficient. Only 1% scored as being advance proficient. This data reveals that approximately 87% of American Indian students in the 8th grade are underperforming in the area of Mathematics with 11% performing at proficient levels or above.



Students, Teachers and Administrator Demographics

American Indian students make up 11% of the public school enrollment in New Mexico. A majority of the 36, 325 American Indian students are enrolled in the Central Consolidated, Gallup McKinley, and Bernalillo public school districts.

In contrast, American Indian teachers make up about 2% of the total teachers employed in public schools. According to 2003-2004 New Mexico Public Education Personnel data, there were approximately 537 American Indian teachers out of 21,814 teachers working in New Mexico Public Schools. In equal proportion, American Indian administrators including principals make up 2% of the 1291 administrators in the State. The 2003-2004 report on Public Education Department Personnel reports that there were 26 American Indian principals out of a 974 principals working in the New Mexico Public School Districts, There were even fewer American Indians employed as administrators. Out of the 317 administrators only 7 were American Indian. Administrators include positions like Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and various program directors.

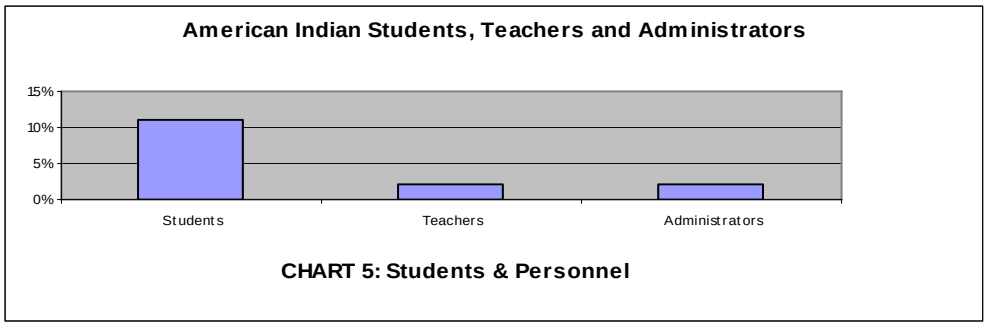


CHART 5: Students & Personnel

State Perspectives

Veronica Garcia – Secretary, New Mexico Public Education Department: stressed the need for schools to be open to the community. Many schools on tribal lands are the only public spaces in the community and serve a dual role by supporting after-school activities. The schools need to remain open after 3:00 p.m. Garcia encouraged parents to be involved in school activities. She stated that testing is also an issue for American Indian children. Many tests are culturally-biased. She closed by advocating for Indian bilingual education, stating, “Children should not have to choose between education and their language and culture.”

Tribal Perspectives

Frank Dayish – Vice President, Navajo Nation: expressed concerns about the fifty-six percent poverty rate on the Navajo Nation and the need for schools to be responsive to the language learning needs of students. Navajo is spoken in eighty-two percent of the homes on the Navajo Nation. Children often have difficulties in school because state assessments do not take this into account. Schools must do more than teach to the tests; they must emphasize reading comprehension, especially in secondary education. Dayish believes that teacher training and methodologies need to be examined to

produce highly qualified teachers of Native American students, who then need to be compensated with good pay so they will remain in tribal communities to provide continuity in American Indian Education.

Joe Garcia – Governor, Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo: stated that American Indian education policies are well intended, but their implementation is often flawed. No Child Left Behind requires research-based teaching methods but does not mandate the inclusion of tribal language and culture. It is important to revisit the policies and establish initiatives that will work for tribal communities. No Child Left Behind requires Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) reporting for schools. Tribal communities do not know what AYP is. We must partner, collaborate, and plan for the implementation of Indian Education in New Mexico; understand that our local efforts impact national policy; and develop, teach, and assess Native language and culture curriculum. Garcia proposed that a work group address the implementation of No Child Left Behind, the Indian Education Act, and the Education Executive Order at the school and local community levels. Participants in the working group would be representatives from public schools, BIA Grant and Contract institutions, and private schools.

Kevin Shendo – Lieutenant Governor, Jemez Pueblo: spoke about the strong emphasis of Towa language and culture in Jemez Pueblo charter schools, the establishment of which has been an important step for the community. Walatowa Charter School has met AYP requirements for the last two years. Shendo advocated more accessibility to the Public Education Department to communicate about tribal initiatives, better technical assistance with Joint Partners Agreements and RFP's to improve the contract process, better coordination between tribal education offices and the Higher Education Department, and elevating the Assistant Secretary of Indian Education to a Cabinet Secretary position to allow for better monitoring of Indian education. He added that tribal members need to be co-authors of Indian education reports and that school-based health programs be expanded to link with tribal and community health programs.

Amadeo Shije – Chairman, All Indian Pueblo Council: stated that communication and collaboration were key to improving Indian Education in New Mexico. Parent involvement is essential to educational success. Successes in Indian Education should be highlighted. Santa Fe Indian School is a good example of a school that produces well-prepared Indian students.

Ken Lucero – Assistant Tribal Administrator, Pueblo of Zia: shared that his pueblo does not have facilities for educational purposes. There is a need for better library facilities and places in the community where learning can take place. Zia Pueblo wants to develop better working relationships with the Public Education Department to work on initiatives such as Title VII and Impact Aid. The development of a memorandum of understanding would improve lines of communication and support the elevation of the State Indian Education Division.

Shawn Duran – Director, Taos Department of Education: believes that Indian children need to be given the opportunity to pursue their dreams. Schools need to be held accountable for those who do not succeed. Current data show that Indian students do not perform well in traditional school settings when the curriculum is not appropriate. There is a lack of tribal and parental input in schools. Education in tribal communities needs to be available 24/7 through cyber-based alternative delivery systems.

Greg Shutiva – Lieutenant Governor, Pueblo of Acoma: stated that fifty percent of the schools in Cibola County that serve Indian children do not meet AYP requirements. To improve the state of Indian Education in New Mexico, there must be collaboration and partnerships, tailoring policies to a tribal community's specific needs.

Richard Mermejo – Picuris Pueblo: said that smaller tribes like the Picuris are often overlooked in State policy initiatives despite overwhelming need. Picuris Pueblo lost funding for Head Start despite need for Prek education. They want help returning Head Start services to the community.

Everett Chavez – Governor, Santo Domingo Pueblo: said that we can make change because we are the products of the genius of our forefathers. It is our critical and moral responsibility to continue this legacy. Santo Domingo students attend public schools in Bernalillo or the Santa Fe Indian School, but issues persist regarding transportation, tribal consultation, and MOU's between the pueblo, Public Education Department, and Bureau of Indian Affairs. An Indian Education Policy Center could help with such matters.

Leland Leonard – Director, Department of Diné Education, Navajo Nation: stated that 98,000 Navajo students currently attend K-12 schools on and adjacent to the Navajo Nation. We need to embed tribal language and culture into non-traditional educational systems and establish our own AYP criteria. Title X of the Navajo Nation code allows for a tribal board of education. The Navajo Nation needs quality bilingual teachers; better teacher and administrator preparation programs; best practices for Indian students in higher education; better access to student data at state education departments; and better communication between the PED and Indian Education Office. The Navajo Nation is concerned about impact aid disparities and continued JOM support.

Arlen Quetawki – Governor, Pueblo of Zuni: said that we need to be role models and practice what we preach. Governor Richardson has opened the door; we must show what we can do. We need to include economic development into Indian education. We need to see what degrees our students are getting so we can prepare them for employment.

Community Perspectives

Larry Emerson – Chairperson, New Mexico Indian Education Advisory Council (NMIEAC): explained the role of the NMIEAC. It was created by the state's Indian Education Act (2003), includes fourteen members, and is designed to bring together the No Child Left Behind Act and tribal policy. The council has designed memoranda of understanding (MOU) between tribes and the Public Education Department in which tribes have established criteria for teaching their own language and culture. The goal is for all tribes to sign MOU's. Emerson asked, "To what degree will we allow outside evaluators to impose their criteria?" He stressed that tribes need to set their own measures. Jemez Pueblo is a model and is demonstrating that it can be done.

Russ Fisher – Science Teacher, Rio Rancho High School: discussed a research program that he started at Rio Rancho High School and mentioned the International

Science and Math Conference held in Albuquerque, funded in part by Intel, Santa Fe Indian School and CENAC are collaborative partners in the endeavor.

Stanley Milford – Board Members, Southwestern Polytechnic Institute: talked about the lack of economic development on Indian reservations. As a result, young people leave. When youth move away to pursue education and employment, they do not return home.

Joe Abeyta – Superintendent, Santa Fe Indian School: stated that NCLB needs to be revised to work for Indian students. There needs to be increased communication with the state and BIA. Designing and interpreting data should involve American Indian people and the results applied to benefit Indian students. American Indians need to be considered as contributors regarding solutions with Indian Education. He suggested that there be research center housed at the Santa Fe Indian School and requested $500,000 in federal and matching funds toward this end.

Jeanette Davis – Zuni Public School: spoke about the unequal distribution of JOM funds and misapplication of Impact Aid throughout the state. Tribal leaders must voice their issues and concerns. Taking governance powers from the local school board is also a concern. Davis stated that everyone needs to work toward the same goals.

Zelda Yazza – Mescalero Apache tribal member: said that the legislature does not support educational issues. She questioned school districts about not providing services and MOU's between tribes and colleges and universities. Tribes and parents should stress the importance of follow through.

Albert Shirley – Navajo tribal member: described problems with the state's Indian Education Act, which supports the inclusion of tribal languages, but few want to do it. Shirley does not want an English Only law. He added that, due to NCLB, many Navajo teachers have been released. Classes now are being taught by non-fluent language speakers.

Lloyd Tortalita – Director, Acoma Education Department: The National Johnson O' Malley (JOM) Association data shows that ninety percent of American Indian students attend public schools. The JOM funds are continually under scrutiny for budget cuts. The Grants-Cibola School district enrollment is thirty nine percent American Indians. JOM funds impact Acoma Pueblo students by providing transportation and other educational support services. The State of New Mexico needs to continue to support JOM as it has been around since 1934.

Keith Franklin – Albuquerque Urban Indian Education: Individuals from more than forty different tribes live and work in Albuquerque. 5,614 American Indian students are enrolled in the Albuquerque Public Schools. Truancy and dropout rates are high. American Indian teachers, staff, and administrators are needed. American Indian students need role models, academic enrichment, health, and intervention programs that encourage school attendance, motivation, and academic success. In Fall 2006, Albuquerque will have a new charter school that will serve American Indian students in the sixth and seventh grades.

Challenges

- Engagement of American Indian youth in their educational programs.
- Development and incorporation of culturally relevant materials and indigenous languages in school classrooms
- Effective utilization of resources

Recommendations

- Comprehensive professional development plan for teachers teaching American Indian children.
- Continued communication and input from tribes into the statewide plan for Indian Education.
- Recruitment of American Indian teachers.
- Development of a Communication Plan about New Mexico Indian Education that regularly provides information to Tribal governments, parents, key stakeholder groups, and school communities.

Higher Education and Adult Education

New Mexicans of American Indian ancestry participate less often and less successfully in higher education than do other groups. Nationally, American Indians make up less than one percent of college enrollment (NMHED, 2005).

In New Mexico, American Indians account for 7.5 percent of the state's undergraduates. Eighty-three percent of this total enters the system as first-time freshmen at community colleges. Overall, San Juan College and UNM-Gallup have the highest number of Indian students, followed by UNM-Main Campus, Albuquerque-TVI, New Mexico State University-Grants, New Mexico State University, Northern New Mexico College, and New Mexico Highlands University (NMHED, 2005).

Recent data (Fall 2004) indicate the most popular majors for American Indian undergraduate students are Early Childhood, General Studies, Liberal Arts, and Nursing. That said, many first-time American Indian college students are placed in remedial courses that offer no credit. Based on the most recent study of Department of Finance and Office of Education Accountability of public high school graduates readiness for college level work by ethnicity shows that sixty six percent of American Indian public high school graduates place in remedial classes in their first year of college.

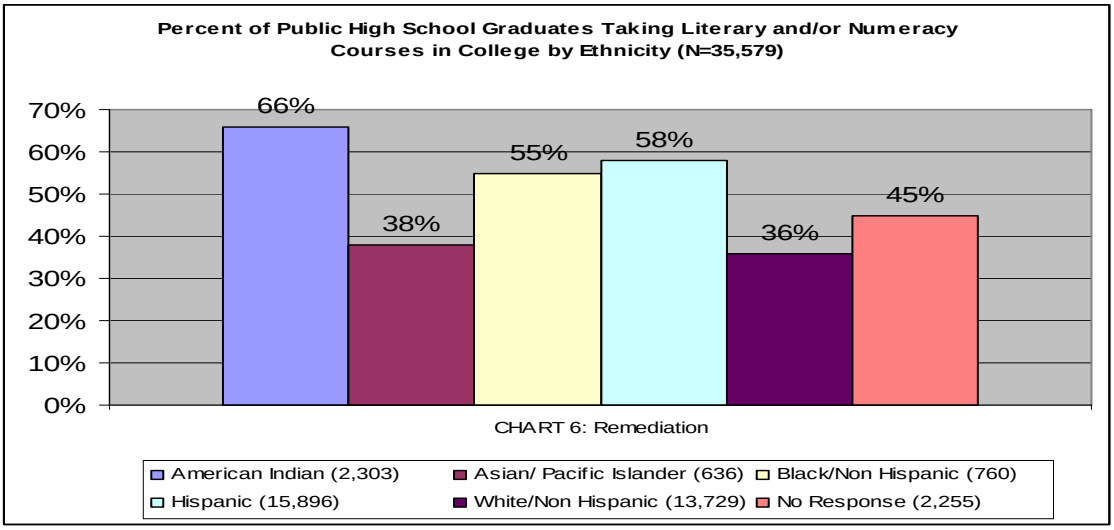


CHART 6: Remediation

Recent figures show that the first-time freshmen enrollment of American Indians in New Mexico's public colleges and universities decreased from 5.9 percent in Fall 2004 to 4.7 percent in Fall 2005 (Council of University Presidents, 2005). Only 2.5 percent of the undergraduate enrollment persist and graduate (NMHED, 2005). If American Indians were enrolled in proportion to their representation of the population, an additional 2,590 undergraduate students would be participating in the system currently.

Approximately 2,188 students were awarded $5,935,870 from tribal sources to pay for their education in 2005, an average of $2,713 per student.

Four tribal colleges are located in New Mexico: the Institute of American Indian Arts (chartered by the U.S. Congress), Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (chartered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs), and Crownpoint Institute of Technology and Diné College (both chartered by the Navajo Nation). In accord with treaty obligations, these institutions receive federal funding; they do not receive support from the state.

Statistics indicate that American Indian students who enroll in tribal colleges are more likely to graduate than those who attend public colleges and universities. This is due to the support of family, extended family, and a college student population that reflects their culture and identity. More than fifty percent of those who transfer from tribal colleges to four-year public post-secondary institutions do graduate (Boyer, 1997, NCES, 2005).

State Perspectives

Beverlee McClure – Secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department: said that the goal of the Higher Education Department is to provide access to a quality education for all New Mexicans. Key initiatives include the College Affordability Act, which helps students pay for college; the Articulation Taskforce's work to create a common core of General Education courses across New Mexico institutions including tribal colleges, which allows student to transfer without loss of credit hours; and partnerships with the Public Education Department to align high school and college entry requirements to reduce the number of first-year freshmen needing remedial courses. McClure stressed the urgency to address the lack of retention and persistence of American Indian college students: more than half do not go beyond the second semester of their freshmen year.

Tribal Perspectives

Gilbert Sanchez – Director, Laguna Department of Education: shared that tribal members who choose to attend college are between 22-40 years of age, who tend to be highly motivated. However, low expectations and inadequate funding are common reasons why native students do not persist in college. The focus on students needs to change from a deficit model approach to a proactive stance that focuses on students' intelligence, potential, and high expectations. The presence of colleges and universities in tribal communities and high schools is essential to alleviate barriers, send the message to American Indian students that college is an option, and develop proactive, effective programs.

Darlene Smart-Herrera – New Mexico Tribal Higher Education Consortium: stated that tribal people teach the importance of education in general and school attendance specifically, as well as the value of maintaining one's culture while respecting self and others. Nonetheless, the families of first generation college students have limited support from their parents, who have not experienced higher education. Students need help with

financial aid and admissions applications. Memoranda of understanding between tribes and colleges and universities must support this work. Colleges and universities need to employ more American Indian professionals to whom students can relate as role models and look for support. College recruiters need to follow through on initial contacts and promises of fee waivers. Tribal education offices must do a better job determining when and why students stop out. In addition, high school graduates are not adequately prepared for college, in large part, because teachers in tribal communities know little about working effectively with American Indian students. Finally, tribal education officers have experienced recent demands to serve students with disabilities, an area for which they are inadequately prepared.

Ferlin Clark – President, Diné College: shared that tribal colleges serve American Indian students in their tribal communities and have a unique focus on culturally relevant curriculum, pedagogies, and philosophies. Because tribal colleges contribute to the New Mexico economy, their students should have access to New Mexico Lottery Scholarships and the College Affordability Act, which will help them attain college degrees, increase transfer rates to New Mexico post-secondary institutions, contribute to economic development, and create jobs.

Challenges

- American Indian students enroll in college but do not continue beyond the first year.
- They are academically under-prepared and placed into remedial courses in their first year.
- They have difficulties paying for college tuition and related costs.
- They have a difficult time transitioning to college.
- College and universities come to tribal communities and high schools to recruit but fail to follow up with students after enrolling in college.
- There are disconnects with tribal higher education office and American Indian Programs at colleges and universities in their efforts to retain students.

Recommendations

- Develop a taskforce with student services professionals in higher education to explore ways to establish goals and performance measures to address retention and persistence concerns in New Mexico public post secondary institutions.
- Collaborate with the Public Education Department, Public Post Secondary institutions, and tribal colleges to develop processes to share student data and follow students through the education pipeline; use the data to develop policy initiatives.
- Develop memoranda of understanding between the New Mexico Higher Education Department and the New Mexico Tribal Higher Education Consortium to develop and jointly support initiatives that promote college access, student success, and college affordability for American Indian students.

- Develop school-to-college partnerships designed to involve K-12 schools in promoting educational success using a P-20 educational perspective.
- Continue to involve Tribal Colleges in the New Mexico Higher Education advisory board and initiatives concerning articulation, alignment and P20 data sharing.

Resources

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