

Montana Indian Education Association

Report to Membership 2009-2010

*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 2009-2010

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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.

Advocacy and Partnership building efforts in 2009-10:

MIEA Resolutions 2009: MIEA disseminated the resolutions passed at the 2009 Conference to the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education, Board of Education, Board of Public Education, and Board of Regents. Resolutions pertinent to the Federal Government were followed up on by Board members Norma Bixby and Jennifer Flatlip. Resolutions are also posted on MIEA's website.

Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE): MACIE is the state advisory group that provides recommendations to the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and to the Board of Public Education. Norma Bixby is MIEA's representative to MACIE. MIEA presented reports to MACIE on Sept. 10, 2009 and January 6, 2010.

MCEL Conference in Billings –October 15-17, 2009: This is the statewide conference for school boards and administrator). Board member 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 was done on this issue in 2009 and is continued for 2010.

MEA/MFT Conference in Billings, Montana 2009: This is one of the largest teacher conferences in Montana. MIEA is one of the partners in this conference. MEA/MFT provides support to MIEA to host a guest speaker and workshop strand. October 2009 MIEA Keynote was Everall Fox. Norma Bixby and Jennifer Flatlip were the MIEA Reps. on the planning committee for the 2009 MEA Conference. .

MEA/MFT 2010 Conference: Planning is underway with Sandra Boham and Luanne Kicking Woman as MIEA's reps on the MEA Planning committee. The conferences will which will be held in Helena in Oct. 2010. MIEA's representation helps to ensure that American Indian issues in education are addressed through speakers and workshop sessions.

Learning First Alliance: MIEA is represented by Lynda Brannon at meetings of the Learning First Alliance.

Education Forum: The Education Forum is a group of educational organizations (MSBA, MEA/MFT, Montana Rural Schools, SAM, Indian Impact Aid Schools, representatives of OPI and Governor's Office, ...) that promote legislative policies and educational funding. This will be a vital group to maintain communications with as the 2011 legislative session nears. Sandra Boham is MIEA's Representative to the Ed Fourm as well as Lynda Brannon.

MIEA Advocacy with various educational entities in Montana:

96% of Indian students in Montana attend public schools. There are only two tribal schools serving Indian students in Montana. Most of the services and resources provided to Indian students in K-12 both on and off reservation come from the State of Montana. Therefore, it is vital that advocacy efforts are directed at state educational leadership including the Governor's Office, Office of Public Instruction, Board of Education, Board of Public Education and Board of Regents.

Following is a listing of the various groups that MIEA advocated with in 2009-2010 and a summary of the policy issues that were a part of MIEA's advocacy efforts with these groups:

1. Governor's Office - Communication with Dan Villa, Governor's Policy Advisor.
2. Board of Education – Communication Nov. 10, 2009. The Board of Education is a combination of the Board of Regents and the Board of Public Education, chaired by Governor Schweitzer.
3. Board of Public Education – Presentation September 9, 2009
4. Kindergarten to College Work Group – Presentation May 10, 2009
5. Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education
6. Commissioner of Higher Education – Communication regarding American Indian Minority Affairs Position

Major Policy Issues in Indian Education in Montana for MIEA Advocacy:

1. Indian Education for All K-Higher Education: Need to continue Montana's strong leadership in the nation in integrating content on Montana and American Indians throughout its standards, benchmarks, and curriculum in K-12. Funding matters in developing curriculum, professional development, buying texts and supportive resources and staffing. Yet, funding has decreased from \$67.00 per student in 2005 to \$20.40 in 2009. That is too great a reduction to continue this important work. We were not successful in 2009 to increase the funding to schools for Indian Education for All. We must continue advocacy to increase the \$20.40 per student to a minimum of \$40.00 per ANB in the 2011 session.

Note: With state budget projections as dismal as they are at this point and possible cuts to education, MIEA will need to remain vigilant to maintain current funding levels for Indian education efforts. Funding increases will be extremely difficult.

Also, the Board of Regents needs to include adequate funding for Indian Education in the University System budget for 2011. This budget item has not been a part of the University Budget as of yet.

MIEA asked the Kindergarten to College Workgroup (which advises the Board of Education) 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 the Kindergarten to College Workgroup when this group was formed in 2006 and other committees such as the Indian Education for All Committee were disbanded.

2. **Restore the \$10.0 Million in At Risk Funding:** We must work to restore the \$10.0 million that was deleted in the state budget in the 2009 session for at risk students. Only \$1.00 was left in this line item. Many of the students who benefitted were American Indian students and students in poverty in our state's public schools.. MIEA did not support the replacement of these At Risk funds with the AARA Funds in the 2009 Legislature, but it was to no avail and a great loss to our students.

The definition of a quality education includes at risk students and is very specific about including funding for at risk students (see 20-9-309, 20-9-328 below).

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.

3. National Common Core Standards: Montana is one of the states who have agreed to work toward the Common Core Standards proposed by the National Governor's Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. We need to make sure that these new standards do not reduce the positive efforts Montana has made on integration of Indian Education for All in Montana's Standards and that these new Common Core Standards do not exacerbate the achievement gap and further reduce the high school completion rate for American Indian students.

4. Race to the Top Grants: As a part of the National Common Core Standards, we understand that there are Race to the Top grant funds available. Currently Montana will be applying for the 2nd offer of Race to Top Grants and it is important to insure that the needs of American Indian students are included in their planning for these funds.

5. Montana Virtual Academy and Broadband to Reservations: As Montana implements the new distance learning program in Montana, it is important for this new educational strategy and its curriculum to include Indian Education for All. Also, we need this new learning opportunity to help increase the graduation rate through programs such as credit recovery or perhaps retrieving students who have already left school. Let's make it work for all students.

6. Reporting and accountability on the use of ARRA Funds: A large portion of the ARRA funds were allocated for educational services for our schools. We are interested in the accountability of these funds in relation to services for American Indian students both on and off reservation and look forward to these reports. In a recent press release August 26, 2009, on the ARRA Funds, Secretary Duncan said

"If we are to put an end to stubborn cycles of poverty and social failure, and put our country on track for long-term economic prosperity, we must address the needs of children who have long been ignored and marginalized in chronically low-achieving schools," said Duncan. "States and school districts have an opportunity to put unprecedented resources toward reforms that would increase graduation rates, reduce dropout rates and improve teacher quality for all students, and particularly for children who most need good teaching in order to catch up."

In Montana, many of the students Secretary Duncan is referring to are the American Indian students. We have a wonderful opportunity with these resources to create new opportunities that will help us bring equity to the educational achievement of Indian students in our public schools.

7. Closing the Achievement Gap for Indian students and Increase the High School Completion Rate for both on and off reservation schools: We need to continue efforts to close the achievement gap and increase the high school graduation rate of American Indians to an equitable level with their non-Indian peers as one of our priorities. Secretary Duncan in a Oct. 15, 2009, press release said:

“policymakers, educators and community leaders need to work together so that student achievement increases, the achievement gap narrows... too many of our students are failing to reach their potential....In cases where children are being underserved or neglected, we have a moral obligation to intervene...”

Funding has been provided by the state to close the achievement gap for American Indian students since 2005 at \$200.00 per Indian student. We need to continue this funding. Montana wins when Indian students succeed.

The most recent Diplomas Count 2009, shows the following rates. Page 28 www.edweek.org/go/dc09, “Graduation in the United States, Recent Gains at Risk of Eroding.” Graduation Rates for Class of 2006

State	American Indian	White	State	American Indian	White
US (all)	50.0%	76.1%	Oregon	39.1%	73.1%
Montana	48.3%	79.5%	South Dakota	33.5%	81.7%
New Mexico	49.5%	67.8%	Washington	37.9%	66.8%
North Dakota	39.9%	83.7%	Wyoming	25.8%	76.7%

8. **Urban Indian Education:** The challenges facing American Indian education is not only limited to the seven (7) reservations; these challenges extend to our urban schools as well. We need to insure that our policy and resources for closing the achievement gap and increasing the graduation rate reach these students as well.

9. **Accountability of the Funds for Indian Student Achievement and the At Risk Funds:** We need to insure that funding being used by our public schools for Closing the Achievement Gap and At Risk is meeting the needs of the purpose and students it was intended for. We look forward to the reporting that will be done as outlined in statute (20-9-328 and 20-9-329) which is due on or before Sept. 15, 2010.

10. **Tribal College Non-Beneficiary Funding:** The 2009 Legislature funded our tribal colleges at approximately \$3,000 per non-beneficiary FTE. This meets the legislation that was passed in 2007, but half of this funding is one-time-only. The Tribal Colleges have had to come to the legislature every session to seek additional funding for the non-beneficiary students who attend their colleges. We need to work to include the full \$3,025 authorized by statute for tribal college non-beneficiary into the on-going budget of the Board of Regents.

11. **Revitalization of Tribal Languages in Montana:** We need to develop strategies to support the revitalization of Native (American Indian) languages in Montana. Montana’s Class 7 Teacher Certification has been a wonderful effort to helping with this, but this is limited and we still find that our native languages are being lost at an alarming rate.

Other MIEA Activities 2009-2010:

- Urban Indian Education Forum, November 19-20, 2009, in Great Falls, Montana
Sandra Boham, MIEA member and Director of Great Falls Indian Education organized the 3rd Indian Education Forum. The purpose of this Forum is to address the academic issues of American Indian students in the urban school districts in Montana. Strategies to close the Academic Achievement Gap are the primary focus. A report on this Forum will be available on MIEA's website, www.mtiea.org.
- Montana Virtual Academy: Sandra Boham participated in the interview process for the Director and Curriculum Specialist. Advocated for the inclusion of IEFA standards in the courses offered through the Virtual Academy.
- State Accreditation Standards in Math and Language Arts: The Board of Public Education adopted the [Mathematics Content Standards and Performance Descriptors](#) on September 12. Robyn Baker, on behalf of MIEA, worked in conjunction with OPI's Indian Education Division to ensure that language was included in all standards geared specifically to Montana's Indians and ensuring that Indian Education for All was infused into each standard.

Up for approval next is the Communication Arts Standards – they have gone through the review process. Robyn Baker, on behalf of MIEA, and with assistance from Dottie Susag, reviewed and made recommendations to ensure that appropriate language was included in each of the standards for Communication Arts regarding Montana's Indians to comply with the Indian Education for All law.

- Conference Planning for 2010 – Conference planning is an on-going activity for the Board at every meeting. Committees are organized for work that needs to be done and consultant is hired to help organize the conference and seek funds.
- MIEA Website: MIEA maintains a website at www.mtiea.org. This was reviewed and revised this past year with a new website management consultant.
- NIEA Conference- Milwaukee: Some members of the MIEA Board were in attendance at the NIEA Conference to participate in conference activities as well as to celebrate Denise Juneau's award as NIEA's Educator of the Year Award. (*Note: MIEA Members travel expenses were paid by their own organizations, not MIEA*).
- MIEA Consultants: 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.
 - Lynda Brannon, who is based in Helena, represents MIEA at various educational meetings in Helena when MIEA members cannot be present, including the Learning First Alliance and the Education Forum. Lynda assisted MIEA in the first budget request to the Legislature in 2005 for Indian Education for All. 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.
 - MIEA did hire a part time Director for a couple of months in the fall of 2009, but this did not work out. A full time Director and "home" office continues as a goal of MIEA that needs to be developed with fund raising to provide sustained funding for such an effort. Costs are projected to be approximately \$100,000 for a year to accomplish this, and MIEA does not have the resources to do this at this time.

- Gwyn Anderson is hired as MIEA's Accountant. Gwyn is the School Clerk for Browning Public Schools. Gwyn assists with financial reports and IRS reporting requirements.
- Colleen Barcus is hired to manage MIEA's Website. Colleen has her own consulting firm on computers.
- **Corporation Reports as 501 C (3):** IRS Tax Report Returned completed and filed for 2009. MIEA is a tax exempt non-profit 501 C (3) organization. Corporation Annual report completed and filed with Sec. of State.
- **MIEA Policies and Guidelines for the Board of Directors.** The MIEA Board of Directors completed a review of their policies and procedures for operation and updated in August 2009.
- **MIEA Board Meetings – 2009-2010** 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)

June 4, 2009 – Billings, Montana, Holiday Inn – Organizational Meeting

July 14, 2009 - Havre, Montana

August 20, 2009 - Conference Call

September 9-11, 2009 – East Glacier Park, Browning Montana

October 20, 2009 - Conference Call

November 18-20, 2009 – Urban Indian Education Forum, Great Falls, Montana

January 27, 2010 - Conference Call

Current Issues that needs attention as of April 2010

- **Title VII Indian Education Grants:** *There are a number of schools in Montana who may be eligible for Title VII Indian Education Grants that are not receiving them or applying for them. This is based on a comparison of schools who receive Title VII with the American Indian Achievement Gap funding there are schools receiving (\$200.00 per Indian student) from the state of Montana. There may be some Indian students who are not eligible for Title VII included in the state's Achievement Gap funding, but in looking at difference in the numbers served by the two funding sources, there are some Indian children and their families are not receiving services that could be provided by these Title VII grants.*
- **National Common Core Standards: www.corestandard.org** *K-12 Standards called the Common core Standards have been developed and released for public comment. Comments were due April 2, 2010. It will be important for the Indian Education Community to provide input into these as they move forward and are implemented to insure that the needs of Indian students are included. NIEA is actively involved in this process and has info on their website www.niea.org*

Per the website: These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. The standards are:

- *Aligned with college and work expectations;*
 - *Clear, understandable and consistent;*
 - *Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;*
 - *Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;*
 - *Informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and*
 - *Evidence- and research-based.*
- **Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (NCLB):** *We need to insure that the programs that are included in the reauthorization of ESEA include Title VII Indian Education as well as other supportive programs that will provide support to schools to help Indian students succeed. NIEA is actively involved in this and has information on their website. www.niea.org*
 - **Funding matters -- Advocacy for State of Montana Funding for 2011:** *The state Legislature will be in session in January 2011 and it will be important to develop communications and support for continued funding for*
 - *Indian Education for All*
 - *Closing the Achievement Gap for American Indian Students*
 - *Tribal College Non-Beneficiary Funding*
 - *Restoring the \$10.0 million in At Risk Funding that was taken away in 2009*

YOUR VOICES ON THESE ISSUES ARE NEEDED.