



South St. Paul School Board - Work Session

Monday, April 22, 2024 5:00 PM

Location: CITY HALL

125 THIRD AVENUE NORTH

South St Paul, Minnesota 55075

Agenda

I. EQUITY

- A. School Board Response to the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee Annual Compliance. (L. Gámez and C. Renville Soto) 2

II. SCHOOL BOARD

- A. Public Relations and Community Engagement
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- District 917
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 - Community Education
 - Educational Foundation
 - Finance, Facilities and Long-Range Planning
 - Local Issues
 - Policy
 - Public Relations/Community Engagement
 - SSP Open Foundation
 - Superintendent Executive
- C.
- D. Other Items Deemed Necessary by the School Board

III. CLOSED SESSION

- A. Closed Session per the Open Meeting Law (Minn. Stat. § 13D.03) for principal negotiations. (J. Milteer/B. Hoffman)
- B. Adjourn the Closed Session

IV. ADJOURN WORK SESSION



SOUTH ST. PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Agenda Item

Meeting Date: April 22, 2024

Place on Agenda: Work Session

Action Requested: None. Review and Discussion Only

Attachment:

Topic: School Board Response to the AIPAC Annual Compliance

Presenter(s): Lesly Gámez, Courtney Renville Soto

Background:

Following a Resolution of Non-Concurrence by the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee, the School Board issues a response to the vote and recommendations therein.

Recommendation: Response is to be signed by the entire School Board and submitted to both the AIPAC and MDE Office of American Indian Education

Alternatives:

2023-24 SSPPS AIPAC Non-concurrence Response

Commitments and Action Steps

South St. Paul Public Schools is committed to the growth and development of our American Indian Education program and services. We are grateful for the engaged and involved members of the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC) and the American Indian Cultural Liaison who are critical thought-partners, problem-solvers, community leaders, and most of all, culture bearers in service of American Indian students and families.

Over the past two years, we have made important changes to the American Indian Education (AIE) program in order to meet the program goals. The following list highlights important improvements to the program (in chronological order):

Data Practices

- 2022-23: Reviewing and updating data practices around self-identification of American Indian students by their families. A review of our student information system, 506 forms, and lists of American Indian students showed inconsistencies in identification that led to uneven access to programming for American Indian students. Organizing, cross-referencing, and digitizing paper records helped to reveal where problems in accuracy were occurring across the system.
- *Changes in 2023-24 are detailed later in this response.*

Funding

- Improvements in data practices during the 22-23 school year allowed for us to submit more accurate information to the state and we received more funding for AIE programming during this school year. Increased funding allowed us to change our staffing model and expand the goals in our plan.

Staffing

- 2023-24: The American Indian Cultural Liaison role changed from a contracted to a regular district employee position. This change ensured regular, on campus hours for the American Indian Cultural Liaison and expanded service to include elementary school students. Previous staffing models only allowed for early childhood and secondary students to have access to the AIE program. This increase in staffing also allows for increased parent involvement opportunities, access to the American Indian Resource Center, and programming for families.

Staff Development and Advocacy

- As the American Indian Education program grows, staff have been provided with information and support in making changes needed to integrate more programming opportunities. The Educational Services Department has provided coaching, feedback, and coordination to introduce the American Indian Cultural Liaisons in all of our buildings/programs and to support the implementation of AIE programming during the school day. Additionally, a professional

development opportunity to help staff learn about American Indian Education was made available for all staff in the first half of the 23-24 school year.

- All school staff are encouraged to engage in continuous learning about American Indian culture and topics, some of which will be provided in-district, along with opportunities in the wider community.

Annual Compliance

The American Indian Parent Advisory Committees vote of nonconcurrency included six concerns, which were in close alignment with the goals and objectives of the AIE Program Plan. We look forward to taking steps to meet both the outcomes listed in our plan and the requests made in the vote.

AIPAC CONCERN: 506 Tracking

AIPAC RECOMMENDATION: Develop and implement an accurate 506 tracking system to monitor Native student's progress and ensure their success.

SSPPS RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATION:

Students are identified for American Indian Education programming based on **both** state and federal identification. Parents/families self-identify each student's race at the time of registration. Our enrollment system has been updated to offer every family who identifies as American Indian the option to complete a 506 form. At the time of enrollment an email is sent to the American Indian Cultural Liaison which serves as notification that a new American Indian student has been enrolled in the school district and is eligible for American Indian Education programming. In addition to improving our system for recording 506 forms, the changes in our enrollment process help to ensure more students are registered as accurately as possible when they first enroll.

The 506 form is the official record of eligibility determination for Title VI Indian Education Formula Grant Program (federal funding). Students do not need to complete the form or be eligible for Title VI to participate in American Indian Education programming in South St. Paul Public Schools, however, we do encourage families to complete the form as this ensures that our information is accurate and complete, especially as we seek Title VI funding to increase the services and opportunities the program offers. Through the Educational Services Department all 506 forms are recorded in a spreadsheet, scanned to record an electronic copy, and originals are stored at the District Office. This process is a change from previous practice that centralizes the collection and documentation of this information. The improvements to this system have allowed for a more accurate record of students and will directly impact the Title VI grant application process.

While 506 form tracking is an important aspect of maintaining accurate records, especially for federal funding, all students who are identified as American Indian in our student records are eligible for and

invited to participate in American Indian Education programming. Our American Indian Education Aid Application provides further detail on how we support American Indian students' progress and our commitments to their success by working to meet their cultural and academic needs.

Accurate 506 tracking **and American Indian student enrollment information support** allows us to monitor Native student's progress and ensure their success in the following ways:

- Ensures accurate student counts and rosters which the American Indian Cultural Liaison uses to contact students and families for programming
- Provides accurate student counts for teachers, social workers, counselors, and other staff to identify and provide differentiated supports for American Indian students
- Improves data and records that increase opportunities for additional funding, such as the Title VI grant

AIPAC CONCERN: Social worker visits for students with attendance needs.

AIPAC RECOMMENDATION: Assign social workers to visit and support student concerns.

SSPPS RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATION:

The 2023-24 school year is the first year that a social worker has been staffed at each school in South St. Paul Public Schools, and we have implemented a student support model at each site that includes school administration, a building coach, school counselors, social workers, and school psychologists.

In response to the AIPAC's request, we have created the following process¹ to address attendance needs of American Indian students. This process was created in collaboration with social workers, the Director of Student Services, and the Educational Services team. Both the American Indian Cultural Liaison and Education Services staff will provide expectations, support, and accountability for this plan (or a similar plan, as it undergoes development and refinement):

1. **Start of the school year:** The school social worker or designee² will be provided with a **list of all American Indian students enrolled at the school** by the Educational Services Department/American Indian Cultural Liaison. Additionally, the American Indian Cultural Liaison will update the list over the course of the year when there are changes to the roster (as students enroll and/or exit).
2. **Every day of the school year:** Attendance is automatically reviewed twice daily and absences generate an automatic response via ParentSquare to families.
3. **First month of school:** Attendance is recorded daily by teachers, and the school social worker should note both daily attendance to begin the year (in order to confirm or deny that absences

¹ <https://www.attendanceworks.org/mission/>

² Typically the designee for the school social worker in the 360 Communities Worker

are either true absences, tardies, or instances of inconsistent record keeping) and then check attendance on a regular basis during the remainder of the year.

- Looking Back: Students who missed 10% or more of the prior school year will be prioritized for outreach and support during the current school year and upcoming summer.
 - If students enroll after the beginning of the year, they should be monitored for the first four weeks according to the practices for all American Indian students during the first month of school.
4. **For high school students**, the social worker or designee should work closely with student services. A detailed plan of school counselor support for American Indian students is listed below.
5. The school social worker or designee will implement **regular attendance monitoring** (weekly or biweekly) with attention to guidance from the Dakota County Truancy Reduction Program for children ages 12-17:
- Schools are required to notify parents when a child has three unexcused absences. The SSPPS High School Social Worker sends a letter home when a student has 3-6 unexcused absences. Additionally, the American Indian Cultural Liaison will be alerted when students are identified at this level as an extra point of contact and support.
 - Schools schedule a meeting with the child and parent to discuss the child's school attendance and academic performance prior to a child reaching seven unexcused absences.
 - When a child ages 12-17 reaches seven or more unexcused absences, it is considered truancy. The school is required to make a referral to the Truancy Reduction Program. The social worker works with the family to create a truancy diversion plan.
 - If the student/family is not responsive to the plan, a truancy referral letter is issued and the Dakota County Truancy Reduction Program takes an active role in addressing the unexcused absences.
6. **When students have missed either more than 10% of school days in the previous year or have more than seven unexcused absences in the current year**, the social worker or designee will begin a tiered support for increasing the student's attendance including, but not limited to, the following steps:
- Contact the family the day of each absence via ParentSquare. During the range of 3-6 unexcused absences the high school social worker reaches out to learn more and offer support with attendance.
 - Increase attendance monitoring to daily (instead of weekly or biweekly)
 - Determine the cause(s) of the absences
 - Determine support for increasing attendance
 - Follow up with appreciation and encouragement when the student is in school
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7. **Maintaining current contact information for families** is crucial for supporting regular attendance at school. Both the social worker and American Indian Cultural Liaison will request updated email, phone, and emergency contact information multiple times: at the start of the year and at each opportunity for parent contact (back-to-school events, open houses, conferences, school activities and programs). Families who have not been in touch with school will be prioritized for a home visit to build a relationship and open up communication.
8. **Strong, caring relationships** support students and families feeling connected to school. When social workers and other staff reach out, they will do so with intentionality and act in a caring, invitational manner. The social worker or designee and American Indian Cultural Liaison are regular points of contact for families with students experiencing absenteeism, and additional school staff should get involved, too. In order to build a network for the family, the social worker should regularly contact the family, and enlist the efforts of teachers, principals, and others to reach out to affirm the importance of attendance and to provide resources to help increase attendance.
9. The social worker is encouraged to engage in learning about American Indian culture and topics in order to provide culturally relevant support and engagement.

AIPAC CONCERN: Hire additional PT staff to support AIE office.

AIPAC RECOMMENDATION:

- Hire additional staff to assist with meeting with students and supporting families.
- American Indian Education staff to advocate for students and families during disciplinary actions/hearings.

SSPPS RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATION:

Staffing

During this school year we increased our American Indian staffing from a contracted position to an internal employee working 26.25 hours per week (5.25 hours per day). This was an increase from a previous service model of 1-2 days per month. This increase has allowed for the AIE program to serve all students from Early Learning through 12th grade, has made the American Indian Cultural Liaison available to students every day of the week, and has allowed us to meet many more program goals than in previous years. Additionally, one additional part time staff was hired as the Indigenous Leadership Circle advisor this school year. As of March 2024, we are part of the way through the Title VI grant application process. If we are funded, we plan to collaborate with the AIPAC on how to use the funding, which could include an increase in staffing, among other priorities.

Advocacy

Since the time of the vote/presentation to the School Board, we have begun to increase liaison participation in office referrals (described in the vote as “disciplinary actions/hearings”). An outline of this work is as follows:

1. Each site has a comprehensive list of American Indian students enrolled in their school/program.
2. When an American Indian student is involved in an incident that leads to an office/administrative referral, the American Indian Cultural Liaison is contacted. The nature of the referral may include the student as someone who was affected by, had direct involvement in, or has information about an event or incident. The student does not necessarily have to be facing discipline in order for the American Indian Cultural Liaison to attend as an advocate.
3. The American Indian Cultural Liaison will be on call and available as much as possible to attend meetings. Additional meetings may be scheduled if the liaison is not available in order to ensure thorough and responsive attention to the matter.

AIPAC CONCERN: Guidance Counselor follow up with High School students quarterly.

AIPAC RECOMMENDATION: Quarterly meetings with students and parents to ensure all American Indian Students are on track to graduate and receiving the support they need.

SSPPS RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATION:

The increase in hours of the American Indian Cultural Liaison position has allowed us to provide more hands-on support for American Indian seniors as they approach graduation, as well as providing for more consistent connection with 9th-11th graders as they navigate their high school career. While this request specifically asks for School Counselor support, the Areas 1 and 2 of the American Indian Education Aid Plan outlines responsibilities of support to American Indian high school students as a core part of the American Indian Cultural Liaison role.

In response to the AIPAC’s request, we have created the following process to address the academic needs of American Indian students in support of high school graduation. Both the American Indian Cultural Liaison and Educational Services staff will provide expectations, support, and accountability for this plan (or a similar plan, as it undergoes development and refinement):

1. High school counselors work with specific grade bands. The school counselors or designee³ will be provided with **a list of all American Indian students enrolled at the high school and CLC** by the Educational Services Department at the beginning of each school year and a roster of students will be assigned to each counselor according to the groups of students they serve. Additionally, the American Indian Cultural Liaison will update and share the list over the course of the year when there are changes to the roster (as students enroll and/or exit).`

³ Designee could include any role from the student support team: social worker, school psychologist, or administrator.

2. The school counselor or designee will schedule **an initial meeting** to either meet the student, or reconnect with them to start the year. The initial meeting should be focused on building a trusting, supportive relationship and working with the student to set goals for the year. Goals may include, but not be limited to, social, academic, and/or cultural goals.
3. **Each trimester check-ins** should be scheduled with each student, family, and the American Indian Cultural Liaison should attend the meetings. The trimester check in will be scheduled during high school conference time.
4. The school counselor will also **encourage the student to participate in American Indian Education programming opportunities** including, but not limited to: Indigenous Leadership Circle, Youth Ambassadors, monthly high school meetings, after school family programs, and language and cultural events and opportunities.
5. The school counselor is encouraged to engage in learning about American Indian culture and topics in order to provide culturally relevant support and engagement.

AIPAC CONCERN: Accurate Data Collection

AIPAC RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Acknowledgement and accountability of poor data practices and action plan to correct this moving forward.
- Collect and report all data accurately to ensure annual progress is being made.

SSPPS RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATION:

We deeply acknowledge and take full accountability for the poor data practices that have impacted our American Indian students and families within our community. Recognizing the gravity of this situation, we understand the urgent need for a sincere and comprehensive response.

First and foremost, we acknowledge the stark opportunity and achievement gap that exists between American Indian students and other demographic groups. It is evident that we have fallen short in addressing their unique needs and challenges, necessitating a more committed and intentional focus on their well-being and success.

Furthermore, we take full responsibility for the inconsistent and inaccurate data that has beset our records concerning American Indian students over the course of many years. This lack of attention to detail and oversight is unacceptable, and we understand the profound impact it has had on our ability to accurately assess and address the needs of the American Indian community.

To address these shortcomings, we pledge to actively monitor the American Indian Education Plan to ensure its effectiveness and responsiveness. Additionally, we are committed to learning more about American Indian Education, history, and culture, as well as prioritizing being student-centered in our approach and advocating strongly for their needs.

We also acknowledge the importance of being student-centered in our approach and advocating strongly for the needs of our students. To address this, we have outlined a new system for tracking student preferences and account information, ensuring that we have up-to-date information to better serve our students. Additionally, we are committed to making necessary changes in our data practices to improve accuracy and effectiveness.

In addition to regular checkpoints and monitoring, we seek to enter into fuller and deeper dialogue and relationship with the AIPAC.

We understand that words alone are not sufficient to address the harm that has been done. However, please know that our commitment to accountability and improvement is unwavering. We humbly ask for your collaboration and your partnership as we strive to create a more equitable and inclusive educational environment for American Indian students, families, and the community.

Data Practices

As part of our commitment to better serve and support American Indian students, we have undertaken significant improvements in our data practices to accurately track both demographic information and academic achievements. These measures aim to ensure greater transparency, accountability, and inclusivity within our educational system.

1. **Repairing Data Mapping Pathways:** We have meticulously reviewed and repaired the data mapping pathways within our Student Information System (SIS) to ensure seamless and accurate data flow.
2. **Addition of American Indian Specific Tracking Elements:** Recognizing the importance of accurate identification, we have incorporated specific tracking elements within the SIS, such as tribal affiliation and registration number, to better capture the unique identity of American Indian students.
3. **Intentional Tracking of Form 506:** We are now intentionally tracking Form 506 and have established clear protocols for its documentation within the SIS, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements and providing valuable insights into the educational needs of American Indian students.
4. **Focused Clean-Up Efforts:** We have undertaken focused clean-up efforts to rectify discrepancies in both State and Federal American Indian designations, ensuring consistency and accuracy in our data records.

5. **Intentional Training:** School site office staff have received intentional training on the differences between State and Federal American Indian designations, enabling them to accurately identify and document students' demographic information.
6. **Designing Specialized Reports:** Specialized reports have been designed to analyze State designation, Federal designation, and both designations combined, allowing for comprehensive assessment and targeted interventions.
7. **Specialized Sub-Report on Tribal Affiliations:** A specialized sub-report has been developed to specifically examine tribal affiliations, providing valuable insights into the diversity and cultural background of our American Indian student population.
8. **Enhanced Online Enrollment Process:** The American Indian area of the online enrollment process has been enhanced with more deliberate questions, ensuring that families can provide comprehensive information regarding their cultural identity and needs.
9. **Inclusion of Form "Trigger" for Personal Connection:** We have included a form "trigger" that not only makes American Indian services availability more evident for families but also alerts the American Indian Cultural Liaison to the enrollment of a new student into the program. This enables a personal connection to be made, fostering a supportive and inclusive educational environment.
10. **Enhanced Academic Achievement Reporting:** By more accurately tracking demographic information in our Student Information System (SIS), we can incorporate more effective disaggregates in our academic achievement reporting. This is crucial as the demographics recorded in our SIS directly feed into academic and testing programs, allowing us to analyze and address disparities in achievement outcomes among different demographic groups, including American Indian students. With improved data accuracy and granularity, we can better identify areas for improvement, implement targeted interventions, and ensure that all students, including American Indian students, have equitable access to educational opportunities and support services.

These improvements represent our ongoing commitment to honor the cultural identities and educational needs of American Indian students. By implementing these measures, we aim to foster a more inclusive and equitable educational experience for all members of our school community.

AIPAC CONCERN: Money match from the district for MDE AIE Grant.

AIPAC RECOMMENDATION: This will ensure that our American Indian students are given the supports needed to receive an education equitable to their peers.

SSPPS RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATION:

The South St. Paul American Indian Education program is funded through American Indian Education Aid (AIEA) and Achievement & Integration (A&I). AIEA funds the majority of programming and A&I funds

some specific projects and aspects of American Indian Education as laid out in the American Indian Education Aid Plan. We are in the grant application process for Title VI and hope to bring in more funding for the program next year through this opportunity. The chart below details funding for American Indian Education Programming.

	American Indian Education Aid	Achievement & Integration
2022-23	\$28,950	\$3,549.12 \$3,549.12 - Indigenous Leadership Circle
2023-24	\$56,500.00	\$19,528.83 \$1,985.25 - Youth Ambassadors \$12,900.08 - Cultural Liaison \$4,643.50 - Indigenous Leadership Circle

Our partnership and collaboration is an essential component for designing a culturally meaningful and impactful American Indian Education program. We look forward to making the changes outlined in this response, as well as many more as the program grows and develops.

Respectfully submitted,

SSPPS Educational Services Department

Signed by South St Paul Public Schools' Board of Education

John Raasch, Chair
Nikki Laliberte, Clerk
Tim Felton
Monica Weber

Anne Clafin, Vice Chair
Kim Humann, Treasurer
Wendy Felton



SOUTH ST. PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Agenda Item

Place on Agenda: Committee-of-the-Whole

Action Requested: None. Discussion Only.

Attachment: None

Topic: Committee Updates
Presenter(s): School Board Members
Background: School Board members will provide an update for the following committees that they serve on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• District 917• Association for Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD)• Community Education• SSP Educational Foundation• Finance, Facilities and Long-Range Planning• Local Issues• SSP Open Foundation• District Policy• District Community Engagement and Public Relations• District Superintendent/Executive
Recommendation: N/A
Alternatives: N/A