

Minutes

Washington State Native American Education Advisory Committee

November 30, 2020

WSNAEAC Members Present

Michelle Parkin

Anna Armstrong

Else Washines

Jennifer LeBret

Cindy Kelly

Joseph Martin

Patricia Whitefoot

Sara Marie Ortiz

Jeremy Rouse

Sally Brownfield

Jarrood Da

Zoe Higheagle Strong

Buddy Bear

Dorothy Apple

Additional Participants

Jon Claymore

Laura Lynn

Shandy Abrahamson

Gayle Pauley

Joan Banker

Jennifer LeBret, WSNAEAC Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed Chris Reykdal, State Superintendent.

- 1.a: How can we hold harmless to student progress while working through distance learning options due to COVID-19? Some are still in distance learning models and yet we have let go of the "do no harm" declaration from the previous school year when we first closed our school buildings.

Superintendent Reykdal: Recognized the challenges and barriers many students are confronting during this time of remote/distanced learning as well as the challenges students' parents and care givers are also experiencing. Affirmed his belief that we should be operating in a "hold harmless" world so we didn't formally let that go. Last

year OSPI came to a consensus that students not meeting course criteria would be given an incomplete and instead work on individual learning student plans. Many districts have kept with this practice during the 2020-21 school year but many districts also wanted their grading system back. They wanted to make their own determination and we honored that. If you are really about mastery based, you continue to work with students until they demonstrate proficiency in the content area or learning outcome and achieve graduation. Plus, we can't forget the ongoing social emotional learning that is also not taking place with the loss of in-person classes, sports, extra-curricular activities, etc. OSPI is looking at presenting some legislation to address these issues and secure funding, working with the Governor, and will continue to be a resource and provide guidance to school districts and tribal compact schools. We may be looking at summer school and interventions for students and creating a new school calendar to reduce learning loss. He is looking for input and ideas from WSNAEAC and others to promote student success.

1.b: We have concerns with Native learners falling off-track with graduation requirements due to deficiency in credits What is the plan to support those in need of making up or credits being waived?

Superintendent Reykdal: We are going to pursue the testing waiver and submit a request to the US Department of Education. USDE has decided to move forward with the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which is a randomly sampled method of accessing a fraction of our students but gives us an idea of where our kids are with their learning. The end size is large enough to give us data by race, gender and other categories. The US Secretary of Education said we should all go to this. We are requesting to be excused from doing the Smarter Balanced testing this year, but instead ask educators and school districts to determine how they will decide learning loss so they can build individual student plans for success. Also working with the Washington State Board of Education and the legislature to work on other options to waive credits or credit retrieval. We need to trust our educators who are well trained to determine student success. GPA and attendance have always been bigger indicators of student success than standardized test scores. Are we successfully measuring our students' critical thinking abilities? Looking to this committee to dive in and discuss what a better system to evaluate student learning looks like.

1.c: The Bureau of Indian Education is implementing a common assessment for all BIE schools. Will this suffice the testing requirements for those State-Tribal Education Compact schools affiliated with the BIE?

Superintendent Reykdal: When I heard about this, I couldn't believe it; but we can work together to figure this out. Should the BIE be issuing a mandated assessment that is separate and different from the current established assessments during this

time of educational upheaval? Is there a possibility of influencing the BIE's decision in this matter, and how can OSPI work with tribes and affected tribal schools to communicate our belief that this is not the time to issue mandated national assessments of our Native students? Does the compact between tribal schools and OSPI cover using state assessments? We need to look into that.

- 2.a: What supports at the State level are taking place to correctly identify Native learners K-12 and what can we do to help support accurate identification? Else mentioned Senate Bill 1541 from 2015 or 2016 regarding the student race and ethnicity data task force that had made recommendations that districts have four years to fully implement the recommendations. Patricia shared the work being done by the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Education Northwest and Zoe Higheagle-Strong/WSU to work toward better identification of Native students from early childhood through post-secondary education. AND,
- 2.b: WSNAEAC designated committee members are requesting a work group on data collection to provide input on what is being collected and how. Superintendent Reykdal: *I have been in discussion with OSPI staff regarding the need for accurate data regarding Native student enrollment, high school completion, academic, etc. He noted the challenge of Native student identification when trying to work within the categories of Native-Non Hispanic, Native-Hispanic and Native-2 or more races. Could we look into creating our own expectations of school districts that they will identify students in greater detail? I would ask that Jon work with WSNAEAC and the OSPI Data team to develop a framework for how we would best achieve this. We need to be clear with everyone about why we need to improve how we collect data in this way and the benefits. Could we work together to develop a model for student identification and not just for Native students but all students? Perhaps a student ID system beginning in early childhood. We have a data governance team and Jon who we can work with to bridge and develop the data language needed to make this happen. Could this be a sub-group of WSNAEAC or are we ready to meet now with data experts?*

Patricia and Zoe felt that since this has been an ongoing priority and ground work has been done through various educational and Native organizations, we are ready for next steps to meet with the broader data experts and move forward. Shandy mentioned the WSSDA development of data sharing agreements between tribes and school districts.

- 3.a: How can we ensure that the Native family voice is integrated into the planning process that impacts Native learners? Accurately identifying Native students enables effectively connecting with their families. Sara Marie and Sally provided

some background regarding current efforts to include the parent voice within Native student education and many of the challenges faced in making this happen within school districts.

Superintendent Reykdal: Looking at sending a comprehensive letter to every school district superintendent and school board around expectations for parent/guardian involvement and input into Native student learning. This effort also includes dialing up the expectations around tribal consultation and interaction with tribal government on a government-to-government basis. Perhaps include within the Comprehensive Program Reviews, a question on how districts are engaging with neighboring tribe(s) and hold them accountable. I have taken good notes and think our team can really put something together that's pretty powerful. Would also like this committee's input and ownership. This is something we can commit to because there are several things starting to build here that require more than just hoping a district has a Title VI coordinator who kind of knows what is going on but actually elevating this to a superintendent and school board level.

Michelle suggested that one of the resources to consider looking at are school districts residing on Indian lands and receiving Impact Aid funds where districts are required to have an Indian policies and procedures committee to provide feedback to the school board and the school board has to respond in writing regarding how they are going to incorporate tribal input into their strategic planning. Under ESSA, an audit team is actually coming in to review the policies and procedures and making sure communities input is included in the policies. Perhaps this could be a model.

4. Indian Education Best Practices

- a. Laura Lynn provided an update on training/implementation of the "Since Time Immemorial" Tribal Sovereignty Curriculum including the transition from in-person to virtual trainings, addition of "Ready to Go," "Teacher to Teacher Grade Band Focused," and Tribal Focused trainings. ONE is continuing the effort to support educators in the implementation of STI and development of tribal curriculums through the Tribal Writers Group hosted by the Burke Museum. Work is also being done with the WSSDA Government to Government Task Force in their support of STI implementation, strengthening the tribal consultation process, and adding a question about STI implementation in the Consolidated Program Review questionnaire.
- b. Jon provide an update on the tribal consultation process immediately focusing on the 38 school districts identified for consultation under ESSA. Want to

- continue working with WSNAEAC, the Tribal Leaders Congress on Education, Tribes, and others to develop a structure for ongoing tribal consultation.
- c. Jon discussed the granting of close to \$500,000 to both urban and rural schools to implement Native language programs.
 - d. Jon updated everyone on adding an additional staff person to ONE focusing on improving access and opportunities for Native students in CTE programs.
 - e. Sara Marie providing an update on the Native Voices Art (Middle School) Academy. She encouraged the need to build this program model out and make sure that more Native students are granted access.
5. Region 16 Comprehensive Center
- a/b. Patricia and Sally provided a background about “Circles of Reflection” and updated everyone on the progress of this effort. This is taking place in just four states and Washington has included an additional fourth circle to include the family voice which we have entitled “Share our Voices, Hear Our Stories.” Sally shared that we need to be sure that this work reflects the needs of our Native communities and benefits our kids. Parent engagement is of utmost importance and we need to cultivate including the not only the voices of Native parents into everything we do but also the input of intergenerational families and elders who are part of the households where our children live. We are also working with Region 16 to develop models for government to government training and consultation. Region 16 supports a Native educator advisory committee including Sally, Patricia, Jon, Laura, and others to work on issues involving Native communities and education.
 - c. Jon discussed internal and external efforts to provide “land acknowledgement” training and explaining its relevance.

Superintendent Reykdal: Appreciated the momentum of some issues but acknowledged additional work needed to happen on others. He wants to keep investing in the Office of Native Education and focus on several of the specific tasks discussed today, particularly communication to the field and elevating parent engagement efforts.