



National Education Association

A Report on the Status of

*American Indians and Alaska Natives in Education:
Historical Legacy to Cultural Empowerment*



**A Report on the Status of American
Indians and Alaska Natives in Education:**

*Historical Legacy to Cultural
Empowerment*

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The Status of Underserved Groups in Education

The National Education Association's commitment to creating great public schools for every child requires working to ensure that all students are learning and succeeding in schools. This task is challenging. From its beginnings, our nation's school system has treated students differently, depending on their race and ethnicity, social class, gender, sexual orientation, language, and disabilities; and, even today, significant gaps in academic achievement and attainment persist among groups.

Beginning in 2005, the National Education Association will publish eight reports on the status of underserved groups in education, focusing on: American Indians and Alaska Natives; Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; Hispanics; Blacks; women and girls; gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered students; English-language learners; and students with disabilities. The reports will draw on proceedings of national summits that bring together researchers, national leaders, and NEA members to discuss the problems experienced by each group and promising strategies for change in policy and practice.





About the Authors

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Dr. Trujillo (Yaqui), lead author of this report, is professor and chair of the Department of Applied Indigenous Studies at Northern Arizona University. Trujillo has worked over the past three decades in the area of educational program development for minority and multicultural populations, particularly Native Americans. She has served as chair of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas special interest group of the American Education Research Association. Trujillo was the leading principal investigator for the Native Educator's Research Project, an activity of the "Research Agenda" under President Clinton's Executive Order on American Indian and Alaska Native Education. She is also former chairwoman of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Arizona.

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NEA/NIEA Moving from Research to Practice: A Summit on Indian Students

October 27, 2004, NEA joined with the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) to host *Moving from Research to Practice: A Summit on Indian Students*. The Summit took place the day before NIEA's 35th Annual Convention began in Phoenix, Arizona. Over 100 American Indian and Alaska Native education practitioners and researchers from Alaska to Mississippi gathered to share their knowledge of effective educational strategies for AI/AN students. Presentations focused on four themes: Using Native Language and Culture To Promote Success in Indian Students, Preparing Educators To Be Effective Supports for Student Achievement, Reaching Out to the Community To Create Success, and Promoting Policies that Benefit Indian Students. This report draws, in part, on the presentations and discussions held at the Summit.

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The Summit consisted of 4 panels based on these themes. The participants* for each panel are listed below.

Using Native Language and Culture To Promote Success in Indian Students

- Arlene Begay (Navajo), teacher, Navajo Immersion School, Arizona
- Denny Hurtado (Skokomish), program supervisor-Indian Education, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington
- Jon Reyhner, professor, Northern Arizona University, Arizona
- Moderator: Inée Slaughter, executive director, Indigenous Language Institute, New Mexico

Preparing Educators To Be Effective Supports for Student Achievement

- Robin Butterfield (Winnebago/Chippewa), education specialist/professional development, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Center for School Improvement, New Mexico
- Kellamay Kelly (Navajo), early childhood educator, Navajo Immersion School, Arizona

- Brenda Peltier (Turtle Mountain Chippewa), principal, American Indian Magnet School, Minnesota
- Nita Rearden (Yup'ik Calista Region), education specialist, Lower Kuskokwim School District, Alaska
- Moderator: Carl Downing (Cherokee), retired educator, University of Central Oklahoma, Oklahoma

Reaching Out to the Community To Create Success

- Leona Dixon (Choctaw), teaching assistant and member, Parent Advisory Board, with Dianne Johnston, community relations specialist/parent involvement coordinator, Mississippi
- Eugene Shawano (Potawatomi), tribal administrator, Forest County Potawatomi, Wisconsin
- Colletta Wilson (Navajo), education specialist/parental involvement, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Center for School Improvement, New Mexico
- Moderator: Chris Bordeaux (Sicangu Lakota), gifted and talented coordinator, Wounded Knee School District, South Dakota

Promoting Policies that Benefit Indian Students

- David Beaulieu (White Earth Chippewa), director, Center for Indian Education, Arizona State University and president-elect, NIEA, Arizona
- JoAnn Harvey (Nez Perce), health/physical education elementary specialist, Coeur d'Alene School District, and Chair, NEA American Indian/Alaska Native Caucus, Idaho
- Wayne Trottier (Standing Rock Lakota), superintendent, Plummer-Worley Joint School District, Idaho
- Moderator: Cindy La Marr (Pit River/Paiute), president, NIEA, California

* All designations reflect positions held at time of Summit.



“Contrary to popular belief, education, the transmission and acquisition of knowledge and skills, did not come to the North American continent on the Niña, Pinta, and Santa Maria . . .”

—Henrietta Mann (*Southern Cheyenne*), professor emeritus of Native American Studies, Montana State University

“Indian education” is a term that means many things:

- Culturally, it suggests the process that American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities use to pass on their knowledge, values, and collective experience to ensure their continuity.
- From the perspective of educational research and policy, the term reflects the academic performance and educational outcomes of American Indian/Alaska Native students in comparison either to other groups or to statistically established norms.¹
- For classroom practitioners, Indian education refers to instructional approaches and culturally relevant curriculum content used to supplement the “regular” school program as a way to enhance AI/AN students’ educational experiences.
- Indian education comes to mean special programs designed to address perceived “deficits” in students’ readiness in those instances, which are many, where there is a lack of alignment between AI/AN students’ culture and the learning environment.²
- Alternatively, Indian education can mean strategies that address the deficiencies of educational institutions in meeting the needs of AI/AN students.

Historically, U.S. federal policy defined Indian education as cultural assimilation: the elimination of Native peoples’ language, religion, and overall way of life and replacement with ‘American’ culture. Even though this approach to Indian education has been largely unsuccessful, it has had many negative consequences for both AI/AN individuals and communities.³ While individual Native people are experiencing increasing levels of academic success even in the face of cultural and institutional barriers,⁴ as a broad cultural group, American Indians and Alaska Natives have historically benefited the least from the educational institutions of the United States.⁵





CHAPTER 1

Who and Where We Are

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report, *Status and Trends in the Education of American Indians and Alaska Natives*, in 2003, 2.8 million persons living in the United States identified themselves exclusively as American Indian/Alaska Native and another 1.6 million as AI/AN in combination with one or more other races.⁶ Forty-eight percent (48%) of this population lives in the western states. Of the remaining half, seven percent lives in northeastern states, 16 percent in midwestern states, and 29 percent in southern states.

In 17 states, the AI/AN population is more than the national average of one percent of the total state population. At over 333,000 persons, California has the largest AI/AN population, and, at 16 percent, Alaska has the largest percentage. The 2000 U.S. Census also shows that 47% of AI/AN people live in specially designated indigenous areas: reservations, off-reservation trust lands and statistical areas, Alaska Native village statistical areas, or Alaska Native Regional Corporations.⁷

Today, the U.S. government recognizes 562 American Indian/Alaska Native tribes, conferring upon them “domestic dependent nation status”—recognizing their power of self-government and political authority, as sovereign nations, over nearly 56 million acres of land within the territorial U.S. Among these tribes, by far the largest are the Tsalagi (Cherokee), numbering over 750,000, and the Diné (Navajo), who number nearly 300,000; and the approximately 55,000 who are Yup’ik (Eskimo), the largest Alaska native group.⁸

NCES also shows that in 2002, approximately one percent (approximately 550,000 – excluding students attending Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools) of the nation’s public elementary and secondary school students were AI/AN, a proportion that has remained fairly constant since 1986. Excluding BIA schools, which were attended by seven percent of all AI/AN students, the states where American Indian/Alaska Native students composed the largest proportion of the total student population included Alaska (26 percent), Oklahoma (18 percent), Montana, New Mexico, and South Dakota (11 percent each).⁹

Even while a higher proportion (38%) of AI/AN students attend rural public schools than other groups, most Native students go to urban and suburban schools. Nearly one-third (31%) of AI/AN students attend schools where they make up at least 50 percent of the enrollment.

More AI/AN families with school-aged children lived in poverty in 2003 than white, Hispanic, or Asian American/Pacific Islander families. The poverty rate among preschool-age children (under 5) is more than twice that of the total population (43% compared to 21%). Poverty is highest among AI/AN families living on reservations or off-reservation trust lands.¹⁰

The poverty data are significant because they shed light on the well-known disadvantages poor children have in accessing high quality learning opportunities. School-based factors such as poorly-trained teachers, out-of-date materials, and inadequate facilities contribute to the disadvantage. Home-based supports, including adequate nutrition, a safe and quiet space in which to study, and books and other academic learning resources, are also sorely limited.

AI/AN Educational Attainment and Performance

An NCES report indicates that, over the past 20 years, AI/AN students have made gains in educational attainment. By 2003, 42 percent of AI/AN adults 25 years and older had attended college. During the quarter century prior to 2003, their enrollment in degree granting institutions and their rate of attainment for each level of degree (e.g., bachelor's, master's, etc.) had doubled.¹¹

Despite these gains, AI/AN students' academic outcomes were still significantly lower than European Americans. They were still less likely to earn a bachelor's or advanced degree than their nonindigenous peers. Correspondingly, student data indicate that they continue to have the lowest matriculation rates and the second highest dropout rates of all students in the country.¹²

In 2003, 15 percent of Native youths 16- to 24-years old had not completed high school or earned a G.E.D. credential. This rate was more than twice the rate for white youths (6 percent), four times that of Asian American/Pacific Islanders (AA/PI) (4 percent) and about the same as Black youths. Only Hispanic students dropped out at rates higher than AI/AN students.¹³ Persistence to graduation is difficult for students who are not achieving at high levels. AI/AN students, like other students, get discouraged when they are unable to feel success in their school work. Native students generally score lower than white or AA/PI students in both reading and math in the 4th and 8th grades.¹⁴

Other factors figure into the high dropout rate of Native youth. AI/AN male and female students are second only to Black students in suspension and expulsion rates.¹⁵ The ongoing debate around overrepresentation of minority youth in disciplinary actions in schools is likely to apply to AI/AN students as well, given the persistence of racial stereotypes and prejudice against Native groups. Another factor in Native students' learning environment is their safety. AI/AN high school youth are the most likely of all groups to report being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property or being in a physical fight.¹⁶

Part of the context for these lags in attainment and academic performance is that AI/AN students suffer from significantly higher rates of poverty, unemployment, suicide, early school leaving, and serious health risks. Another source for the gaps is the lack of alignment between students' home culture and public schools' teaching methods.¹⁷

The Contributions of Tribal Schools and Colleges

The Bureau of Indian Affairs funds 184 schools and operates 64 of the schools while tribes operate the remaining 120. These schools sit on 63 reservations in 23 states and serve about 46,000 students, according to the U.S. Department of Interior. BIA schools are generally quite small and serve up to 300 students.¹⁸ They are generally severely underfunded, with inadequate facilities and poorly paid teachers. Yet these schools are the venues where AI/AN students have the opportunity to learn their own languages in the context of their tribal cultures, based in their group history, as well as acquire the skills they need to be successful in the national society.

One revealing observation underscores how the missions of BIA and non-BIA schools differ now that the former are under the control of AI/AN school officials. Principals of both types identify academic skills and work habits and self-discipline as goals that they want their students to reach. Only BIA school principals also note among their top three concerns personal growth and multicultural awareness.¹⁹

The tribal colleges are another Native resource that face extreme odds yet deliver some success for AI/AN students. The 32 tribally controlled colleges and universities (of which 7 were four-year and 25 were two-year in 2002) experienced a greater increase in AI/AN student enrollment than all other colleges and universities.²⁰ Their preference by AI/AN students most likely reflects their mission to preserve and promote Native language and culture, while teaching tribal history. Tribal colleges are also more accessible logistically to many AI/AN students. They often serve an older student population and have become the leading Native teacher training institutions.²¹

Given these schools' commitment to educator preparation, they deserve greater support for their efforts. They also could serve as models for nontribal institutions in how to prepare educators to be successful with AI/AN students. The importance of tribal colleges in their own right and in what they can share with mainstream institutions in offering higher education to AI/AN students lies also in the increasing interest in postsecondary education by these students. In line with other racial and ethnic groups, Native students' expectation to complete at least a bachelor's degree more than doubled (from 31% to 76%) in the 20+ years between 1980 and 2002. This increase was the highest among Hispanic (33% to 73%), White (41% to 81%), Black (41% to 77%), and Asian/Pacific Islanders (67% to 87%).²²

On the whole, however, most (93%) AI/AN students attend America's public schools — in large cities to rural villages - throughout the country.

Status Report

This report will explore several aspects of the American Indian/Alaska Native historical, social, and cultural experiences as they relate to the development of Indian education. Using these experiences as a context, the report suggests a few broad strategies for improving the status of AI/AN education and ends with recommendations for action. Multiple resources round out the text to encourage further investigation into how to make a positive impact on the education of American Indian and Alaska Native students.



The AI/AN Educational Experience in the Evolution of U.S. Society²³

“For so long the government said we need to be assimilated into the mainstream. But native people have scientifically based knowledge acquired over hundreds of years. Our knowledge is important and we need to honor and use it.”

—Dr. Gerald Gipp (Hunkpapa Lakota), former director, Office of Indian Education, U.S. Department of Education; and, executive director, American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC)

The multitude of linguistic and cultural groups that are collectively called “American Indians and Alaska Natives” include 562 distinct cultural communities. Considering each group’s unique historical and cultural experiences, the diversity among them is greater than commonality. That indigenous Americans are regarded, and have even come to regard themselves, as a collective group reflects their 500 year experience of contact with the other racial and ethnic groups who reside in the United States.

From the AI/AN historical perspective, there is but one distinguishing characteristic that binds them all—one that has come into focus as a result of their interaction with others with whom it is not shared — AI/AN peoples’ continuing connection with their homeland. Apart from American Indians and Alaska Natives, all other cultural groups are historical immigrants to North America. Some immigrants came from communities with a sacred sense of connectedness with their own homeland while others came from traditions that viewed the earth as a negotiable commodity. Whatever may have been the relationship of each of these groups to the land from which they came, they were “foreigners” in their new land.

This fundamental distinction between AI/AN peoples and nonindigenous Americans has had a powerful impact on cross-cultural communication and has profoundly affected AI/AN access to the educational resources offered by U.S. society.²⁴

Historical Implications of Indigenous/Non-indigenous Contact

American Indian/Alaska Native methods of education were maintained during the initial phases of contact with the European immigrants. Even as the European presence increased in close proximity with the indigenous peoples, Native education practices continued. These methods enabled AI/AN youths to uphold the traditions of their tribes, learn and use their Native languages, develop the skills to support families, and preserve their spiritual beliefs.

Only when U.S. expansion began to overwhelm the Indian communities with military, political, economic, and social force did indigenous education systems fail to prepare its people for these affronts to their survival. The U.S. territory spread from coast to coast and was made possible by the forced removal of millions of indigenous people largely from the East to the western parts of the continent. The relocations resulted in massive loss of lives due to disease, starvation, and outright genocide.

Maintaining traditional ways of living was discouraged and punished by the expansion of non-indigenous people. The U.S. policy of relocation of tribes eroded two foundations of Native self-determination: physical connection to the land and tribal sovereignty or self-government. Even with this immense displacement of communities from the places of their ancestors and birth, many AI/AN people maintained a close spiritual relationship to the land.

Establishing friendly relations with the U.S. government was the only reasonable alternative to the extinction of AI/AN cultures. This stark reality set the stage for the shaping of both the direction and the content of "Indian education" from that point until recent times. Treaties between individual tribes and the U.S. government formalized their relationship and described the content and the systems for meeting the educational needs of the AI/AN groups. From the tribal leaders' perspectives, their nations would benefit from becoming more knowledgeable of the European American society and of the means to gaining access to its institutions.²⁵

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Education as Domination

Through policy, the U.S. government ignored or, worse, eliminated AI/AN education efforts. Indigenous leaders had hoped to use the new education system, as outlined in their treaties with the U.S., as a means of protecting their cultural identities. Instead, this new system's intent was just the opposite: the elimination of Native people's cultural uniqueness.

Tribal leaders accepted the new formal schooling as a survival mechanism for their individual members and their nations. They did not view government-offered schooling as parallel to education as they had traditionally known it. However, they also did not anticipate that the U.S. intended to displace totally their traditional systems, which had sustained them from time immemorial as dynamic thriving societies.

The 19th century brought in the first phase of indigenous peoples' new educational experiences with the creation of the Indian boarding schools. In the early 1800s government-supported missionary schools bent on 'civilizing' indigenous populations sprang up around the country —often in areas significantly removed from where Native populations had been relocated. As the U.S. Government's Department of the Interior took over the operation of these schools, their primary practices were to keep students apart from their parents for years at a time, teach the students Christianity, and punish them for speaking their Native languages.²⁶

The belief that drove this mission was that if Native students would learn English and become Christians,

they would “settle down” with their white neighbors and leave their Indian ways behind. With over 200 schools in operation by 1887 and an enrollment of over 14,000 students, most of whom were forcibly removed from their families to attend, the process of stripping students of their Native cultures and replacing them with the mainstream culture was in full swing.²⁷ AI/AN students returning home from the boarding schools often found their formal schooling had alienated them from tribal values and practices of their community. At the same time, the boarding school experience mostly failed to increase AI/AN people’s acceptance of, or acceptance by, the mainstream cultural society.²⁸

The goal of complete cultural assimilation of Native America has never been realized. Yet the 50+ years of the boarding school experience and the adaptation to a rapidly changing nation has severely limited the transmission of traditional cultural practices and the use of indigenous languages from one generation to the next. Nevertheless, AI/AN communities demonstrate remarkable perseverance of their distinct identities and cultural heritage. This continuity of culture has been sustained even as indigenous groups have become demographic minorities within their own homelands.²⁹

Shifting Toward Self-Determination

With U.S. territory well established, policy shifted to reverse the trend of breaking up tribes. The 1934 Indian Reorganization Act reflected a national attitude toward AI/AN peoples that appeared somewhat more tolerant. The 1934 law returned significant political authority to the tribes and provided federal government funds for education, health care, and cultural activities. Yet, intolerance continued toward Native peoples’ distinct ways of living.

Politically, this intolerance is found in the policy embodied by the Termination Act of 1944. This law initiated the termination of federal benefits and services, and recognition of tribal governments.³⁰ In the ensuing years before its final repeal in the mid-1960s, this act had a devastating effect upon the integrity of Indian communities and their ability to pass on their languages and cultures to their children.³¹ The implementation of the Termination Act caused 12,000 tribal members to lose their tribal affiliations and political relationships with the U.S. Government. Thousands of Native families were lured to inner cities with the promise of employment only to find few employment opportunities that could provide a living wage. Urban Indian poverty grew in the wake of this law.

This historical displacement to urban centers has led to AI/AN students finding themselves to be a distinct minority in urban schools, cut off from traditional ways of living, family networks, and familiar geographical surroundings, with non-Native teachers and few culturally appropriate materials. Such isolation adds to the factors that continue to inhibit their classroom achievement and maintenance of Native language and culture.

The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Indian Education Act of 1972 (and the grassroots community organizing, protests, and resistance activities that preceded them) paved the way for changes in government-run schools. AI/AN communities began to have members on tribal school boards, established community schools and colleges, and created tribal colleges. For the most part, these AI/AN—focused institutions help native youth preserve their culture and become prepared for work and life in the wider society. The Indian Education Act also established the U.S. Office of Indian Education and funded programs in schools both on and off the reservations to meet AI/AN students’ special needs in the areas of culturally relevant and bilingual materials.³²

The enactment of the Indian Self-Determination Assistance Act in 1975 prompted a gradual shift toward reclaiming self-government that had been eroding over many decades. This law enabled AI/AN groups to begin strengthening tribal governments and further loosen federal control. Tribes also began to take

over the administration of federal programs—including education—that were in operation on the reservations.³³

In 1991, in the spirit of the National Education Goals, the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force report identified 10 goals covering early childhood education; maintenance of native languages and cultures; literacy; academic achievement; high school graduation; teacher quality; safe and drug-free schools; adult education; school reform; and parent, community, and tribal partnerships.³⁴ These goals, which were to be reached by the year 2000, reflected the need to address the realities of the following:

- The failure of schools to educate large numbers of AI/AN students and adults
- The rapid erosion of the AI/AN language and cultural base
- The constant assault on the natural resources and diminished land holdings of AI/AN peoples
- The steady challenges to AI/AN self-determination and governance rights by the changing policies of the administration, Congress, and the justice system.³⁵

Several recommendations emerged from the Task Force's deliberations. The predominantly AI/AN panel identified five major strategies for implementing the 10 goals including:

- Developing comprehensive education plans
- Developing partnerships among multiple educational stakeholders
- Emphasizing early childhood education, the promotion of tribal language and culture in schools, training Native teachers, and strengthening tribal and BIA colleges
- Creating mechanisms for holding officials at all levels, including tribes, accountable for achieving the goals
- Fostering understanding of the relationships that exist between tribes and all levels (local, state, and federal) of government.

The goals and priorities outlined in the Task Force report are not markedly different from those found in other reform documents of this era. Yet, the urgency of the need for action is deeply felt in Native communities and in those schools serving Native students in light of the persistent lags in AI/AN student performance, access, and attainment documented at the beginning of this report.

The enactment of the Native American Languages Act in 1990 restored the rights of indigenous peoples to use their Native languages in instruction, as well as any other public proceeding.³⁶ Furthering the direction of this policy, in 1998, Presidential Executive Order 13096 was signed that called for a comprehensive federal Indian education policy that would improve academic performance, reduce dropout rates, create a research agenda to address the areas of disparity and identify effective practices, and repair the effects on AI/AN students of fragmented, complex government services and intergovernmental relations.

One of the outcomes of the 1998 Executive Order was a detailed education research agenda that is still being reported on and still supplying educators with valuable information on the status of the education of AI/AN students. The priorities of the agenda were to research the following:

- Educational outcomes of AI/AN students—particularly to be able to establish a baseline for future comparisons

- Effects of incorporating Native languages and cultures on educational outcomes
- Effective methods for developing, recruiting, and retaining teachers for schools with large AI/AN enrollments
- Evaluation of the practices used with AI/AN students who are often overrepresented in special education and remedial classes
- Status of early childhood education and programs
- Effect of standards and high stakes tests on AI/AN students.³⁷

Progress is being made in gathering data in these areas. Research and practice reports are available to educators to help them improve the quality of curriculum and instruction for AI/AN students. However, more work is needed to ensure that educators are able to recognize and incorporate the uniqueness of AI/AN students' experiences into their teaching and learning.





CHAPTER 3

Pathways to Success for American Indian/Alaska Native Students

“Formal Indian education in America stretches all the way from reservation preschools to prestigious urban universities far away from Indian cultural centers. This educational journey spans two distinct value systems and worldviews. . . . In that meeting ground lies the opportunity for the two cultures to both teach and learn from one another.”

—Vine Deloria, Jr., retired professor of Political Science, University of Arizona; Deloria was named by *Time Magazine* as one of the 11 most influential religious thinkers in the 20th century

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As with any group of educators, Native educators and educational researchers hold a wide range of perspectives on what it will take to improve the educational outcomes of AI/AN youth. Some agreement emerges around three broad themes: the value of Native language and culture, the need for special preparation of educators, and the importance of engaging families and communities in the educational process. State and federal policies are critically important in supporting educational efforts based on these themes.

Using Native Language and Culture to Promote Success in Indian Students

Language and Culture

In 1990, the Native American Languages Act was signed into federal law. The law supported the preservation, protection, and promotion of Native Americans’ right to use and practice Native American languages, even in public schools.³⁸ The act was needed because most public policy until then had worked to suppress the use of Native languages. Consequently, many languages ceased to be spoken or preserved.

Given the importance of language as a central element of a people’s culture, the ways they think and how they communicate, this law was essential to the continuation of AI/AN culture in the U.S. Native

languages serve as both a link to the past, as well as a bridge between traditional members of indigenous tribes and those members who interact regularly with the broader, multicultural society.³⁹

The struggle to preserve Native languages did not end with the passage of the 1990 legislation. The past several years have seen a growing movement toward English-only policies that have threatened AI/AN groups' efforts to help their youth keep or learn their ancestors' languages. This struggle does not just belong to Native students, but also to many immigrants who have a strong desire to learn English as well as keep their home languages intact.

Among the impediments to maintaining and preserving AI/AN language is that the areas where Native languages are spoken are often isolated geographical locations, with rapidly shrinking numbers of Native speakers. Some Native languages are only known through recordings made of deceased ancestors. On the other hand, the urban relocation of many AI/AN families has scattered many people who speak the same language. The difficulties inherent to language preservation for urban students are many. These obstacles present both fiscal and logistical limitations that are difficult to overcome when developing and implementing programs and services.⁴⁰

The great concern expressed by many AI/AN families and educators about the loss of Native languages is supported by data on home language. NCES data show that 88 percent of AI/AN 8th graders report living in homes where either no other language besides English is spoken or another language is spoken only once in a while. Hispanic and Asian American and Pacific Islander 8th graders were nearly five times more likely to report that their families speak a language other than English all or most of the time.⁴¹

Maintaining a language as a true living mode of communication requires a strategy different from how languages are usually taught in school. Often foreign languages are taught by focusing on the names of objects or through the repetition and memorization of dialogues.⁴² This approach has not proven effective for helping Native students recapture their languages in such a way as to allow students to use them outside the context of school.

A more effective approach for Native language instruction involves the immersion of students in the language and the culture to which it belongs. Native educators who have successfully taught students their Native language, for example at the Tséhoosóí Diné Bít'ólta'í Navajo K–6 Immersion School in Window Rock Unified School District #8, find that students learn when they are taught in an environment where the educators:

- Respect and value the students' language and culture
- Use a "total physical response" approach using gestures and facial expressions to communicate and allowing students to act out behaviors
- Enact common routines using Native language to describe the action
- Encourage regular practicing of the language throughout the day, not just as a curriculum subject
- Integrate cultural activities like singing, dancing, storytelling.⁴³

In Alaska, another model of teaching Native language and culture offers parents the choice of an immersion, dual immersion, or all English approach. In the two forms of immersion, students are taught using texts in their Native language by educators who have spent time learning about the Native culture.

Both immersion programs, in this case, teaching the Yup'ik language and culture, use thematic units that extend into the secondary levels. These units cover topics as varied as family and community, winter sur-

vival, toy making, and fishing — all drawn from their daily environments. The dual immersion program offers students both Yup'ik and English language arts. By fifth grade, when all students are making a transition to academic English, educators are seeing that the Native language literacy skills are transferring to support the English skills.⁴⁴

The development of indigenous language and culturally appropriate instruction and curriculum in schools attended by AI/AN students helps instill in them a strong sense of their unique value and worth in their own tribal community as well as in the multicultural environment in which they live.⁴⁵ It would be safe to say that, paraphrasing the title of this section, Native language and culture promotes success in Indian students.

The AI/AN students' reading achievement gap is prompting creativity in the development of culturally appropriate materials. Educators in Washington state have developed an early literacy curriculum (K–2) that reflects three broad cultural themes of the AI/AN groups in that region. The drum, the canoe, and the basket form the basis of the curricular materials, which include 22 books (recorded on a CD-rom).⁴⁶

The reading curriculum was developed by cultural specialists including tribal elders and students, as well as curriculum specialists to ensure cultural accuracy and sensitivity. The place-based curriculum is grounded in the local history, culture, and ecology of the community and invites the engagement of parents, elders, and other community members in their children's education. The collaboration between educators and community members inspires respect for each other's knowledge and experiences.⁴⁷

The developers of the early reading curriculum argue that their Northwest-developed curriculum is adaptable for AI/AN students, and other culturally diverse students, in urban areas, provided the cultural expertise of local community members is tapped. If educators start with the basic Washington state K–2 reading curriculum, which is state standards-based, and then reach out to the community for the particulars, greater community engagement and connectedness of students to the academic work can result.

Culture and Learning

There is always a danger in making too broad generalizations about how students' learning styles are determined by their culture. The greatest threat is stereotyping students and ignoring their individuality. With that said, some AI/AN writers suggest that Native cultures do value education and children in ways that may result in behavior that conflicts with the expectations of student behavior in public school classrooms.

One example of a culture clash is how Native cultures view education's purpose as a means to learn to be a better person, rather than to become a better worker. Thus, a values-infused learning environment in which students learn about respect, keeping promises, kindness, peacefulness, courage, and moderation may help students build resilience, but not a desire to compete.⁴⁸

Another source of conflict may be found in how Native children are treated as "respected or (sacred) beings" and thus their value is not commonly seen "in terms of grades, testing performance, or potential for economic success in the workforce."⁴⁹ Some AI/AN child rearing practices encourage children to express themselves, have pride and independent values, as well as develop skills through observational participation.⁵⁰ These values may clash with classroom expectations in some of the following ways:

- While AI/AN students are active participants in small learning groups, they may not be as willing to contribute individually in large groups.

- Students' use of humor may lead them to tease each other about their ability to do a task or may jokingly refuse to show their ability until they are confident they have it mastered. Similarly, they may hold back from showing their ability until they are sure they know the new skill and choose their own time to demonstrate what they know.
- At home, Native students are likely to learn a skill or knowledge and its direct real world application. In school, students may press their teacher for a direct application of what they are learning or even query, "How are we going to use this?" or "Why are we doing this?"
- Collaboration in the completion of tasks is highly valued in AI/AN communities but may be perceived as cheating when school assignments are completed in the same way.
- In the realm of discipline issues, AI/AN students are likely to take the blame for something and not identify anyone else who participated with them and thus end up with increased discipline referrals.⁵¹

In light of these differences, educators might choose to:

- Establish one-on-one relationships with the AI/AN students in their classes and with their parents to help them understand and respect the cultural differences they may observe.
- Model the behavior they desire from children.
- Show or give concrete examples of why processes or actions are required.
- Develop an appreciation of Native humor.⁵²

As valuable as this general guidance might be, there is still the danger of adhering too closely to any single teaching style. The reality of AI/AN students is that their differences in learning styles are probably as great as their commonalities. Consequently, a safer path might be for educators to broaden their teaching styles so they can adapt to a wide variety of learning styles as might be found in any classroom with a diverse collection of students.⁵³ Instructional approaches that are successful in classrooms populated by culturally diverse students include cooperative learning, instruction that supports multiple sensory modalities, and the use of thematic units that support a more global style of learning.⁵⁴

Given these complexities, preparing both Native and non-Native educators to be successful with AI/AN students is a unique challenge.

Preparing Educators To Be Effective Supports for Student Achievement

Another important element in creating greater AI/AN student success is the careful preparation of both Native and non-Native educators. An essential feature of this preparation is the exposure of educators to the culture of Native students. Here we refer to culture as including not only the traditions and beliefs of a group, but also the elements that make up the everyday lives and routines of students and their families. As mentioned in the previous discussion of culture and learning, when educators understand how students are valued in their homes, how children are reared, and how youth relate to the adults in their communities, they are better able to establish relationships with AI/AN students that foster success in school and in life.

Building a Native teaching force is a major challenge for public education advocates. Some of the rationale for making this effort lies in research that finds that:

- When educator and student share the same language and culture, learning and the desire to stay in school are enhanced.
- Native educators are important role models for students, especially when they have cultural knowledge, hold high expectations for students, show students respect, and insist on respect for themselves.
- Native educators are likely to be aware of AI/AN learning styles and use this knowledge to be more effective teachers.
- Native educators provide a bridge between AI/AN students and their communities and help build support for maintaining indigenous languages and cultures, while ensuring that students are prepared to function well in the larger society.⁵⁵

A recent study of AI/AN and Native Hawaiian educators found that while nearly 100 percent of them felt that Native languages and cultures should be included in AI/AN students' learning experiences, only about a quarter of them felt qualified to make this inclusion and teach Native languages or cultures. Only 49 percent felt ready to deal with Native learning styles.⁵⁶

When asked what the surveyed AI/AN and Native Hawaiian educators believed would help them to become better prepared, they identified the following five improvements:

1. "Instruction would be "indigenized," [quotes in original] not merely in content but, more importantly, in pedagogical style. Whenever possible, Native [college] instructors would deliver lessons, utilizing styles and strategies that are culturally congruent.
2. The curricular integration of cultural values, beliefs, and local knowledge would be modeled.
3. Bilingual or ESL methods for teaching Native languages would be offered.
4. More time and resources would be allocated to academic exploration of the issues around parent involvement, authentic assessment, and investigating teaching strategies congruent with Native learning styles.
5. Native faculty would be available to mentor and guide students through the period of professional development and to provide support during their induction year of teaching."⁵⁷

Currently, tribal universities, tribal colleges in collaboration with state universities, and state colleges and universities produce the bulk of Native educators. Unfortunately, because of the relatively small numbers of AI/AN students who complete both high school and college and then choose education as a career among the many more lucrative professional opportunities now available, there is a serious shortage of Native teachers.

Compounding the pipeline problem is the high teacher turnover rate in schools serving AI/AN students. Whether the cause is low salaries, high poverty environments, or extreme rural isolation, teachers leave schools with high percentages of AI/AN students at alarming rates. The institutions producing Native educators cannot keep pace. The turnover rate also disrupts the instructional program and leadership in the schools and undermines AI/AN students' persistence.

Consequently, non-Native educators hold a major responsibility for preparing AI/AN students to achieve academically and go on to be productive members of their communities. To that end, their preparation as educators should reflect the kinds of objectives articulated above by the Native educators. In addition, the inservice professional development offered to practicing educators must help them overcome whatever remaining deficiencies in their preservice preparation.

One Alaska Native professional development specialist created a semester-long course on cultural processes in collaboration with a local university professor to help both her non-Native and Native educators become more proficient in their dealings with the Alaska Native students they teach. The course content began at the beginning of the Native group's (in this case the Yup'ik people of southwest Alaska) history before contact with the Europeans or Russians. She explored how her people lived, the tools they used, the raw materials they had access to, and how they survived. She proceeded with post-contact history that incorporated the experiences of the Yup'ik people with that of U.S. and Alaskan history.⁵⁸

She also engaged teachers, teacher candidates, and education support professionals in culturally appropriate hands-on learning, including cutting salmon, plucking ducks, and Eskimo dancing. These experiences were coupled with lectures on Yup'ik philosophy and way of life. This comprehensive learning was offered not only to non-Native teachers, but Yup'ik teachers as well.

Not many educators have the chance to engage in this type of intense exposure to Native culture, nor do they usually have a single tribal group represented in their classrooms. Urban educators with 25 percent or more AI/AN students in their schools are more likely to have several language and cultural groups to instruct. The hurdle they must overcome is getting access to professional development that helps them to be effective with a variety of students. Building skills in the pedagogical approaches mentioned in the previous section (cooperative learning, multisensory instruction, and using thematic units) is one strategy.

Another essential strategy is making an effort to learn about the history and culture of the Native and non-Native students in the classroom. While books and other similar materials are one source, they are no substitute for learning directly from the communities the students come from. AI/AN researchers and practitioners encourage non-Native educators to become engaged in AI/AN communities and learn about their students through the Native people who work in their school systems as teacher mentors and assistants, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, Native faculty and others.

The effort to learn about AI/AN students pays off with appreciation from community members and tribal elders. Such knowledge can prevent the predicament created by one well-meaning non-Navajo teacher who took her class to a cemetery for a writing assignment about Halloween. She did not know how culturally inappropriate this was for the students and that, as a result, the students had to go through cleansing ceremonies.⁵⁹

Professional development to be effective with AI/AN students can go further if the school and district are committed to multicultural education that transforms and leads to social action.⁶⁰ Moving beyond the "heroes and holidays" approach to multicultural education, educators can shift the perspective of the curriculum from the mainstream to the historical and cultural experiences of the students in the classroom.

In this approach, educators learn how to 'flip' the curriculum so that AI/AN students no longer are inundated with the value of Western technology, science, and the arts to the exclusion of Native ways of doing, understanding, and creating. The knowledge base of the indigenous peoples of the Americas—North, Central, and South—to the U.S. form of government, western pharmaceuticals, and the North American diet are studied as a lens through which to view the contributions of the Middle East and Mediterranean regions.⁶¹

Moving toward social action, students may become empowered to study and address issues that affect them directly, such as the environmental justice issues in and near their reservations, violation of their civil right to wear their hair long while playing on sports teams, and the use of stereotypical images of Native

Americans as mascots for those teams. This approach to multicultural education is more challenging and risky for educators because it takes on issues of prejudice and racism. However, it has the potential payoff of intrinsically motivating students to use the knowledge and skills they are gaining because of its personal relevance to their home communities.⁶²

Reaching Out to the Community To Create Success in the Classroom

Family and community engagement in education is a major endeavor for all educators, especially in low-income and minority communities. With AI/AN communities, educators must also overcome the legacy of an antagonistic relationship with U.S. public and Indian schools. The boarding school experience, the denial of public school access until the 1920s, the persistent underfunding of Indian schools, and the assimilationist mission of these schools have created a well-founded mistrust of the public school enterprise.

This mistrust can lead to families viewing educators' invitation to become involved with suspicion. Family members are unsure of educators' motives, are unclear what is expected of them, or not certain of how they can contribute. Educators must not only overcome family members' suspicions but also be clear about how parents, who may have had incomplete educations and negative experiences with schools, can now help their children be academically successful.⁶³

Despite these hurdles, the schools need the communities and the communities need the schools.⁶⁴ The wealth of research supporting the positive impact of family and community engagement on student achievement holds true for AI/AN families, communities, and students. The positive outcomes of improved motivation, attendance, graduation rates, and achievement are all outcomes observed in AI/AN students when their families and communities are involved.⁶⁵

Educators need supports in order to successfully make these links. They require professional preparation in how to open up the decision making and school governance processes in ways that value AI/AN knowledge, skills, languages, and institutions. They also benefit from guidance in engaging family members in the formal education of their children.

A key contribution that AI/AN families and communities can make is supporting the maintenance of indigenous languages and cultures in the public schools. Urban AI/AN peoples often maintain strong ties to their respective home communities. These ties often include commitments to extended family, clans, and traditional ceremonial responsibilities.

The ties that connect urban AI/AN communities with their traditional roots are resources for urban educators. Previously discussed is the need for educators to reach into the community for help in enriching their capacity for bringing Native languages and traditions into their classrooms. AI/AN communities also must step forward to work with educators to prepare materials, teach classes, share knowledge and skills, and find other creative ways to inform the education of their children.⁶⁶

Schools are realizing greater success with AI/AN students where they have created in-school experiences for family members that are positive, welcoming, and responsive to their needs and that emphasize two-way communication between school and home and between school and community. Some schools are redefining themselves as community learning centers that offer educational, social, and recreational activities to adults, as well as to children, and that reach out to community constituencies to support their involvement.

Programs such as family math, science, literacy, and technology nights help to extend the schools' reach and accessibility to AI/AN communities. One program in Mississippi, serving Mississippi Choctaw communities, has a traveling bus that houses tutoring, literacy support, and supplemental services for students by day and computer access and other job training by night.⁶⁷

Parent involvement and family engagement are difficult for most communities—especially those dealing with poverty and/or rural or urban isolation, as well as health and safety needs. Yet, the commitment of Native peoples to preserving their languages and cultures and to supporting their children in being successful in the wider society demands a strong connection between school and home. This connection can only be created with persistence and creativity.

Promoting Policies that Benefit Indian Students

The Dilemma of NCLB and Indian Education

The so-called No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and reaffirms the federal government's unique trust responsibility to AI/AN people for the education of their children and pledges the federal government to work with states, school districts, and tribal governments to ensure that Native students' basic and unique educational needs are met.

However, the implementation of the NCLB has resulted in a rolling back of tribal sovereignty in AI/AN education and a greater intrusion of state and federal control. For example, in response to NCLB, most states are exercising increased control over teacher certification and student standards, thus encroaching on, in some views, the trust relationship that exists between tribal governments and the federal government. This change in power and relationships is coming under the auspices of the federal requirements for highly qualified teachers and the adequate yearly progress (AYP) expectations of NCLB.⁶⁸

Admittedly, the law's mandate to break apart average school test scores is bringing to the surface the places where AI/AN students are not achieving at levels that will lead to success. The accountability requirements of the law also have the potential to spotlight the failures of school systems in adequately meeting the needs of their AI/AN students.

Unfortunately, insufficient funding of the law's school improvement provision and a punitive approach to enforcing accountability is keeping the law from fulfilling its potential and is resulting in damaging outcomes. Some educators and community members see the law undermining advances made in the 1990s to involve families and communities in the everyday education of their children and in shaping policy that affects that education. The use of standards that do not take into account the unique language and cultural needs of AI/AN students is seen as a direct affront to these efforts.

In addition, the narrowing of curriculum, focus on absolute annual performance rather than improvement over time, preference for direct instruction, and single-minded use of tests as a measure of achievement appear to be having pernicious effects on AI/AN education in the following ways:⁶⁹

- With the primary focus on standardized achievement tests in reading, math, and science only, AI/AN students who have been enjoying learning environments that take into account their unique cultural and learning needs are likely to feel more alienated from their schooling experiences.

- The pressure of the stringent AYP requirements is reported to be making individual AI/AN students feel personally responsible for the failure of their schools to meet the standards.
- The pedagogical preference, especially in struggling schools, for direct instructional approaches has the potential to undermine educators' efforts to use instructional techniques that meet AI/AN students' unique learning needs.
- The focus on test preparation is discouraging educators from continuing to teach, thus exacerbating an already critical teacher supply problem.⁷⁰

Other ethnic, minority, low-income, and language groups are feeling the effects of NCLB in ways similar to AI/AN students. Resistance to the more limiting effects of the law is growing among these groups.

State Policies

From a funding standpoint, the federal government has a much smaller effect on the public education of AI/AN students than states. State education policies directly affect at least 90 percent of all AI/AN students who attend public schools, so it is useful to look at a few examples of state education policy. These examples illustrate what is possible in state policies and what is likely when the political will to truly embrace cultural diversity is lacking.

Alaska

The Alaska Native Language Center (ANLC) was established by state legislation in 1972 as a center for research and documentation of the 20 Native languages of Alaska. It is internationally known and recognized as the major center in the United States for the study of Eskimo and Northern Athabaskan languages. ANLC publishes its research in story collections, dictionaries, grammars, and research papers. It houses an archival collection of more than 10,000 items and the Center's staff provides materials for bilingual teachers and other language workers throughout the state and deliver consulting and training services to teachers, school districts, and state agencies involved in bilingual education.⁷¹

California

Community activism was the critical force in effecting the teaching of AI/AN history from an indigenous point of view in California. The inclusion of Native input has had an effect on the entire state history curriculum and has resulted in a legislative appropriation for the California Indian Heritage Center.⁷² The Center will give the state's students, teachers, and families the chance to learn about the history and heritage of California's indigenous population and contemporary Indian life. The Center will be developed and run in collaboration with and under the guidance of the California Indian community.

Idaho

As a way to support native languages and cultures in the public schools, Idaho permits a limited certification of Native language speakers to teach their languages. They are not allowed to teach anything else without a standards-based teacher certification. The statute goes further to "permit" tribes to create their own system for designating individuals to teach their languages as long as there are both oral and written qualification tests, a system for evaluating the teaching methods, and the duration of the designation. In this way, the state maintains quite a bit of control over what the tribe can do in this certification process.

Minnesota

Minnesota's 2004 Indian Education Act supports a variety of efforts to enhance the quality of education for its American Indian students including:

- Focusing strongly on reading and math achievement
- Positively reinforcing Indian students' self-image
- Developing intercultural awareness among pupils, parents, and staff.

Programs to support these efforts involve:

- Inservice and technical assistance for educators in teaching strategies effective for American Indian students
- Research and evaluation of effective methods
- Program development in collaboration with tribal groups and Indian social service agencies.

Scholarship programs for financially-needy AI students and programs to train Indian teachers are available in the higher education system.

Of particular interest to educators is a curriculum that includes 13 American Indian-focused topics usable by classroom educators, parents, and students. Among these topics are American Indian art, contributions to modern society, leadership, sovereignty, U.S. policies, and Indian values. These curricula are available for downloading at http://children.state.mn.us/mde/Academic_Excellence/Indian_Education/k-12_curriculum/index.html.

Montana

Montana's constitution is unique in that it requires all the state's public schools to teach about American Indian culture and history. The problem is that the requirement has never been funded. The most recent attempt to have the effort financed took place in the spring of 2005. After an initial proposal of over \$20 million was rejected, the amount was reduced to \$6 million then cut and eliminated altogether. Legislators did not see the need to make additional funds available to provide for the professional development of educators in this area.

New Mexico

The state legislature passed and funded the Indian Education Act in 2003. The act affects:

- Governance, through the Assistant Superintendent of Indian Education who has responsibility for programs, curriculum development, creating an Indian Education Advisory Council, and other actions;
- Teacher and principal quality by calling for the recruitment and preparation of Native teachers, principals, and bilingual educators; and
- Parent and tribal involvement by requiring regular state, district, and school level reports on the status of American Indian students.

Other states have expectations for schools to teach American Indian history (Washington), but often these policies are hard to enforce or implement at the school and district levels. States have the power and the resources, but not always the will, to improve significantly the quality of education for both Native and non-Native students. Specific policies and strategies for change that educators and education advocates, including community members and businesses, can push for are included in the recommendations section.

Conclusion

This report began by identifying several meanings of Indian education: communities continuing their cultural heritage; the status of AI/AN student performance, access, and attainment; supplementary approaches to the regular curriculum to meet Native students' needs; special programs to assist AI/AN students; and ways that schools can change to accommodate to AI/AN students. Each of these meanings has been explored to some extent along with the historical and policy contexts for their use or rejection.

The issues raised here illustrate the complexity of AI/AN students' needs and the changes required in education institutions to meet them. Yet, in articulating a response to those needs and identifying options for those changes, there is an underlying simplicity in what is required: the will to act. For those who value high quality, equitable education, there must be the political, social, and moral will to take action to support a diverse democracy. Such action would make it possible for American Indian/Alaska Native students to fulfill their destinies as contributors to their communities and to the larger society. These students have waited long enough.



The graphic features a large, bold number '4' in the center, with the word 'CHAPTER' written vertically to its left. Below the '4' is the word 'Recommendations' in a bold, sans-serif font. The background is a light beige color with faint, stylized white outlines of a person and a bird, possibly a Native American figure and a hawk, respectively.

CHAPTER 4

Recommendations

American Indian and Alaska Native students face many obstacles in their schools and communities. Yet, increasing numbers of AI/AN students are successfully moving through the educational pipeline and attaining college degrees at all levels. This report has explored the historical context and present day circumstances that contribute to this picture. Public educational policies, community action, and individual educator practice can all play a role in improving the educational outcomes for this diverse and unique group of students.

This report concludes with the following recommendations for practice and policy.

For all school personnel and education advocates:

- Learn about the history and present day situations of AI/AN students, both in urban and rural areas of our country, to better understand the context for Native school achievement.
- Work together with AI/AN communities and your local and state affiliates to create action plans for removing the obstacles AI/AN students face in learning about and maintaining their Native languages and cultures while becoming proficient in the skills that will enable them to be successful leaders in the U.S. society.
- Join forces with AI/AN communities, local school boards, and the broader community to eliminate the use of AI/AN images as mascots for school sport teams.
- Engage policymakers and legislators in identifying ways that local, state, and federal policies, especially the so-called No Child Left Behind Act, limit AI/AN students' achievement opportunities.

For classroom teachers:

- Recognize AI/AN students' cultural experiences as resources for in-class cultural education.
- Examine your classroom for subtle and not-so-subtle images and/or messages that support stereotypes of AI/AN students and their cultures.

- Learn about the history, languages, and cultures of your AI/AN students to help create a learning environment that will stimulate their minds and hearts and allow them to stay connected with their Native cultures.
- Create opportunities for AI/AN and other students to learn about the history and contributions of AI/AN peoples to modern society.
- Learn from AI/AN families and communities about alternative ways of understanding the relationship between humans and the land in order to augment the teaching of science, math, and other subjects.
- Create innovative opportunities to engage AI/AN families and community members in the education of AI/AN students by tapping into their knowledge to help shape culturally appropriate curricular materials and instructional approaches.

For professional development programs:

- Devise pre-service and in-service learning opportunities that help educators become versed in teaching strategies that help AI/AN students be successful in the classroom and in life.
- Recruit more AI/ANs into teacher preparation, school building leadership development, and education support professional positions, including bilingual resource specialists.
- Facilitate the creation of programs that assist interested AI/AN education support professionals to become classroom teachers.
- Develop occasions for experienced AI/AN educators to mentor and support new AI/AN educators to help increase the likelihood that new educators will stay in the profession.

For educational leaders and policymakers:

- Acknowledge tribal sovereignty and work directly with tribes and AI/AN communities to create policies and strategies to improve Indian education.
- Develop activities that help AI/AN families and community members overcome their negative experiences with schools to see ways they can help their children be successful academically while staying connected to their tribal or group cultures.
- Analyze barriers to college gateway courses like algebra and physics and Advanced Placement courses and create strategies for overcoming these barriers for AI/AN students.
- Distribute college financial aid information, accompanied by access support, to help more AI/AN students—especially first generation college goers—gain entry to postsecondary education.
- Recognize the knowledge of tribal elders as educators and allow them to contribute to the preservation of native languages and cultures in the public schools.

For researchers:

- Analyze the impact of high stakes testing on AI/AN high school completion rates.
- Survey AI/AN parents and families to determine how they see their role in promoting their children's academic and life success.
- Examine the impact of NCLB on the infusion of Native languages and cultures into the curriculum in schools with 25 percent or more AI/AN student populations.

- Explore how the adequate yearly progress provisions of NCLB are affecting AI/AN students' attitudes toward schooling.
- Investigate the effects of the narrowing of curricula and of the focus on testing on AI/AN teacher retention.
- Identify Native communities that are working to integrate their knowledge and skills into school curricula and the effect this is having on AI/AN student achievement and other outcomes.
- Evaluate successful AI/AN educator preparation programs and share their components widely.
- Review state policies geared to improving AI/AN student outcomes to analyze their fiscal support and effectiveness.
- Highlight successful programs which are using language and culture to create successful education programs.

For AI/AN advocacy organizations:

- Promote the involvement of AI/AN educators and community members in the development/selection of assessments to be used with AI/AN students, especially for those who are English-language learners (ELLs).
- Design and seek support for programs that help AI/AN students persist to graduation through middle and high school on to college or technical training by offering both academic and social support.
- Reach out to state legislators and local school board members to educate them about the need for culturally sensitive education programs and policies to support AI/AN students.
- Support the recruitment of AI/AN college students into educator preparation programs to become models of academic success and cultural competence.
- Produce opportunities in which AI/AN communities and the public schools cooperate to help educators understand Native cultures and locate appropriate instructional resources.
- Work in partnership with education stakeholders (e.g., tribal councils, education associations, school leadership, local businesses, and faith-based communities) to advocate for adequate funding to support AI/AN education.
- Encourage AI/AN community members to become part of the education policy structure, including school governance, school boards, and the legislature.
- Coordinate an advocacy strategy that includes other English-language learning communities to seek education reform that supports students' bilingualism.

For the National Education Association:

- Inform members, staff, and the public of the availability of this report and of resources for improving the ways we teach to and about AI/ANs, and assist affiliates in developing and delivering professional development workshops that accomplish this goal.
- Continue the partnerships with the National Indian Education Association, the United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc., and other AI/AN education organizations to advocate for favorable legislative and policy changes to enhance the academic and life outcomes of AI/AN students.
- Address AI/ANs in all of NEA's strategic goals by ensuring that AI/AN concerns are integrated wherever possible.

- Persist in its advocacy for adequate funding for tribal schools and colleges and social programs that help AI/AN peoples overcome the poverty, ill-health, and limited opportunities they continue to suffer.
- Continue its advocacy to fix and fund the so-called No Child Left Behind Act with the purpose of removing the negative impact it is having on AI/AN students' achievement by narrowing the curriculum and limiting the opportunities for these students to demonstrate what they know.



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- ⁴⁶ For copies of the CD-rom, please contact Denny Hurtado, Office of Indian Education, Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Olympia, WA.
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History Timeline: Selected Dates in Indian History and Indian Education*

**This information was adapted from *The Quest for Quality Education* (Washington, DC: NEA, 1982); *Report of the American Indian/Alaska Native Concerns Study Committee* (Washington, DC: NEA 1987); *American History: A Survey. Volume II: Since 1865* by Alan Brinkley et al. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991); "Comprehensive Reform and American Indian Education" by David L. Beaulieu (*Journal of American Indian Education*, June 2, 2000); and "Reflecting on the Past: Some Important Aspects of Indian Education to Consider as We Look Toward the future" by John W. Tippeconnic III (*Journal of American Indian Education*, June 2, 2000).*

A more detailed version of this timeline can be found in National Education Association. 2002 "Summary Report of a Panel Discussion on American Indian Education." Compiled by Ron Houston & Tarajeen Yazee, amended by Octaviana Trujillo.

The Beginning to 1492 (Period of Self-determination)

Before the introduction of the European system, tribal education was the norm in the Americas. Parents and other adult members of the tribe transmitted the people's values, customs, stories, religion, and history to the next generation. They taught children to use that knowledge wisely and responsibly, and they taught them in the language of the tribe.

1492 to 1776 (Colonial Period)

In the early days of Indian-European contact, education consisted of efforts to "civilize and convert" the Natives. Jesuits taught them French customs and language, Protestants Anglicized them and Franciscans tried to mainstream them by making them missionaries. During the colonial period, colonists signed treaties with Indians to acquire land and regulate transactions, with some treaties stipulating the employment of people to teach Indians.

1776 to 1830 (Period of Early U.S. – Indian Relations)

Between 1778 and 1871 – when it needed Indians as allies against European powers, land for settlers spreading west, and an end to wars with the Indians themselves, the U.S. government signed hundreds of treaties with tribes offering health services, schools, teachers, and money in exchange for Indian land, trade concessions, fishing and hunting rights, and the tribes’ jurisdiction over their remaining land.

But the schools the treaties authorized did little more than spread Christianity and Western culture and provide agrarian training to compensate for the loss of the Indians’ livelihood. They were ill equipped to provide mainstream education, and they failed utterly to recognize Indian languages, culture, and history.

Out of the treaty arrangement, however, the U.S. government assumed a protective role that developed into the “trust relationship,” albeit a shifting trust relationship, that governs U.S.–Indian relationships to this day.

1830 – 1850 (Removal Era)

Indians wanted to remain on their ancestral land, which Whites wanted to occupy. The solution reached by the states and the U.S. government under President Andrew Jackson was to remove the Indians from the path of white settlement. Some tribes, such as the Sac and Fox in Illinois and the Seminoles in Florida, were subdued, but they resisted removal. The Creek, Winnebago, Cherokee, and other tribes were forcibly resettled in “Indian Territory,” separated from whites. The Cherokees tried to hold onto their land by becoming “American” in customs, language, and constitution and by educating all their people through Osceola’s syllabary of the Cherokee language. However, the state of Georgia refused to recognize the Cherokee Nation and declared its laws null and void.

1850 – 1880 (Period of Reservations and Wars)

The “Indian Territory” to which tribes were removed faced more demands by Whites who continued to move westward, taking land, killing buffalo, and further weakening the economic viability of the tribes. Constant fighting ensued as Indians valiantly but unsuccessfully resisted white threats to their civilization. The period ended in 1890 with the Battle of Wounded Knee in South Dakota, in which more than 200 Indians were slaughtered.

1880 to 1920 (Period of Allotment and Assimilation)

This period sees a reversal of the U.S. policy of creating reservations to isolate Indians from whites. Through the Dawes Severalty Act, Congress forces Indians to become landowners and farmers by refusing to allow tribes to own reservation lands communally. Under this law, the U.S. gives tracts of land to individual Indians and U.S. citizenship to adult owners—however, unlike other citizens, Indians do not get full title for 25 years.

During this time, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) forced Indian assimilation to White ways: it removed families from their land, sent Indian children to White-run boarding schools, stopped the practice of Indian rituals, and encouraged the spread of Christian churches to reservations. The boarding school movement grew, with the number of federal Indian schools reaching 106. Abandoned military posts were used for educating Indians.

The period ended with the publication of the *Merriam Report*, which ushered in a period known as the Indian New Deal. The report brought the deprivation and abused of Indian children attending public

and BIA schools to the attention of the federal government. It resulted in the authorization of programs for improving the education of Indians and the provision of federal financial aid to local school districts, reservation day schools and public schools that had been established on Indian trust lands.

1930 to 1945 (Indian Reorganization Act)

During this period, Congress passed two landmark laws—the Indian Reorganization Act and the Johnson-O-Malley Act—and alternately strengthened and weakened the Indian tribes. Under the New Deal, for example, pressures on Indians to assimilate abated and U.S. policies toward Indians began to improve. This was seen in the Indian Reorganization Act, which returned significant political authority to the tribes; provided government funds for education, health care, and cultural activities; and reversed the allotment policy. As a result of this redistribution of land, Indian income increased and the tribes became more viable. However, the national unity pressures that built up during World War II undermined this newly-found tribal strength, and many Indians who served as soldiers elected to live in the non-Indian world rather than return to the reservation.

1945 to 1965 (Termination Period)

Through the termination policy that was begun in 1953, Congress stopped recognizing the tribes as legal entities separate from the states where they were located. Instead, it made the tribes subject to the same local jurisdictions as other people and required that Indian property be managed, not by tribal councils, but by private organizations, such as banks, which served as trustees for tribal assets. Congress also reinvigorated the assimilation policy, encouraging Indians to move to cities. As a result, the tribes were weakened and corruption became widespread. Bowing to pressure from Indians, including the National Congress of American Indians, President Dwight Eisenhower barred further terminations without the tribes' consent.

The period ended with the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act and the channeling of federal community action funds to the tribes, which became more autonomous and began to mobilize for self-determination.

1965 to 2005 (Period of Self-Determination)

During this period, the U.S. rejected the termination policy and began to be more responsive to Indian issues. Much of the credit for this responsiveness goes to the groundbreaking report, *Indian Education: A National Tragedy, A National Challenge*.

The U.S. enacted and started to implement Great Society programs under the Economic Opportunity Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Indian Civil Rights Act, the Indian Education Act, and the Tribally Controlled Community Colleges Act.

At the same time, Indians started to win court victories to rectify broken treaties and started to organize more militant advocacy organizations, such as the American Indian Movement (AIM). These events, as well as clashes with Washington State officials over fishing rights and AIM's occupation of Alcatraz Island and Wounded Knee brought the Indians' plight to national attention.

Two presidents' executive orders resulted in the collection and report of educational data that help to identify successful education strategies and the status of AI/AN early and K-16 education.





NEA Online Resources

Native American Reading List <http://www.nea.org/readacross/resources/nabooklist.html>.

"Focus On American Indians/Alaska Natives," 2004–05

An annual newsletter that highlights educational issues of interest in AI/AN education. This issue focuses on strategies to close the student achievement gaps.

<http://www.nea.org/teachexperience/images/indiansfocus.pdf>.

The 2005-06 issue provides a brief summary of NEA/NIEA Moving from Research to Practice: A Summit on Indian Students.

Available by contacting hcrinfo@nea.org.

American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month

November is American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month. Explore Education World's resources on the history and cultures of America's original inhabitants.

<http://www.nea.org/lessons/tt031109.html>.

Safe Zone: Taking a Stand So All Students Can Learn and Succeed

A downloadable poster that shows students that their schools are taking a stand against racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, ageism, religious bias, and other forms of bias and discrimination. <http://www.nea.org/schoolsafety/safezone.html>

Selected Journals, Web Sites and Online Reports on AIAN Education

"A Quiet Crisis: Federal Funding and Unmet Needs in Indian Country," US Commission on Civil Rights <http://www.tedna.org/usccr/quietcrisis.pdf>.

AEL, Inc., Resources for American Indian Alaskan Native Education.
<http://www.ael.org/page2.htm?&index=751&pd=1&scope=ai&pub=x&pv=x>.

Alaska Federation of Natives Research Guidelines. <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/afnguide.html>.

American Indian Language Policy and School Success. <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/BOISE.html>.

Arizona State University Labriola Center. <http://www.asu.edu/lib/archives/labriola.htm>.

Broken Promises: Evaluating the Native American Health System.
<http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/nahealth/nabroken.pdf>.

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Indian Education Programs. <http://www.oiep.bia.edu/>.

Census 2000 Brief, "The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2000."
<http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kbr01-15.pdf> .

Cultural Survival. <http://209.200.101.189/>.

Indian Nations At Risk Task Force. http://www.kued.org/productions/2worlds/at_risk/.

"*The Inevitable Corruption of Indicators and Educators through High-Stakes Testing.*" PDF
<http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps1/EPRU/documents/EP5L-0503-101-EPRU.pdf>.

Journal of American Indian Education. <http://jaie.asu.edu/>.

Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation. <http://evaluation.wmich.edu/jmde/>.

Language Learning and Technology. <http://llt.msu.edu/vol6num2/default.html>.

Maintaining and Renewing Indigenous Languages. <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/Main.html>.

National Indian Education Association. *No Child Left Behind in Indian Country*
http://www.niea.org/sa/uploads/policyissues/29.23.NIEANCLBreport_final2.pdf.

Native American Studies Information and Resources.
<http://cobalt.lang.osaka-u.ac.jp/~krkvl/nas.html>

Native Research Network. <http://www.aaip.com/nrnet/nrn.html>.

Plans for Dropout Prevention and Special School Support Services.
<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/INAR.html>.

Revitalizing Indigenous Languages. http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/RIL_Intro.html.

“Strengthening Partnerships for Native American Student Education,” Council of Chief State School Officers’ Research Bibliography. <http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/NASResearchBibliography.doc>

Teaching and Learning with Native Americans. <http://literacynet.org/lp/namericans/>.

Tribal College Journal. <http://www.tribalcollegejournal.org/>.

US Executive Order #13336 - NCLB Order re: American Indian /Alaska Native Education. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/04/20040430-10.html>.

Selected Online Curriculum Resources

Alaska Native Knowledge Network. <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/>.

A Specialized Knowledge Base for Teaching American Indian and Alaska Native Students. <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/TCarticle.html>.

Cradleboard Teaching Project. <http://www.cradleboard.org/>.

Curriculum Development for Native Americans. <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/Curr.html>.

Finding out What Works for Native Students. <http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/09-04/finding.php>.

Hawaii Guidelines for Culturally Healthy and Responsive Learning Environments (CHARLE). <http://www.olelo.hawaii.edu/dual/nhmo/>.

Index of Indigenous Education and Indigenous Language Web Sites. http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/TIL_Index.html.

Improving Mathematics and Science Instruction for LEP Middle and High School Students through Language Activities. <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/symposia/third/reyhner.htm>.

Indian Land Tenure. <http://www.indianlandtenure.org/curriculum/curricindex.htm>.

Minnesota Indian Education K-12 Curriculum http://children.state.mn.us/mde/Academic_Excellence/Indian_Education/K12_Curriculum/index.html

National Museum of the American Indian, Education. <http://www.nmai.si.edu/>.

Northwest Native American Reading Curriculum. <http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/09-03/cloak/curriculum.php>.

PBS Teacher Source. <http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/>.

Teaching and Learning with Native Americans. <http://literacynet.org/lp/namericans/>.

AI/AN Advocacy Organizations

American Indian College Fund. <http://www.collegefund.org/>.

American Indian Higher Education Consortium. <http://www.aihec.org/>.

American Indian Graduate Center. <http://www.aigc.com/>.

American Indian Science and Engineering Society. <http://www.aises.org/>.

Americans for Indian Opportunity. <http://www.aio.org/>.

Boys and Girls Clubs in Native Country. <http://www.naclubs.org/>.

Center for Indian Education. <http://www.ed.asu.edu/cie/>.

Indian Law Resource Center. <http://www.indianlaw.org/>.

Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, Special Interest Group-American Educational Research Association. <http://www.coe.missouri.edu/~ipa/>.

Indigenous Women's Network. <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/WinonaLaDuke/Beijing95.html>.

National Congress of American Indians. <http://www.ncai.org/index.asp>.

Native American Rights Fund. <http://narf.org/>.

National Indian Education Association. <http://www.niea.org>.

National Indian Youth Council. <http://www.niyc-alb.org/>.

Society for the Achievement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science. <http://www.sacnas.org/>

Acknowledgement

The primary author would like to acknowledge the writing assistance of Douglas Martin.



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