

**TNEC QUARTERLY
REPORT TO MIAC**

REPORT PERIOD	April, May and June 2024	DATE: 8/5/2024	

Name	Position	Tribal Nation Represented
Laurie Harper	TNEC Chairperson	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
Beth Tepper	TNEC Vice-chair	Twin Cities Representative
Billie Annette	Secretary	Minnesota Chippewa Tribe
Jennifer Murray	Treasurer	Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Vondalee Carr	TNEC Representative	Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
Tara Dupis	TNEC Representative	Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Carissa Picket	TNEC Representative	Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
Dana Goodwin	TNEC Representative	White Earth Nation
Niiyo Gonzalez	TNEC Representative	Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
Johnny Johnson	TNEC Representative	Prairie Island Indian Community
Jesse Kodet	TNEC Representative	Lower Sioux Indian Community
Carrie Trutna	TNEC Representative	Upper Sioux Indian Community
Glenda Martin	TNEC Representative	Red Lake Nation
Maria Burnett	TNEC Representative	Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Zhawin Gonzelez	Twin Cities Metro Representative	
Vacant	Greater Minnesota Representative	
Leanne Hoffman	Alternate Representative	Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
Jackie Probst	Alternate Representative	Lower Sioux Indian Community
Roberta Bjerkeset	Alternate Representative	Upper Sioux Indian Community
Dorothy Robinson	Alternate Representative	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
Dan Morgan	Alternate Representative	Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
Trista Ayers	Alternate Representative	White Earth Nation
Raina Killspotted	Alternate Representative	Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
Annamarie Hill	Alternate Representative	Red Lake Nation

DATES OF ACTIVITIES

April 2024 Meeting: TNEC met with the following organizations:

- Karen Baumgartner, Global Minnesota
- Dr. Jane Harstad, Office of American Indian Education, Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)
- Brandon Alkire, Legislative Director-Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC)
- Graham Hartley, Student Access & Opportunity Programs-MDE
- Anita Fineday, Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)
- Natalie Giese Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan #196
- Scott Parker, Department of Human Services (DHS)
 - Joshua Quigley, DHS
 - Kate Bigg, DHS
 - Stacia Ross, DHS
 - Alyssa Dotson, DHS

Global Minnesota

An overview was provided from Global Minnesota of their recent collaborative efforts with Native American and Indigenous groups. Wanting to bring people from different nations into classroom with the goal of promoting international awareness and understanding. A professional exchange program with Minnesota as a top destination. Recognizing an international interest in the Dakota and Ojibwe language revitalization efforts.

Their ask is for guidance and partnership with Native peoples and communities in Minnesota.

TNEC conversed about the western viewpoint of education in K-12 settings; noting that language reclamation, stewardship of land and place and culturally responsive training and programing must be in the forefront of learning moving forward. TNEC suggested that Global Minnesota reach out to individual Nations via website to further learning, conversations and partnerships.

Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC)

Brandon Akire is a new to his role at MIAC and provided a brief introduction of his personal and professional history. TNEC wants to know if MIAC passed any resolutions in reference to having Ojibwe and Dakota being declared as the official Native languages of Minnesota. Brandon said he would research the issue and do a follow up with TNEC. It was reported that MIAC is aware of the mascot extension, and that he is currently updating MIAC's website to include legislative actions. TNEC is concerned about the lack of communication from MIAC to TNEC and the Tribal Nations. TNEC would like to be notified of any educational legislation discussions and proposals. Transparency is needed from the communication director of MIAC.

Office of American Indian Education (OAIE)

Dr. Harstad and her staff prepared binders for American Indian Education Aid (AIEA) to distribute at MIEA.

Areas of concern for TNEC:

- The READ Act was pushed through legislation by MDE without consultation
- School districts are to start implementation of the READ Act this 2024-2025 academic year

- District 196 sent a letter to Commissioner Jett regarding the approved curricular resources and also contacted TNEC with their concerns
- TNEC and OAIE was also not part of the process that chose those curricular resources nor included in the conversations
- The curricular resources chosen by MDE were not culturally responsive reading
- None of the resources had American Indian authored books
- If districts use other curricular resources not approved by MDE, they will not be reimbursed
- It was overseen by Bobbie Burnham and others from MDE as well as CARIE the educational research team at UMD
- Districts are being placed in an unfair and unequitable position of either choosing a reimbursable bad curricular resource or selecting a non-reimbursable good resource
- TNEC requested a meeting with Assistant Commissioner Burnham

Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)

Anita reported that the transition to the new department is almost complete. The goal is to improve services coordination

May 2024 Meeting TNEC met with the following:

Dr. Jane Harstad, Director of Office of American Indian Education-MDE

Commissioner Wille Jett, MDE

Melanie Franks, Tribal Liaison-MDE

Minnesota Department of Education: Quarterly Consultation

General Concerns, Comments, Discussion

- Committee concerns focused on MDE's lack of consultation with the committee on various department initiatives, legislation, consultant's, curriculum, and RFPs, with specific attention being paid to the READ Act.
- There were 3 pieces of legislation brought forth that tribes and/or TNEC should have been consulted on.
- Assistant Commissioner Bobbie Burnham did not consult with the committee about the READ Act, and reported to the committee that the OAIE was not included because the division was too busy.
- Concerns about a single source consultant for the Read Act were expressed.
- The committee reiterated that all divisions at MDE must consult with TNEC on things related to American Indian students and education, and that MDE must include the OAIE in all things related to American Indian students and education as well.
- Concern is expressed about the committee not being included in the RFP process and notes that a single source consultant is not able to represent all the tribal nations of Minnesota, and this same single source consultant is used on a variety of projects and is not affiliated with a Tribal Nation of the U.S.
- **Q: Why weren't we included?**
A: Commissioner Jett will investigate.
- **Q: Who's responsible for ensuring sufficient staffing of the OAIE?**
A: Commissioner Jett is responsible, followed by his collaborative efforts with Dr. Harstad, and then HR.

- **Q: Is this a high priority on your list?**

A: Yes.

- Past commissioners of education have paid the group a lot of lip service that resulted in no action.
- The committee has had numerous conversations about the de-prioritization of the OAIE, and there's concern that blame could be laid on Dr. Harstad for when American Indian students don't succeed.
- Regarding IEFA, MDE has given tribal nations very little funding to do a very large job in a very tight timeframe and is setting unrealistic expectations.
- Commissioner Jett reiterates his commitment to prioritizing the capacity of the OAIE and acknowledges that the committee would like to see more action from MDE leadership.
- Districts were told last July that they had to incorporate knowledge and teachings about the tribal nations of MN, and some districts have moved to create their own curriculum in order to meet the requirements, and there's concern about the accuracy of what's being created as well as the lack of vetting.

- **Q: How are we going to address that when schools start teaching?**

- The Ethnic Studies workgroup meeting was cancelled (yesterday) and the group has concerns about the amount of time afforded to build the framework and develop resources – things are due to the Commissioner in September.
- Members are also concerned about being called out on social media or other platforms by vocal opponents of the work, and the people on the workgroup are concerned about their safety.
- There are organizations that will try to attack, rather than listen and understand.
- **Response:** The meeting was cancelled to regroup with the facilitator and ethnic studies coalition. Others have questioned the timeline and productivity of the workgroup as well, so the meeting was cancelled to evaluate the approach. Dates have been offered for a make-up meeting.

- **Q: Is that something that the Education on the Holocaust, Genocide of Indigenous peoples and other Genocides workgroup is undergoing as well?**

A: There are some similarities but it's two separate things. MDE received feedback on the process to develop the working group and decided to pause activities and work with the group co-chairs to determine what course of action will set the group up for success. This group is new and there is 1 – 1 ½ years remaining to complete activities. These are two distinct groups.

- **Q: Do you have a timeline?**

A: No. MDE is working with the co-chairs.

- There are significant issues with communication and collaboration between the Tribal Liaison and the Office of American Indian Education, and instances where information wasn't shared.
- The Tribal Liaison has historically not attended committee meetings and/or does not prioritize their time with the committee.
- The committee's expectation is that the OAIE and the Tribal Liaison are both standing reports on our agenda.
- **Request:** The committee would like to see a formal plan that outlines the communication of information between the Tribal Liaison and the department divisions, and that shows the flow of that information to the OAIE in a timely fashion, as well as to the TNEC.

- **Q: Can the Commissioner of Education provide a plan that outlines how that communication and collaboration will work?**

A: I'm hearing you say that the Tribal Liaison is sharing information with the OAIE. If information is not being shared in either direction the expectation is that they collaborate as colleagues to work through the issue. If that doesn't work, then the expectation is that they will come to me. Regarding the communication plan, I will see what that looks like. The ask is understood.

- Commissioner Jett confirms that the problem being voiced is that information is not being shared with the OAIE and/or the committee in a timely fashion. He notes that information is often fluid.

- As soon as information is learned at the MDE level it should be shared immediately with the committee.
- Frustration is voiced surrounding the lack of commitment by past commissioners to allocate Title 3 funds to American Indian languages.
- **Response:** This has been discussed before and Commissioner Jett has met with the “title team” to better understand what’s within the Commissioner’s authority.
- **Commissioner Action:** Set up a meeting during the July retreat between Title funding staff and the committee to better understand what’s possible.
- **Request to Committee:** Please be thinking of financial asks for the next legislative session.
- **Commissioner Action:** Commissioner Jett commits to providing a report to the committee on everything that passed this legislative session.

TNEC Concerns: St. Michael-Albertville

- A student in the St. Michael-Albertville school district has been denied permission to wear a beaded graduation cap.
- Beth Tepper received outreach from a grandparent on the AIPAC requesting help, and she gave them an OAIE PDF of the legislative requirements related to items of cultural significance at graduation, and connected them with the OAIE directly to learn about filing a complaint.
- Q: Should TNEC ever write letters to school districts on behalf like supporting the legislative?
- A: The committee has not done this in the past. It’s been left to MDE because it’s a state law.
- It’s noted that this is a recurring scenario every year around graduation time.
- Beth stresses the importance of giving parents the tools and resources needed to pursue complaints against their districts in these situations.
- She recommends continuing to let MDE handle these issues.

TNEC Concerns: Hinckley-Finlayson

- The Hinckley-Finlayson school board voted not to approve the use of a traveling song at the year-end graduation events.
- It was deemed religious and therefore not allowable.
- There are many different types of traveling songs and the superintendent did not do his due diligence when researching the topic and presenting the information to the school board for consideration.
- The concern was initially brought to the MIEA board, which concurred that disallowing the song was wrong.
- People are writing letters of support and placing calls in support of the song’s use and the American Indian student body.
- Concern was expressed that the MDE and OAIE did not send someone as a measure of support.
- The OAIE director cited needing permission to attend.
- Frustration was expressed because this isn’t’ about taking sides but showing up to present and supportive for what is right.
- A general discussion was had about the student actions, social media activity, community response, and the responsibility of MDE and OAIE to stand with American Indian students and families.
- Local control often prevents MDE from getting actively involved in district-level situations.

May 16, Meeting: Public Attendees:

Dr. Jane Harstad, Director of Office of American Indian Education-MDE

David Parker, ServeMN

Julia Quanrud, ServeMN

Lisa Winkler, ServeMN

Melanie Franks, Tribal Liaison-MDE

Anita Fineday, Department of Children, Youth, and Families-MDE

Graham Hartley, Student Access & Opportunity Programs-MDE

Alex Liuzzi, Elevate Teaching

Commissioner Dennis Olson, Office of Higher Education-MDE

Rafael Eubanks, Office of Higher Education-MDE

Tribal Consultation Under ESSA: Kristen Aeikens

- An updated affirmation of consultation form was received from Graham Hartley, MDE.
- Kristen reviewed, formatted and updated the form and sent to TNEC for approval.

MIAC Updates

Kristen shared that there were no MIAC updates sent from Shannon Geshick-Executive Director of MIAC.

ServeMN:

ServeMN is Minnesota's Commission on National and Community Service. They administer federal AmeriCorps funding. In 23-24 that was \$57M. Monies are competitive.

- They have identified education, environment, and community building as top investment priorities. Within community building, their focus is housing, substance use disorders, and public health.
- 15,000 people serve in Minnesota: 1/3 are between ages 18-29, 1/3 are midlife, and 1/3 are retirees.
- AmeriCorps usually provides a living stipend in Minnesota, that's at minimum \$15 per hour, and many positions offer health insurance.
- Additional types of AmeriCorps funding in the state include:
 - AmeriCorps Native Nations grant, which are administered on a federal basis. Red Lake Nation is a current recipient.
 - AmeriCorps Seniors
 - AmeriCorps Vista
 - End Triple C, which are field crew operations.
 - National Direct Grant
- Education programs include:
 - Early Learning Corps – 3–5-year-old children
 - Reading Corps – K-3; tier 2 literacy; aligned to READ Act
 - Bridge2Read – not AmeriCorps; tier 3 literacy and free curriculum
 - Math Corps – tier 2 math tutoring
- Student Engagement includes:
 - Minnesota Alliance with Youth Promise Fellows – grades 6-12
 - True North AmeriCorps – tutoring and mentoring
 - Summer Impact Corps – youth development support
- College Access includes:
 - Breakthrough Twin Cities – academic enrichment and college prep
 - College Possible – supports historically underserved student populations towards earning a degree.
 - Improve Your Tomorrow – supports young men of color who want to go to college.

Committee Discussion

The committee had a general discussion about the presentation, noting that data specific to American Indian students and their programs is needed, and their specific ask of the committee was unclear.

- What kind of data are they collecting?
- How is information collected?
- How does the Native Nations grant work?
- How do they work with tribal governments in hiring?
- Why are they continuing to double count their Native students?
- In general, the committee would have liked solid data and more information.

Committee Recommendations

- Collect accurate data specific to American Indians to measure success.
- Deepen knowledge of the various tribal communities.
- Host listening sessions within tribal communities to get feedback/input.
- Develop relationships with tribal partners and understand the diversity of needs amongst the nations.

Elevate Teaching: Teacher Marketing and Recruitment Campaign (TMOC)

TMOC is a grant funded by legislation. The grant was \$500K for the first 2 years and was recently renewed for double that amount.

- The campaign focus is to elevate the teaching profession in Minnesota.
- They have three focus areas: marketing, outreach, and bridging.
- Marketing and outreach targets communities, but especially those that may have lower numbers of people going into the teaching.
- Bridging is aimed at identifying and providing support to those that choose to go into teaching.

Comments, Concerns and Discussion

The grant is just for the campaign itself. This can not help FDLTCC with providing funds for new teachers to be placed with mentors—other grant avenues are available. They are looking for people to be facilitators to promote their campaign. They have not partnered with any American Indian teacher training programs, only with the Minnesota Association of Collegiate Teachers.

OAIE Open Discussion

Hinckley-Finlayson District decision:

- Superintendent has stated this is a school board decision
- Superintendent presented the “traveling song” as being religious to the school board
- They are citing the separation of church and state for not allowing it
- Are not allowing the drum at the graduation ceremony—drum and drum lessons are extracurricular
- Dr. Harstad reminded the district that they were given \$147,500 of AIEA funds and \$18,000 was for drumming and it isn’t extracurricular

Office of Higher Education (OHE)

OHE hired Rafael Eubanks a member of MLBO as a Tribal Liaison

Legislative session ends May 20 & Higher Education has an omnibus bill

OHE got \$500K in a supplemental budget to be used to bring Head Start centers to onto select college campuses to address the childcare shortage

Made the North Star Promise program available to families and students making under \$80,000
Fostering Independence grant is a waiver for students that were in the foster care system in Minnesota
OHE is giving financial aid directors more clarity and information about the order in which awards are to be used and how and when to apply them

Comments, Questions, Discussions

TNEC supports financial aid distribution and wants MITTP and Ethel Curry awards to be included
TNEC supports the Head Start on college campus, can they also introduce math and reading concepts as part of the program

Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)

Alina gave update on Native Arts Resources to support arts standards implantation and the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities

Looking for feedback on *Essential Understandings about Native Arts in Minnesota, Additional Considerations for Curriculum and Instruction and the Native Arts Resource Artist List*

Comments, Questions Discussion

TNEC appreciated the arts resources and that the encouragement of having districts reach out to the Native people in their community to work with them

TNEC is concerned that districts/educators might use objects with religious or spiritual significance because they don't know what they are doing.

TNEC recommends that context be added

There should be information or a process for Native families to file a complaint if necessary.

Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)

In the process of completing interviews for the Tribal Relations Director

The 18-member executive team should be in place by July1, 2024

The agency has received all requested funding and will have approximately 1000 employees when the doors are open, mostly from DHS and other agencies

Formal letters will be sent out to tribal nations as official notification of all of the programs moving to the new state agency.

There will be no lapse in services for children and families

MDE Office of American Indian Education

OAIE has created a Responsibility Matrix for AIEA staff because American Indian education staff in districts are being told to develop curricular resources for their district

The matrix provides clear direction as to who is responsible for creating resources

Districts are required to implement the standards and the curriculum staff is responsible for the resources

The matrix was included in the binders handed out at the MIEA conference.

Minnesota Department of Education

Melanie is looking for input from TNEC for the July 23 professional development in Mille Lacs Onamia
Topics to be covered: Understanding the difference between Anishinaabe, Ojibwe and Dakota, History of AIEA, TNEC panel, AIPAC panel, Boarding School Era, Federal Indian Policy, IEFA, NIEA Blanket exercises, Language exercises and Tribal Leader panel

Comments, Questions, Discussion

Meals and Lodging covered, smudging station available, currently no stipends for those that lead/participate in training sessions

June Meeting: Public Attendees

Melanie Franks, Tribal Liaison-MDE

Rafeal Eubanks, Tribal Liaison-OHE

Dr. Jane Harstad, OAIE-MDE

Graham Hartley, MDE

Rochelle Pemberton, Director of Indian Education-Cass Lake-Bena school district

Maddy Blaser, IEFA Specialist-OAIE-MDE

Betsy Blackhawk, Education Specialist-OAIE-MDE

Minnesota Department of Education-Commissioner's Office

The report has been posted online but not sent out publicly, comments and recommendations were included TNEC was not notified of the publication because it was not a priority and not committed to notification Melanie clarified that the field hearing is about what MDE heard and learned-not a report on the state (condition) of American Indian education in Minnesota

Concerns, requests

Clarification on the report(s) and statutes from the Commissioner

Research the Commissioner requirements on the field hearing on the state of American Indian education in Minnesota

Remind Commissioner that his presence is requested at the training retreat

Minnesota Department of Education, Standards and Assessments

TNEC requests that MDE is to use the terms Dakota, Anishinaabe, Ojibwe, Chippewa and American Indian in the language of the law related to standards

Current language in academic standards references "Minnesota's American Indian tribes and communities" which is possessive.

TNEC representatives on standards committees have requested to use the terms Dakota and Anishinaabe/Ojibwe.

Tribal community members have expressed a need to revise the language during IEFA discussions.

The use of consistent language in both MDE and legislation is stressed.

Comments, Concerns Requests

Send Ethnic Studies workgroup meeting dates to Dana and Jackie.

Provide update on Native Arts standards, confirmed artist information, and full list of artists who were contacted

Send opportunities for feedback on Personal Finance Course work group

Share the Phase 2 links once received

Department of Children, Youth and Families

Anita confirmed that DCYF will open on July1, 2024

Additional money has been appropriated from the legislative session

The DCYF commissioner must designate someone to lead the coordination for children w/ disabilities & mental health the agency and for all ages

Tiki Brown is the Commissioner designee for DCYF

In the DCYF, there's going to be an Executive Director of Tribal Relations that oversees at least 2 other people. Sam Moose has been selected for the position.

Anita will stay on till June 30, 2025 to help with onboarding Sam

Minnesota Department of Education

Joyti discussed the gap analysis for the homeless students in Minnesota, information was brief and document was shared with TNEC prior to the meeting

Office of Higher Education (OHE)

Dennis Olson and Lara Gerhardson (MISP) provided information on the recent changes in financial aid options and opportunities for Native students.

OHE staff is available to present virtually and in-person at community events and districts

Dennis is looking for feedback in any potential policy changes that TNEC and tribal nations would like to prioritize

Minnesota Department of Education

OAIE is looking at adjusting the timeline for AIEA Annual Compliance

The change would need to be made in state statute

AIEA funding can not be taken away from districts that are not in compliance

There needs to be a process in place for non-compliance, how it will be managed and who should oversee it

ACTIVITIES UNDERWAY:

Compiled by Maria Burnett