

Red Wing Public Schools
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Board Meeting Agenda Item

Topic: Dakota Language and Culture Program
Contact(s):
Presenter(s): Karsten Anderson, Superintendent
Jess Whitcomb, Director of Teaching and Learning

Nature of Action Requested

Board Action X
Information or Report

Background Information

Thanks to the Tribal Council of the Prairie Island Indian Community Tribal and the Red Wing American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC), the school district has the opportunity to offer Dakota Language and Culture courses beginning with the 2022-23 school year.

For years, the district has considered the possibility of offering Dakota Language and Culture courses, but concerns included finding a licensed teacher, funding, and sustainability. Recently, however, Prairie Island hired an appropriately licensed teacher and expressed willingness to share the teacher's time.

If authorized, an agreement between the Prairie Island Indian Community and school district will outline expectations and financial arrangements. If two classes are taught each semester, approximate personnel-related costs for the district are \$30,000-\$50,000/year. If ESSER funds and/or grants are not available, the district's general fund will pay for these associated costs. Other costs such as curriculum will be coded to existing budgets.

The following course description will be added to the RWHS 9-12 Program of Studies:

Dakota Language & Culture Course Description:

This is an introductory course in Dakota language and culture. The focus areas will be learning Dakota sounds, the alphabet, vocabulary, language structure, and basic grammar. Learners will be able to introduce themselves, learn relative terms and be able to identify kinship within their own families. Learners will be able to understand and speak basic phrases.

Department: World Language
Grade Level: 9-12
Course number: 1665 (S1) and 2665 (S2)

The plan addresses previous concerns in the following ways:

- Licensure: The individual is licensed as a teacher in Minnesota.
- Funding: The school district does not need to hire a full-time teacher, so overall costs for the district are lower.
- Sustainability: The teacher is an employee of Prairie Island so there is a much stronger chance of maintaining the program for many years.

Recommendation

I move to amend the RWHS 9-12 Program of Studies to include Dakota Language and Culture and to authorize the Superintendent to finalize arrangements for implementing Dakota Language and Culture courses beginning in 2022-23.