Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Regional Educator Recruitment Program

2021

Authorizing Legislation: House Bill 1139 (2019)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through House Bill 1139, the 2019 Legislature aimed to expand Washington's current and future educator workforce supply through evidence-based strategies – particularly focusing on the recruitment and retention of highly effective educators in high-need subjects, grade levels, and geographic areas. The bill directed the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to administer a regional educator recruitment program by awarding federal Title II, Part A (Title IIA) funds to the three educational service districts (ESDs) whose school districts have the least access to alternative route teacher certification programs.

OSPI Title IIA and ESD leaders used data from the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) *(see Appendix A)* to identify ESDs 114 (Olympic Peninsula), 123 (Tri-Cities), and 171 (North Central) for regional recruiting efforts.

Based on educator data and in connection to other initiatives, the specific focus centered on recruiting systems for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) educators serving both tribal and non-tribal students in the state. The importance of this work is clear, and consistently documented over time and in many ways, including:

- Listening to repeated voicing of this priority from Native students, families, and communities;
- Data trends for students, educators, and systems *(see Appendix B)*; and
- The responsibilities and charges for OSPI and its divisions.

The approach of this initiative centered on listening and learning with tribal Elders, education leaders, and community members to align recruiting structures more closely with the assets, goals and needs of the communities they serve. OSPI's Office of Native Education (ONE) and Title II, Part A (Title IIA) convened the Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD) and regional ESD partners; tribal Elders and education leaders; and representatives from PESB and the Region 16 Comprehensive Center (R16CC), a program of the AESD focused on supporting OSPI's Native education efforts. Monthly meetings provided opportunities to listen with tribal Elders and learn about effective and responsive AI/AN educator recruiting pathways, examine data, and build relationships within regions and across the state.

ESD leaders also worked within their regions to build and deepen relationships with tribal education leaders, to understand the opportunities and needs within each unique region, and to connect the system building work with the local education agencies (LEAs) they serve.

Three important lessons emerged from the statewide, regional, and local work that guide next steps:

1. There isn't one pathway for future Native American educators or groups of Native American educators. Multiple pathways responsive to regional assets and needs are necessary.

2. Tribal consultation and collaboration are at the center of change. It is essential to listen and learn with tribal Elders, education and community leaders, families, and students.

3. Access to data about Native American educators and students is of the highest priority of tribal partners.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Structure of the Initiative: Collective Partnership Work

The overall structure of this foundational work included monthly meetings with all partners and region-specific work in between. Initial work centered on listening and relationship building, opportunities to critically examine regional and local data, learning about successful recruiting models, and developing processes to assess the important system readiness factor of implementation of the *Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State* (STI) curriculum.

The foundation of this collective work is listening: listening to the voices, experiences, and life-stories of tribal Elders, education leaders, families and students, and about the existing work such as the Future Native Teachers Initiative (FNTI) led by partners at the Washington Education Association (WEA) and Recruiting Washington Teachers (RWT) led by partners at the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB).

This approach creates the conditions for long-term sustainability. If we want American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) educators to enter, stay, and share their gifts in our schools, and we want to serve AI/AN students well, then there are conditions that need to be addressed. This work coordinated existing opportunities in addition to developing the foundation of a long-term initiative that centers tribal values and traditional knowledge and systems.

Region-Specific Partnership Work

Leaders from the three ESDs actively engaged in the statewide collaborative meetings with tribal leaders and other statewide organizations, supported communication across their regions, and supported connections among LEAs and their nearest federally recognized tribal nations. Given the focus of the year was listening, learning, and relationship-building, following are examples of work each of the three regions engaged in during the 2020–21 school year:

- Engaged with local tribes to build relationships and explore opportunities for collaboration within the region.
- Shared information, learning opportunities, and resources with LEAs. Examples included:
  - *Since Time Immemorial* curriculum professional learning opportunities,
  - Grant opportunities (Native and dual language program grants), and
  - Teacher recruitment and other opportunities offered through OSPI's Office of Native Education, PESB, and WEA's Future Native Teachers Initiative.
- Reviewed regional and district-specific data of AI/AN learners and educators as baseline information to inform efforts.

In addition, ESD 123 (Tri-Cities) and ESD 171 (North Central) supported regional superintendents with tribal relationships and outreach. ESD 123 also supported local superintendents with the implementation of the *Since Time Immemorial* curriculum. This involved collaboration with OSPI's Office of Native Education for support.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Three important lessons emerged from the statewide, regional, and local work that will guide next steps:

1. **There isn't one pathway for future Native educators or groups of Native educators.** Successful models cultivate ongoing, sustained, connected, and supportive structures, such as:

    o   Tribal language and the First Peoples' First Language, Culture and Oral Tradition Certification Program.
    o   Mentors within the system for both recruitment and retention.
    o   Cohorts and affinity groups that create community within the larger system.
    o   Targeted resources that can be utilized for intentional support of Native educators, such as scholarships for cohorts of candidates.
    o   Programs that start with the understanding that Native identity matters within the system, including schools, higher education preparation programs, and employment.
    o   Coordinated educator pathways between community colleges and four-year institutions.
    o   Partnerships with higher education programs and Native communities to bring certification opportunities to them, rather than asking students to leave their community.
    o   Connections and learning with tribal early learning pathways.

2. **Tribal consultation and collaboration are at the center of change. It is essential to listen and learn with tribal Elders, education and community leaders, families, and students.**

OSPI and partners have listened to the experiences and educational journeys of tribal peoples to help guide the work. Patricia Whitefoot shared how she experienced injustice and leaned in to make change for the future. Elese Washines, who is completing her doctoral dissertation in mathematics, shared her story about the difference an education assistant made by recognizing her as a gifted mathematician. Jamie Valadez spoke to the important support she found in her cohort of Native American teacher candidates and how tribal language and the First Peoples' Certification are important pathways for teacher candidates in her tribal community.

These stories from important tribal Elders and leaders inform the work ahead, both in what to consider and include in creating pathways for Native educators, and what to interrupt and replace that creates barriers and harm.

3. **Access to data about Native educators and students is of the highest priority to tribal partners.**

Tribal Elders and leaders have been clear and consistent on the need for accurate data about where and how their nations' citizens are interacting with the K–12 public education system. Access to reliable data is a center of educational sovereignty with tribal peoples. For too long, requests for that access have been denied or delayed. Once systems for access are in place, the next step is ensuring the data are accurate. Developing capacity for accurate reporting is essential; for example, ensuring school office staff understand the critical role they assume when assisting families with registration paperwork.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

The next phase of capacity building responds to the three conditions necessary to develop systemic change to identify, support, recruit, and retain American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) educators: 1) Listen, learn, and respond to the recommendations brought forward by tribal Elders, leaders, families, and students; 2) Create and support multiple pathways to recruit and retain future AI/AN educators; and 3) Create access to reliable AI/AN educator and student data.

Specific goals for 2021–23 include:
- Develop and collaborate a Native American Educator Pathways Research Advisory to develop, articulate, and communicate pathways, including creating structures of support.
- Develop and implement innovative Native American Educator Pathways grants for ESDs, Tribes, state-tribal education compact (STEC) schools and other local education agencies (LEAs), higher education, non-profit organizations, and other partners.
- Develop and implement contracts for regional, local, and STEC group pathway facilitators to help move innovative pathway ideas forward.
- Make improvements to data systems for collecting Native American educator data.
- Improve updates to Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) to enable CEDARS and the Native American Student Information System (NASIS) to connect.
- Create, improve, and manage a system to respond to requests.

Project components include:
- Establishing a 10-member Native American Educator Pathways Research Advisory.
- Convening ongoing facilitated listening, learning, research circles.
- Awarding innovative Native American Educator Pathways grants to ESDs, tribes, STEC schools and other LEAs, higher education, non-profit organizations, and other partners.
- Improving data processes.

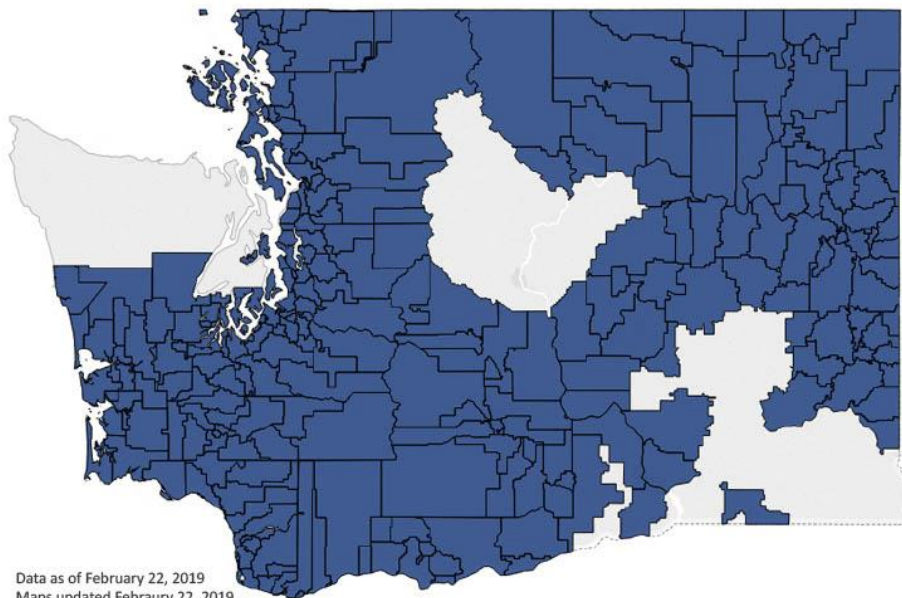Additional efforts facilitated by ESD partners may include:
- Building connections among LEAs, colleges and universities, and tribes within each region to explore pathways and opportunities for educator certification, specifically focused on supporting future Native educators engaged in existing educator recruitment efforts.
- Facilitating networking, resource and information sharing, and relationship-building opportunities among tribes, LEAs, and other partners within each region.
- Coordinating regional data collection regarding LEA implementation of the *Since Time Immemorial* (STI) curriculum to identify barriers and promising practices in its implementation. This data collection may also serve as an indicator of system readiness to receive Native educators, as well as to help promote a culture of awareness for Native children and youth in the K–12 system.
- Providing support and technical assistance as needed to increase STI implementation and effectiveness by communicating STI opportunities for training and awareness as offered through OSPI's Office of Native Education.
- Building awareness of and access to professional learning opportunities and resources focused on tribal consultation and government-to-government relations available through OSPI's Office of Native Education, the Washington State School Directors' Association, and the Region 16 Comprehensive Center.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Statewide Alternative Routes Map

STATE OF WASHINGTON
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR
STANDARDS BOARD

Current Alternative Route
program locations

School districts that have ever been an
Alternative Route program partner

Current Alternative Route
program providers

Antioch University Seattle
Central Washington University
Centralia College
City University
Eastern Washington University
ESD 112
Grays Harbor College
Heritage University
Highline College
Northwest University
Pacific Lutheran University
Pierce College
St. Martin's University
Seattle Pacific University
Seattle University
University of Washington - Seattle
Washington State University Tri-cities
Washington State University - Pullman
Western Washington University
Yakima Valley College

Data as of February 22, 2019
Maps updated Febraury 22, 2019
The displayed Alternative Route partner districts have been a partner at least once, though an individual district partnership may not necessarily be active this year.

Appendix B: AI/AN Educator Data Trends

Figure 1-A: Max-Identification of AI/AN Educators in Washington State

School Year	Teachers			Paraeducators		
	AI/AN Count	AI/AN Percent	Total Count	AI/AN Count	AI/AN Percent	Total Count
2016–17	1,094	1.7%	64,150	669	2.8%	24,270
2017–18	1,119	1.7%	65,638	663	2.6%	25,159
2018–19	1,157	1.7%	66,987	734	2.8%	26,349
2019–20	1,162	1.7%	67,653	707	2.7%	26,629
2020–21	1,174	1.7%	67,124	646	2.6%	24,570

Source: S-275 Personnel Reporting and eCertification, September 24, 2021.

Figure 2-A: Max-Identification of AI/AN Educators in ESD 123

School Year	Teachers			Paraeducators		
	AI/AN Count	AI/AN Percent	Total Count	AI/AN Count	AI/AN Percent	Total Count
2016–17	69	1.6%	4,355	32	1.8%	1,798
2017–18	76	1.7%	4,487	32	1.7%	1,887
2018–19	71	1.5%	4,586	28	1.5%	1,906
2019–20	65	1.4%	4,592	28	1.5%	1,906
2020–21	64	1.4%	4,561	26	1.4%	1,811

Source: S-275 Personnel Reporting and eCertification, September 24, 2021.

Figure 2-B: Max-Identification of AI/AN Educators in North Central ESD 171

School Year	Teachers			Paraeducators		
	AI/AN Count	AI/AN Percent	Total Count	AI/AN Count	AI/AN Percent	Total Count
2016–17	56	2.0%	2,815	61	5.0%	1,209
2017–18	68	2.4%	2,850	63	5.1%	1,234
2018–19	74	2.6%	2,890	71	5.5%	1,294
2019–20	71	2.5%	2,892	66	5.1%	1,290
2020–21	70	2.4%	2,921	63	5.4%	1,157

Source: S-275 Personnel Reporting and eCertification, September 24, 2021.

Figure 2-C: Max-Identification of AI/AN Educators in Olympic ESD 114

School Year	Teachers			Paraeducators		
	AI/AN Count	AI/AN Percent	Total Count	AI/AN Count	AI/AN Percent	Total Count
2016–17	67	2.2%	2,984	42	3.7%	1,124

School Year	Teachers			Paraeducators		
	AI/AN Count	AI/AN Percent	Total Count	AI/AN Count	AI/AN Percent	Total Count
2017–18	70	2.3%	3,022	39	3.5%	1,123
2018–19	68	2.2%	3,116	44	3.7%	1,180
2019–20	64	2.1%	3,117	44	3.6%	1,226
2020–21	64	2.1%	3,014	38	3.4%	1,113

Source: S-275 Personnel Reporting and eCertification, September 24, 2021.

LEGAL NOTICE

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