

**Montana Indian Education Association**

**Recommendations for the School  
Funding Formula  
to the Quality Schools Interim  
Committee**

**July 2005**

## **Introduction**

The Montana Indian Education Association (MIEA) presents the following recommendations for inclusion in the development of the school funding formula for Montana. These recommendations were developed at the MIEA Forum on School Funding held July 12, 2005, in Helena, Montana. As a part of the process a draft was sent out to the MIEA Board of Directors asking for their review and any additional recommendations, which were added.

In addition, the priorities identified at the OPI Indian Education Summit of October 2004 are included which directly tie to the issues discussed at the Forum.

Two questions were outlined at the MIEA School Funding Forum for the group's discussion and recommendations:

**Issue No. 1 – Indian Education for All:** How can Montana's schools effectively deliver Indian Education for All for grades K-12? What funding will be needed for materials, professional development, curriculum infusion, assessments, etc.

**Issue No. 2 – How to Close the Achievement Gap:** How will Montana schools close the achievement gap for students who are a part of the various disaggregated groups? What funding will be needed to support educational services for LEP, Low Income, Native American, Special Education, Disabilities? (*Indian students are included in each of these groups*)

The recommendations developed at this Forum are only one resource that can be used by the Interim Committee on School Funding and RC Wood and Associates in providing resources to help create a school funding formula that will address these two issues. There have been a number of other reports and recommendations developed through other forums and meetings that identify the importance of implementing Indian Education for All as well as the need to eliminate the achievement gap.

## **Indian Education for All – Recommendations for Funding**

### **1. Professional Development for Indian Education for All**

- a. Professional Development was a major area of need. There is a need for well trained, quality teachers, school staff, school administrators, as well as school board members in all schools in Montana on all aspects of Indian Education for All – what does it mean, how do schools integrate across the curriculum for grades K-12, what resources will be needed, how do schools assess progress, etc.
- b. Need at least 2 PIR Days that will be identified for inservice training for Indian Education for All. Cost would be \$8.0 million total at estimate of \$4.0 million per day. This would also increase the school calendar by 2 days.
- c. Develop a “training the trainers” model to insure that there are an adequate number of people available to provide the professional development resources needed by Montana’s schools.
- d. There is a need to develop professional development opportunities that empowers all teachers (Indian and non-Indian) to create lessons and integrate Indian Education for All in their classes without fear of being culturally inappropriate in their work and to build their confidence in teaching culturally appropriate lessons.
- e. Provide resources to support a Teacher Mentor Program that will pair teachers with cultural consultants (elders, Class 7 certified teachers, culturally knowledgeable people). Support is needed for stipends, transportation, costs for quarterly mentoring meetings. Resources will be needed to support rural school teachers to allow them the opportunity to network with grade level appropriate teachers from larger schools.
- f. Tribal Histories that are being developed by the Tribal colleges can be a resource for Professional Development. These histories need to be made accessible for every school and every teacher.
- g. On-line delivery of Professional Development for Indian Education for All would be a strategy to insure access for all teachers in Montana’s schools, especially those rural schools who are limited in resources. This could be for graduate credit or renewal units.
- h. Creating Sacred Places can be used as a model for teachers incorporating the tribal histories that are being done by Tribal Colleges.
- i. Develop a teacher informational packet and make available to every teacher in Montana. Local schools can expand on packets to provide more information pertinent to their area. Example of items to include: “Essential understandings of American Indians,’ 10 things to know for each tribe, local tribal information, treaties, etc.
- j. Professional Education Program Standards (PEPPS) needs to include Indian Education throughout all standards.
- k. Native American Endorsement of 15 credits: Courses/training must be relevant to meeting Indian Education for All curriculums.
- l. CSPD (Special Education Professional Development regions) has been a very successful training model that could be utilized in developing training for Indian Education for All.

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m. Resources provided to Tribal Colleges to offer course on Introduction to American Indian studies, including urban Indian issues, to all teachers and paraprofessionals in the districts surrounding the Tribal College as well as on-line for teachers who cannot access the tribal college easily.

### **2. Curriculum Development**

- a. One committee per content area organized in each school district to work on integration of Indian Education for All into the ten content areas K-12. The cost estimate is \$20,000 per content area per school district per year.
- b. Provide funding for 5 curriculum specialists to work with the current consortiums in Montana on integration of Indian Education. Cost estimate is \$70,000 per specialist x 5 = \$350,000 plus fringe.
- c. Provide funding for “teams of experts – including Indian and non-Indian teachers” to provide training expertise to teachers/schools on curriculum development.
- d. Tribal colleges and American Indian Studies Departments at the University Level are resources that can assist K-12 education in curriculum development.
- e. Indian education curriculum needs to be integrated and not a “stand alone” class. Language, sign language, history, current issues can easily be integrated into the regular curriculum.

### **3. Materials/Resources for Libraries and Classrooms**

a. Adequate resources is needed for all schools for all grades, libraries, students, instructors to support the Indian Education for All curriculum for grades K-12.

Example of cost of one history book: Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes History Book (just released) \$29.95 per text X 2,000 texts for Montana’s schools as an estimate - \$59,900

Information: New textbook costs: \$30,000-\$35,000 for 500 students for a new textbook in one discipline.

### **4. Community Involvement - Human Resources**

a. Local community resources working in schools on culturally appropriate lessons. An estimate of costs would be \$1,000 allowed per grade level x 13 grades = \$13,000 for each school per year. This cost was based on a small school (450 students or less) and would increase in larger schools.

### **5. Funding Formula:**

a. The funding formula should include a specific budget category or fund to identify Indian Education for All resources. This will provide a level of reporting and accountability for the legislature, Office of Public Instruction, and the School Boards in meeting the intent of the constitution as well as the Court Orders.

## **How to Close the Achievement Gap Recommendations for Funding**

### **1. Professional Development**

- a. Mentoring for teachers is an important strategy. Recommend funding of \$1,000 per new teacher as well as the Mentor. 800-900 new teachers per year in Montana= \$2-3 million cost per year for mentoring (whenever possible certified Indian teacher teamed up with certified non-Indian teacher).
- b. Inter-tribal cross cultural mentoring is also needed. (Example: Blackfeet teacher and Crow Teacher work together to gain knowledge of each other's tribal history and culture)
- c. Inservice training for teachers before school starts with an overview of programs that are designed to assist in the educational needs of Indian students (Talent Search, Upward Bound, Title VII, Rural Systemic Institute Support, TCUP and other programs designed to assist schools in serving students).

### **2. Curriculum and Programs**

- a. Cultural integration in curriculum (create a curriculum that respects Indian culture) will support Indian students in school.
- b. Provide adequate funding to enable all schools to provide full day Kindergarten.
- c. Fund after school activities, including cultural activities.
- d. Fund summer school.
- e. A year-round schools should be an option available to schools to support students. Retention of knowledge by students will be strengthened.
- f. Classroom size should be a maximum of 15 to 1 for grades K-3 and kept as low as possible for grades 4-12. Support personnel to work with students would be recommended as an alternative to smaller classes, but certified teachers with small classes are the priority.
- g. Early reading is needed, culturally relevant reading materials needed.
- h. Individual assessment/LEP/Special Ed, etc. where students are over identified.
- i. Native American Counselors needed for students in high schools that have a significant Indian population to provide on-going support to students.
- j. Assessments should show unduplicated counts.
- k. Support for a state-level program for a state high school diploma per accreditation guidelines that is administered through a contract by the Office of Public Instruction.
- l. Provide resources to schools to support additional extra-curricular and other activities for students. Sports is one of the primary activities that keeps Indian students in school as documented by studies done at Great Falls High and OPI.

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**3. Retention/Dropout Prevention/Increasing Graduation Rates:**

- a. Dropout Prevention funding for schools is needed - ( Example of funding needed: OPI has a dropout prevention grant that provides \$40,000 to the six targeted schools, which is not sufficient).
- b. High School Freshman – targeted programs and resources to assist freshmen in getting through the freshman year (this is the year when the majority of Indian students drop out). Targeted funding to allow for smaller classes as well as requiring fewer classes for high school freshman. Provide schools with an additional per pupil allowance for their 9<sup>th</sup> graders to provide the extra support.
- c. Provide funding to allow schools to offer GED instruction in high schools as an alternative instructional model for student choice who are deficient in credit for graduation.
- d. Provide funding for alternative instructional strategies to assist students in meeting academic requirements.
- e. Research money is needed to provide accurate information to schools for decision making in programming and policy development.
- f. Funding is needed to create student discipline systems and policy that are built based on cultural issues, ability of students, and fairness to all students on an equitable basis.

**4. Community Involvement funding needed:**

- a. Provide schools with funding for parental training/parent involvement/grandparent involvement. This could be done on a classroom model basis which would involve the teacher and school. \$1,000 per classroom. Schools should have in place a parental involvement policy which outlines the parents rights and responsibilities. This policy needs to be published for the community.
- b. High expectations for teachers and students.
- c. Teacher involvement in community: Provide funding for all teachers as an addendum to contracts to work on community involvement activities = \$4.0 million a year cost estimate. (distributed on school size)
- d. Build a bridge of success by working with Head Start to ensure a smooth transition into Kindergarten. Collaborate with the elementary school and junior high schools and high schools to ensure high expectations and standards are implemented. High Schools work with colleges and universities to ensure a smooth transition from high school to college. Colleges work with potential employers to ensure employment after college. By bridging the programs from Head Start to employers, the child is ensured success. If the student does not want to go to college right out of high school, then they are more equipped to enroll as a non-traditional student in their adult lives.

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**Participants**

**Montana Indian Education Association Forum on School Funding**

**MIEA Board of Directors:**

1. Carol Juneau, Browning, MT - Chair, MIEA; State Legislator
2. Norma Bixby, Lame Deer, MT - MIEA Board Member; Chair, Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education; Director, Tribal Education, Northern Cheyenne; State Legislator
3. Joyce Silverthorne, Dixon, MT - Director, Tribal Education, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes; MIEA Board of Directors
4. Arlene Augare, Heart Butte, MT - MIEA Board of Directors; Teacher Heart Butte Schools
5. Dulce Whitford, Great Falls, MT - MIEA Board of Directors
6. Thomas Brown, Poplar, MT – MIEA Board of Directors
7. Joe Arrowtop, Heart Butte, MT – MIEA Board of Directors
8. Michael Running Wolf, Bozeman, MT – MIEA Board of Directors

**Other Forum Participants/Speakers:**

9. Erik Burke, Helena, MT - MEA/MFT
10. Forrestina Calf Boss Ribs, Heart Butte, MT - MEA/MFT, Heart Butte Schools
11. Anda Pretty on Top, Lodge Grass, MT - MEA/MFT, Crow Agency Public Schools
12. Tammy Elser, Arlee Public Schools
13. Dawn Bishop-Moore, Harlem, MT - Harlem Schools Impact Aid Committee Chair
14. Nancy Stiffarm, Harlem, MT - Harlem Public Schools Title VII Director
15. Floyd “Bob” Gervais, Browning, MT - Browning Schools Board of Trustees
16. Stan Juneau, Browning, MT - Browning Schools Board of Trustees
17. Cheryl Wilson, Missoula, MT - Missoula County Public Schools
18. Darrell Crawford, Heart Butte, MT - Heart Butte Public Schools Board of Trustees
19. Penny Kipp, Ronan, MT.
20. Mike Jetty, Helena, MT - OPI
21. Bud Williams, Helena, MT - OPI
22. Lynn Hinch, Helena, MT - OPI
23. Jack Copps, Helena, MT - MQEC
24. Evelyn Bigby, Fort Belknap College Rural and Systemic Project Director

**Recommendations outlined at the  
OPI Indian Education for All Summit  
October 2004**

(The OPI Summit Report outlines more detailed strategies for each of the five areas and priorities listed below)

**Indian Education for All:**

Priority 1 – On-going funding for Indian Education for All, 20-1-501, MCA, must be adequately and consistently in the State P-20 budget.

Priority 2 – Create and implement a P-20 curriculum that fulfils Indian Education for All.

Priority 3 – Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for professional development on Indian Education for All, 20-1-501 MCA.

Priority 4 – Create and implement an accountability system for compliance with Indian Education for All, 20-1-501, MCA.

**Education System Structure:**

Priority 1: A proposal will be presented to the Board of Education to create an implementation council to oversee full statewide implementation of Indian Education for All.

Priority 2: an integrated P-20 curriculum for Indian Education for All, with an emphasis in language, culture, and community will be developed and implemented by the State of Montana in cooperation with Montana Indian Tribes.

Priority 3: An audit will be conducted to align and strengthen policies mandating implementation of MCA 20-1-501.

Priority 4: A research agenda will be developed to inform Indian Education for All to implement and build a truly data driven model.

Priority 5: Robust pre-school and all-day kindergarten programs emphasizing native language acquisition to reduce the American Indian achievement gap, will be developed and implemented.

Priority 6: All entering Pre-service educators will develop cultural competence to effectively deliver Indian Education for All curriculum.

Priority 7: A comprehensive statewide professional development infrastructure will deliver and support Indian Education for All curriculum.

Priority 8: Develop a comprehensive system to recruit, prepare and retain highly qualified American Indian educators serving P-20 education.

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### **Educational Leadership:**

Priority 1: School Cultures – Montana educational leaders will enforce the implementation of state and federal mandates concerning NCLB and Indian Education for All.

Priority 2: Curriculum Development – to develop a culturally accurate K-12 curriculum of American Indian cultures to disseminate to every school leader in Montana.

Priority 3: Poverty – Leadership will identify and implement strategies to effectively confront the debilitating effects of poverty upon student achievement.

Priority 4: Data – Montana education leaders will utilize and implement a comprehensive data system that includes academic and social demographics that will inform decisions regarding strategies to improve student achievement.

Priority 5: Professional Development Frameworks: OPI in partnership with educational organizations and associations will develop educational resource packages to ensure implementation with integrity of 20-1-501 that will result in elimination of the achievement gap for American Indian students.

### **Improving Achievement:**

Priority 1: Develop a parental/community support system for student achievement.

Priority 2: Improve student achievement through teacher preparation and professional development resulting in increased development of awareness of needs of American Indians.

Priority 3: District will evaluate current curricular areas by mapping the state-mandated tests used to evaluate achievement in those areas in order to 1. Identify areas of alignment/misalignment. 2. Use the results of this mapping to inform and improve instruction.

Priority 4: Use instructional time effectively and efficiently to increase student achievement.

### **Dropout and Retention:**

Priority 1: All American Indian students in Montana will be provided with innovative instructional methodologies, resources, and teaching paradigms that will lead to an increased graduation/completion rate (H.S./GED) or at least 80%.

Priority 2: OPI will propose and support (to the Montana Board of Public Education) initiatives that strengthen and encourage early childhood education and early interventions that foster school retention for students who may be at-risk.

Priority 3: OPI will allocate adequate resources including funding to provide professional development for school personnel to meet the unique needs of American Indian students in a culturally responsive manner.

Priority 4: OPI will develop a plan and identify resources for American Indian students to insure that they are provided with the necessary supportive services designed to increase graduation/completion rate to at least 80%.

Priority 5: OPI will develop and engage in a collaborative process between the BPE, legislature, tribal government that results in policies and legislation that will improve American Indian graduation/completion rates.