

Montana Indian Education Association

Report to Membership 2008-2009

*Thank you from the MIEA Board of Directors to the MIEA Membership.
It has been an honor serving you in representing the issues of
Indian Education in Montana*

MIEA Board of Directors 2008-09

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MIEA Building Partnerships

To strengthen communications and advocacy for Indian Education in Montana it is important for MIEA to create partnerships through participation in other statewide educational organizations and activities to share our priorities and efforts on improving Indian education for Montana.

It is important to note that MIEA Board members are volunteer. They serve without compensation as MIEA is a non-profit tax exempt corporation. Board members do receive travel expenses for mileage, meals and rooms when traveling to Board meetings or representing MIEA at various activities.

MIEA does not have staff, so Board members are expected to be active participants in planning and organizing activities and in carrying out the purpose of the Association. MIEA has hired various consultants to assist with specific targeted projects over the years.

A full time Director and “home” office is a goal of MIEA that needs to be developed with fund raising to provide sustained funding for such an effort.

MIEA Board members participated in a number of educational organizations and their activities throughout the year.

Lynda Brannon – MIEA Representative: To be better represented on an on-going basis, MIEA hired Lynda Brannon, who is based in Helena, to insure that MIEA is represented at the Education Forum and other educational organizations that meet on a regular basis in the Helena community. Lynda has many years of experience in the field of Indian education and is the Executive Director of the Mt. Association of School Business Officials and Indian Impact Aid Schools of Montana.

Lynda writes in her report to the Board: “The board for the Montana Indian Education Association is the most active and productive board I have worked with. The Association members need to keep the momentum going as MIEA has been present on every doorstep in Helena and is making a difference. The time and energy put into the association by its board is inspiring, amazing and uplifting. I have thoroughly enjoyed and have learned from the positive interaction that occurs within the association.”

Some of Lynda’s representation on behalf of MIEA included:

- **Learning First Alliance:** MIEA has joined this new educational alliance in Montana. This is a national association made up of 18 education organizations that has made it their mission to improve student learning in America’s public schools. Many states, including Montana, are starting state affiliate associations to do the same but on a statewide basis that will mirror the national alliance. The state organization’s role is to find common ground and develop common messages that will expand the support of public education The MT Learning First Alliance (MLFA) was started with the idea of changing the perception of education and relaying a positive and unifying picture of education for the Montana public.
- **Education Forum** This group of education organizations and agencies meet regularly during a legislative session and occasionally during the non-legislative time. The group discusses legislative bills, what they do to the constituents of each organization, to the funding of the affected schools and where each organization stands on the bill. This forum has proven to be a great source of information and keeps the Education Organizations and Agencies up to date on state and federal education issues.
- **MQEC Remedy Committee** MQEC stands for the “Montana Quality Education Coalition. The members are schools and organizations involved in the Adequate School Funding lawsuit. MIEA had filed an Amicus Brief in the

original lawsuit so would be involved in any new decisions or actions of MQEC, so it is important for MIEA to stay informed and active with MQEC.

- **The other meetings** I participated in or monitored on behalf of MIEA were: Meeting with the Governors' office about the funding of Indian Education for All, At Risk, Achievement Gap and non-beneficiary funding, Board of Public Education meetings, Board of Education meetings, K-20 Workgroup meetings, Montana American Indian Policy Roundtable, Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE), Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL) meeting in Helena, MIEA Summit on Tribal Education

Following is a list of events/organizations that MIEA had representation at in 2008-09 and advocacy work:

- MEA/MFT Conference, October 16-17, 2008 in Missoula, Montana This is one of the largest teacher conferences in Montana. MEA/MFT provides support to MIEA to host a guest speaker and workshop strand. October 2008 MIEA Keynote was Leo Bird. Dulce Whitford and Arlene Augare were the MIEA Reps. on the planning committee for the 2008 MEA Conference. Norma Bixby reports MIEA has had an increased presence at MEA with many workshops and this has increased our credibility in presenting professional development.

MEA/MFT 2009 Conference planning is underway with Norma Bixby and Jennifer Flat Lip as MIEA's reps on the MEA Planning committee. The conference will which will be held in Billings in October 2009

- Board of Education: Sept. 11, 2008 – The Board of Education is combination of the Board of Regents and the Board of Public Education, Chaired by Governor Schweitzer. MIEA submitted policy recommendations for their consideration in 2008.

Excerpts:

Montana has become a national leader in its efforts to strengthen Indian education and in implementing curriculum that reflects the American Indian people in its instruction. The educational culture of Montana has been changed and we have seen some wonderful instructional resources developed and teachers throughout Montana beginning to integrate their curriculum with lessons about Montana's Tribal nations. Recommendations to Board of Education. Following are recommendations:

1. Indian Education for All needs on-going, adequate support for our K-12 education system to support curriculum development, teacher training, and instructional resources for Montana's students.
2. Close the Academic Achievement Gap for American Indian Students in grades K-12 and continue providing adequate funding to create the opportunities for our Indian students to succeed.
3. Increase the high school completion rate of American Indians to 85%.
4. Funds for Closing the Achievement Gap for Indian Students and At Risk students be used for increasing student achievement through new programs or expanding existing successful programs.
5. Develop a report on how schools are utilizing funding received for Closing the Achievement Gap for American Indian Students and At Risk Students, similar to the Indian Education for All reporting.
6. Support Funding for Non-Beneficiary Students at Montana's Tribal Colleges at an equitable funding level with the State Community Colleges.
7. Annual report on Indian Education for K-Higher Education to the Board of Education.
8. Report on Impact of Special Education (IDEA) Programs on Indian students K-12.
9. Funding for Indian Education for All in the Units of the University System.
10. Develop a grant program to help with the preservation and revitalization of Montana Tribal Languages.

- Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE): MACIE is the state advisory group that provides recommendations to OPI and to the Board of Public Education. MIEA is included as a representative on MACIE's Board. Dulce Whitford and Joe Anderson attended a January 5, 2009 meeting in Helena, Montana. Report presented to MACIE with recommendations in September 2008 (similar to Board of Education recommendations – see above)
- MCEL Conference in Billings –October 15-17, 2009 - (This is the Statewide conference for school boards and administrator). Norma Bixby attended this conference for MIEA and participated in workshops and the Indian School Board Caucus. MIEA plans to be more proactive in trying to get MCEL to do more IEA and achievement gap training and awareness for its membership. (Resolution has been developed on this issue)
- Board of Regents Meeting – Norma Bixby Attended this meeting in January 2009 and made a presentation.
- Board of Public Education – Norma Bixby attended this meeting as well.
- Indian Education for All - Best Practices Conference in Helena, February 17-18, 2009 - This conference highlights best practices for IEFA across the state. Joe Anderson was a presenter and Dulce Whitford attended the conference
- Montana PIRC (Parent Information & Resource Center) Advisory Committee: This organization promotes school-family-community partnerships in childhood learning. State Conference in Missoula-August 13-14. Joe Anderson attends meetings.
- NIEA Conference- Seattle: Majority of MIEA Board attended the 2008 National Indian Education Association Conference (*paid by their own organizations or by themselves as MIEA does not provide out of state travel*). Jennifer Flatip ran for the NIEA Board of Directors and did a wonderful job in her efforts, but was not successful. We need to continue our efforts to get a Montana Rep on the NIEA Board.

MIEA Board Meetings - 2008-2009. In addition to regular meetings a number of conference calls were also held. (Conference calls are a less expensive vehicle for conducting targeted MIEA business)

- May 18, 2008, Great Falls, Montana – Regular board meeting – organizational for 2008-09.
- July 2, 2008 – Conference Call
- September 10-11, 2008 Polson, Montana –Regular board meeting
- October 5-6, 2008 Helena, Montana - Tribal Education Summit and regular board meeting
- November 19, 2008 Great Falls, Montana –Board meeting and Urban Indian Education Forum
- January 4, 2009 Helena, Montana – Regular Board Meeting
- March 15, 2009, Helena, Montana - Regular Board meeting
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Corporation Reports as 501 C (3):

IRS Tax Report Returned completed and filed for 2007-08. MIEA is a tax exempt non-profit 501 C (3) organization.

Corporation Annual report completed and filed with Sec. of State. (2009 completed and paid March)

MIEA Other Activities 2008-09

- **Urban Indian Education Forum**

Urban Indian Education Forum, November 20-21, 2008 in Great Falls, Montana

MIEA along with OPI, Helena Public Schools, and Great Falls Public Schools sponsored the conference, which focused on the American Indian Achievement Gap and Indian Education for All in urban districts across the state. Great Falls, Missoula, Billings, Havre, Helena, Butte, Bozeman and Kalispell had representation at the conference.

Urban Indian Education Forum planning for 2009 is underway with Dulce Whitford and Sandra Boham, Director of Indian Education GFPS

- **MIEA Tribal Education Summit: “Building our Tribal Communities Through Education”**

On October 5-6, 2008, approximately 50 Tribal Leaders, Legislators, K-12 Educators, School Trustees, Head Start, MEA, Higher Education and Tribal Colleges gathered to develop stronger Indian Education partnerships through goal setting and declaration. Guest speakers and break out sessions provided the elements of the forum. Ray Cross, from the University of Montana Law School, Dan Belcourt Attorney for the Rocky Boy Tribe, Maylinn Smith, from the University of Montana Laws School, Kirsten Maloy Carlson from the Indian Law Resource Center were speakers on legal issues and tribal issues pertinent to Indian education, indigenous knowledge, and the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The focus of this Summit was the need to develop stronger partnerships/relationships between tribal education systems and state/federal systems from early childhood through higher education. It was very apparent that Indian Education has finally hit a monumental crossroad in that more than just the Native Americans are concerned and want to be part of the great progress that has been made it the last decade. The journey is by no means close to a perceived finish line but having more along the road will make the journey smoother.

Copies of the full report are available from MIEA Board members.

- **Conference Planning for 2009** – Conference planning is an on-going activity for the Board at every meeting. Committees are organized for work that needs to be done.
- **2009 Educational Policy Advocacy:** MIEA Resolutions approved in 2008 were disseminated to appropriate educational organizations, State Educational Leadership, as well as Governor’s Office, and Congressional Delegation.
- **MIEA contracts for fiscal record keeping and reporting:** A consultant prepares ongoing fiscal reports for the MIEA Board, Annual IRS Reports, and 1099’s.