HOUSE BILL NO. 286

INTRODUCED BY J. WINDY BOY

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT EXPANDING THE PURPOSES OF THE MONTANA DIGITAL ACADEMY TO SUPPORT ARTICLE X, SECTION 1(2), OF THE MONTANA CONSTITUTION AND THE PRESERVATION OF THE CULTURAL INTEGRITY OF AMERICAN INDIANS; AMENDING SECTION 20-7-1201, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 20-7-1201, MCA, is amended to read:

"20-7-1201. Montana digital academy -- purposes -- governance. (1) There is a Montana digital academy at a unit of the Montana university system.

(2) The purposes of the Montana digital academy are to:

(a) make distance learning opportunities available to all school-age children through public school districts in the state of Montana;

(b) offer high-quality instructors who are licensed and endorsed in Montana and courses that are in compliance with all relevant education and distance learning rules, standards, and policies; and

(c) emphasize the core subject matters required under the accreditation standards, offer advanced courses for dual credit in collaboration with the Montana university system, and offer enrichment courses; and

(d) offer courses to support Article X, section 1(2), of the Montana constitution, including courses in Indian language and culture that:

(i) utilize American Indian language and culture specialists as teachers;

(ii) support Indian language immersion programs pursuant to Title 20, chapter 7, part 14;

(iii) use materials developed by the tribes as part of the Montana Indian language preservation program pursuant to 20-9-537; and

(iv) partner to the greatest extent possible with Montana tribal colleges to include dual credit and intergenerational learning opportunities."
The Montana digital academy must be governed by a board with equal representation from:

(a) the commissioner of higher education or a designee;
(b) the superintendent of public instruction or a designee;
(c) a Montana-licensed and Montana-endorsed classroom teacher appointed by the board of public education;
(d) a Montana-licensed school district administrator appointed by the board of public education;
(e) a trustee of a Montana school district appointed by the board of public education;
(f) the dean of the school of education of the hosting unit of the Montana university system or a designee as a nonvoting member; and
(g) the two officers provided for in subsection (5) as nonvoting members.

The governing board shall elect a presiding officer and vice presiding officer to 2-year terms without limitation on the number of terms.

(5) The governing board shall hire a program director and a curriculum director who shall serve as chief executive officer and vice chief executive officer respectively on the governing board in a nonvoting capacity. The program director shall develop and, upon approval of the governing board, implement and publish policies and guidelines for the Montana digital academy pertaining to:

(a) course offerings;
(b) software and hardware selection;
(c) instructor selection;
(d) partnering school agreements;
(e) instructor training and curriculum development;
(f) course evaluation;
(g) grant opportunities; and
(h) other activities that are essential to the success of a statewide distance learning program.”

NEW SECTION. Section 2. Notification to tribal governments. The secretary of state shall send a copy of [this act] to each federally recognized tribal government in Montana.
NEW SECTION. Section 3. Effective date. [This act] is effective on passage and approval.