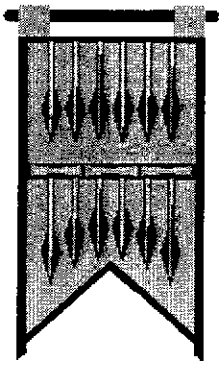
Working Group
EXHIBIT 7
DATE 1/28/2005
HB

Five-Year Comprehensive Planning
To Implement Indian Education for All:
Guidelines for Montana K – 12 Public Schools



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Montana Advisory Council On Indian Education (MACIE)

These guidelines serve to advise communities, school leadership, and educators on their five-year comprehensive planning requirements to meet accreditation standards related to MCA 20-1-501, *Indian Education for All.* The OPI, through the Indian Education program, can provide professional development and resources for implementation of the suggestions made below.

School Profile

In this first template section schools will be asked to state the district's policy on MCA 20-1-501, *Indian Education for All.* A sample policy is provided at the end of this document. Based on precedence from other schools, the OPI offers assistance to schools in writing a policy. To make sure that school data and profiles can be used to guide the decision-making process, the Indian Education Program and OPI staff people are working as a team. The same collaboration holds true as schools work toward the Indian Education for All requirements.

Mission/Vision, Philosophy, and Goals

In this section of the planning template, schools may address their mission and school improvement goals related to Indian Education for All as well as improvement plans related to low achievement and graduation rates. Samples are provided at the end of the document.

Too often for Indian students, classroom time is spent on tasks that are developmentally inappropriate or culturally irrelevant and/or intellectually non-challenging. Historically, public schooling worked to assimilate Indian students to the American culture and for the general public, Indian knowledge was not accurately or sufficiently portrayed. As a result of these practices, academic achievement and motivation for Indian students is low and race relations have not improved to a satisfactory level.

To improve race relations and to learn from diversity, all Montana students should have the opportunity to learn about Montana tribes and be instructed in Indian studies. To improve the achievement levels of Indian students, techniques and classroom structure could work to empower rather than assimilate, to differentiate instruction, to make essential skills automatic, and to provide time for in-depth (not superficial) exploration of concepts that are personally meaningful.

Study of textbooks and other materials without local, tribal content and performance of tasks requiring low- level thinking disempower students and take well over its share in curricular space. We would expect schools to purchase materials (or commission the creation of new, quality materials) to reflect tribal knowledge, language, beliefs, and images. Schools may also access materials from the OPI such as the curriculum guide, *Essential Understandings About Montana Indians*. Equally important is to assign higher-level problem solving and writing tasks, early in school, that will create a foundation to college level learning.

To ease Indian drop out rates and high absences, schools could use models that focus on student assets (not deficits), individual needs, and experiential, student-guided activities. Alternative structures and creative scheduling of staff and mentors could be considered to provide low teacher to student and counselor to student ratios as well as common planning times. Again, professional development activities related to school re-structuring are available through the OPI.

To adjust instructional techniques and learning environments, schools can look to leaders in Indian Education to identify research-based strategies for school success. These strategies could include best practices for early childhood experiences, as well as strengthening identity, resiliency, and parent/community partnerships.

Implementation of Content, Performance, and Assessment Requirements

Indian Education for All is written into specific accreditation content standards. We would like schools to incorporate the benchmark standards for Indian Education for All across all disciplines. To share with all Montana citizens, Montana Indian tribes have a valuable body of knowledge related to many content areas, in addition to Social Studies (i.e.: Reading, Literature, and Science). Bringing this knowledge to teachers and students requires a concerted effort and an institutionalized mechanism (defined by policy) for sustainability of effort, regardless of school staff and tribal council turnover rates. This should include a formal request from the districts for collaboration and assistance from tribal government representatives, such as tribal education directors or tribal college staff. Districts must be willing to provide adequate allocation of time and money to utilize local, tribal experts. To institutionalize efforts, formal agreements between school districts and local tribes should be written. In these agreements, the tribal expertise should be recognized as a valued resource.

Given the unique differences of tribes, some performance standards are held in higher regard than others. Many feel our students should leave school with a good understanding of Indian history as it relates to contemporary issues and with the capability to contribute to the community in matters of economic development. Tribal languages are at the brink of extinction. These communities would highly value the performance standard of tribal language fluency. In assessment, some tribes prefer authentic measures of performance and would urge teachers to use multiple assessment tools, such as electronic portfolios, and to use this data to drive decision-making.

In developing curriculum for Indian Education, schools enrolling high numbers of Indian students should allow for active utilization of tribal resources and materials. Schools could adopt school improvement models that place tribal resources, languages, and materials central, not peripheral, to the curriculum and standards. Schools are urged to purchase or commission the creation of quality materials.

In addition, Indian students who wish to acquire and become fluent in their tribal language should have the opportunity to do so.

Process Used by District to Align Local Curriculum and Assessment and Plan Professional Development

Schools are urged to involve all stakeholders of the community. These may include tribal education directors, tribal council people, Indian education specialists and leaders, experts of local history, culture, traditions, and language, tribal colleges, elders, parents, students, teachers, administrators, and community members. If there is no one available in your area to assist with the Indian Education for All component, contact Lori Falcon, Indian Education Specialist, 444-3013 at the OPI in Helena.

Professional Development

As the Indian Education for All law is implemented and academic standards are examined (or supplemented) to include tribal knowledge, schools could provide job-imbedded training to teachers for lesson development and assessment. The OPI is working on a model for such training and a web-based forum for schools to report activities and standards-based instruction related to Indian Education for All.

Also in the planning stages at OPI are regional professional development activities, summer institutes, and a curriculum document: *Essential Understandings About Montana Indians*. In a district plan, professional development should provide structures that give teachers access to the above-mentioned activities as well as ample time for study related to Indian Education for All. As state and school level programs initiate professional development opportunities, the scope should be comprehensive and systemic.

On a state level, the OPI is working with universities and all stakeholders on defining the content areas for Indian Education.

Sample District Vision/Mission Statement

The mission of [School Name] is to provide each student a quality education in a safe, supportive setting that promotes a high standard of academic excellence and achievement. The education provided by [School Name] must be responsive to all of the students we serve, as well as being inclusive of all cultures and backgrounds. The [School Name] team joins the parents and community to assist the students in developing skills to become independent and self-sufficient adults who will succeed and contribute responsibly in a global community.

Sample District Philosophy of Education

The [School Name], in cooperation with students, teachers, school board and community members, will provide an education that will prepare students for life. [School Name] is committed to providing challenging academics, quality teachers and a variety of extra curricular activities to enhance a well-rounded experience for the learner. [School Name] will be inclusive of all cultures and backgrounds, especially Montana's Native American tribes. The successes our students experience while they are at [School Name] will be the foundation for continued success in higher education, training, and the world of work. It is the philosophy of [School Name] to produce students who are life long learners, confident in their abilities, and productive, contributing members of society.

Sample District Goals:

1. All students will learn about Montana tribes and be instructed in Indian studies. Teachers in our schools will have taken courses related specifically to Native American Studies and to *effective teaching of Indian students*.

2. Purchase materials (or commission the creation of new, quality materials) to reflect tribal knowledge, language, beliefs, and images.

3. Ease drop out rates and high absences by developing a model that will focus on reading achievement, higher-level thinking, student assets (not deficits), individual needs, and experiential, student-guided activities.

4. To adjust instructional techniques and learning environments, look to leaders in Indian Education to identify research-based strategies for school success. These strategies could include best practices for early childhood experiences, as well as strengthening identity, resiliency, and parent/community partnerships.

http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/IndianEd/FYCPguidelines.pdf