

**Board of Public Education Action Plan**  
**For Implementation of HB 528**

**I. Agency Policy Statements and Monitoring**

Each Montana state educational agency (BPE, OPI, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, and Board of Regents) will do the following:

- Develop a policy statement and action plan that expresses its intention to implement HB 528.
- Develop a system to periodically monitor and evaluate its progress toward the implementation of HB 528.
- Review and revise existing policies and consider new policies that will assist the implementation of HB 528.
- Support a public awareness effort to better inform the Montana public about HB 528.
- Encourage tribal-state cooperative agreements, as defined within MCA 18-11-101, that will allow for state and local education leadership and tribal governments to work together to determine appropriate and culturally responsive educational goals for citizens of the Montana reservation communities.
- Expand professional development and other educational opportunities so that administrators, faculty, staff, and students will have a better understanding of American Indian culture and history. Annual reports identifying these activities will be developed by agency staff and reviewed by the Board of Regents and the Board of Public Education.

**II. Educational Standards and Resources**

- The BPE should adopt Social Studies Content Standards that specifically address the topics of Montana and American Indian history, culture, and contemporary issues.
- The OPI will provide a model curriculum aligned to Montana's content and performance standards and will develop supportive resources for teaching Montana Indian history, culture, and contemporary issues. The model curriculum and instructional resources will be developed in cooperation with, and approved by, the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education and will be made available to all Montana public schools. An evaluation tool will also be developed to determine the effectiveness of these resources.
- The OPI and BPE will develop a process to ensure that all content standards reflect the constitutional commitment to American Indian culture, heritage, and contemporary issues.
- The OPI and BPE will develop a process to ensure that the state's accreditation guidelines include the recognition of and commitment to Montana's Constitutional language in Article X.

### **III. Teacher Training/Professional Development**

- The Board of Regents, OPI and BPE will assure that Montana's Teacher Education Program Standards require relevant coursework, such as American Indian Education or its equivalent, that will serve to educate all prospective teachers about teaching American Indian students and enhance their awareness of American Indian culture, language, history, and contemporary issues, including tribal sovereignty.
- The Commissioner of Higher Education will appoint a committee chaired by the Deputy Commissioner and including the deans of teacher education programs to develop a Montana University System plan for recruiting more American Indian students into teacher education, placing and retaining them in Montana's schools, and providing continued inservice opportunities. Representatives from the tribal colleges and tribal education departments will be members of the committee.
- The OPI and BPE will continue to work with teacher education programs in the Montana University System to pursue the development of alternative portfolio assessments for teacher certification.
- The Montana University System will continue to support Class 7 certification and make available, as appropriate, research expertise and information resources on language study. The OPI will continue to collaborate with Tribal Colleges and Tribal Governments in providing instructional personnel to teach American Indian languages and culture in our state's educational systems through the Class 7 specialist certification and will seek ongoing institutional support.
- The Office of Public Instruction will provide guidance in the statewide professional development framework to ensure that the state's educational personnel have available appropriate opportunities to learn about American and Montana Indians to better prepare them to provide leadership and instructional support to students in meeting this policy's commitment. Strategies will include, but are not limited to, the following:
  1. Developing and implementing a five-year American Indian studies professional development plan statewide for teachers, school boards, administrators and support staff.
  2. Developing a professional development program aimed at assisting LEAs to incorporate HB 528.

### **IV. Recruitment and Retention of American Indian Educators and Students**

- The Board of Regents will hire more American Indian faculty, staff, and administrators on the campuses of the Montana University System and the campuses will report data to the Regents every two years.
- The Montana University System will increase enrollments of American Indian students through enhanced recruitment and retention efforts.
- The Board of Regents will annually review and evaluate campus action plans for diversity and ensure that sufficient training opportunities are available consistent with the goals of HB 528.

- The BPE will remain committed to the continuation of the American Indian fee waiver and will support a statutory appropriation for non-beneficiary students at the tribal colleges.
- The BPE will support strategies to promote recruitment and retention of American Indian teachers in Montana's public schools to increase the percentage of American Indian teachers to a level consistent with the percentage of American Indian students in Montana schools. Specific strategies will include, but are not limited to: 1. Creating a scholarship/loan forgiveness program for future American Indian educators; and 2. Undertaking collective efforts to support and attain state and federal programs and grants that encourage American Indian teacher training.

#### **V. Other**

- The OPI will research, plan, monitor, evaluate and budget for programs and services designed to reduce the disparity of educational achievement that currently exists in Montana's educational system for its American Indian students.
- The OPI will develop a communication mechanics between itself and Tribal Education Departments.
- The Board of Regents will develop a communication mechanism between the Board of Regents, Montana's Indian tribes, and tribal colleges.
- The OPI and Board of Regents will continue to advocate for American Indian education and secure adequate funding for the activities of the Indian Education Department and the Office of American Indian/Minority Achievement, respectively.
- The OPI will continue to include input from Montana Indian educators in the development and implementation of statewide assessment activities.
- The OPI will provide adequate supportive resources within its organizational structure to ensure that this commitment will be implement, including both within and without the office, a data management system and reporting mechanism that will serve as a measurement of accountability to this policy.
- The OPI, BPE, and Board of Regents will encourage that all school districts and university units within Montana observe American Indian Week each September.

