



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION
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National Policy Memorandum

Bureau of Indian Education

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Title: Native American Language Programs in BIE-Operated Schools

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support, promote, and require the teaching of native languages in Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)-operated schools. Partnerships with local communities and parents will also facilitate native language revitalization and maintenance with an emphasis on improving language fluency.

The BIE recognizes that the traditional languages of Native American students are an integral part of their cultures and identities, and has been shown to play a role in their academic progress. The desired outcome of this policy is to improve academic performance and increase educational opportunities for Native American students by integrating native languages into daily instruction and creating fluent speakers.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all BIE-operated school administrators, personnel, faculty, and staff.

3. Policy

A. Establishment of Native Language Instruction

- BIE personnel at BIE-operated schools will recognize, honor, implement, and utilize the local tribe's, or tribes', native language(s) standards, curriculum, scope and sequence, and assessment, if such documents have been developed.
- BIE-operated schools will determine and establish a methodology to address native language instruction, e.g., an immersion program.

- BIE-operated schools will define and redefine native language programs at the discretion of evolving and changing language policies.

B. Program Implementation

- BIE-operated schools will support and implement native language instruction in all content areas, at all grade levels, daily.
- BIE will budget funds for BIE-operated schools to use in professional development for native language and cultural programs with a focus on second language learning and language acquisition. The BIE will ensure the funds are used only for their defined purpose.
- BIE will budget funds for BIE-operated schools to ensure native culture and language teachers teaching at BIE-funded schools are provided opportunities to obtain language teaching certification, i.e., Continuing Education Units (CEUs), from colleges/universities for teaching native language, culture, history, and the arts to enhance their knowledge for teaching. The BIE will ensure the funds are used only for their defined purpose.
- BIE will budget funds for BIE-operated schools to obtain culturally appropriate teaching resources and materials; and to develop culturally appropriate curriculum. The BIE will ensure the funds are used for their defined purpose.
- BIE will require Family and Child Education (FACE)/pre-school programs affiliated with BIE-operated schools to enhance their current curricula with native language programs.
- BIE will support BIE-operated colleges and other Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) in the development of a native language component for their early childhood education programs.
- BIE will support BIE-operated colleges and other TCU programs for teachers in the early childhood education profession that focus on second language learning, language acquisition, and native language immersion.
- BIE will support the implementation of quality internship programs for developing teachers skilled in teaching native languages for early education programs.
- BIE will support BIE-operated colleges and other TCUs to provide additional opportunities for new and established teachers at all grade levels to enhance their skills in native languages and native language instruction.
- BIE will offer monetary incentives for hard to fill positions for native language teachers at BIE-operated schools with the understanding that certain requirements will be met, such as, obtaining native language certification designed by local tribal members with linguistic and cultural expertise; and seeking professional development and enrollment in native language programs at higher institutions or colleges offering teacher education or certificate programs.

- BIE will offer technical assistance to schools with native language programs, including immersion and/or those who are seeking to strengthen native language instruction.

C. Partnerships

- BIE, along with local tribal communities, will develop partnerships with TCUs and local universities to promote teacher education programs and internship opportunities to produce quality teachers skilled in teaching native languages with the purpose of promoting, perpetuating, and improving native language instruction at BIE-operated schools.
- BIE will work with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) to provide technical assistance to TCUs and Tribal Education Departments (TEDs) to apply for federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education to support professional development for native language teachers.
- BIE will engage parents in partnering with schools and native language staff to support student language revitalization, maintenance, and immersion efforts.

D. Collaboration with Tribally Controlled Schools

- BIE will continue to fund and expand the purpose of the Sovereignty in Indian Education Enhancement Initiative and the TED grant for TEDs to include funding for native language programs.
- BIE will help facilitate collaborations between the state and tribe for native language teacher certification.
- BIE will help facilitate collaboration between the BIE and TEDs for the development of native language teacher certification programs.

E. TEDs

- TEDs, Education School Boards, and Executive Directors/or Superintendents will facilitate discussions and collaboration between the federal government, states, BIE, and tribes on evolving native language policy.
- TEDs, Education School Boards, and Executive Directors/or Superintendents will ensure implementation of defined language programs and policies for schools with set-aside funding to support the native language programs at schools. TEDs are to ensure funds are only used for specific purpose defined.
- TEDs, Native Language Departments/offices, and BIE-operated schools will collaborate to ensure the native language programs and policies are fully adhered to, honored, and used to promote fluency in native languages.

