

On Thursday, February 20, 2025, your American Indian Parent Advisory Committee convened to review and discuss the data received from the district to determine whether or not the district has met the needs of American Indian students. 8 voting members were present, effectively establishing a quorum. The AIPAC voted 8-0 Nonconcurrency. As required when issuing a vote of nonconcurrency, the AIPAC discussed and developed the following written recommendations for improvement.

1. We recommend providing the opportunity for AIPAC committee members to tour all sites where we currently have American Indian Liaisons.
  - a. We recommend inviting school board members to attend the tour alongside the advisory board.
  - b. We recommend inviting other interested parties, i.e. the Duluth Indigenous Commission, to attend the tour.
2. We recommend implementing an action plan by 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of SY 2024-2025 that identifies American Indian students who need additional transportation support and utilize district vans/drivers to intentionally target American Indian students that need additional transportation supports to get to school.
3. We recommend utilizing the American Indian education coordinator, the various American Indian parent committee members, and the local Indigenous community such as AICHO, local Tribal Urban Offices, and The Duluth Indigenous Commission to assist in vetting Professional Development opportunities and curriculum. District wide Professional Development must not solely come out of American Indian Education Aid funds and must be used proportionally while achievement gaps exist.
4. Statute 122A.70 requires retention strategies for American Indian educators within the school district. An HR plan has not been shared or discussed with the American Indian parent committees. We recommend providing the statistics within the district about how many American Indian staff we currently employ, how many American Indian applications were received that met minimum qualifications and were not offered interviews, and how many American Indian staff we have lost within the past 2 years.
5. AIPAC is unaware of the funding amount that has been earmarked for the pilot school within a school program known as the “Denfeld Indigenous Cohort”. There has been little to no collaboration or status updates with the American Indian Parent committees. We would like to ensure that the Indigenous Cohort is supported by a licensed American Indian Language and Culture teacher. We recommend providing the criteria for admitting American Indian students into the Indigenous Cohort, the policy for removal from the cohort, and include any additional supports for success given to American Indian students after removal and/or prior to removal.
6. We recommend prioritized hiring of open American Indian liaisons and American Indian education department positions and increasing the number of positions hired to ensure manageable caseloads per student count in each building in accordance with current evidence-based literature recommendations. Most evidence-based recommendations are 1/30 students per caseload or less.
7. We recommend counselors implement an action plan to identify the American Indian students within their caseload, identify the Tribal Nation these students belong to and provide targeted opportunities for scholarships and career training to both enrollees and descendants.

8. We are unaware of the locations of dedicated spaces that have been set aside to be utilized by American Indian liaisons and/or American Indian staff. Due to the repurposing of DNT storage, the American Indian Education Department is fiscally responsible for paying for an external storage unit for our materials, records, supplies and cultural items that should be more easily accessible to all American Indian Education staff and students. We recommend the school district assist with an accurate inventory of all American Indian Education Department program materials and supplies, i.e. cultural materials, books, sewing machines, etc and anything bought from American Indian Education Department funds. All items in American Indian Education Department storage need to be inventoried to ensure maximum availability and utilization of previously spent funds on these materials.
9. We recommend providing regular district reports to the AIPAC regarding direct services for American Indian students attendance and academics.
10. American Indian Education Aid is for American Indian students specifically, until accountability factors are the same or better than non- American Indian peers. We recommend integration specialists intentionally target American Indian students within their caseloads and provide the data about the number of American Indian students that are being served to the AIPAC.
11. AIPAC has not received updates from the district in accordance with the MDE timeline. We have not received full meaningful collaboration from the district with meeting minutes, tabling opportunities, events, Tribal Consultation meetings, nor with reserving spaces within the district for meetings, work sessions and posting our meetings on the district website, calendar, social media or parentsquare. We recommend meetings with district representatives and AIPAC members be completed in compliance with the EASIE Title VI Meaningful Collaboration Chart. Per MDE, AIPAC was not provided with ESSA data when developing the American Indian Education plan and budget
12. We recommend ethical stewardship of funding for AI students to ensure program fidelity and accountability. The previous American Indian Education coordinator was not present at the OCT 8<sup>th</sup> 2024 quarterly American Indian Education Budget meeting. It is absolutely necessary for the American Indian Education coordinator to be present at such meetings. AIPAC needs to know total salary and fringe for each American Indian Education Department employee by FTE, building and program code. And any reimbursements received from Special Education. As for all other expenses, each building needs to be designated per expense code, not just district wide 005. 005 should only be used if it is truly a district wide expense. All P-card purchases and purchase orders need to be brought forward monthly to AIPAC with receipts to ensure fiscal responsibility and fidelity with American Indian Education funds.
13. We recommend that the School Board has an appointed AIPAC delegate reserved for and invited to all school board meetings with an opportunity to have meaningful collaboration with our school board and administrators. We are requesting an official seat at the table.
14. AIPAC recommends that the district create additional pathways for student success in collaboration with AIPAC, AICHO, 1854 Treaty Authority, and local Tribal Urban Indian offices. These recommendations include -
  - a. giving seat time to our students that participate in cultural activities offered by these agencies and offices

- b. giving a civics credit to our AIPAC student reps
  - c. that a mirror of AEO/ALC be offered at AICHO for our students at all levels of the district as an alternative to non-Indigenous spaces of learning.
  - d. Also, to ensure full ability to participate in these programs by providing transportation via the vans purchased and mentioned in Recommendation #2 in this document for this purpose.
15. AIPAC recommends restorative efforts be made to repair the trust relationship between the district and its American Indian Education parent committees. Volunteer AIPAC members provided more than 30 hours of supplemental meeting time at the district's request since losing our dedicated coordinator in November 2024. AIPAC was not presented with American Indian Education application documents in the appropriate format and/or with the appropriate allocation amount prior to February 11, 2025. Of concern is that budget amendments must be completed by March 1. Tribal consultation dates reported on federal documentation are false. Publicly available district audit information indicates JOM funds have passed through Fond-du-Lac for JOM program expenses, but Parent Committee members are told that we have not requested a JOM reimbursement from our fiscal agent (FDL) for the last 5 years. Publicly available district audit information indicates a restricted American Indian Education balance of \$114,974. Is this carry-over or is this a Special Education reimbursement for American Indian Education Liaisons? No explanation for these discrepancies have been provided.
- a. We recommend ensuring that numbers reported on the American Indian Education State Aid Grant application match the information and data provided to AIPAC.
  - b. As part of the restorative process, we recommend providing annual AIPAC training to newly elected and returning committee members and district staff.
16. AIPAC recommends utilizing the Indigenous People's Taskforce endorsement of strengthening our communities and students by utilizing methods that are based in Indigenous values and ways of knowing. A vital way of doing this is returning to the first medicines and connecting our students and people to Indigenous healing traditions that have been passed down through the generations since time immemorial. A recent survey of middle school students in Duluth indicated that they were very interested in learning the medicines. There is a local medicine gatherer that is willing to teach this. Her name is Natalie Smith.