



**Agenda III.D.
March 28, 2024**

To: Board of Education
From: Dr. Theresa Battle, superintendent and Isis Buchanan, director of educational equity
Date: March 28, 2024
Re: Report about Written Response to the Vote of Nonconcurrency

On January 17, 2024, the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC) voted the resolution of nonconcurrency to express their views concerning all aspects of American Indian education and the educational needs of American Indian students enrolled in District 191 schools and programs. Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District 191 was presented with a letter of non-concurrency at the February 8, 2024, school board meeting. The American Indian Parent Advisory Committee outlined six areas of concern that led to the vote of nonconcurrency. AIPAC provided six recommendations to address the concerns. The District takes this matter very seriously and plans to take steps to better meet the needs of American Indian students and families. Our strategic directions include creating a space and opportunity for each and every voice to be heard. We appreciate the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee for sharing ways that we can better meet the needs of American Indian students and ensure students, families and staff are informed and grow in their knowledge of American Indian history and culture.

The six recommendations from AIPAC are listed below along with the school district's response to each recommendation.

AIPAC Recommendation 1

Cultural Proficiency Training for all staff in the district

- *Specifically on cultural heritage, generational trauma and tribal nations*

District Response:

This recommendation connects to work we are currently doing in the district. To address this concern, District 191 will establish clear action steps as part of its Equity plan and our professional development sessions during the current and upcoming school years. District 191 will provide culturally proficient training for all staff in the district focused on increasing staff and board members knowledge of Indigenous cultural heritage, generational trauma, and the eleven Federally recognized [Minnesota Tribal Nations](#):

- Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
- Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
- Lower Sioux Indian Community
- Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
- Prairie Island Indian Community
- Red Lake Nation

- Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
- Upper Sioux Community
- White Earth Nation

The American Indian Cultural Specialist, Indigenous Cultural Liaison, and the Director of Educational Equity will work with AIPAC members to gather feedback and suggestions as the equity action plan and professional development content is created. We will ensure that curriculum resources are accessible by all staff and collect data about lesson implementation. We look forward to continuing our partnership with AIPAC and the American Indian Cultural Specialist, Indigenous Cultural Liaison, and the Director of Educational Equity will continue to attend AIPAC meetings to share updates and gather feedback.

AIPAC Recommendation 2

More American Indian representation in the schools and district

- [Tribal maps](#) of Minnesota and the district Land Acknowledgment in every classroom and in entryways in all district facilities

District Response:

District 191 has reviewed the placement of land acknowledgements at each school site. We took steps to ensure that the current land acknowledgment posters are in the entry ways of each site. The district will utilize the Minnesota of Department Resources to use the Tribal Map provided by the state of Minnesota. We will explore the idea of combining the Tribal map with the Land Acknowledgment redesigned poster. To learn about the 11 sovereign Nations and to view a Tribal Nations map visit

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/indian/TribalNationsofMinnesota/index.htm>.

The American Indian Cultural Specialist, Indigenous Cultural Liaison, and the Director of Educational Equity will continue to work with AIPAC to create a revised copy of the land acknowledgement that will include a map representing the 11 Minnesota Tribal Nations.

The Director of Educational Equity will continue to partner with our Human Resources team to improve our efforts of recruiting and retaining Indigenous staff members.

AIPAC Recommendation 3

Review of the names of schools in the district:

- *In the near future, changes to building names*
- *Specifically Gideon Exposure*
- *Dakota/Lakota/Ojibwe/Oceti Sakowin (Sioux). Tribes Native to Minnesota*

District Response:

To address this recommendation we will review *Policy 899-Naming School Buildings or Facilities* and follow the procedures included in the policy. As a district we will form a committee that is representative of the entire school district. The American Indian Cultural Specialist, Indigenous Cultural Liaison, and the Director of Educational Equity will continue to work with AIPAC to keep them informed on the progress of this recommendation.

AIPAC Recommendation 4

More American Indian representation in school newsletters regarding

- *South Of The River Pow Wow, Indigenous Peoples Day, Orange Shirt Day, other special observances of American Indian Cultural Heritage and Peoples*

District Response:

In alignment with our core values of being a Caring Community and Inclusive Partnership, the District 191 Communications Team will meet with AIPAC to ensure that American Indian representation is included in the information that is shared with the community. District 191 will communicate information about events such as the

South or the River Pow Wow, Indigenous Peoples Day, Orange Shirt Day, and other special observances of American Indian Cultural Heritage and Peoples. The American Indian Cultural Specialist, Indigenous Cultural Liaison, and the Director of Educational Equity will continue to work with AIPAC to keep them informed on the progress of this recommendation to ensure that our community is aware of the supports, events, and learning opportunities that are available to students, families, and staff members.

AIPAC Recommendation 5

District Wide Smudging Policy

- *Use of sacred sage, sweetgrass, cedar, and tobacco in building with American Indian Students*

District Response:

District 191 will review and modify policy 419-Tobacco-Free Environment; Possession and Use of Tobacco, Tobacco-Related Devices, and Electronic Delivery devices to ensure the most current MN Statute language is included in district policy. District 191 has formed a committee to learn more about the cultural practice of smudging and to review other school district smudging policies, to start the process of drafting an District 191 smudging policy; share the draft of the smudging policy with the District 191 Policy Review Committee, and create formal support for tribal policies and cultural practices for American Indian Students in District 191. The American Indian Cultural Specialist, Indigenous Cultural Liaison, and the Director of Educational Equity will continue to work with AIPAC to keep them informed on the progress of this recommendation.

AIPAC Recommendation 6

More support for American Indian Education Programming overall and the Liaisons:

- *Student count and subsequent data*
- *Special Education Services*

District Response:

District 191 will review enrollment procedures to ensure that our district American Indian student count is accurate. The Director of Educational Equity will meet with the district Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) Coordinator to review the Minnesota Department of Education's (MDE) Ethnic and Racial Designation forms and guidance. The Director of Educational Equity, Director of Administrative Services, Director of Technology, and MARSS coordinator will meet to review our student information system and the MDE Ethnic and Racial Designation form to review procedures, update processes, and ensure accurate student count reporting.

The Director of Educational Equity and the Director of Student Services will meet to discuss and complete the application for the Dream Catcher Project. The American Indian Cultural Specialist, Indigenous Cultural Liaison, and the Director of Educational Equity will meet with the Director of Student Services to review data and the progress of American Indian students with individual education plans (IEP). As a district we will continue to reduce the disproportionality and unnecessary assessment of American Indian Students and placement in special education programs.

District 191 has hired an Indigenous Cultural Liaison who will work with our American Indian Cultural Specialist to expand our American Indian education program. The American Indian Cultural Specialist, Indigenous Cultural Liaison, and the Director of Educational Equity will work with our Systems Improvement and Student Achievement (SISA) team to ensure that District 191 has current, grade-appropriate and historically accurate American Indian materials or content, representative of local tribal communities in our media centers, libraries, and classrooms, and available to all students. The American Indian Cultural Specialist, Indigenous Cultural Liaison, and the Director of Educational Equity will continue to partner with our curriculum coordinators to ensure we are providing a K-12 curriculum that aligns with the new Ethnic Studies and Social Studies Standards implementation. We have taken steps to begin the process of developing an American Indian History, Culture, and Language course proposal. The timeline for implementation of K-12 ethnic studies has started and is expected to be completed during the 2027-2028 school year.

The American Indian Cultural Specialist, Indigenous Cultural Liaison, and the Director of Educational Equity will have regular meetings with Dr. Battle to discuss our progress towards improvement.

Conclusion:

The District 191 School board has an unwavering commitment to foster a welcoming and supportive environment for each student. We deeply appreciate the collaboration and partnership shared with our American Indian Parent Advisory Committee. The collaboration and engagement between our dedicated parents and staff members are paramount as we work to ensure we are meeting the needs of American Indian students.