

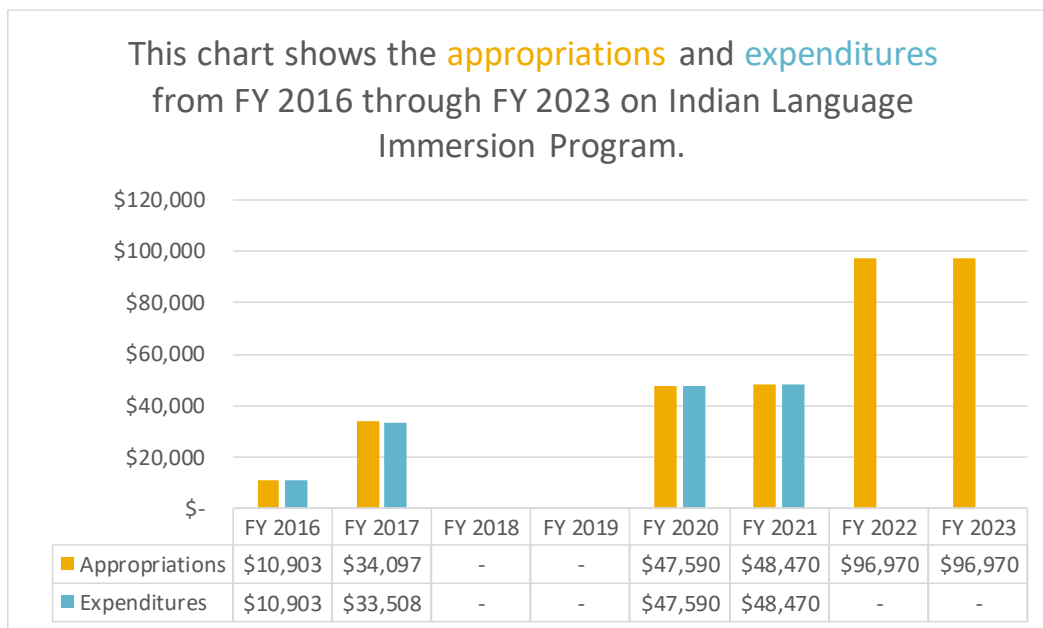
Indian Language Immersion Program

BACKGROUND

The 2015 Legislature passed SB 272, the Cultural Integrity Commitment Act, which encourages school districts to create Indian language immersion programs in order to preserve and perpetuate Indian languages. It provides a mechanism for financial support, if appropriated, for any programs at eligible school districts.

APPROPRIATIONS AND EXPENDITURES

The following chart shows the appropriations and actual expenditures on the Indian Language Immersion Program from FY 2016 through FY 2021 as well as the appropriations for the 2023 biennium.



APPLICABLE STATUTES

This section provides the statutes that are applicable for the Indian Language Immersion Program. These statutes were amended, as shown below, by the 2021 Legislature. This includes:

- HB 671 (Rep. Bedey), which eliminated the termination dates
- HB 34 (Rep. Smith), which revised the language in 20-7-1403 to reflect the federal recognition of the Little Shell Band of Chippewa Indians

Title 20, chapter 7, Part 14 – Cultural Integrity Commitment Act (Indian Language Immersion)

20-7-1401. (Temporary) Short title. This part may be cited as the "Cultural Integrity Commitment Act".
(Terminates June 30, 2023—sec. 1, Ch. 171, L. 2019.)

20-7-1402. ~~(Temporary)~~ Legislative findings — purposes. (1) The legislature finds that:

- (a) language in the form of spoken, written, or sign language is foundational to cultural integrity;
 - (b) Montana tribal languages are in a time of crisis through the loss of native speakers, writers, and signers;
 - (c) achievement gaps persist for Indian students, including higher dropout rates;
 - (d) Article X, section 1, of the Montana constitution established the educational goals of:
 - (i) establishing an education system that develops the full educational potential of each person;
- and
- (ii) preserving Indian cultural integrity.

(2) The purpose of this part is to promote innovative, culturally relevant, Indian language immersion programs for Indian and non-Indian students with the goal of raising student achievement, strengthening families, and preserving and perpetuating Indian language and culture throughout Indian country and Montana. ~~(Terminates June 30, 2023 — sec. 1, Ch. 171, L. 2019.)~~

20-7-1403. ~~(Temporary)~~ Definitions. As used in this part, the following definitions apply:

- (1) "Eligible district" means a school district encompassing or adjacent to an Indian reservation or a school district that includes one or more schools with an Indian population of 10% or greater.
- (2) "Immersion program" means a program of an eligible district in which:
 - (a) all participating students receive content area instruction in an Indian language at least 50% of the day;
 - (b) teachers are fully proficient in the languages they use for instruction; and
 - (c) the goal of the program is perpetuating cultural integrity and promoting bilingualism and biliteracy.
- (3) "Indian language" means any of the languages of ~~the tribes located on the seven Montana reservations and the Little Shell Chippewa tribe~~ a federally recognized tribe in Montana. ~~(Terminates June 30, 2023 — sec. 1, Ch. 171, L. 2019.)~~

20-7-1404. ~~(Temporary)~~ Indian language immersion programs — funding — flexibility. (1) School districts are encouraged to create Indian language immersion programs and in doing so:

- (a) collaborate with other school districts, the Montana digital academy, tribal governments, and tribal colleges;
 - (b) utilize materials produced in the Montana Indian language preservation pilot program pursuant to section 1, Chapter 410, Laws of 2013;
 - (c) utilize American Indian language and culture specialists as teachers of language and culture;
- and
- (d) look to existing native language schools in Montana and around the world for guidance and best practices.

(2) In acknowledgment of Article X, section 1, of the Montana constitution, the educationally relevant factors for the school funding formula under 20-9-309(3), and the increased costs associated with language immersion programs, a district creating an Indian language immersion program is entitled to the following in addition to the school funding formula in Title 20, chapter 9:

(a) (i) subject to subsections (3) and (4), for every Indian student participating in an Indian language immersion program, an additional American Indian achievement gap payment, as calculated in 20-9-306, multiplied by 2; and

(ii) for every non-Indian student participating in an Indian language immersion program, an additional Indian education for all payment, as calculated in 20-9-306, multiplied by 2; and

(b) for every full-time American Indian language and culture specialist teaching in an Indian language immersion program, a quality educator payment as calculated in 20-9-306.

(3) For a district operating an Indian language immersion program that improves the district's graduation rate for American Indians by 5 percentage points or more from the previous year as measured by the office of public instruction, the multiplier in subsection (2)(a)(i) must be increased to 3.

(4) If the money appropriated for Indian language immersion programs is insufficient to provide the amounts in subsections (2) and (3), the office of public instruction shall prorate the payments accordingly.

(5) The board of public education is encouraged to approve proposed variances to standards of accreditation for Indian language immersion programs when the board finds the proposal to be educationally sound and in alignment with the purpose described in 20-7-1402(2).

(6) The cultural and intellectual property rights from materials developed for an Indian language immersion program belong to the tribe to which the materials relate. Use of the cultural and intellectual property outside of the Indian language immersion program may be negotiated with the tribe.

(7) A district may use payments received pursuant to this section as matching funds for federal or private fund sources to accomplish the purposes of this part. ~~(Terminates June 30, 2023—sec. 1, Ch. 171, L. 2019.)~~