



Indian Education

By Melody Staebner, Indian Education Program Coordinator

Do You Really Know About Indian Education?

Did you know that the Indian Education Program at Fargo Public Schools (FPS) has been around since the 1970s? It's true! This program has evolved and expanded over the years, but our goals of servicing and supporting Native students, families, and our community has never changed. We are here to help!

In an article by the Fargo Forum on July 3, 1977 titled, "Gladys Ray Making Progress in Indian Education Efforts," Gladys described her role on the Indian Education Parent Committee in the early 1970s. She said, "Schools may be the best place to bring about change." The Parent Committee also worked on Native content curriculum reviews in the Fargo Public Schools. Fargo Public Schools has received "Federal Title VI Indian Education Funding Grant" since 1973. Back then, the grant was only \$8,000 for 100 Native American students. The funding was used to meet the special educational needs of the students through tutoring, program coordinator, and supplies. I was very fortunate to have Gladys guide me through my first three years of Indian Education, and one thing I remember was her dedication to educating everyone about Native American culture.

A Glance at Our Program

The Indian Education Program of Fargo and West Fargo Public Schools has four full time staff members. Our student count has grown to over 500 Native American students in Fargo and over 400 in West Fargo, representing more than 30 tribes in both districts. The primary program goals remain to provide cultural awareness, Native cultural identity, and a sense of belonging to engage students in school.

Needs Assessment

The Indian Education Program recently completed District-wide Needs Assessment Survey for both Fargo and West Fargo school districts. One significant finding was that 31% of teachers who responded said that they didn't know that the Indian Education Program existed. In that survey, staff, Native students, and parents said they would like teachers to receive more cultural training to infuse Native content and for the school district to re-examine its curriculum so that more authentic Native content is being delivered to all students.

North Dakota Native American Essential Understandings

For the past three years, our Indian Education Program has trained over 70 teachers on using the curriculum warehouse of the North Dakota Native American Essential Understandings. This curriculum



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was developed by the North Dakota Department of Instruction to address Native content standards throughout our state.

We Need All of You to Know!

The Indian Education Program looks forward to sharing more with the Fargo and West Fargo School Districts and plans to make sure that ALL STAFF have better awareness of our program and services we provide to Native students and families.

Check Out the Indian Education Overview Document!

Please review [this overview document of the Indian Education Program](#). This will give you more awareness and key knowledge of the Indian Education Program.

