



DEFINING EXCELLENCE

Edina School Board  
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May 13th, 2024

Response to Letter of Non-Concurrence

Dear American Indian Parent Advisory Committee Members,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our American Indian students and American Indian Education. Your advocacy and involvement is seen, heard, valued and has an impact on the entire Edina Public Schools system.

At its regular meeting on May 13th, 2024, the School Board of Independent School District No. 273 provided the following written response to the March 2024 letter of non-concurrence the District received from our American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC). In accordance with Minnesota Statutes section 124D.78, subdivision 2, this written response addresses AIPAC's recommendations and states the District's reasons, if any, for not implementing any or all recommendations.

**AIPAC Recommendation #1: Hire a full-time American Indian Cultural Liaison who will interact and engage with our students and create culturally relevant programming throughout the district.**

District Response: Edina Public Schools will hire a cultural liaison staff member solely devoted to our American Indian students and families. Responsibilities of the cultural liaison will be guided by the six focus areas found within Minnesota Statute 124D.74, subdivision 1 including:

- I. Support post-secondary preparations for students
  - a) The cultural liaison will regularly meet with American Indian high school students, provide academic and career mentoring, and develop college and career readiness opportunities.
- II. Support the academic achievement of American Indian students
  - a) The liaison will be a part of the larger team that evaluates and reviews American Indian student academic data.
- III. Make curriculum relevant to the needs, interests, and cultural heritage of American Indian students
  - a) The American Indian cultural liaison will work with teachers to understand course units of instruction and will be a resource for developing classroom lessons that incorporate the heritage of American Indian students.
- IV. Provide positive reinforcement of the self-image of American Indian students

- a) The American Indian cultural liaison will work with groups of students at each of Edina Public School sites.
- V. Develop awareness among students, parents, and staff
  - a) The American Indian cultural liaison will work with the Director of Achievement Equity and Multilingual Learner Programming to embed awareness of American Indian heritage into current district-wide Culturally Proficient School Systems (CPSS) training.
- VI. Supplement (not supplant) state and federal educational and co-curricular programs
  - a) The American Indian cultural liaison will plan and support cultural events for American Indian students.

The American Indian cultural liaison will act as a liaison between the District and the American Indian Parent Advisory Council. They will work with the Director of Achievement Equity and Multilingual Learner Programming to complete the American Indian Education Aid application and monitor the fidelity of the goals. The American Indian cultural liaison will report to the Director of Achievement Equity and Multilingual Learner Programming.

Funding for the American Indian cultural liaison position will be provided through our district's Achievement and Integration grant and American Indian Education Aid (AIEA). To use AIEA funds, American Indian families must agree to the expenditure, and only 50% of the funds can be used toward salaries.

**AIPAC Recommendation #2: The District will create a welcoming space for Indigenous students and their families. Elders, community culture, language and knowledge keepers, families are invited and welcome in the schools both formally and informally.**

District Response: Edina Public Schools is committed to ensuring that each and every student and family feels welcome in our schools, this unequivocally includes our American Indian students and families. Ongoing conversations around creating welcoming spaces for our American Indian students and families will take place between the American Indian cultural liaison, the Director of Achievement Equity and Multilingual Learner Programming, and the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee. This work will begin, continue and be monitored throughout the 2024-2025 school year.

**AIPAC Recommendation #3: Native American District employees must be fairly compensated for their time when they are being asked to do additional work for native students outside their job description.**

District Response: Any Edina Public School employee doing work outside of their contractual time to support American Indian students will continue to be paid for the additional work.

**AIPAC Recommendation #4: Edina district staff will complete the MDE Tribal Relations Trainings. The District will provide for regular all-staff training for working with American Indian students and understanding American Indian culture.**

District Response: In 2023 the state legislature created a new licensure renewal requirement in the cultural heritage and contemporary contributions of American Indians. All licensed staff are required to take this training through the State of Minnesota. In addition, as stated under the District's recommendation regarding the hiring of the American Indian cultural liaison (recommendation #1), the

cultural liaison will work with the Director of Achievement Equity and Multilingual Learner Programming to embed awareness of American Indian heritage into current district-wide Culturally Proficient School Systems (CPSS) Training.

**AIPAC Recommendation #5: Continued work on curriculum development to provide more areas of Indigenous inclusion in our classrooms, libraries and book rooms.**

District Response: The newly hired American Indian cultural liaison will have as part of their duties to partner with and serve as a resource to the Director of Teaching and Learning to understand curriculum units across subject and grade levels where American Indian heritage, contributions, and interests can be included.

**AIPAC Recommendation #6: District will create visible representation throughout District building that recognizes and honors the unique contributions of tribal nations.**

District Response: The school board and administration feel strongly that the work around this recommendation should be done in a partnership with our American Indian families. The District's American Indian cultural liaison will work with the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee to explore what meaningful, visible representation could look like in our schools. This work will begin in the fall of 2024.

**AIPAC Recommendation #7: All family night events need to start after all schools have dismissed to enable full family and student participation. AIPAC Recommendation #8: AIPAC meetings will be scheduled by AIPAC for the school year. Any family and district wide events will be organized in partnership with AIPAC.**

**AIPAC Recommendation #15: District will collaborate with AIPAC to host all-district cultural events, such as round dances, traditional arts and crafts, drumming.**

District Response: The American Indian cultural liaison will work in partnership with the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee to plan and coordinate next school year's family events and AIPAC meetings to be inclusive of all families.

**AIPAC Recommendation #9: The up-to-date AIPAC budget will be provided to AIPAC members at every meeting.**

**AIPAC Recommendation #10: The AIPAC budget will be used in accordance to MDE guidelines and Minnesota State Statutes.**

District Response: The Director of Achievement Equity and Multilingual Learner Programming along with the American Indian cultural liaison will work with the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee to create a budget that is in accordance with MDE guidelines and state statutes. The budget will be available for regular review, including at every AIPAC meeting.

**AIPAC Recommendation #11: Communication from the District to families and students needs to be clear and consistent.**

District Response: The District is committed to being a good partner with our families and this includes communicating in a clear and consistent manner. With the hiring of the American Indian cultural liaison,

whose duties include serving as a liaison and communication conduit between the District and American Indian families, the District is prioritizing consistent and streamlined communication.

**AIPAC Recommendation #12: As per Minnesota State law, Edina Public Schools will publicly celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day throughout the district.**

District Response: The Director of Achievement Equity and Multilingual Learner Programming will work with the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee to provide a distinct cultural event celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day. This work will begin in the fall 2024. This partnership will continue on an annual basis and the district is committed to working together to celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day.

**AIPAC Recommendation #13: The District will create a land acknowledgment statement.**

District Response: Representatives from the school board, the Director of Achievement Equity and Multilingual Learner Programming, the District's American Indian cultural liaison and the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee will work in partnership to discuss this request. Work will begin in the fall 2024.

**AIPAC Recommendation #14: The academic outcomes of Native students will meet or exceed those of their peers.**

District Response: Edina Public Schools is committed to academic achievement for each and every student as indicated in our district's vision for Each and Every Student to Discover their Possibilities and Thrive and our strategic plan [Strategy A: Advance Academic Excellence, Growth, and Readiness](#) and [Strategy B: Ensure an Equitable and Inclusive School Culture](#). Counselors, teachers, administrators, the school board, the American Indian cultural liaison, and the Director of Achievement Equity and Multilingual Learner Programming will work in partnership with American Indian students and families to ensure that student needs are met so that they can achieve at an academic level meeting or exceeding that of their peers.

The School Board values its relationship with our American Indian Parent Advisory Committee and thanks the members for their collaborative input and their work on behalf of the District's American Indian students and all Edina Public Schools students. The District looks forward to partnering with AIPAC to implement the initiatives described in this letter.

Respectfully,

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Erica Allenburg  
Edina School Board, Chair

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Karen Gabler  
Edina School Board, Vice Chair

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