

# Fourth Quarter Report

October – December 2023



Tribal Nations Education Committee (TNEC)

February 21, 2024

Submitted by: Chair Harper



## Committee Membership

Area of Representation	Name
Bois Forte Band of Chippewa	Vondalee Carr
	<i>Alternate: Leanne Hoffman</i>
Fond Du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	Tara Dupuis
	<i>Alternate: Jennifer Murray</i>
Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	Maria Burnett
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	<b>Laurie Harper, Chair</b>
	<i>Alternate: Dorothy Robinson</i>
Lower Sioux Indian Community	Jesse Kodet
	<i>Alternate: Jackie Probst</i>
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe	Niiyo Gonzales
	<i>Alternate: Raina Killspotted</i>
Minnesota Chippewa Tribe	<b>Billie Annette, Secretary</b>
Prairie Island Indian Community	Paul Dressen
Red Lake Nation	Glenda Martin
	<i>Alternate: Annamarie Hill</i>
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community	Dan Morgan
	<i>Alternate: Carrissa Pickit</i>
Upper Sioux Indian Community	Carrie Trutna
	<i>Alternate: Roberta Bjerkeset</i>
White Earth Nation	Dana Goodwin
	<i>Alternate: Trista Ayers</i>
Greater Minnesota	Vacant
Twin Cities Metro	<b>Beth Tepper, Vice-Chair</b>
	Zhaawin Gonzalez

# Committee Report

## Quarter Four (Q4) Highlights:

The following organizations or entities consulted with or presented to the Tribal Nations Education Committee during Q4:

- The Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC)
- The Office of Higher Education (OHE)
- The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)
  - Office of American Indian Education (OAIE)
  - Indigenous Education for All (IEFA)
  - Arts
- Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB)
- The Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP)

## Meetings:

### October

#### **MDE | Alina Campana, Arts Specialist**

Ms. Campana provided an update on the Native Arts Resource and next steps. She reported working directly with the Tribal Nations and the budget of \$40k with \$500 honorariums. They are seeking 80 Native artists total and have 71 secured. Artists eliminated from consideration are ineligible for reconsideration. They do verify identity via enrollment or descendency. They reported adherence to the Native American Arts and Crafts Act. TNEC requested a written statement of the legal interpretation from department counsel.

A steering committee developed a decision-making tool to help with curriculum and resource development. The OAIE was not involved, but the director reviewed the tool. The tool's use of "Indian people world-wide" is problematic.

#### **MDE, OAIE | Dr. Harstad, Director**

Dr. Harstad reports that the annual field hearing will be at Leech Lake on 11/06. Results of the IEFA needs assessment data are now available. The OAIE will draft a summary.

The division is setting up interviews for the Indigenous Education Specialist.

A Native Languages meeting is scheduled for two weeks out.

### **Other Committee Business**

Dana Goodwin is drafting a letter on Social Studies standards and requested committee input.

Schools that applied for a mascot exemption must be notified of whether their exemption was approved or denied by December 15. Letters will go out by certified mail on 12/07.

## **November**

### **MIAC | Opalina Peralta, Executive Assistant**

Opalina Peralta attended on behalf of Director Geshick. She shared the 2024 MIAC schedule with the committee and confirmed in-person status for all future meetings.

### **PELSB | Yelena Bailey, Executive Director; Steve Rollins, Rulemaking Attorney**

PELSB staff shared data on American Indian teachers in Minnesota. There are 394 licensed American Indian teachers. The majority hold tier 3 or 4 licenses. Employers reported 574 American Indian teachers in districts in SY22-23. LEAs report data differently and may be generated in various ways at the local level. Data will improve and discrepancies will decrease if MDE moved to require collection of demographic data.

Staff discussed the rulemaking process for the new American Indian history and culture renewal requirements. 2023 legislation – PELSB must adopt rules that require all licensed teachers renewing their license under sections [122A.181](#) to [122A.184](#) to include in the renewal requirements professional development in the cultural heritage and contemporary contributions of American Indians, with emphasis on Minnesota Tribal Nations (MN Statutes Section [122A.187, Sub. 7](#)). MDE is creating E-Learning courses for districts and schools. The first course is on key concepts and terms and is close to release. The second course is in development and will be on Federal Indian Policy. They are considering up to 10 professional development courses for teachers.

PELSB would like to set up 1:1 meetings with each Tribal Nation to discuss questions about training. The committee recommended meeting with each Tribal education director and recommended that they reach out to the tribal government relations teams to set these meetings up.

The committee had a general discussion about the K-12 Culture, Language, and History license, including documentation, tribal endorsements, certificate programs, vetting programs, non- Native people teaching Native language courses, barriers for Native people, and Tribal resolutions. PELSB will join a future meeting to answer questions about the K-12 license.

### **MDE, IEFA | Sam Zimmerman, Indigenous Education Specialist**

The Indigenous Education Specialist met with Bois Forte, Lower Sioux, Leech Lake, Prairie Island, and Mille Lacs. At the time of his report, Red Lake was scheduled, and Fond du Lac was pending. The IEFA teams are at different places in this work. Language, treaty rights and sovereignty are “the big three” items that are coming up. How curricular resources will be created from tribal contributions will be discussed at MDE’s next cross-divisional meeting. Collection methods, storage, and filing have not been

determined. IEFA participants will be offered the opportunity to come together in January to share progress and ideas.

There was general discussion about the IEFA budget and monetary timelines, whether there was additional money for IEFA, and the Governor's initial investment of \$500k followed by an additional investment of \$750k. The development of curriculum is costly and it's unclear if the current investment in the work is feasible with the current funding.

The committee had a lengthy discussion about timelines, the development of curricular resources, Tribal inclusions, the vetting of resources, who leads training sessions for educators, and the importance of the Native lens and voice.

An update was provided on the pending contract with Odia Wood-Kruger. The contract had not been finalized at the time of the presentation. The contract will be updated to reflect the inclusion of the urban Indigenous voice. The contract timeline is the same as the Tribal Nations' timeline. There was a general discussion about potential conflicts of interest and the Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

A brief update was provided on the Indian Arts and Crafts Act and Native Arts resource. Alina Campana (MDE Arts Specialist) met with Eric Taubel (MDE Counsel) and Melanie Franks (MDE Tribal Liaison) to discuss compliance with the Indian Arts and Crafts Act. A memo was being drafted that will be shared with the MDE Office of American Indian Education (OAIE) and TNEC. To date this has not been received.

The MIAC World Languages Work Group meets every Friday. The current work focus is on the Dakota/Ojibwe language symposium, which is scheduled for 02/29/24 and 03/01/24 at Treasure Island.

#### **MDE, OAIE | Dr. Harstad, Director**

The OAIE and MDE staff are analyzing data for Indigenous Education for All. Their report is due to the legislature by 02/01/2024. The report has not been shared with TNEC.

Information on the Language Revitalization Grant was being added to the department website and a Request for Information (RFI) was to be sent out. Tribal schools are included in the grant.

Culture and Language courses requirements were discussed. Challenge 1: Districts set their calendars the spring prior to the start of the subsequent school year, and they are pushing back on including culture and language courses because their schedules were already set. Challenge 2: If they convert a class, and it's serving Native and non- Native students, then they have to figure out a way to pay for that class, because American Indian Education Aid (AIEA) is specifically for Native students. MDE is identifying ways to move forward.

MDE is considering a legislative proposal to provide a small amount of funding to districts who have to change their logos due to the discontinuation of their Mascots.

A brief update was provided on the status of American Indian Education Aid (AIEA), applications and budgets.

Best practices for Tribal Consultation Under ESSA along with budgets, and accountability were discussed.

Melanie Franks and Dr. Harstad are both in Commissioner Jett's cabinet. Decisions at MDE are made by a new group called the Cabinet Advisory, which they are not on. There are no Native people on the Cabinet Advisory. The MIAC attendee inquired about who will bring this information to the MIAC meeting, and the committee was told Melanie Franks will report on this.

## December

### **MnEEP | Dr. Jon Peterson**

Dr. Peterson presented information on House File (HF) 1773 and HF 1774. HF1773 was introduced last year and relates to race, equity, and English learners. House File 1774 is called Race Equity for Accelerating Learning and focuses on transformative work in ALCs and in dual enrollment for students of color and Indigenous students. Primary talking points centered on three ideas: Innovation Grants, ALC High School Credit Recovery, and Dual Enrollment. TNEC will be kept informed of progress in order to voice support.

### **OHE | Commissioner Olson**

Commissioner Olson provided updates on the new FAFSA form and roll-out, the NorthStar Promise, the Minnesota Indian Scholarship, and financial aid. He also provided updates related to restructuring at the department level, including the addition of staff and the redefining of current staff roles.

### **MDE, IEFA | Sam Zimmerman, Indigenous Education Specialist**

Mr. Zimmerman provided a written brief by email to the committee. The committee learned that he will no longer be attending TNEC meetings as he has exited his role as the Indigenous Education Specialist.

### **MDE, OAIE | Dr. Harstad, Director**

The committee engaged in a lengthy discussion with Dr. Harstad on American Indian Education Aid and district expenditures. The committee voiced that the AIEA program rests with MDE to monitor and administer, and while they can offer their interpretation of the accompanying statute, the processes reside with the department.

The committee inquired about data on schools, specifically related to American Indian Parent Advisory Committees (AIPAC). The director reported that there are 87 schools with 10-19 American Indian students, nine of which have been nonconcurrent.

A legislative proposal was shared, and the current language cites a "tribal rep" not the TNEC as the consultative entity. The committee expressed concern about who these tribal reps would be if not the TNEC, and what a district will think consulting looks like. The general consensus was that the proposal as reported was not effectively worded and unclear.

## Additional Activities:

### Mascots

The TNEC followed the intent of the law and dutifully acted upon their prescribed obligations. They commenced with the review process and issued or denied exemptions. The committee has been repeatedly contacted by multiple districts who were displeased with the lack of exemption.

### Request for Proposals

In November, the committee approved and posted a public *Request for Proposals* (RFP) for the TNEC Executive Assistant position.

### Committee Support

The Tribal Nations Education Committee entered into a one-year contract with Kristen Aeikens to provide comprehensive executive level committee support. Contractual priorities include board assistance, presentations, report writing, communications assistance, web redesign, and the research and development of archives and resource repositories. The contract is valid January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024.