



**TNEC**  
Tribal Nations Education Committee

**TRIBAL NATIONS EDUCATION COMMITTEE (TNEC)**

**OPEN MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** March 21, 2024 | **Time:** 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM | **Location:** Zoom | **Facilitator:** Chair Harper

**ATTENDANCE**

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

\*Alternate

**PUBLIC ATTENDEES**

Name	Area/Organization
Dr. Harstad	Office of American Indian Education, Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)
Maddy Blaser	Office of American Indian Education, MDE
Betsy Blackhawk	Office of American Indian Education, MDE
Graham Hartley	Student Access & Opportunity Programs, MDE
Michelle Poitra	Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC)
Gimiwan Dustin Burnette	Executive Director, MiiN
Traci Maday-Karageorge	AIR/ISI Project
Leslie Harper	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

**MEETING**

Time	Item	Owner
10:01 AM	<p><b>Meeting Called to Order</b></p> <p><b>Prayer</b></p> <p><b>Committee Rollcall:</b> Quorum met.</p> <p><b>Approval of Agenda</b> Motion made to move legislative updates to Dr. Harstad's presentation. Motion to approve agenda with changes. Seconded. Motion carried.</p>	Chair Harper
10:08 AM	<p><b>Legislative Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are not a lot of measures going through.</li> <li>Inclusions in the bill should have been sent to the committee by Adosh Uni.</li> <li>One inclusion is the carryover of funds for American Indian Education Aid (AIEA). Half of the funds may be carried over under this proposal. It's not clear how this will work because MDE doesn't get an expenditure report until the following fall.</li> <li><b>Q: Why can't the FIN number system employed during COVID for pandemic funds be used for AIEA? Is it too difficult?</b> <b>A:</b> That system works well for federal dollars but not for state grant or aid programs. They have an option of starting a "restricted fund balance" or a "reserve fund balance". That entails creating an entirely new bank account within their system.</li> <li><b>Q: Why wouldn't the state try and mirror something that has already being proven to work?</b> <b>A:</b> Uncertain. Finance has reported that it's not as easy as it appears to be.</li> <li>There is an amendment window for changes.</li> </ul>	Dr. Harstad, Director of the Office of American Indian Education, MDE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no process in place for the OAIE to manage this new funding system.</li> <li>• They are waiting for the legislature to decide when this has to be implemented by. If it's the end of this year it will be difficult. If next year they have some time to plan.</li> <li>• This is the only AI specific legislation that has gone forward.</li> <li>• The charter schools have been allies and have been very good at ensuring that every place they are included in language that the tribal contract schools are also included.</li> <li>• <b>Q: Are tribal schools made aware that they've been included in new items?</b> <b>A:</b> I would say no. I am not aware of them ever being asked. We are erroring on the side of inclusivity.</li> <li>• <b>Q-Michelle Poitra (MIAC): Shannon wants to know if there is any glaring opposition to this year's Indian Education for All bill? She's been working with a representative on it.</b></li> <li>• The committee requested that Michelle share the bill, but she reports not having it.</li> <li>• <b>Committee Request:</b> Ask Shannon to share this so it can be reviewed.</li> <li>• <b>Resources from Dr. Harstad:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Senate File</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">House File</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• 11 mentions of AI in Senate file.</li> <li>• 12 mentions of AI in House file.</li> <li>• Melanie has been working on the item related to excused school absences for religious or other spiritual reasons.</li> <li>• A general discussion was had about the use of the word "Indigenous" in American Indian related legislation/law at the state level.</li> <li>• Dr. Harstad offered that additional time is needed to review the files and discuss with the committee.</li> </ul>	
<p>10:27 AM</p> <p><b>Professional Educators Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB)</b></p> <p>PELSB met with the committee to have a conversation about the new renewal requirement that went into place last year for teachers specific to cultural heritage with an emphasis on Minnesota's tribal nations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Language/Citation:</b> <a href="#">Minnesota Statutes 122A.187, Subd. 7</a></li> <li>• PELSB has met with 10 of the Tribal Nations and the TNEC to develop a first draft of the rule.</li> <li>• Discussed what can be done to implement professional development.</li> <li>• Commonalities from these discussions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The TSRT was cited repeatedly by Tribal Nations as being the model to strive for.</li> <li>○ A one-hour training is insufficient for training.</li> <li>○ The lessons should be very specific, for example treaties, sovereignty, and language, and that the trainings must be truthful about history, removal, and boarding schools and colonization.</li> <li>○ The training materials must be vetted and a review process must be developed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• PELSB provided an overview on their initial training parameters for teachers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Key concepts and terminology;</li> <li>○ The Dakota and Ojibwe peoples relationship with Minnesota and their unique and distinct cultural heritages and sovereignty;</li> <li>○ The laws that govern how Minnesota teachers, schools, and districts work with the 11 Tribal Nations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ongoing training parameters include a deeper dive into topics and concepts, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Incorporating history language and culture into curriculum;</li> <li>○ Understanding historical events and treaties relevant to relationships;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Michelle Hersh Vaught, Chief of Staff</p> <p>Steve Rollin, Rulemaking Attorney</p>

- Understanding the current status of treaty and land rights;
- Understanding the impact of federal and state laws and policies that were put into place to undermine cultural practices and coherence;
- Best practices for serving American Indian students.
- Next Steps:
  - Initiate formal rulemaking process – 60-day comment period;
  - Finalize draft of components, issue notice of intent, hold rules hearing (if 25 or more requests);
  - Review by administrative law judge;
  - Adopt components.

#### **Discussion, Comments, Questions – Training**

- The use of the word “Indigenous” vs. what is used in state law (American Indian) gets confusing.
- **Committee Request:** Return to using the terminology American Indian
- Previous searches by the committee on the PELSB website were confusing and didn’t garner the results expected. This could be problematic for teachers visiting the site and looking for information, who know to use the American Indian reference.
- **Concern:** They have 3-5 years to renew their license, but they are required to be able to teach these concepts immediately. For a teacher it could feel like this is to late in coming.
- **Concern:** A focus on history and how we got her without current contributions being noted. We’re not all history.
- **Concern:** Consider putting the “best practices” for American Indian students at the top of your list. This is a high priority.
- **Concern:** Consider adding language around trauma informed practices.
- PELSB offered that this is the beginning of the conversation and the committee’s input is valuable.
- **Concern:** Terminology is inconsistent.
- **Concern:** Ensure that the focus is specifically on Dakota and Ojibwe peoples of Minnesota. As written, teachers could lean into their comfort with other American Indian tribes and choose to do what’s comfortable instead of what’s right and applicable to this area.
- Comment related to the need for accurate knowledge vs. checking a box or being “performative”.
- The consensus was that the draft was a good place to start.

#### **Discussion, Comments, Questions – Website**

- **Concern:** The Indigenous Educators and Pathways Licensure is difficult to find. A search for “American Indian” does not take the viewer to the correct area. We want American Indian teachers to be able to find this information quickly and easily and recommend calling this area what the license is.
- **PELSB:** We intend for this webpage to be a one-stop resource for educators that included American Indian history/language/culture licensing information, but also adjacent programs, such as grants and training programs.
- **Concern:** We’re under DEI. Would an aspiring educator know to look here?
- **PELSB:** Launching a new webpage called Pathways to Licensure and this information will live there. There will be separate pages of information by topic. Ex. Heritage Language is one area and American Indian Educators will be another specific area.
- **Concern:** Indigenous is a broad term that encompasses many people beyond American Indians, and it should be clear that this is focused on American Indians as defined in the state of Minnesota, specifically the Ojibwe and Dakota. That is who we represent. You would not want to give someone credentials not knowing anything about them. There are over 500 Tribal Nations.

- **PELSB:** Regarding the broad American Indian licensure, that is meant to capture anyone who falls outside of Dakota and Ojibwe. They could be from another Tribal Nation and get a letter or resolution and be an expert and that could be honored with this license.
- Ojibwe language isn't listed and PELSB confirmed this was a typo and would fix.
- The way the information reads is confusing. It's hard to tell if you need multiple resolutions if you want multiple areas.
- PELSB confirmed that only one resolution would be needed and that it is set up to fulfill the request of tracking information better. This is a small step to identify actual numbers.
- A committee would prefer just Ojibwe and Dakota be taught in Minnesota because those are the 11 Nations that are here.
- Other Native languages are appreciated, but their place in Minnesota schools is questionable because statute aligns to the Nations of Minnesota and their accompanying languages.
- This topic is complicated by the fact that there are already teachers with the existing iteration of the licenses, and its not clear what that looks like at renewal.
- The committee wants it to be clear that if someone applies for the culture, language, and history in Dakota (ex.), they only need one resolution to get multiple licenses.
- PELSB agreed that the clarifications offered were needed and the information would be updated.
- Clarification is needed surrounding the evidence of the applicant's knowledge. An endorsement from the Nation serves as evidence of qualifications.
- PELSB confirmed that additional evidence beyond that was not required.
- Concern is expressed surrounding the affidavit attesting to their knowledge and the current website verbiage that cites PELSB consulting with TNEC. The committee has not agreed to serve in this capacity, nor has it been discussed.
- PELSB offered that this came out of rulemaking from a couple of years ago and concerns about internal politics and a Tribal Nation denying someone a resolution for personal reasons.
- The committee expressed that this was very paternalistic and judgmental.
- PELSB offered that the solution is to remove this from the rule. Removing the language from the website does not mean it's removed from policy.
- The committee noted that legal terms in use come from specific policy and history and language consistent with statute and policy is helpful to maintain focus.
- PELSB offered that the terms in questions were pulled from the MDE training sessions, which the committee took issue with because the Office of American Indian Education was not involved in the review of those training modules. Further, it wasn't reviewed by any Tribal Nation to ensure efficacy.
- **Committee Request:** Remove TNEC from the website as a collaborator.
- Assurance was offered that PELSB would not issue any licenses without a resolution or without TNEC being involved in the process.
- A community member offered that statute uses the term American Indian and the use of the word Indigenous opens it up to being broader than the intent of the law. Intent is critical.
- A community member offered that the previous comment by PELSB related to the rulemaking has not place in the meeting. Look at the intent of the clause and bring it to the Tribes and TNEC. Otherwise it's hearsay. What you've been discussing oversteps. Provide the rule. That would be helpful. Otherwise this is out of place.
- The website reference to go to the TNEC website should be removed. Questions go to PELSB, but if they need a letter of support, they can visit the website to find the links to our Nations.
- **Q: Do we the committee want to have a landing page for licensure information?**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A:</b> Not at this time. It's something to discuss.</li> <li>• The committee asked for clarification about the Indigenous Licensure Programs section on the website. PELSB offered that it is a placeholder for future information and that more context is needed.</li> <li>• A general discussion surrounding programs and pathways ensued. In general there are multiple issues.</li> <li>• <b>Committee Request:</b> Come back to discuss so we can assist and help you with this.</li> <li>• The committee reiterated the need for clarification across the board and expanded on the sacredness of their Native languages. They are not the same as Spanish or Russian. This needs to be pushed out respectfully.</li> <li>• The committee would have preferred all of the information as presented on their website to have been discussed in advance with them rather than them finding it by happenstance. These issues could have been averted had they been brought forward earlier.</li> <li>• <b>Committee Request:</b> Proactive discussions going forward.</li> </ul> <p>*Presentation: Has not been sent.</p>	
<p>11:32 PM</p> <p><b>Midwest Indigenous Immersion Network (MiiN)</b></p> <p>Mr. Burnette provided an overview of his organization's mission and priorities and presented data on American Indian language instruction in Minnesota's public and BIE schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In SY22-23, surveys were conducted with districts in Minnesota.</li> <li>• The purpose of the study was to identify where Ojibwe students are and to provided data to stakeholders surrounding American Indian language education in Minnesota.</li> <li>• Hoping to identify the most effective communities in which to offer services.</li> <li>• The data identifies inequities between American Indian language instruction and other education options in Minnesota public schools.</li> <li>• The study revealed a lack of completed curriculum, licensed teachers, poor student to teacher ratios and a low percentage of districts offering Native American language.</li> <li>• Identifying inequities can aid in advocating for change at the Tribal, state, and federal level.</li> <li>• The SY22-23 American Indian eligibility list was used to identify districts with 40 or more American Indian/Alaskan Native students.</li> <li>• 116 out of 117 districts responded to the survey.</li> <li>• 33% of district respondents and 100% of BIE respondents offer American Indian language courses.</li> <li>• There are no recognized standards or benchmarks, and no common curriculum.</li> <li>• 62% AI/AN enrollment rate in American Indian language classes.</li> <li>• An overview of courses, student ratios and enrollment were offered. (slide 5)</li> <li>• 56% of educators teaching American Indian languages in Minnesota have culture and language licenses. 21% general ed. 23% no license.</li> <li>• Regarding curriculum, districts do not have consistent materials.</li> <li>• The presenter touched on commonalities but asked the committee to refer to the slide deck once received to augment his report. In general, the feedback received indicated that districts would like to do more but lack people to fill the positions.</li> <li>• Discussed their work and partnerships on this topic in Wisconsin.</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion, Comments, Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a similar presentation to what MiiN presented at the MIAC language symposium in February.</li> <li>• <b>Q: Why is there a focus on elementary school? Is there an effort to have programming for middle and high school teachers?</b></li> </ul>	<p>Gimiwan Dustin Burnette, Executive Director, MiiN</p>

	<p><b>A:</b> This is due to the specific partner university. They are working on an immersion teacher training track. The process could be replicated at different levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Q: Why did you choose 40 students or more?</b> <b>A:</b> They chose to focus on districts with 40 or more AI/AN students for the research citing the availability of lists of eligible students.</li> <li>• <b>Q: Minnesota has statutes in place related to 20 or more American Indian students as well as language requirements and districts with 100 or more American Indian students. Was this taken into account with your research?</b> <b>A:</b> No.</li> <li>• <b>Q: Were Charter Schools included?</b> <b>A:</b> No.</li> <li>• The Office of American Indian Education would like to connect to further this conversation. You may be missing a lot of the picture and they would like to help round out their information. Research presents a unique collaborative opportunity.</li> <li>• It's understood that there are difficulties related to transferring licenses from one state to another.</li> <li>• <b>Q: What do you see as the teacher licensure with your training?</b> <b>A:</b> Initial goal is trying to get accredited to provide K-6 dual licensure in Minnesota/Wisconsin.</li> <li>• General discussion regarding standardized standards and curriculum. Scaffolding would be more feasible.</li> <li>• No action steps for TNEC. Just wants the data made available to the committee for its use. Would like to be kept in mind for future collaborative efforts.</li> <li>• <b>Q: How can the committee help encourage students for teacher training?</b> <b>A:</b> Recruitment and advertising campaign will start soon and that could be shared out.</li> <li>• <b>Q: How does this fit in with current licensed teachers?</b> <b>A:</b> They would like to do a needs assessment of current teachers. Some assumptions can be made related to benchmarks and curriculum, materials, etc. Professional learning communities, professional development.</li> <li>• <b>Concern:</b> PELSB issue related to reciprocity.</li> <li>• <b>Q: Do you have a way to share resources with current teachers?</b> <b>A:</b> They have a process in place for sharing materials resources for immersion teachers and that could be adapted.</li> <li>• <b>Q: Who are your "stakeholders"?</b> <b>A:</b> The immersion sector, immersion organizations.</li> <li>• Their current plan is for general education, k-6 licensure program through the medium of English with a focus on Ojibwe language and culture. There will also be a immersion track.</li> <li>• They do not have an official focus currently.</li> <li>• Certificates would be issued from the university.</li> <li>• Minnesota has an immersion educator teaching license; it may be helpful to look at that.</li> </ul>	
12:15 PM	LUNCH	
12:52 PM	<p><b>Legislative Updates (Cont.)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Harstad provided a side-by-side comparison of the house and senate files. See side-by-side sheet for a full review.</li> <li>• It's been shared with tribal leaders.</li> <li>• She highlighted excused days for American Indian students for culture, in response to church release days for other students, bilingual seals, smudging,</li> </ul>	<p>Dr. Harstad, Director of the Office of American Indian Education, MDE</p>

<p>and voluntary PreK for 4-year olds who are American Indian. These are the only bills moving forward this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Harstad and Chair Harper asked Michelle Poitra (MIAC) to weigh in on additional items she may be aware of.</li> <li>• Michelle is compiling information, but they are hiring someone to oversee legislative measures.</li> <li>• She is looking to build out the MIAC legislative webpage.</li> <li>• She is following four bills but has nothing to add at this point.</li> <li>• She forwarded information to Kristen today and that information was sent out to the full committee for review during the meeting.</li> <li>• The committee should reach out to Michelle directly with comments and questions.</li> <li>• Michelle referenced possible amendments to language in some of the Indian Education Act related statutes and tied this to the carryover of American Indian Education Aid.</li> <li>• She was not able to provide further clarification as this language was not her own.</li> <li>• Dr. Harstad offered that if there are going to be changes to 124D.74 someone must speak to her office directly because they are not aware of any such proposals.</li> <li>• Michelle asked on behalf of the MIAC Executive Director, if the committee has any glaring opposition to this year’s Indian Education for All bill. Shannon is working with Rep. Kozlowski on potential language amendments.</li> <li>• Michelle has not received information related to potential changes.</li> <li>• Neither MDE, nor the committee is aware of any changes and it’s concerning.</li> <li>• <b>Presenter Action:</b> Will contact Shannon to get clarification and follow-up with the committee and Dr. Harstad.</li> <li>• Michelle offered that she thinks the proposed changes are to last year’s IEFA bill.</li> <li>• The committee expressed concern that there would be changes proposed this early in implementation.</li> <li>• Dr. Harstad would only agree to changes to IEFA if it’s related to an increase in funding.</li> <li>• General concern is expressed about a lack of knowledge related to this.</li> <li>• Chair Harper reports that Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe legislative staff will reach out to the Rep.</li> <li>• A general conversation surrounding the lack of consultation and information. There is confusion on the part of MIAC and MDE is not aware of changes. Concern is expressed.</li> <li>• The Chair offered that changes, if any, may be in response to the MIAC meeting in February, and what TNEC reported at that meeting. It’s unclear.</li> <li>• Vice-Chair Tepper offered that the MDE Tribal Liaison should provide clarity on this.</li> <li>• Michelle offered a side update: The May MIAC meeting has been changed. It will take place May 22-24 at Lower Sioux.</li> </ul>	<p>Michelle Poitra, Communications Director, MIAC</p>
<p>2:05 PM <b>Other Updates</b></p> <p>The committee requested that Graham Hartley provide a general update on pertinent activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He is involved with the consolidated ESEA applications. He reviews the affirmations of consultation, asks questions as needed, ensures dates are appropriated, and signatures obtained.</li> <li>• He and Dr. Harstad discussed the importance of relooking at materials with the sunseting of ESSER funds, such as current guidance.</li> <li>• They made minor adjustments to the affirmation form.</li> </ul>	<p>Graham Hartley, Student Access &amp; Opportunity Programs, MDE</p>



- He reported on internal conversations involving foster care and homeless McKinney Vento students where overrepresentation of American Indian students is seen.
- They are presenting information to liaisons at regional meetings and are trying to bring visibility to this situation.
- They are exploring opportunities for support, specifically through Title programs.
- The committee offered that, relating to the affirmations, there are definitions that the federal department of education has created on timely and meaningful consultation and we have felt they are not timely or meaningful.
- It's more or less a report of past activities, not consultation.
- No forward thinking about how to use funds to best affect American Indian student outcomes.
- Chair Harper expressed concern that consultations aren't addressing this.
- Additional concern is expressed about staff in northern districts being reportedly told by MDE that it doesn't matter if they submit their affirmations because MDE can't do anything if they don't turn them in.
- Even if MDE doesn't have the accountability, the affirmation is what "allows" Tribes to affect change in Indian education policies.
- The general discussion emphasized the importance of tribal consultation and collaboration with TNEC and the OAIE on Indian education policies.
- Discussion included historical context with laws and reaffirming sovereignty.
- Tribal Consultation is a continuous conversation and not just a reporting mechanism.
- Affirmations are often the only thing they have that will hold an LEA accountable to our community and our students and families.
- There are reports of community members not wanting affirmations signed because the district isn't actually doing their due diligence.
- Graham appreciated the feedback and suggested more recurring check-ins on this and other information.
- He offered that a big challenge with affirmations is that they are often just reports rather than thoughtful conversations and collaborative planning for the best interests of American Indian students.
- Ideally the fall consultation would review results from the previous school year, and spring for the upcoming school year.
- Chair Harper clarified that Tribal Consultation is not prescribed by MDE, or what MDE wants to hear.
- ESSA clearly calls for tribal consultation between and LEA and a Tribe and consultations between an SEA under Title I and a Tribe.
- There has been no consultation with the SEA (MDE) under Title I and when Leech Lake tried to include, the MDE Tribal Liaison said that would not be discussed and removed it from the agenda without any conversation.
- Our request for quarterly meetings between the TNEC and Commissioner also ties into ESSA and MDE should be prepared for that.
- TNECs tribal consultation with metro schools are because the committee is named in statute.
- **Committee Action:** The Chair will formally request consultation under Title I and ESSA.
- The committee has discussed this with MDE before and has requested that MDE fill out the school profile, but they've done so. When they next meet with the Commissioner, they will be asking for this again.
- The Chair reiterated that the TNEC relationship should not be exclusive to the Office of American Indian Education. TNEC is the statutory body to consult with on all facets of education.
- Graham clarified that he meant it to be planful and not just a reporting out of activities and accomplishments.

2:25 PM

**Adjournment**

Motion made to adjourn. Seconded. Motion Carried.

Chair Harper

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**NEXT OPEN MEETING: APRIL 11, 2024**

**Submitted by:** Kristen Aeikens | **Date:** April 5, 2024