EXHIBIT 5
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HB 137

Notes for Power Point Presentation "Is There a Hole in Our Boat?"

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Handout: "Roots & Branches" Dorthea Susag (read & tell) Does Indian Count?

*** Slides of District American Indian Scores**

*** What research tells us:**

Hudson & Alquist: This research has had global implications for colonized countries because the overarching question of the study addressed concerns for how schooling may:
1. Help children of color to develop identities that are not distorted by the colonizing identity of Eurocentrism and
2 How teachers can learn to challenge assimilationist curricula and teach instead about the diverse histories, sciences, and arts of people of color.

The color-blind construct (curriculum) denies the link between socioeconomic privilege and whiteness. It erases historical memories.

Until we have personal insight into the racialized nature of our education institution, we can not honestly answer "Does Indian Count" to find solutions for fixing the hole in our boat.

Robert Alquist, one of this study's researchers, graduated from Great Falls High School in the early sixties. She visited our library last summer to report that her study had deep implications for the students in Great Falls because (in her opinion) the district was still a "closed system" in denial of its ethnocentrism.

~~She~~ Her studies showed the difference in academic success or failure in Australian and U.S. schools that had minority populations.

In successful schools:

1. Indigenous people's art, heroes, history, culture, music, could be seen on the walls, in the halls, and in the classrooms.
2. Curriculums and classroom materials had been defined to reflect and connect minority groups to learning goals.
3. Guidance had been sought from indigenous people to develop curriculums and to re-educate the white teachers.

A. Ethnic diversity was valued.
B. Professional development had been required for teachers' understanding of the history and culture of the local indigenous people.

State scores for students improved when student identities and histories were validated and confirmed.

Dr. William G Demmert, Ed.D, Woodring College of Education, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington: "Improving Academic Performance Among Native American Children" Presented to the Indian Education Summit in Helena, Montana on October 15, 2004. He told us there are two most accurate predictors of a young person's ability to succeed in school. They are:

1. Reading readiness based on phonemic awareness, vocabulary, alphabet naming, and listening comprehension.
2. Social Behavior a. external with peers and b. internal in independence, responsibility, and self-control.

Native American students start low in both predictors for starting school. When we add predictors of family, economic conditions, age of birth, and other factors influencing academic achievement, we see the reasons for low scores in multiple risks.

Yet we know those only account for only half of the achievement gap. The rest of the factors are related to community and the school experiences.

Dr. Demmert went on to tell us that the culture of the family is the framework that must be used, to apply what they have learned, to learn new information. Also, the educational environment must provide the connectors because

"Learning, remembering, talking, and imaging are made possible by and through culture connections."

Three education theories regarding Native peoples are closely aligned with "Culturally Based Education (CBE).

a. Cultural Compatibility theory says, "The more closely aligned the human interactions in the school are with family and community, the more likely academic goals will be reached.

b. Cognitive Theory- New knowledge must be associated with prior knowledge.

c. Cultural-Historical-Activity theory (CHAT) says that, "Issues of culture, language, cognition, community and socialization are central to learning. Socialization is… joint, meaningful, guided activities by the more accomplished participants…mostly through language exchanges. (Successful learning depends on cultural vocabulary basis.)

Teachers speak formal English, Native students speak Indian English.

The collaborative project between Evergreen Center State College and the Office of Indian Education of the State of Washington concurs with the Demmert study and Hudson-Alquist findings…

"The history of the education over time received by Native Americans will determine low or high reading scores and low or high dropout rates."

*** Options for Improvement**

So, what are our options for improvement of our district's historical educational outcomes for American Indian students?

1. Wait for the reservations and the State of Montana to develop culturally relevant curriculums or to develop professional training for the majority white teacher population.

2. Continue to take on the responsibility of fixing the hole in the boat ourselves.

If we continue to assume responsibility for district and building level action, there are some models for us to use.

*** Actions to keep the boat afloat**

Chris Wortman and the high school history teachers have developed a new curriculum for Montana Government. That process drew the historical/culture gap much closer. She and the committee are to be commended.

Other models that have been successful in Montana are

1. The professional development days offer on the Blackfeet and Flathead Reservations:

All public and private schools attend one to two days of classes rich in information for teachers about the history, culture, and successful teaching methods of their area.

2. The portfolio required for graduation at Browning High School that provides requirements of:

- Academic reports, career and college preparation (letters of reference, resume, college and financial aid application, and more),
- Community service hours
- Examples of academic performance from math, writing, science, and other classes as well as letters from teachers, and summaries of clubs/activities/and awards.

3. The "Hoop of Learning" program for school to college, seventh grade to college graduation sponsored by a three-way partnership between businesses, the school district and the local colleges and university. The retention rate for American Indian students in the program (22 seventh graders start each year. Eventually 220 will be in the program through 10 years). The model has a 98.9% retention rate. Some elements supporting the students are: coordinators, transportation, books & supplies, higher level classes (8th graders take one h.s. class and high school students get college credits on campus) and the meals during the summer sessions are free.

Each person in this room sincerely cares for every student. "Indian does Count." We know because most building's scores are raising.

How can this boat really float?

* ***Assistance***

Malcolm Gladwell's book "The Tipping Point" shares how little things can make a big difference.

1. The "Law of Few" says, "Look to the four directions for who we are." It only takes a few people to make change. They are the ones with real social power:

a. Connectors know lots of people and we rely on them to connect us with what we need.

b. Mavens want to help and like to help. They pass along good ideas with enthusiasm that makes others pay attention.

Salesmen are people who are mezmorizing in their "pitch." They persuade others.

All three types can assist with the successful tipping point.

2. Stickiness Factor looks at ideas that have worked and "catch on" You all have seen them. You can use proven models to create what works for your unique school.

a. Sesame Street discovered if you can hold the child's attention, you can educate them. They learned, show after show, what worked and what didn't.

Blue's Clues wanted to know how knowledge "stuck." Their program discovered that kids would watch the same segment five days in a row and the information would stick.

We need to run our own investigations on "what sticks".

3. Power of Context

We are actually powerfully influenced by our surroundings, our immediate context, and the personalities of those around us. "We are suggestible in the face of what we see and hear and are sensitive to the smallest details of everyday life."

It is up to us to manipulate the size of groups and to find the people who hold social power to help us. What may seem immovable is not. With the slightest push in just the right place. Indian students' scores can be tipped.

What can I do to help? Do we need more information?