

NAS report May 1, 2018

In early April representatives of the NAS program went to Billings for the MEIA conference, which was focused on 'Educational Sovereignty.' The conference was a few days long and had presenters from all around the state. Personally, speaking solely for myself, I did not gain anything from being at the conference. It was nice connecting with other Indigenous people I have know and don't know but the actual presentations were things, that I believe, can be discussed over the phone. As I sat through the keynote speakers and the individual presentation I couldn't help but continue to ask myself what 'Educational Sovereignty' precisely means. Although the our staff may have gained valuable insights (much of us attended different individual presentations, perhaps they were treated to better presentations than myself), I am unsatisfied with the conference and would not be inclined to go again.

Then, on April 10th I went to Washington DC and met with Amy Andreas and the BHS Human Rights Club where we visited the Sidwell Friends Quaker Schools. The experiences our students gained in this trip will last with them forever. They met former Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, Senator John Tester, a score of educated Indigenous folk working and living in the DC area, and Bill Nye the Science Guy. I will always remember meeting up with our students inside a small room where our fifteen students were relaxing with about ten Sidwell students as Amy was on her computer mapping out our day. I saw a young African-American girl sitting between two of our students and thought to myself, 'this young lady look familiar.' As I sat there wondering why this young lady looked familiar to me I had noticed a picture of Michelle Obama in this room and looked back and forth from the picture to the young lady a few times and realized that our fifteen students were relaxing and listening to music with the daughter of the former President of the United States.

While in DC we also visited the National Museum of the American Indian, the Holocaust Museum, the Senate, and The Supreme Court buildings. It was interesting to see the BHS students reactions and perspectives in these places. I believe it was a successful cultural exchange that helped the students understand the larger American life and culture and how our nations capital has diversity.

As we move on to the last few weeks of school we plan a head for the next year. I will be meeting with the curriculum director of the schools to plan out summer events and training we can conduct and strengthen our program and make our language more available in the summer months. Thank you.