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The issue of *Quality Education* in relation to Indian Education for All

In the words of former Secretary of Education Richard Riley, "A quality education for every child is a 'new civil right' for the 21st Century." A quality education for Montana students includes the opportunity to learn about its first people. In order to fully implement Indian Education for All (MCA 20-1-501) all teachers in the state must be prepared to teach about American Indians in an authentic historical and contemporary manner. Based on data from the 5-Year Comprehensive Plans and the Annual Data Collection(ADC) submitted to OPI by all K-12 districts, teachers need professional development and curricular materials to gain expertise and support in implementing the law. The October 2004 ADC shows that districts rate 91% of their teachers' background knowledge of Montana contemporary American Indian issues as basic. Eighty percent of the districts indicate that their most immediate need in effectively implementing Indian Educator for All is for materials. Successful implementation of Indian Education for All will require support for extensive professional development (inservice and pre-service) and available curricular materials.

The basis for these efforts will be:

- the Montana content and performance standards which will lead to student competencies such as the ability to "analyze how human settlement patterns create cooperation and conflict which influence the division and control of the earth(e.g., treaties, exploration, borders, religion, exploitation, water rights)*Montana Accreditation Standards, Chapter 54-57*, and
- in developing curricula in all program areas, the board of trustees shall consider ways to take into account individual and cultural diversity and differences among learners. Cultural and language differences should be viewed as valuable and enriching resources taking into account the unique needs of American Indian and minority students(10.55.803 Learner Access),
- in developing curricula in all program areas, the board of trustees shall consider ways to provide books and materials which reflect authentic historical and contemporary portrayals of American Indians(10.55.803 Learner Access).
- the Essential Understandings of Montana Tribes developed by expert Montana Indian educators in 2000, which provide an understanding of basic concepts such as "Reservations are land that has been reserved by the tribes for their own use through treaties, not "given" to them. The principle that land should be acquired from Indians only through their consent with treaties involved three assumptions: that both parties to treaties were sovereign powers; that Indian

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tribes had some form of transferable title to the land; that acquisition of Indian lands was solely a government matter not to be left to individual colonists.”

For American Indian students in the State, a quality education will provide a culturally responsive curriculum that allows them to achieve at a proficient academic level. The attitudes, beliefs and actions of the school must model respect for cultural diversity, celebrate the contributions of diverse groups, and foster understand and acceptance of racial and ethnic plurality. “The means and ends of schooling is a society that continues to advance toward social justice and equality of opportunity.”(Novick, 1996).

Culturally responsive teaching does not consist of a recipe or series of steps that teachers can follow, but instead relies on a positive disposition toward learners and their culture. The educational process is founded upon traditional tribal values and principles using the most appropriate concepts, technologies and content of modern education(Cajete, 1994). A culturally responsive curriculum will include a sequential K-12 native language program that allows students to meet the Montana World Language standards, which state “Language study is communication-based and requires a sequential curriculum that provides consistent and increasing contact with the language and culture.” To maximize efforts, the K-12 language program should coordinate with pre-school and tribal college work.

A quality education includes what the framers of the Montana Constitution had in mind while at the time incorporating the elements of Indian Education for All.