

May 10, 2009

Erin Williams, Chairperson, Kindergarten to College Work Group
Montana Board of Education
State of Montana
Helena, Montana

Dear Chairperson Williams and members of the Kindergarten to College Work Group:

The Montana Indian Education Association presents the resolutions recently passed at the 2009 Montana Indian Education Association and asks your consideration of these recommendations in your work as the Board of Education's Work Group.

Also, we ask you to continue to include Indian Education for All as a component of your Working Group's ongoing efforts. Previous to the formation of this working group, there was an Indian Education for All Committee of the Board of Education which was organized in 1999 and provided excellent oversight and guidance to the work of Indian Education for All in Montana's K-Higher Education System. We understand that Indian Education for All was to be one of the components to be included as a part of each of your agendas when this work group was formed in 2006.

There has been real progress made by our classrooms throughout Montana in integrating lessons about American Indians in their instruction. This has been possible because of funds provided since 2005 for curriculum, professional development, and materials. We are grateful for this support. It has been a great beginning but we must be vigilant to make sure that this effort is sustained with adequate funding.

MIEA's resolutions cover many issues, but we want to emphasize the need to advocate for the restoration of the \$10.0 million in at risk funds in the 2011 session that was lost in this past session. This has been a wonderful resource to all our schools in Montana who are working to help at risk students find success. It is very clear in statute of the definition of a quality education (that was developed as a result of the court decision) that the state legislature is to provide funding for at risk students. The \$1.00 left in the At Risk line item in HB 2 does not meet this definition! Following is the statute language:

20-9-309. Basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools defined -- identifying educationally relevant factors: (2) As used in this section, a "basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools" means: ... (ii) an at-risk student;

*20-9-328. At-risk student payment. (1) The state **shall** provide an at-risk student payment to public school districts, as defined in [20-6-101](#) and [20-6-701](#), for at-risk students, as defined in [20-1-101](#) and referred to in [20-9-309](#).*

Thank you for your work to improve education in Montana. We look forward to your efforts to help close the achievement gap for American Indian students and to your advocacy for Indian Education for All in K-Higher Education.

Sincerely,

Carol C. Juneau, Chairperson
Montana Indian Education Association

**Montana Indian Education Association Resolutions 2009
for the Board of Education Kindergarten to College Work Group
May 14, 2009**

RESOLUTION 2009-01: Indian Hiring Preference Policy in Public Schools on Indian Reservations

RESOLUTION 2009-03: Close the Achievement Gap and Increase Graduation Rates for American Indian Students in Montana's K-12 Schools

RESOLUTION 2009-04: Use Funds Allocated for the Achievement Gap and At Risk Students (*if funding is restored for At Risk students*) to Close the Gap and Support At Risk Students with Accountability through Ongoing Reports

RESOLUTION 2009-05: Increase the On-Going Funding for Indian Education for All for 2009 Biennium

RESOLUTION 2009-06: Annual Report on the Status of Indian Education by MBPE and BOR

RESOLUTION 2009-07: Building an American Indian Data Bank at OPI

RESOLUTION 2009-08: Funding for Indian Education for All in the Units of the University System

RESOLUTION 2009-09: Revise Reporting for NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Reporting and Defining Graduation Rates

RESOLUTION 2009-10: Preservation and Revitalization of Montana Tribal Language

RESOLUTION 2009-11: Restore the \$10.0 Million in At Risk Funding

RESOLUTION 2009-13: Report Closing the Gap and At Risk Student Funds be Developed to Provide a System of Accountability for Funds

RESOLUTION 2009-14: Improving Urban Indian Education

RESOLUTION 2009-17: In Support of Graduating Students Wearing Items of Cultural Significance During Graduation Ceremonies

RESOLUTION 2009-20: MACIE is Recognized as the Formal Group to Advise the Office of Public Instruction and the Board of Public Education

RESOLUTION 2009-21: The MIEA Supports the Inclusion of Indian Education for All in Early Childhood Programs in Montana