



Bureau of Indian Affairs
Native Language
Revitalization

Literature Review*
August 2023

**For comment and review*

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Introduction

Native language revitalization is a complex and interdisciplinary subject that recognizes not only the damages incurred through the actions of colonization, but the amazing resilience and persistence of Native and Native Hawaiian people. Native communities have experienced a changing landscape that has impacted Indigenous languages since the intervention of Western Europeans to the North American continent. The daily and ongoing focus of these communities includes governance of their respective sovereign nations, economic development to supplement the lack of full treaty and trust obligation funding, and combatting social phenomena that impacts their people. The culmination of tribal engagement is intended to identify solutions for the following questions:

- *What existing federal funding streams and resources are most helpful to your Native language programs, initiatives, or efforts?*
- *What are the barriers and challenges to Native language revitalization and protections?*
- *Aside from increased federal funding, what more could the federal government do to support Native language revitalization, reclamation, and protection?*
- *What elements need to be in a national plan for language revitalization?*
- *What role should tribes and others have in the national plan?*

Additionally, these follow up questions may provide for a richer examination of the challenges in order to identify solutions:

- *What are the major opportunities you see with a national 10-year plan on Native language revitalization?*
- *What are the major challenges or barriers you see with the plan?*
- *How would you structure implementation of this plan?*
- *What are some key considerations we should examine when preparing to engage tribal communities and tribal leaders on the topic of Native language revitalization?*

This comprehensive literature review helps inform solutions for the above-listed questions by identifying approaches and best practices for designing a long-term Native language revitalization strategic plan. While culture and language remain a top priority, a summary review of systemic impacts and an environmental scan of solutions and promising practices can also add value when creating long-term strategic solutions for Native language revitalization and reclamation.

Sources Consulted

To identify resources relevant to Native language revitalization and address the BIA's policy and engagement objectives, a search strategy was developed that focused on:

- Relevant federal laws, statutes, regulations, policies and practices;
- All data available through the BIA, DOI, ANA, ED, ACF Head Start, the WHCNA, and the White House initiative including available programs and initiatives;
- Federal agency websites for published reports and information;

- Known reliable sources of partnerships for language preservation, such as coalitions, nonprofits, and tribal governmental associations;
- Scholarly papers related to Native language revitalization;
- Conference proceedings and unpublished gray literature, including independent research studies; and
- Key informant interviews of subject matter experts and practitioners in the field of Native language revitalization.

This literature review is divided into two parts: a review of relevant federal laws, regulations, and policies, and a review of current native language revitalization efforts.

Native Language Revitalization Background

It is important to note that while this report is written in English, some Indigenous concepts, and the very formation of thought in Native languages may not be translatable. Further, Indigenous ways of knowing, tribal customs and practices, and traditional oral methods for maintaining beliefs were not used to show the results within this report. Nonetheless, this report will endeavor to tell a story to a broad cross section of readers in gaining a fuller appreciation for the importance of this project and the crucial juncture we find ourselves in to revitalize, revive, retain, and reclaim our Indigenous languages.

Today, approximately 167 Indigenous languages are spoken in the U.S., and it's estimated that only 20 will remain by 2050. Navajo is the most spoken Native American language, with nearly 170,000 speakers, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Ten of the largest Native American languages by number of speakers in the U.S.¹

¹ U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Interior (2016). A New Chapter for Native American Languages in the United States: A Report on Federal Agency Coordination and Support. Retrieved: [a_new_chapter_for_native_american_languages_in_the_united.pdf \(hhs.gov\)](#)

Even with this number, the Navajo language doesn't make it into the top 25 languages spoken in the U.S.² The majority of Native Americans today only speak English. An added dimension are the impacts of historical and intergenerational trauma as reported in the *2018 United States Commission on Civil Rights Broken Promises Report*,³ and the 2022 Center for Disease Control Health Statistics⁴ reported lower life expectancy for Natives than life expectancy data for the general population immediately following WWII. An examination into the federal laws, regulations, and policies is worth understanding how the current state of Native language fluency came to be dismantled and identify opportunities to revitalize Native languages using the same mechanisms.

Since 1980, the American Community Survey, part of the U.S. Census has been asking respondents about Native languages spoken at home by Native American individuals aged 5 and over (Figure 2).

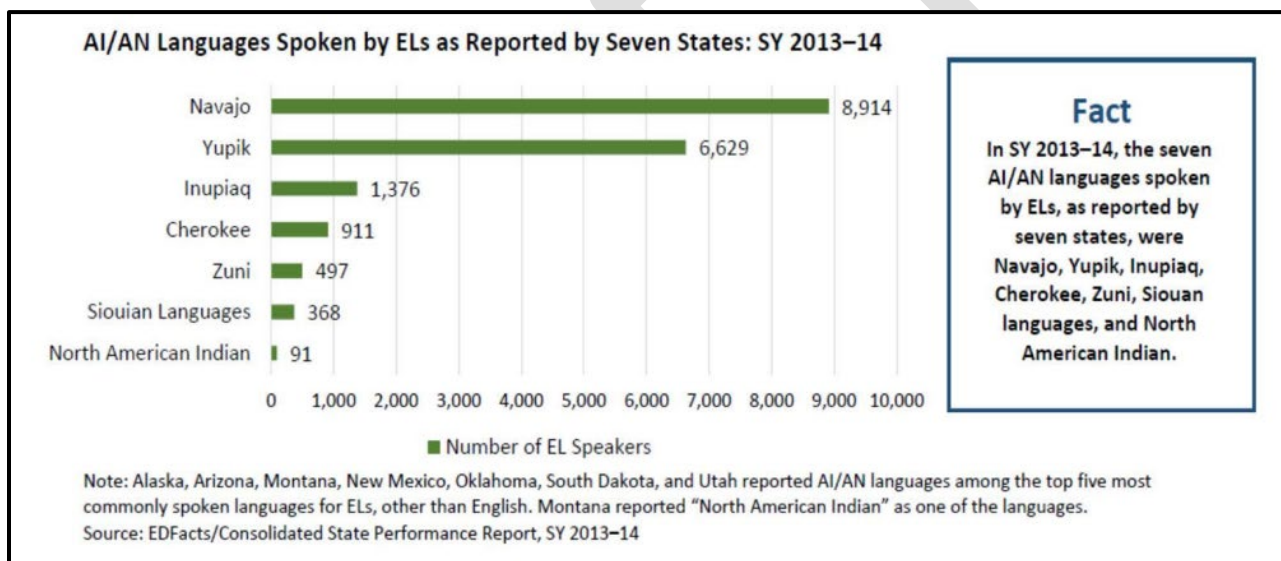


Figure 2. Native languages spoken by EL (English language learners) school year 2013-2014.

In 1990, there were 281,990 who replied "yes" they spoke a Native language; in 2000 there were 353,340, and in 2010 there were 372,095. It's encouraging that Native languages are gaining speakers, but we know that the upward trend is not true for each language and each Native American community. In addition, the overall percentage of the Native American population that speaks a Native language is in decline.⁵ According to Dr. Jason Cummings (*Apsaalooke Nation*), former Deputy Director of the White House Initiative, an ad hoc analysis factoring out Native Hawaiian and Navajo speakers, reduces the percentage of Native speakers to just 2.7%.⁶

² *The most spoken Languages in America* worldatlas.com/society/the-most-spoken-languages-in-america.html

³ U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. (2018). *Broken promises: Continuing Federal funding shortfall for Native Americans*. Retrieved: <https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2018/12-20-Broken-Promises.pdf>

⁴ Center for Disease Control: National Center for Health Statistics (2022). *Provisional life expectancy estimates for 2021*. Retrieved: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/vsrr/vsrr023.pdf>

⁵ U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Interior (2016). As cited in the A New Chapter for Native American Languages in the United States: A Report on Federal Agency Coordination and Support. Retrieved: [a_new_chapter_for_native_american_languages_in_the_united.pdf \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.hhs.gov/a-new-chapter-for-native-american-languages-in-the-united-states)

⁶ Cummings, J. (2023). Personal Interview

Part I. Federal Laws, Regulations, and Policies

To gain a full appreciation for the context for Indigenous language loss and revitalization, it is important to understand related federal Indian policy as a manifestation of both a role and a responsibility. While an education is not a fundamental right under the U.S. Constitution, the federal government, has a unique treaty obligation, perpetual trust responsibility, and contractual duty to provide an education to Natives as a federal right. Federal Indian policy, however, has had a devastating impact as it relates to Native education. According to the 2022 Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report,⁷ the federal Indian boarding school system, “discouraged or prevented the use of Native languages or cultural or religious practices” with a secondary motivation in that “the twin federal policy of Indian boarding and mission schools was territorial dispossession and Indian assimilation through militarized and identity-alteration methodologies to assimilate Native American people—primarily children,” under the rubric of education. Still, many tribes seek reconciliation and fulfillment of the treaty and trust obligation for education rather than reparations.

“The federal Indian boarding school system, “discouraged or prevented the use of Native languages or cultural or religious practices.”

~ 2022 Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report, pp. 92

Many think that the federal government became involved in the federal right to an education in *Brown vs. Board of Public Education* in 1954, but history tells us the federal government’s first foray into education was in relation to Native education including Native Hawaiians in the Indian Boarding School movement. A full understanding of the origin of the treaty and trust obligation necessitates advanced legal and policy study. For now, it is explained through a level of acknowledgement of responsibility in the 1763 Royal Proclamation, 1787 Northwest Ordinance, and the United States Constitution. First, the Royal Proclamation recognizes that those considered aboriginal at the time had title to land prior, that such title continues to exist, and that all land would be considered Indigenous land until ceded by treaty.⁸ The 1787 Northwest Ordinance extends this recognition and expresses the need for consent through, “the utmost good faith shall always be observed towards Indians; their land and property shall never be taken from them without their consent.”⁹ Article 1, Section 8, Paragraph 3 of the U.S. Constitution memorialized government-to-government relations in a commerce clause, which vests Congress with the power to, “regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.” Further, Article VI, Clause 2, establishes that the U.S. Constitution, and

⁷ U.S. Department of the Interior. (2022). *Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative investigative report*. Retrieved: https://www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/dup/inline-files/bsi_investigative_report_may_2022_508.pdf

⁸ Indigenous Foundations Website (n.d) *Royal proclamation of 1763: What is the royal proclamation?* Retrieved: https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/royal_proclamation_1763/

⁹ Northwest Ordinance (1787). National Archives Microfilm Publication M332, roll 9. <https://guides.loc.gov/northwest-ordinance#:~:text=Also%20known%20as%20the%20Ordinance,to%20the%20original%20thirteen%20states>

federal law generally, take precedence over state laws, and even state constitutions.¹⁰

This unique political and legal relationship with the 574 federally recognized Indian tribes,¹¹ is set forth in the U.S. Constitution, treaties, federal court decisions, and various presidential directives. The federal government’s relationship with tribes has been guided by a treaty and trust responsibility: a long-standing commitment of the federal government to protect the unique rights and ensure the well-being of tribes while respecting their sovereignty. Two centuries of Supreme Court case law establish that there is an “undisputed existence of a general trust relationship between the United States and the Indian people.”¹² The federal government, following “a humane and self-imposed policy ... has charged itself with moral obligations of the highest responsibility and trust”¹³ obligation, “to the fulfillment of which the national honor has been committed.”¹⁴ The Court has recognized that “throughout the history of the Indian trust relationship...the organization and management of the trust is a sovereign function subject to the plenary authority of Congress.”¹⁵ Moreover, “because the Indian trust relationship represents an exercise of that authority,” the Supreme Court has “explained that the government ‘has a real and direct interest’ in the guardianship it exercises over the Indian tribes, ‘the interest is one which is vested in it as a sovereign’.”¹⁶ Table 1 outlines a Native American language legislation chronology.

Table 1. Native American Language Legislation Chronology.

Native American Language Legislation Chronology
1969: A special senate subcommittee on Indian education issues "Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge" focusing national attention about Native American students.
1972: Indian Education Act establishes the Office of Indian Education and the National Advisory Council on Indian Education. Authorized a formula program & several grants.
1974: PL 93-380 amends the act to add a teacher training program and a fellowship program.
1988: PL 100-297 qualifies BIA-funded schools eligible to apply for formula grants. Also creates an authorization for gifted and talented education.
1990: Native American Languages Act of 1990.
1994: PL 103-382 reauthorizes Indian Education as Title IX Part A of ESEA. Requires a comprehensive plan to meet Native student academic and culturally related academic needs.
2002: PL 107-110 Indian Education Act is reauthorized as Title VII Part A of the No Child Left Behind Act . The formula grants are to challenge state academic content and student academic achievement standards and designed to assist Indian students in meeting those standards.
2015: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The Office of Indian Education (OIE) administers the Indian Education Program of ESEA, as amended by ESSA (Title VI, Part A). OIE’s director reports to the Assistant Secretary and advises the office on matters related to OIE administered programs.

¹⁰ U.S. Const. Retrieved: <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript>

¹¹ There are 578 federally recognized tribes when counting the four Minnesota Chippewa Tribes under the umbrella of Minnesota Chippewa Tribal Nation.

¹² *United States v. Mitchell*, 463 U.S. 206, 225 (1983).

¹³ *Seminole Nation v. United States*, 316 U.S. 286, 296–297 (1942).

¹⁴ *Heckman v. United States*, 224 U.S. 413, 437 (1912).

¹⁵ *United States v. Jicarilla Apache Nation*, 564 U.S. 162, 175 (2011).

¹⁶ U.S. Department of the Interior. (2002). *Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative investigative report*. Retrieved: https://www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/dup/inline-files/bsi_investigative_report_may_2022_508.pdf

Native Language Legislative, Policy, and Regulation

Historically, many legislative, policy, and regulatory factors have impacted Native languages contributing to their loss and need for revitalization. This section provides a comprehensive chronology of these factors. A full appreciation of the impacts and legacy conveyed by B.M.J. Brayboy (2005):

“... in the following policies and practices of the U.S. government are grounded in a legacy of imperialism and the domination of others (manifest destiny); identity of Indigenous people is more than a racial status it is a unique political and legal status ...”¹⁷

Thus, it is necessary to do a walkthrough of various laws, regulations and policies that have impacted Native language loss and efforts to reconcile this loss. The first law of Congress relating to Indians was creating the War Department in 1789, which entrusted the Secretary of War with responsibility for such duties relative to Indian Affairs as the President should entrust to him.¹⁸ In 1802, up to \$15,000 annually was appropriated, “to promote civilization among the friendly Indian tribes, and to secure the continuance of their friendship.”¹⁹ In the *Indian Civilization Fund Act* of 1819 appropriations were enacted to civilize Native Americans as “... apportioned among those societies and individuals—usually missionary organizations—that had been prominent in the effort to ‘civilize’ the Indians.”²⁰ Thus began the legacy of federal funding to “civilize” Native people by contracting with religious entities who had an ethnocentric bias and objective as distinct from the general welfare and beneficence of Native people.

While the use of federal funds toward Native assimilation as a practice was initiated in 1819, the formal enactment of the mission and Indian boarding schools commenced in 1879 when the Carlisle Indian School opened. This is when the school’s superintendent, Henry Pratt, proclaimed “kill the Indian to save the man,” as the U.S. policy and pedagogy for Indian boarding schools.²¹ The practice of further dispossessing Native Americans from their land while “civilizing” them through forced assimilation tactics was reinforced through the enactment of the 1887 Dawes Severalty Act.²²

“Kill the Indian to save the man.”

~ U.S. School Superintendent Henry Pratt, 1879

¹⁷ Brayboy, B. M. J. (2005). Toward a tribal critical race theory in education. *The Urban Review*, 37(5), 425-444. doi: 10.1007/s 11256-005-0018-y

¹⁸ Act of Aug. 7, 1789, Ch. 7, 1 Stat. 49 (establishing the Department of War). Retrieved: <https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/lisl/lisl-c1/lisl-c1.pdf>

¹⁹ Act of Dec. 23, 1791, Ch. 3, Sec. 4, 1 Stat. 226, 228. The amounts so appropriated totaled \$76,764.19. Id.

²⁰ Committee on Labor and Public Welfare. (1969) *Indian Education: A National Tragedy – A National Challenge*, S. Rep. No. 91-501 at 143 [hereinafter Kennedy Report]. Retrieved: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED034625.pdf>

²¹ Perdue, T., & Green, M. (2010). *North American Indians: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press. Retrieved: <https://academic.oup.com/book/477>

²² General Allotment Act or Dawes Act, Statutes at Large 24, 388-91. Retrieved: <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/dawes-act#:~:text=Also%20known%20as%20the%20General,granted%20of%20reservation%20land>

In accordance with its terms, and hoping to turn Indians into farmers, the federal government redistributed tribal lands to heads of families in 160-acre allotments. Unclaimed or “surplus” land was sold, and the proceeds used to establish Indian schools where Native children learned reading, writing, and the domestic and social systems of White America. Much of this land was ultimately declared abandoned and seized by local governments which further fractionated tribal citizens from their collective tribal land holdings.

From the numerous sources cited herein, judicial precedence, administration direction and enacted legislation reinforces the conclusion that the federal government has a federal treaty and trust responsibility to provide financial assistance for providing educational services to Native Americans stemming from hundreds of known treaties on record in which education was promised many times in exchange for lands. It is very important to note that these obligations apply to public schools that may receive federal funding on behalf of Native American students as well.

Investigation into Federal Boarding Schools

With the advent of the Biden-Harris Administration came the Nation’s first appointed Native American cabinet member in Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) as Secretary of the Interior and Bryan Newland (Bay Mills Indian Community) as the Assistant Secretary. Immediately after appointment Secretary Haaland launched the *Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigation* with Assistant Secretary Newland publishing the initial report in May 2022. This report found the federal Indian boarding schools operated from 1801 to 1969 and that the system was expansive, consisting of 408 schools. These schools were located at 431 sites across 37 states (including 21 schools in the Alaska territory and seven schools in Hawaii territory). These schools were places of punishment, including corporal punishment such as solitary confinement, flogging, withholding food, whipping, slapping, and cuffing. Many Native children simply did not survive this federal policy as the department’s investigation has so far identified marked or unmarked burial sites at approximately 53 different schools across the federal Indian boarding school system.²³

As federal Indian policy ebbs and flows, in 1924 (some 134 years after the U.S. Constitution was ratified and 148 years since the U.S. Declaration of Independence) Native Americans were granted citizenship²⁴ and the right to vote, which was not fulfilled until 1957 as some states continued to bar Native Americans from voting. In 1928, the *Meriam Report* was published and recommended the abandonment of the assimilation strategy “to remove the Indian child as far as possible from his home environment” because the “modern point of view in education and social work lays stress on upbringing in the natural setting of home and family life.”²⁵

Two additional pieces of complementary legislation were enacted in 1934 which seemed to solidify a move away from forced assimilation and tribal government eradication practices by the federal government. First, the Indian Reorganization Act²⁶ established legitimacy of tribal governments under corporate charter-like constitutions and seemingly put an end to attempts to eliminate tribal self-governance structures. Next as a recognition of the Meriam Report

²³ U.S. Department of the Interior. (2002). *Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative investigative report*. www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/dup/inline-files/bsi_investigative_report_may_2022_508.pdf

²⁴ PL 68-175, 43 STAT 253 (1928). *Indian Citizen Act*. Retrieved: <https://govtrackus.s3.amazonaws.com/legislink/pdf/stat/43/STATUTE-43-Pg253a.pdf>

²⁵ Merriam, L. (1928). *The Problem of Indian administration*. Institute for Government Research https://www.narf.org/nill/documents/merriam/n_merriam_chapter9_part1_education.pdf

²⁶ 48 Stat. 984, 25 U.S.C. *Indian Reorganization Act*. Retrieved: www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-5299/pdf/COMPS-5299.pdf

recommendations, Congress enacted the Johnson-O'Malley Act (JOM) which offered resources to "include such programs as culture, language, academics and dropout prevention."²⁷ Additionally, the act, "authorized contracts for the education of eligible Indian students enrolled in public schools."

Failure of the Federal Government to Uphold Treaty Rights

As time went on, congressional and presidential administrative interpretation of federal Indian policy led to an emerging termination era,²⁸ appropriations for relocating Native Americans to urban centers,²⁹ and a greater focus on the plight of Native Americans as the poorest of the poor with the worst of the worst statistics as indicators of their welfare. With most treaty language providing for "health, education and social welfare" and with the American Indian Movement emerging and national level politicians becoming aware of the conditions in which Native Americans lived, a seminal report was issued 41 years after the *Meriam Report*. The Special Subcommittee on Indian Education findings also known as the 1969 *Kennedy Report*, explained that the federal government had failed in the treaty and trust obligation for Indian education. Reinforced in the report was language that identified the objective, "to develop higher education programs sensitized to how Native Americans differ from majority students in terms of culture, history, and language."³⁰ Indian Education scholars largely believe the Kennedy Report along with American Indian activism and advocacy and the emergence of greater tribal self-determined political power, ushered in a flurry of legislative activism related to Native American education focused on halting assimilation practices in favor of policies and funding that embrace a recognition of the importance of supporting and reinforcing Indian identity as a resilience factor. Additionally, revitalization of Native American culture and language emerged as an objective to be embraced rather than the former federal policy of assimilation.

The End of Forced Assimilation and the Indian Education Act

Legislation enacted in the 1970s supports the notion that the era of forced assimilation was coming to an end. The Indian Education Act passed in 1972 created the Office of Indian Education (OIE) under the U.S. Department of Education and established Title IV Indian Education. A separate section of this literature review further describes how in some cases tribes and school districts collaborate to pull together Indian education funds, JOM funds, and Title VII Impact Aid funding along with in many cases, tribal funds to ameliorate the minimal federal, state or district funding for the 93 percent of Native students who attend public schools. Indian education funding has changed from Title IV to Title VII and now Title VI, but the general purpose has remained the same with minor additions. What follows is a purpose and legislative history provided by the U.S. Department of Education on the history of Indian education. The OIE has three primary responsibilities:

²⁷ U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Education. (n.d.). *Johnson-O'Malley*. Retrieved: bie.edu/topic-page/johnson-omalley

²⁸ P.L. 280. *Indian Termination Act*. Retrieved: www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-67/pdf/STATUTE-67-Pg588.pdf

²⁹ PL 959 (1956). *Indian Relocation Act of 1956* Retrieved: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-70/pdf/STATUTE-70-Pg986.pdf>

³⁰ Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, U.S. Senate, Special Subcommittee on Indian Education. (1969). *Indian education: A national tragedy - A national challenge*. Retrieved: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED034625.pdf>

1. To meet the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of Indian students, so that such students can meet the challenging state academic standards,
2. To ensure that Indian students gain knowledge and understanding of Native communities, languages, tribal histories, traditions, and cultures; and
3. To ensure that teachers, principals, other school leaders, and other staff who serve Indian students can provide culturally appropriate and effective instruction and supports to such students.

The 1972 Indian Education Act was the landmark legislation establishing a comprehensive approach to meeting the unique needs of Native American students. The unique aspects of the original authority have been retained through subsequent legislative reauthorizing statutes in the following ways:

1. It recognizes that Native Americans have unique, educational and culturally related academic needs and distinct language and cultural needs;
2. It is the only comprehensive federal Indian education legislation, that deals with Native American education from pre-school to graduate-level and reflects the diversity of government involvement in Indian education;
3. It focuses national attention on the educational needs of Native American learners, reaffirming the federal government's special responsibility related to the education of Native Americans; and
4. It provides services to Native Americans that are not provided by the BIA.

The 1972 act also created the National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE).³¹ ³² NACIE published an annual report to Congress and the Secretaries of Education, Interior and Commerce³³ on Native American education issues and recommendations. In the most recent reauthorization of NACIE as established by Executive Order 14049,³⁴ the following specific responsibility with respect to advising the federal government was reaffirmed: actions for promoting, improving, and expanding educational opportunities for Native languages, traditions, and practices to be sustained through culturally responsive education. Building on this momentum and reinforcing the importance of Native language revitalization, the 1974 *Native American Programs Act* established the Administration for Native Americans to promote self-sufficiency for Native Americans by providing discretionary grant funding for community-based projects, and training and technical assistance to eligible tribes and Native organizations. In addition, NAPA provided financial assistance for Native communities to do the following:

1. The establishment and support of a community Native language project to bring older and younger Native Americans together to facilitate and encourage the transfer of Native American language skills from one generation to another;

³¹ Pub. L. No. 92-318, 86 Stat. 235 (1972). Indian Education Act. Retrieved: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-86/pdf/STATUTE-86-Pg235.pdf>

³² US Department of Education Website. National Advisory Council on Indian Education. Retrieved: ese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-indian-education/national-advisory-council-on-indian-education-oie/

³³ US Department of Education (2022). *2021 to 2022 National Advisory Council on Indian Education Annual Report to Congress*. Retrieved: static1.squarespace.com/static/5cfff319973d7000185377f/t/6408f98cb871b94df22d31b1/1678309786313/2021-2022NACIEAnnualReport_508-final-2.pdf

³⁴ Federal Registrar Website (2021). *White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities*. Retrieved: <https://sites.ed.gov/whiaiane/>

2. The establishment of a project to train Native Americans to teach a Native language to others or to enable them to serve as interpreters or translators of such language;
3. The development, printing, and dissemination of materials to be used for the teaching and enhancement of a Native language;
4. The establishment or support of a project to train Native Americans to produce or participate in a television or radio program to be broadcast in a Native language;
5. The compilation, transcription, and analysis of oral testimony to record and preserve a Native language;
6. The purchase of equipment (including audio and video recording equipment, computers, and software) required to conduct a Native language project; and
7. Native language nests were created to ... ensure that a Native language is the dominant medium of instruction in the Native language nest.

Promote the “*establishment and support of a community Native American language project to bring older and younger Native Americans together to facilitate and encourage the transfer of Native American language skills from one generation to another.*”

~ 1974 Native American Programs Act

Native Language in the Classroom and Restoring Native Identity

In 1975, following the American Indian Movement’s occupation of the U.S. Department of Interior, a national level of attention was afforded like never before which scholars argue was the impetus for the enactment of the *Indian Self Determination and Education Act*.³⁵ This act rejuvenated tribal governments by admitting, rejecting, and countering previous paternalistic policies. Native Americans were now able to operate their own schools. Since the act was passed more than seventy schools have taken charge of their own operations. Native Americans now had the chance to take control of their own education bringing back their own languages, and beliefs.³⁶

Up until this time, the practice of Indian assimilation, while no longer official U.S. policy was nonetheless manifested in the atrocity of placing Native American children outside of tribal families at a rate of 17:1 compared to other races. It is imperative to understand the important distinction of Native American children as citizens of both the United States as well as that of their respective tribal nations. To address this continuing practice of stripping Indian children of their identity and in many cases access to their culture, customs, and language, the 1978 *Indian Child Welfare Act* (ICWA)³⁷ and the 1978 *Indian Religious Freedom Act*³⁸ formally ended these assimilation tactics. In ICWA, Congress hereby, “declares that it is the policy of this Nation to

³⁵ Pub. L. No. 93-638 (1975) *Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, as Amended Regulations Final Rule*. Retrieved: bia.gov/sites/default/files/dup/assets/bia/ots/ots/pdf/Public_Law93-638.pdf

³⁶ American Indian Relief Council, Retrieved:

nativepartnership.org/site/PageServer?pagename=airc_hist_selfdeterminationact#:~:text=The%20act%20rejuvenated%20tribal%20governments.and%20countering%20previous%20paternalistic%20policies%20

³⁷ P.L. 95-608 (1978). *Indian Child Welfare Act*. Retrieved: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-92/pdf/STATUTE-92-Pg3069.pdf>

³⁸ PL 95-341 (1978). *American Indian Religious Freedom Act* Retrieved: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-92/pdf/STATUTE-92-Pg469.pdf>

“Today’s decision affirming the constitutionality of ICWA is a major victory for tribes, tribal families, and tribal children and it should put an end to the challenges to ICWA and the broader challenges to tribal sovereignty.”

~ Native American Rights Fund Executive Director, John Echohawk

protect the best interests of Indian children and ... placement of such children in foster or adoptive homes which will reflect the unique values of Indian culture ...”. Further, “the court shall also certify that either the parent or Indian custodian fully understood ... or that it was interpreted into a language that the parent or Indian custodian understood.” It is important to add, that while finalizing this literature review, the United States Supreme Court handed down its decision in *Haaland v. Brackeen*,³⁹ and affirmed the constitutionality of the ICWA.⁴⁰

The Reagan Administration recognized the need to focus attention on a failing national education system and published *A Nation At Risk: National Education Report*,⁴¹ which was devoid of any mention of Native American education despite being a federal treaty and trust obligation nor having the worst graduation rates. It would not be until 1991, when the Bush Administration published the *Indian Nations at Risk* report that findings were identified related to Native American languages and culture. The findings from the *Indian Nations at Risk* report are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. *Indian Nations at Risk* Report findings.

Indian Nations at Risk Report Findings
Native and non-Native teachers across the country should be required to complete a course in Native history, culture, languages, and educational needs as a part of pre-service training.
Native communities must be the producers of Native education materials that reflect the language and culture of the local area.
The preservation of Native languages is of primary importance to the survival of our cultures and to the self-esteem of Native children, which leads to higher academic achievement.
Meaningful workshops must be widely offered to non-Native teachers and administrators in order to overcome prejudicial attitudes by raising cultural awareness and appreciation of Native history, literature, language, culture, and spiritual values.
Speech therapists who work with Native children need to be trained the recognize local and regional dialects of Native English and the influence of Native languages so that Native children are not so often mistakenly referred for speech therapy. ⁴²

³⁹ Native American Rights Fund Website. *Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Haaland v. Brackeen*. <https://narf.org/cases/brackeen-v-bernhardt/>

⁴⁰ US Supreme Court (2023). *Haaland, Secretary of Interior, et.al. v. Brackeen, et.al.* Retrieved: https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/22pdf/21-376_7148.pdf

⁴¹ US Department of Education (1983). *A Nation at Risk : the Imperative for Educational Reform : a Report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education*. Washington, D.C. :National Commission on Excellence in Education : [Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office distributor] Retrieved: reaganfoundation.org/media/130020/a-nation-at-risk-report.pdf

⁴² US Department of Education (1991). *Indian nations at risk: An educational strategy for action*. Final report of the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force. Washington, DC Retrieved: files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED343754.pdf

Funding for Native Language Preservation

What follows is a series of activities best described as policy soup⁴³ involving various legislative efforts that germinate and stew over years and ultimately result in enactment of legislation—in this case, the initial federal legislation toward funding for Native language preservation and revitalization beyond political platitudes or policy. There is no doubt that efforts beginning with the 1972 Indian Education Act and subsequent legislation led to this point. However, it was not until Senator Inouye (D-HI) who served as chair of what is now the Senate Indian Affairs Committee began his legacy that language preservation moved from reports to action. This history is memorialized in an essay published in the 2008 Greenbook of Language Revitalizations as written by Senate staffer R. Arnold.⁴⁴ In 1988, Senator Daniel K. Inouye introduced a joint resolution to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs supporting a statement of changing policy to embrace Native American and Hawaiian language, but Congress adjourned. In 1989, he introduced (with nine co-sponsors) a revised and expanded version as S.1781, Native American Language Act, but it was opposed by the Bush Administration. Inouye revised his legislation which was subsequently approved by the Senate in April 1990 and sent to the House. The English-language-only movement killed this effort as the House refused to report out of committee. Then a coalition of Native and Native Hawaiians launched a telephone campaign. Inouye's staffer Lurline McGregor, as a Native Hawaiian herself, found a way to include it as an amendment. Additionally, Robert Arnold, U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs ranking member advised Inouye to add it as an amendment to the reauthorization of the Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Navajo Community College Act, October 30, 1990—it arrived as Title I, the Native American Languages Act of 1990. The act (P.L. 101-477) gave historical importance as it repudiated past policies of eradicating Indian languages by declaring as policy that Native Americans were entitled to use their own languages. The fundamental basis of the policy's declaration was that the United States "declares to preserve, protect and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use practice and develop Native American languages".^{45,46} It is important to mention that despite a myopic view of Indian Education exclusively under the Bureau of Indian Education, enacted legislation herein and for the most part, has application to public schools serving Native students as well Native language mediums of instruction.

The United States "declares to preserve, protect and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use practice and develop Native American languages."

~ Native American Languages Act of 1990

⁴³ Kingdon, J. (1984). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*. Longman Publishing Group, England.

⁴⁴ Arnold, R. as cited in Hinton, L. and Hale, K. (2001). *The Green Book of Language Revitalization*. California: Academic Press. p. 45.

⁴⁵ P.L. 101-477 ~ *The Native American Languages Act*. Retrieved: www.congress.gov/bill/101st-congress/senate-bill/2167

⁴⁶ Arnold, R. as cited in Hinton, L. and Hale, K. (2001). *The Green Book of Language Revitalization*. California: Academic Press. p. 45.

Not satisfied with enactment of the 1990 legislation as a rider of sorts to the reauthorization, Senator Inouye set out to introduce clean legislation to further strengthen the move away from assimilation and reinforce the importance of language preservation. On November 24, 1991, the senator introduced a bill pointing out the unique status of Native American languages by saying, “Since Europeans first arrived on these shores, in the sixteenth century, hundreds of languages have been lost. Each year additional languages are threatened with extinction.”

Failure to Implement the Requirements of the 1990 Act

In the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in July 1992, Senator Inouye noted that the Bush Administration failed to implement the review and evaluation required by the 1990 act. In their opening statements, Senators Inouye and Senator Frank Murkoswki expressed their support for the bill. Testimony was taken from the Tohono O’odham Nation, the Alaska Native Language Center, Coquille Tribe, and the Oklahoma Native American Language Issues Development Institute quoting a Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians member saying, “to not know one’s own language is to be left out.” Also testifying was Tommy C. Yazzie (Navajo) Superintendent of the Leupp Schools in Winslow, Arizona who declared, the “very essence of self-worth and dignity lies in our language.”

An interesting historical note is that the current effort to gather comprehensive input from tribal nations to establish a 10 year strategic plan for language revitalization is that the Senate’s Indian Affairs Committee is once again (2023) lead by a Senate Indian Affairs Committee chair and senator from Hawaii along with the ranking member from Alaska—none other than the daughter of the senator from Alaska who supported and spoke on behalf of the *Native American Languages Preservation Act* which was signed into law October 26, 1992. Also, that year (1992) the Bush White House Conference on Indian Education identified the following as related to Native American language:

- Promoted opportunities to enrich Native American language and development skills during pre-school years
- Described schools as an unfriendly climate that failed to promote appropriate academic, social, cultural, and spiritual development among many Native American students
- Sounded the alarms of continued loss of Native American language ability and wisdom of the older generations
- Demonstrated persisting high drop-out rates for Native Americans
- Produced 113 resolutions calling for Indian education reform⁴⁷

English-only Legislation

A theme throughout the chronology of federal legislation as it relates to Native language revitalization is a sort of “catch 22” of steps forward and threats of regressing to a less-evolved state. This was exemplified in the movement in the mid-1990s of legislation promoting the use of one official language makes the government’s job easier. This type of legislation disenfranchises those for whom the chosen language is not their primary language thereby excluding minority groups from power and privilege. English-only legislation in the 106th Congress (1999 to 2000)

⁴⁷ White House Conference on Indian Education Final Report (1992). Retrieved: narf.org/nill/resources/education/reports/1990whthsconf.pdf

included: (H.J. Res 21, H.R. 50, H.R. 1005, H. Cong. Res 4, S. 667)⁴⁸ with H.R. 123 the Bill Emerson English Language Empowerment Act of 1996⁴⁹ as the lead version of English-only legislation. Such draft legislation is 27 years old and was not enacted, yet various incarnations geared to outlaw curriculum that explains the Indigenous experience have resurfaced in the last several years with the Anti-Critical Race Theory legislation.

In 1998, President Clinton joined the effort by signing Executive Order (EO) 13096 and reaffirmed the federal government’s special and historical responsibility for the education of Native American students. The order identified the following two objectives related to Native languages:

- Evaluate the role of Native language and culture with the development of educational strategies. Within one year, the Secretary of Education shall submit the research agenda, including proposed timelines, to the task force.
- Assist tribal governments in meeting the unique educational needs of their children, including the need to preserve, revitalize, and use Native languages and cultural traditions.⁵⁰

The next year, in 1999, the Federal Register posted the following to detail the implementation of EO 13096, American Indian and Alaska Native Education, to include the establishment of an interagency task force which will confer with the NACIE in carrying out activities under this order. The task force was to consult with tribal representatives and organizations, including the National Indian Education Association and the National Congress of American Indians, to gather advice on implementation of the activities called for in this order. The specific language follows:

1. Establish baseline data on academic achievement and retention of American Indian and Alaska Native students to monitor improvements;
2. Evaluate promising practices used with those students; and
3. Evaluate the role of Native language and culture in the development of educational strategies. Within one year, the Secretary of Education shall submit the research agenda, including proposed timelines ...⁵¹

In 2002, the results of EO 13096 were reported following nine forums held across Indian Country (Table 3).

Table 3. Executive Order 13096 Findings.

Executive Order 13096 Findings
The lack of culturally relevant curriculum and instruction was a concern mentioned in nearly all forums. Participants recommended promotion of tribal language and culture and local tribal history instruction in schools with large numbers of Native students. This should start with early childhood programs.
Establishing a website for tribal and public schools to showcase best practices in education. Also, there was a call for locating Native language and curriculum materials that may have been developed for OIE projects in the 1970s and 1980s that could be shared with tribes.

⁴⁸ Hinton, L. and Hale, K. (2008). *The Greenbook of language revitalization in practice (3rd Edition)*. California: Academic Press.

⁴⁹ H.R. 123, 104th Congress. *Bill Emerson English Language Empowerment Act of 1999*. Retrieved: congress.gov/bill/106th-congress/house-bill/123/text

⁵⁰ EO 13096: *American Indian and Alaska Native Education*. Retrieved: webassets.aihec.org/Policy-Advocacy/TCUExecutiveOrders/Executive%20Order%2013096_Aug_1998_Clinton.pdf

⁵¹ Executive Order 13096: *American Indian and Alaska Native Education*. Retrieved: webassets.aihec.org/Policy-Advocacy/TCUExecutiveOrders/Executive%20Order%2013096_Aug_1998_Clinton.pdf

Executive Order 13096 Findings

Inclusion of Navajo, as a foreign language at post-secondary institutions was cited as a promising practice.

They felt that tribes and schools could jointly develop strategic plans to focus on how to implement language and cultural education from pre-K through post-secondary education.

Tribal colleges should get increased support for their efforts to implement Native language and cultural programs.⁵²

For years, the NCAI and other national Native organizations have advocated for the identification of baseline data to more accurately depict the dire living conditions of Native Americans as possible outcomes of Federal Indian Policy with particular attention to historical and intergenerational trauma associated with assimilation efforts. In her 2016 testimony to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, former NCAI Executive Director Jackie Pata made the following observations:

- Ongoing, federal budget crises demands greater data to justify the federal government fulfilling the treaty and trust obligation for “health, education, and social welfare;”
- Unpredictable and unstable levels of funding streams result in a fluctuating and abrogation of this right;
- Chronic underfunding and level funding in appropriations fail to keep pace with inflation crystalizes the need for accurate and updated data;
- Continued needs exist to more critically assess unmet need, gaps in service delivery, and tracking spending on Indian programs;
- Greater cross agency coordination (and with state pass-through) information is needed;
- An updated report will provide a greater level of understanding of the relative success of the federal government meeting the treaty and trust obligation.⁵³

Subsequently, findings of the *2003 Quiet Crisis Report* as they relate to Indian education and Native language are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4. *2003 Quiet Crisis Report Findings.*

2003 Quiet Crisis Report Findings

The federal government initially educated Native American children with the goal of assimilation, a process it believed would eventually lead to the extinction of Indigenous communities residing within the boundaries of the United States as Native children were acculturated in Euro-American society.

These [Indian Boarding] schools perhaps best exemplified the federal government’s objective in educating Native Americans: prevent them from speaking their language, practicing their customs, and wearing traditional dress.

⁵² US Department of Education and US Department of Interior (2002). Regional Partnership Forum Report Executive Order 13096 American Indian and Alaska Native Education: Summary of Proceedings & Participant Recommendations. Retrieved: [rpf_report.pdf \(narf.org\)](http://narf.org/rpf_report.pdf)

⁵³ NCAI Website (2016). NCAI Testimony supporting a new study of outcomes for AIANs. Retrieved: https://www.ncai.org/attachments/Testimonial_ljKoclPeClqYbRyqRUHwbKbLKaOPOpxqjXhliEIDHxtqwIGkvZG_USCCR%20Briefing%20JJP%2002.19.16.pdf

2003 Quiet Crisis Report Findings

The cultural histories and practices of Native students are rarely incorporated in the learning environment. As a result, achievement gaps persist with Native American students scoring lower than any other racial/ethnic group in basic levels of reading, math, and history. Native American students are also less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to drop out in earlier grades.

Native Americans aged 18 to 24, only 63.2 percent have graduated from high school (compared with 76.5 percent of the United States population) and of those 25 years and older, only 9.4 percent have completed four or more years of college (compared with 20.3 percent nationally).

These factors, and many others, such as the absence of state assistance for Indian education, lower the quality of education afforded Native Americans relative to non-Indigenous students and foster a continuous violation of their civil rights. Current conditions pose difficult challenges for the education of Native American students. National Assessment of Educational Progress test results reveal that fourth-grade Native Americans score lower than other groups in basic levels of reading, math, and history.⁵⁴

The follow up to the *Quiet Crisis Report*, the *2018 Broken Promises Report* reinforced that data shared in the *Kennedy Report* from 49 years prior that Native American “drop-out rates are twice the national average in both public and Federal Schools” matches the current disparity as reported in the *Broken Promises Report*.⁵⁵

Federal Indian Policy Shift to Support Native Language Preservation

As time elapses and report after report are published, the culmination of these efforts appears to amble forward a semblance of federal Indian policy supporting the revitalization of Native languages. From earlier efforts in 1990 and 1992 to supporting the preservation of Native languages championed by Senator Daniel K. Inouye, to the enactment of the 2006 *Esther Martinez Language Preservation Act* which amended the *Native American Programs Act* of 1974 to provide for the revitalization of Native American languages through native language immersion and restoration programs.⁵⁶ The Esther Martinez Act also places implementation in the ANA under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). As welcomed as this act is, ANA

Native “dropout rates are twice the national average in both and public and private schools.”

~ 2018 Broken Promises Report

⁵⁴ U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. (2003) *Quiet Crisis Report: Federal funding and unmet needs in Indian country*. Retrieved: [usccr.gov/files/pubs/na0703/na0204.pdf](https://www.usccr.gov/files/pubs/na0703/na0204.pdf)

⁵⁵ U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. (2018). *Broken promises: Continuing Federal funding shortfall for Native Americans*. [usccr.gov/pubs/2018/12-20-Broken-Promises.pdf](https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2018/12-20-Broken-Promises.pdf)

⁵⁶ Public Law 109-394 (2006). *Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act*. Retrieved: [congress.gov/bill/109th-congress/house-bill/4766](https://www.congress.gov/bills/109th/congress/house-bill/4766)

grants are competitive which tribes argue pits them against one another and small tribes, like Alaska Native Villages, are at a disadvantage due to capacity issues. ANA currently provides approximately \$15 million to support NALA 1992 and the Esther Martinez Act. The purpose of these grants is broken down into two categories:

- **Native Language Preservation and Maintenance** provides funding for projects to support assessments of the status of the Native languages in an established community, as well as the planning, designing, restoration, and implementing of Native language curriculum, teacher training, and education projects to support a community's language preservation goals. Projects should identify opportunities for the replication or modification of projects for use by other Native Americans and include a plan for the preservation of the products for the benefit of future generations of Native Americans and other interested persons.
- **Esther Martinez Immersion** supports the development of self-determining, healthy, culturally, and linguistically vibrant, self-sufficient Native American communities. This funding opportunity is focused on community-driven projects designed to revitalize the Native American languages through immersion instruction to ensure the survival and continuing vitality of these languages and the culture of Native peoples for future generations. The initiative provides funding to support projects implemented by Native American Language Nests, Survival Schools, and Restoration Programs providing at least 500 hours of instruction each year.⁵⁷ Additionally, in 2019, the Act was reauthorized to reduce enrollment requirements from 10 to 5 students in Language nests and 15 to 10 students in survival schools while also extending the project period up to 60 months.⁵⁸

Like the persistence and perseverance of tribal nations, the advocacy for a revitalization of Native languages has persistence across eras and resurfaces in administrative support as demonstrated by select Presidential administration. In 2011, the Obama-Biden Administration issued Executive Order 13592 Improving American Indian and Alaska Native Educational Opportunities and *Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities*,⁵⁹ to establish the WHIAIANE, which was charged with the responsibility to help expand educational opportunities and improve educational outcomes for all Native American students, including opportunities to learn their Native languages, cultures, and histories.⁶⁰ Subsequently, in 2012, in partial fulfillment of this lofty objective, the ED, DOI, and HHS established and signed the first Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on Native

⁵⁷ Administration for Native Americans Website. *About Native Languages*. Retrieved: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ana/programs/native-language-preservation-maintenance/about#:~:text=Additionally%2C%20Congress%20passed%20the%20Esther,language%20immersion%20and%20restoration%20programs>

⁵⁸ Public Law No: 116-101 (2019). *Esther Martinez Native American Languages Programs Reauthorization Act*. Retrieved: <https://www.congress.gov/bills/116/congress/senate-bill/256>

⁵⁹ Executive Order 13592 -- Improving American Indian and Alaska Native Educational Opportunities and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities. Retrieved: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/02/executive-order-13592-improving-american-indian-and-alaska-native-educat>

⁶⁰ Executive Order 13592 (2011). *Improving American Indian and Alaska Native Educational Opportunities and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities*. Retrieved: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/02/executive-order-13592-improving-american-indian-and-alaska-native-educat>

American languages with federal partners pledging to collaborate on programming, resource development and policy for Native American languages across the three agencies.⁶¹

In 2014, the U.S. Department of Interior launched a Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) Collaborative National Indian Education Study Group to promote education self-determination for tribal nations, strengthen and support the efforts of tribal nations to directly operate BIE-funded schools and to engage tribal representation in identifying the following as it relates to Native language revitalization:

- BIE programs and policies are too restrictive and prevent schools from implementing Native language and culture classes;
- Immersion programs not only increase academic achievement, but also guarantee that a student's language will be carried forward for generations;
- The 3-year competitive incentive-based grant, similar to existing race-to-the-top initiatives for which BIE continues to be excluded, could provide much-needed resources to tribes for accelerating local reforms and aligning education services to tribal education priorities that include language and culture; and
- The BIE should also provide tribes with high quality professional development in the areas of parent involvement, common core state standards, high quality assessments, integration of language and culture, and effective use of data in decision making.⁶²

In 2015, *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) was signed into law to mandate that each state education agency notify local education agencies, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, schools, teachers, parents, and the public of the challenging state academic standards, academic assessments, and state accountability system, developed under this section. The law further stipulates that:

"Each such school that is accredited by a tribal accrediting agency or tribal division of education shall use an assessment and other academic indicators developed by such agency or division, except that the Secretary of the Interior shall ensure that such assessment and academic indicators meet the requirements of this section and that (D) programs designed to train traditional leaders and cultural experts to assist those personnel referenced in subsection occur with relevant Native language and cultural mentoring, guidance, and support."

Table 5 lists the lists purposes of the ESSA as it relates to Native languages.

⁶¹ U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Interior (2016). *A New Chapter for Native American Languages in the United States: A Report on Federal Agency Coordination and Support*. Retrieved: [a_new_chapter_for_native_american_languages_in_the_united.pdf](https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/a-new-chapter-for-native-american-languages-in-the-united.pdf) (hhs.gov)

⁶² Bureau of Indian Affairs, (2014). *Findings and recommendations prepared by the Bureau of Indian Education study group submitted to the Secretaries of the Department of the Interior and Education*. Retrieved: [doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/migrated/news/upload/Study-Group-Blueprint-DOI-FINAL.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/migrated/news/upload/Study-Group-Blueprint-DOI-FINAL.pdf)

Table 5. Purpose of Every Student Succeeds Act.

Purpose of Every Student Succeeds Act
To establish a grant program to support schools that use Native American and Alaska Native languages as the primary language of instruction;
To maintain, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans and Alaska Natives to use, practice, maintain, and revitalize their languages, as envisioned in the Native American Languages Act (25 U.S.C. 2901 et seq.); and
To support the Nation's First Peoples' efforts to maintain and revitalize their languages and cultures, and to improve educational opportunities and student outcomes within Native American and Alaska Native communities. ⁶³

Tribal Consultation Critical in Native Language Revitalization Efforts

The two Native Americans appointed by President Obama to the 2016 ESSA Negotiated Rule Making Team, Native language medium expert Leslie Harper (Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe) and Dr. Aaron A. Payment (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe) insisted that tribal consultation over language curriculum and assessment be maintained. This was brushed off as not necessary by some appointees, but a threshold moment came when Tony Evers, State Superintendent of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction supported inclusion of tribal consultation in the final rule.

Again, in 2018, the *2003 Quiet Crisis Report* was updated in the release of the *Broken Promises Report* which reported out the worst of the worst statistics on a wide spectrum of outcome data including that while overall graduation increased, the disparity between Native American high school graduation and that of the White student population remained nearly identical to what was reported in the *1969 Kennedy Report* nearly 50 years prior. This poses the question: How can it be that Native Americans enjoy a federal treaty and trust obligation for education yet have the worst outcomes?

Still, advancements in the preservation of Native languages accelerated the following year, when the United Nations (UN) declared 2019 to be, “the year of Indigenous languages.”⁶⁴ Efforts were made that intended to prevent languages from succumbing to *linguicide*,⁶⁵ and to promote and preserve them. Along with other UN departments, branches of government and business partners, promoted Indigenous languages in these five key areas as noted on their website:

1. Increasing understanding, reconciliation, and international cooperation;
2. Creating favorable conditions for knowledge-sharing and dissemination of good practices in regard to Native languages;
3. Integrating indigenous languages into standard setting;
4. Empowering through capacity building; and
5. Growing and developing through elaboration of new knowledge.⁶⁶

⁶³ Every Student Succeeds Act (2015). Retrieved: [congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1177](https://www.congress.gov/bills/114/congress/senate/bills/1177)

⁶⁴ Eagle Feather News (2019). *Grass roots initiatives key to revitalizing indigenous languages*. Retrieved: <https://www.eaglefeathernews.com/arts/grassroots-initiatives-key-to-revitalizing-indigenous-languages>

⁶⁵ Word Sense Online Dictionary. Retrieved: <https://www.wordsense.eu/linguicide/>

⁶⁶ UNESCO website (2019). *International year of Indigenous Languages to be launched this month*. Retrieved: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/2019-international-year-indigenous-languages-be-launched-month-unesco#:~:text=With%20this%20in%20mind%2C%20the,our%20world's%20rich%20cultural%20diversity>

***In order to promote and preserve them, 2019 will be ...
“The Year of Indigenous Languages.”***

~ 2019 United Nations Declaration

In most recent times, both legislative and administrative efforts to support Native language revitalization seem to converge as an encouraging sign of the times. Again, the Esther Martinez reauthorization in 2019, requires ANA to utilize \$15 million of its funding for Native Language efforts.⁶⁷ Under yet another U.S. Senator from Hawaii, Brian Schatz as Chair of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, along with Co-Chair Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski, two bills were enacted including: S.989, the *Native American Language Resource Center Act of 2021*⁶⁸ and S.1402, the *Durbin Feeling Native American Languages Act of 2021*.⁶⁹ According to an August 4, 2021, press release from the Senate Indian Affairs Committee:

“These bipartisan Native languages bills will improve federal support for culturally based Native language instruction and ensure Native American language use continues to grow ... and S.989 ... will establish a national Native American language resource center [to] share promising practices and resources that support Native language use, revitalization, and instruction. S.1402...makes the federal government more accountable by setting clear goals and asking for direct input from Native communities about how federal resources can be more effectively used to support and revitalize Native languages.” ~ Sen. Brian Schatz⁷⁰

Current Administration Weighs in on Indian Education

In addition to the 2021 announcement and publication of the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative under the current Biden-Harris Administration, a series of substantive efforts have occurred likely as a result of the WHCNAA along with the White House Indian Education Initiative, Native American education and Native language revitalization has been propelled forward. During the 2021 White House Tribal Nations Summit, the Biden Administration reaffirmed and acknowledged treaty rights in the following attestation by federal interagency memorandum of understanding, including the U.S. Department of Energy and Department of Education, which acknowledges:

“The United States Supreme Court has affirmed this principle of reserved rights, explaining that treaties are ‘not a grant of rights to the Indians, but a grant of rights from them, a reservation of those not granted.’ United States v. Winans, 198 U.S. 371, 381 (1905).

⁶⁷ Public Law No: 116-101 (2019). *Esther Martinez Native American Languages Programs Reauthorization Act*. Retrieved: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/256>

⁶⁸ PL 117-335 (2022). *Native American Language Resource Center Act*. Retrieved: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/989#:~:text=This%20act%20authorizes%20the%20Department,Native%20American%20language%20resource%20center>

⁶⁹ PL 117-337 (2022) *Durbin Feeling Native American Languages Act*. Retrieved: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/1402#:~:text=This%20act%20directs%20the%20President,the%20use%20of%20these%20languages>.

⁷⁰ Senate Indian Affairs Website (2021). Press Release: Schatz leads Indian Affairs Committee passage of bipartisan bills to support Native languages. Retrieved: <https://www.indian.senate.gov/news/press-release/schatz-leads-indian-affairs-committee-passage-bipartisan-bills-support-native>

Many of these treaties guaranteed the signatory tribes a unique set of rights ... including [the] rights to ... education.”⁷¹

In November 2021, President Biden issued EO 14049 White House Initiative on Advancing Education Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities⁷² and issued a framing paper to start consultation on the development of a 10-Year National Action Plan on Native American Language Revitalization and Reclamation.⁷³ Ahead of the 2021 Whitehouse Tribal Leaders Summit, President Biden announced the expansion of Interagency Native Language MOA signed by the Secretaries of the ED, HHS, and DOI to promote the protection of Native languages through the establishment of a Native Language Working Group. Other agencies who signed the MOA that year included the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Department of Transportation, the Council on Environmental Quality, the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences, the Library of Congress, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The MOA promotes collaboration on programming, resource development, and policy related to Native languages.⁷⁴

As reported in their *2021-22 Annual Report to Congress*, the National Advisory Council on Indian Education, recommended Congress enact legislation that provides financial support for providing Native American students with an education that honors their unique Native languages, histories, and cultures. The NACIE noted that U.S. assimilation policies created historical trauma and damaged Native American identity. Numerous federal reports conclude that language and culture opportunities reverse the negative outcomes of federal Indian policy. Research shows that Native language revitalization is a key empowerment tool for Native American communities. Congress should acknowledge and insist that executive orders such as EO 14049 and relevant federal legislation should preempt state laws that encroach or disrupt the educational programs of Native American students and their learning of their Native languages and cultures. Funding should be expanded within ESSA, Title III, in addition to Title VI, Indian Education funding.⁷⁵

On June 30, 2022, DOI Secretary Haaland, announced an engagement session with tribal leaders focused on Native language initiatives. Much of the discussion was centered on the implementation of the Native Languages MOA to address barriers to Native language revitalization, supporting integration of Native language instruction and language into educational settings, and strengthening tribal consultation around Native languages. The session was led by Secretary Haaland, who serves as co-chair of the WHCNAA. HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra, Interior’s Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland, and other senior administration officials also joined. This engagement session focused on implementation of President

⁷¹ Memorandum of understanding regarding interagency coordination and collaboration for the protection of Tribal treaty rights and reserved rights (2021). Retrieved: [doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/interagency-mou-protecting-tribal-treaty-and-reserved-rights-11-15-2021.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/interagency-mou-protecting-tribal-treaty-and-reserved-rights-11-15-2021.pdf)

⁷² Executive Order 14049. *White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities*. Retrieved: www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-10-14/pdf/2021-22588.pdf

⁷³ Framing Paper National/Federal Plan on Indigenous Languages. Retrieved: bia.gov/sites/default/files/dup/tcinfo/framing-paper-national-plan-on-indigenous-languages-discussion-draft-508.pdf

⁷⁴ Biden Administration Interagency Native Language MOU. Retrieved: <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/native-american-language-moa-11-15-2021.pdf>

⁷⁵ US Department of Education Website. *National Advisory Council on Indian Education*. Retrieved: oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-indian-education/national-advisory-council-on-indian-education-oie/

Biden’s EO 14049,⁷⁶ which mandates that agencies consult with tribes, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, tribal colleges and universities, and state, tribal and local education departments.⁷⁷

Federal Guidance on the Inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge

In advance of the 2022 convening of the annual White House Tribal Leaders Summit, President Biden issued a fact sheet which announced a first-of-its-kind government-wide guidance⁷⁸ for federal agencies to recognize and include Indigenous Knowledge in federal research, policy, and decision-making which respect indigenous methodologies including that which impacts Native language revitalization. Also, announced was that the WHCNAA Education Committee was planning to a draft 10-Year National Plan on Native Language Revitalization. The Administration will consult with tribal nations on the draft and finalize the plan in 2023. This plan will be built upon four pillars as outlined in Table 6.

Table 6. 10-year National Plan on Language Revitalization pillars.

10-Year National Plan on Native Language Revitalization
Awareness—creating national awareness on the importance of Native languages, the current crises of Native language loss, and the urgency for immediate action;
Recognition/Affirmation—establishing a formal policy recognizing the role that the United States government played in erasing Native languages and affirming the need for federal resources and support for Native language revitalization;
Integration—integrating Native language revitalization in mainstream society, including in federal policies, and outlining the need to create Native language revitalization ecosystems; and
Support—identifying funding, including federal and philanthropic sources for Native language revitalization. ⁷⁹

As reported in their *2021-22 Annual Report to Congress*, the NACIE, recommended Congress enact legislation that gives financial support for providing Native American students with an education that honors their unique Native languages, histories, and cultures. The NACIE noted that U.S. assimilation policies had created historical trauma and damaged Native American identity. Numerous federal reports conclude that language and culture ameliorate the negative outcomes of federal Indian policy. Evidence-based research shows that Native language revitalization is a key empowerment tool for Native American communities. Congress should acknowledge and insist that executive orders such as EO 14049 and relevant federal legislation preempt state laws that impinge upon or disrupt the education programs of Native American students and their learning of their Native languages and cultures. Funding for the effort should be expanded within ESSA Title III (Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant

⁷⁶ President Biden’s EO 14049 [2021-22588.pdf \(govinfo.gov\)](https://www.govinfo.gov/justices/eo/2021-22588.pdf)

⁷⁷ US department of Interior (2022). *Secretary Haaland Announces 2022 Native Language Summit During White House Council on Native American Affairs Tribal Session*. Retrieved: doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-haaland-announces-2022-native-language-summit-during-white-house-council

⁷⁸ Press release on federal guidance regarding use of Indigenous Knowledge: whitehouse.gov/ceq/news-updates/2022/12/01/white-house-releases-first-of-a-kind-indigenous-knowledge-guidance-for-federal-agencies/

⁷⁹ White House (2021). FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Announces New Actions to Support Indian Country and Native Communities Ahead of the Administration’s Second Tribal Nations Summit (2021). Retrieved: whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/11/30/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-announces-new-actions-to-support-indian-country-and-native-communities-ahead-of-the-administrations-second-tribal-nations-summit/

Students) in addition to Title VI, Indian Education funding.⁸⁰ Long a recommendation of the National Advisory Council on Indian Education to reclaim Native languages as demonstrated in several annual reports and in the recently approved 2022-23 NACIE Annual Report to Congress, significant movement toward Native language revitalization has occurred in the last few years.

An all of government approach under the current administration, the Native Languages MOA⁸¹ was entered as noted above. At the 2022 White House Tribal Nations Summit, the number of agencies more than doubled, with 13 additional federal agencies joining the MOA and committing to advance Native languages objectives. These additional agencies include: the U.S. Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Office of Management and Budget, Social Security Administration, Veterans Affairs, Small Business Administration, Office of Personnel Management, Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Departments of Commerce, Energy, Homeland Security, Justice, Labor, and the Department of State. In a substantive demonstration of support for Native language revitalization, the WHCNA has partnered with the DOI and BIA who have contracted with a firm to assist in the completion of the 10-Year Plan, which will include a literature review on Native language revitalization efforts including a policy, legislative and regulatory scan and best practices, key informant interviews, listening sessions, tribal consultation sessions, an interim report to be shared at the annual White House Tribal Leader Summit and culminate in the draft of a 10-Year plan for implementation.⁸²

Summary of Federal Indian Laws, and Policies

There are numerous published federal reports and legislation that have had an impact on shaping the direction of Native American education policy in general and implications for Native languages which include: the *1928 Merriam Report*, *1934 Indian Reorganization and Johnson O'Malley Acts*, *1969 Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare Report (the Kennedy Report)*, *1972 Indian Education Act*, *1975 Indian Self-Determination and Education Act*, *1991 Indian Nations At Risk*, *1992 White House Conference on Indian Education*, *1998 Clinton Executive Order 13096*, *Goals 2000*, *NCLB 2002*, *2014 U.S. Department of Education and Bureau of Indian Education Study Group*, *the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act*, and *Executive Orders 13592 and 14049*.

“The ink will hardly be dry on [this] report before another organization or another federal agency has the urge to investigate, and the cycle will begin again.”

~ Dr. Vine Deloria, Jr. (Standing Rock Lakota Sioux)
Regarding the *1991 Indian Nations at Risk Report*⁸³

⁸⁰ US Department of Education Website. National Advisory Council on Indian Education. Retrieved: <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-indian-education/national-advisory-council-on-indian-education-oie/>

⁸¹ U.S. Department of Interior, et. al. (2021). *Memorandum of Agreement on Native Languages*. Retrieved: <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/native-american-language-moa-11-15-2021.pdf>

⁸² A series of tribal listening sessions were held throughout the years 2022 and 2023. The listening session schedule is listed in Appendix A. WHCNA Listening Sessions.

⁸³ Deloria, Jr., V., & Wildcat, D. (2001). *Power and place: Indian education in America*. Fulcrum Resources, Golden, CO.

Report after report, initiative after initiative have occurred that reinforce the government's role in facilitating assimilation is at the core of Native language loss and a pervasive understanding of the role of language loss with the worst of the worst outcomes on several social indices. Despite the volumes of studies and reports, there remains a need for substantive and sustained reform to change the prevalence of the worst of the worst outcomes on most statistical sociological indices that is explained by historical and intergenerational trauma and Native language, culture, and identity loss. At this time, the BIA Native American Language Revitalization project led by the BIA and the WHCNA is working toward synthesizing the results of all past efforts along with looking forward to solutions as identified by tribes.

Part II. Native Language Revitalization Efforts

The task of summarizing Native language revitalization efforts is daunting due to the importance of Indigenous languages as the key to the ancestral past of Indigenous people, but also the rich and full lifestyles lived by Native people. It is recognized that tribes have ebbed and flowed in their efforts to revive their languages such that the current review cannot possibly detail every effort. The onus is monumental to try and capture a snapshot of generations' efforts to revitalize the once vibrant Native languages, even during forced assimilation eras. Add to that the need to acknowledge the failure of federal policies and over a half a century of mobilized efforts to fully reclaim the ways of life of the people Indigenous to North America—and the task can seem daunting. Note, this has not been a solitary effort as First Nations in Canada have very much played an integral role transcending the border while strategizing Native language revitalization.

A comprehensive literature review of these efforts would take more time than the preparation work for this tribal engagement project allows. However, the following provides a summation of previous efforts while creating a path forward inclusive of an ongoing systemic effort to create and sustain a long-term strategic plan for language revitalization. It is hoped that as part of an ongoing effort to implement a long-term plan, that tribal nations, Alaska Native villages, and Native Hawaiians will share their stories, strategies, pedagogy, initiatives, and tactics to build a compendium of promising practices for others to replicate and build upon.

Native language revitalization efforts began as early as the mid to late 20th century.⁸⁴ In the 1990s there was a turning point in grassroots Native language revitalization efforts, part of a wider global concern to preserve endangered languages. These efforts primarily but not exclusively focus on increasing the number of speakers of a language or developing resources that will lead to the increase in the number of speakers. For many Indigenous groups, language revitalization is a core aspect of cultural continuity, protecting traditional knowledge and practices, and resisting assimilation. Indigenous language revitalization efforts exist within a legacy of colonial power relations and efforts to extinguish Indigenous language and culture.⁸⁵ However, language revitalization efforts increase the visibility and prestige of Indigenous culture and can be used deliberately and strategically by speakers to combat cultural and linguistic hegemony.⁸⁶

Heritage language revitalization efforts are combating English-only school curriculum to support not only heritage language use, but student outcomes.⁸⁵ In fact, Indigenous language use and

⁸⁴ Crystal, D. (2006). *How Language Works*. Woodstock & New York: The Overlook Press.

⁸⁵ McCarty, T.L. (2003). Revitalizing Indigenous Languages in Homogenizing Times. *Comparative Education*, 39(2), pp 147-163.

⁸⁶ Shettle, A.C. (2015). *Influences of Native Language Revitalization in the U.S.: Ideology and Culture*. Purdue University.

revitalization is associated with protective factors and may improve the health status of speakers and communities.⁸⁷ In addition, being multilingual has cognitive, sociocultural, economic, and educational benefits, supporting learning and growth in all four aspects.⁸⁸ These findings demonstrate how language revitalization is intricately connected to the life and well-being of Native American peoples. There is a widespread, firm belief among Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians and among professional Native educators that meaningful educational experiences require an appropriate language and cultural context.⁸⁹ Native language revitalization efforts are numerous, innovative, and often multi-faceted. The evidence base for the strategies is limited,⁹⁰ however the evidence of impact because of revitalization efforts is noted, where it exists.

The literature on Native language revitalization strategies is organized using a taxonomy modified from the one that McIvor and Anisman (2018)⁹⁰ propose. The major types of Native language revitalization strategies include:

- Documentation and preservation
- Curriculum and resource development
- Teacher training and post-secondary initiatives
- Policy development and political advocacy
- Language classes
- Bilingual schools
- Immersion practices

It is important to note that a revitalization project may use one or more of the above-listed strategies. For example, a documentation and preservation initiative may take place alongside language classes. The material below is organized to provide an overview of each type of language revitalization strategy, along with contemporary examples of each strategy.

Documentation and Preservation

Documentation and preservation of Native American languages are of intense concern to tribal members and governments, which has galvanized a range of activities and collaborations.⁹¹ Documentation and preservation of Native languages is foundational to language revitalization and is both important to the continued use and teaching of Native language but is also a politically and culturally meaningful activity that signifies the value of Indigenous communication and culture. Documentation of endangered languages traditionally led to the production of three products: a dictionary, a grammar “guide,” and a set of texts of the language. However, more recently, these

⁸⁷ Whalen, D.H., Lewis, M.E., Gillson, S., McBeath, B., Alexander, B. & Nyhan, K. (2022). Health effects of Indigenous language use and revitalization: a realist review. *International Journal for Equity in Health*. 21:169.

⁸⁸ Office of English Language Acquisition. (n.d.). *Benefits of Multiculturalism*.

⁸⁹ Demmert, W.G.Jr. (2003). *A Review of the Research Literature on the Influence of Culturally Based Education on the Academic Performance of Native American Students*. Northwest Regional Education Lab.

⁹⁰ McIvor, O., & Anisman, A. (2018). Keeping our languages alive: Strategies for Indigenous language revitalization and maintenance. In Y. Watanabe (Ed.), *Handbook of Cultural Security* (pp. 90-109). Edward Elgar Publishing.

⁹¹ Schwartz, S. & Dobrin, L.M. (2016). The cultures of Native North American language documentation and revitalization. *Reviews in Anthropology*, 45:2, pp 88-123.

products have expanded to include documentation of day-to-day conversation, and child-centered language to support intergenerational language transmission.⁹²

The Acquisition of Restored Native Speech Project, spearheaded by Southern Oregon University, was developed to support the language revitalization efforts of Native American tribes.⁹³ It contains a framework for developing Indigenous dictionaries, an audio editing application for creating and editing sound recordings, and an application that can make true type fonts able to accommodate Indigenous keyboard layouts. It contains examples of resources from several Native American languages, to demonstrate how the resources can be used.

Indigenous scholars have documented recommended approaches to collaboratively record and preserve Native American languages within communities. American linguists have described the field methods and project design for a collaborative project for language documentation involving the languages of Mohave and Chemehuevi with the Colorado River Indian Tribes.⁹⁴ Both of these languages had fewer than 50 remaining fluent speakers at the time that the documentation efforts were established. The collaborative project took place following other collaborative language projects between academic researchers and the community. These projects set the stage for relationship and trust building, while also assembling resources such as a compilation of lexical items and increasing language revitalization capacity, such as through technology training conducted in the community.

Community-based Collaborative Native Language Preservation

Using these best practices combined with a collaborative team that included linguists, community collaborators, language speakers, and language advocates, the team of linguists and community language advocates completed a successful language documentation program to support the revitalization of two endangered languages. A methodological cautionary note in authentically and accurately documenting Native languages recognizes subject biases of early ethnographers who endeavored to memorialize Native languages. Early efforts like Bishop Baraga writing an Ojibway dictionary⁹⁵ documented that richer, cultural translations were left to subjective interpretation. Thus, while dictionaries may have a level of accuracy and value, language is more than words.

In Action: Lakota Language Consortium

The Lakota Language Consortium is a non-profit organization comprised of community leaders, linguists, educators, and volunteers. Its mission is to support the revitalization and preservation of Lakǎótiyapi by working to increase the total number of new speakers. They archive audio recordings and from those work with linguists and Lakota elders to develop language learning materials. They work closely with Lakota communities and organizations to obtain, archive, and analyze the materials. They have several online resources, such as a Lakota dictionary, a grammar handbook, and audio recordings.⁹⁶

⁹² Child Language Research and Revitalization Working Group. (2017). *Language documentation, revitalization, and reclamation: Supporting young learners and their communities*. Waltham, MA: EDC.

⁹³ ACORN. (n.d.). *ACquisition of Restored Native Speech*. Retrieved June 15, 2023, from acornslinguistics.com/index.php.

⁹⁴ Penfield, S.D., Serratos, A., Tucker, B.V., Flores, A., Harper, G., Hill, J. & Vasquez, N. (2008). Small languages and small language communities. *Int'l J Soc Lang*, 191, pp. 187-202.

⁹⁵ Baraga, F. (1878). *A dictionary of Otchipwe language explained in English*. Montreal: Beauchemin & Valois.

⁹⁶ Native Language Consortium (n.d.). *Learning Lakǎótiyapi*. Retrieved: <https://lakhota.org/introduction/>

Curriculum and Resource Development

A key aspect of language revitalization is the development of curriculum and other resources to support teachers and learners. Many threatened languages need these resources to support deliberate efforts to increase the number of speakers, since it is difficult for such languages to naturally increase in understanding and circulation. There is an increasing use of digital technologies to support curriculum and resource development. However, adoption of digital technologies within Native communities are often perceived as reinforcing Imperial and Colonial methods of knowledge production and circulation and should be adopted with care.⁹⁷

Using Digital Technology to Translate Native Languages

In Hawaii, a Native language revitalization movement began in the 1980s by a small group of educators, through the use of digital technology to share the language and language resources.⁹⁷ Starting in the 1990s, educators shared children's books that they translated in digital form. This grew to include more Hawaiian-language resources for teachers and parents. In 2004, the University of Hawaii Hilo published the Hawaiian Electronic Library, which contains curriculum guides, reference materials, and other resources for teachers and early learners. These resources include written, audio, and video formats. In addition, advocates worked with Apple and Microsoft to make a Hawaiian keyboard available to users. Locally, the Hawaiian language became available on automated bank machines, and used in radio and television broadcasting. Through these efforts, the number of Native Hawaiian language speakers who could edit and correct their language outputs from Google Translate grew considerably, an indication of growing language proficiency.

In action: Awakening California Tribal Languages in Digital Spaces

The Pomo community has been able to learn and preserve their language thanks to the use of Miromaa software. This software is designed to support language education and training for more than 100 Indigenous languages worldwide. It stores linguistic and cultural materials and generates teaching resources, providing the Pomo community with the ability to enhance learnership, promote language, increase its public visibility and resources, and involve the community in the practice of digital stewardship.⁹⁸

Non-specific resources to support Indigenous language revitalization are also available. These resources are language-agnostic and provide guidance regarding curriculum development and lesson planning. An example is a toolkit entitled "Heritage Language Playschools for Indigenous Minorities,"⁹⁹ which provides a description of how to develop a foundational program for language and culture education for 3 to 4-year-old children. This toolkit provides curriculum, lesson plans, example materials, strategies of how to deliver the program, and gain community support.

A significant challenge in engineering a revitalization of Indigenous languages is the scarcity of fluent speakers who converse in a natural setting. Over the decades, tribes have focused on route

⁹⁷ Galla, C.K. (2018). Digital Realities of Indigenous Language Revitalization: A Look at Hawaiian Language Technology in the Modern World. *Language and Literacy*, 20(3), pp. 100-120.

⁹⁸ Endo, T. (2017). Awakening California Tribal Languages in Digital Spaces. *On Indian Ground: California*, 181.

⁹⁹ Smith, K.J. (2012). *Heritage Language Playschools For Indigenous Minorities* (2nd ed). SIL Malaysia.

learning and memorization of words and even produced volumes of dictionaries, an important but elementary step. In the 1990s many tribes sought to employ the *Pimsleur Method* using cassette tapes for lessons. An analysis of the *Pimsleur Method* showed major strengths in promoting, noticing, awareness, and longer memory retention. Without providing enough input, however, employing meaningful recalls, or engaging learners in negotiation for meaning, learners are merely reproducing dialogues.¹⁰⁰

More recently, tribal nations have partnered with *Rosetta Stone* to animate their language in visual and simulated communal ways of learning like video vignettes of real-life scenarios. In 2021, the *Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe* of Minnesota launched their *Aanjibimaadizing Ojibwe Language and Culture Revitalization Project* which uses Rosetta Stone. The goals of this program are outlined in Table 7.

Table 7. *Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Rosetta Stone Project Goals, 2021 - 2024.*

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Rosetta Stone Project Goals 2021 – 2024
Preserve our endangered language by normalizing Ojibwe language and culture use in the community
Support workforce development by creating life-long Ojibwe language learning opportunities
Support development of client self-esteem, pride in identity and wellness that contributes to workforce readiness by offering life-long Ojibwe language and culture learning opportunities
Support youth substance abuse prevention and support clients struggling with addiction or recovery as a barrier to employment through a language/culture program that promotes the daily use of Ojibwe language and expanded cultural as means of improving self-esteem, pride in identity and workforce readiness. ¹⁰¹

Participation in the program and all of the resources that go with it is free to enrolled citizens of the Mille Lacs Band and students who attend their schools. The tribe offers a discounted rate at a nominal \$40 for two years to members of other federally recognized tribes and first nations, and other tribal school students. This is significant because while there are likely dialectic differences, the larger *Anishinaabe-mowin* (*Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi* languages) have root origins and are for the most part transferable. According to the program website, using a cultural framework benefits the entire community and has a multigenerational impact that benefits families. The success of this program will be seen at the individual level first and then spread long-term to the community level. This investment is for the long-term support of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and other Ojibwe speaking people to retain their unique identity, language (dialect) stories, and sovereignty.¹⁰²

Additionally, the Navajo Language Renaissance has made the Navajo language available on the Rosetta Stone platform, under the auspices of Rosetta Stone's Endangered Language program.¹⁰³ Overall, language classes are a common revitalization strategy, but rarely develop new language speakers.⁹⁰ However, language classes create interest in the language, and can

¹⁰⁰ Choe, A. T. (2016). A critical review of Pimsleur language learning programs. Hawaii Pacific University TESOL Working Paper Series 14, 108-120. Retrieved: www.hpu.edu/research-publications/tesol-working-papers/2016/08ChoeTaiAnn.pdf

¹⁰¹ Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Website: *Aanjibimaadizing Ojibwe Language and Culture Revitalization Project*. Retrieved: culture.aanji.org/about

¹⁰² Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Website: *Aanjibimaadizing Ojibwe Language and Culture Revitalization Project*. Retrieved: culture.aanji.org/about

¹⁰³ Navajo Language Renaissance. (2020). *History*. Retrieved June 15, 2023, from <https://navajorenaissance.org/history.html>.

catalyze ongoing revitalization support through other initiatives. The Navajo Language Renaissance is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization working to revitalize the Navajo language using Rosetta Stone. The Renaissance team is composed of educators, linguists, and individuals passionate about ensuring the future of the Navajo language. According to the program website, the Navajo language is dying. The language of the Navajo Code Talkers, the language that saved thousands of lives in the Pacific Theater of WWII, is in danger of becoming extinct. Recent statistics indicate that fewer than 5% of Navajo children are now fluent in their Native tongue. Children of parents who speak Navajo cannot converse with their grandparents. These parents are eager to have access to a proven program to help their children learn Navajo at home and at school. Rosetta Stone Navajo will be the medium to bridge generations and revitalize the Navajo language.¹⁰⁴

The Crow Language Consortium¹⁰⁵ is another effort on the part of schools, colleges, and educators to develop curriculum to support language revitalization. The consortium builds Crow textbooks, dictionaries, flashcards, audio recordings, posters, and other materials. These materials are available through their online bookstore. Their dictionary is available online, including a mobile version. They moderate a Crow language online forum to support community learning and to help gauge the needs of their growing population of learners. They have developed Crow proficiency tests and a Crow language policy to support teachers and administrators. Finally, they hold a summer institute where they teach both beginner and advanced Crow and provide courses for teachers. These courses teach lesson plan development, curriculum development, language assessment, teacher pedagogy, and how to use the Crow eLearning Platform—an online tool that supports classroom instruction and independent study.

They also conducted the largest Rapid Word collection event in North America, with the collection of over 15,000 Crow words. From this work they were also able to create digital materials such as an app and an online dictionary that contained the audio and written record of the language. They also produce a paper dictionary and digital dictionary that contains over 11,000 entries.

Teacher Training and Post-secondary Initiatives

One important aspect of language revitalization is increasing the number and the proficiency of Native language teachers. Often, but not always, teacher training is developed and delivered by post-secondary departments and the teaching theory and philosophy may be quite different than for other languages—focusing on the cultural meaning and value of the language. Numerous formal Indigenous language teacher training courses exist that train proficient speakers of Indigenous languages who may not necessarily have the skills to teach the language.¹⁰⁶

Universities and Community Collaborative Language Initiatives

The University of Victoria offers a certificate for Indigenous language revitalization which provides the knowledge and skills to design and execute local language revitalization initiatives.¹⁰⁷ This

¹⁰⁴ Navajo Language Renaissance. (2020). Retrieved: <https://navajorenaissance.org/>

¹⁰⁵ Crow Language Consortium. (2021). *We are working together to build a strong Crow language*. Retrieved June 26, 2023, from crowlanguage.org.

¹⁰⁶ Hinton, L. (2011). Language revitalization and language pedagogy: New teaching and learning strategies. *Language and Education*, 25(4), pp. 307-318.

¹⁰⁷ University of Victoria. (2023). *Indigenous Language Revitalization Certificate*. Retrieved June 15, 2023, from continuingstudies.uvic.ca/museums-heritage-and-indigenous-culture/programs/indigenous-language-revitalization/.

course can be tailored and delivered onsite in partnership with Indigenous nations, communities, or organizations, or taken online.

In another example of productive academic-community collaborative language initiative, academics from the University of Alaska partnered with two rural school districts which serve predominantly Yup'ik children.¹⁰⁸ The initiative was developed to increase the use and proficiency of Central Yup'ik, the strongest of 19 extant Alaskan Native languages, among school children in the districts. Immersion teachers in the districts identified materials as the most pressing need. These materials needed to focus on cultural practices and traditions that the community was worried were being lost, while also aligning with the district's curriculum requirements regarding rigor and content. The products of the initiative were books for grades one through four and six that imparted cultural knowledge, were linguistically and culturally authentic, targeted specific grammatical structures of the language, aligned with state mandated reading standards, and were narrative, rather than descriptive. These resources, developed for a teacher-identified need and in collaboration with academics, have been published online and are freely available.

The University of Alaska also offers courses in teaching and learning Alaska Native languages. The Alaska Native Language Center¹⁰⁹ at the University supports language revitalization through language assessments, Alaska Native language teaching courses and programs, such as a certificate in Native Language Education, associate degrees in Native Language Education and Proficiency, and a bachelor's degree in Yup'ik language and culture, Yup'ik language, and Inupiaq language. It also houses numerous digital Native Alaska language resources on its website, describing the history of Alaska Native languages, their geographic distribution, and linguistic association. Further south, the University of Arizona's American Indian Language Development Institute¹¹⁰ is a national leader in Indigenous language development. They have provided Indigenous language education experience to hundreds of educators and advocates over the last 40 years and are also involved in research which supports the preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages. By partnering with organizations and communities alike, they are able to offer workshops and other training opportunities on documentation technology, dictionary making, and other skills required to revitalize Indigenous languages. Additionally, the Institute publishes resources and organizes conferences to support knowledge dissemination and sharing about Indigenous language revitalization. They also maintain an Indigenous Language Program Directory.

The Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute¹¹¹ is a post-secondary initiative dedicated to the revitalization of Canada's Indigenous languages through documentation, teaching and literacy. They are funded by public and private bodies and supported by numerous colleges and universities across North America. In terms of educational offerings, they offer a community linguist certificate, which is aimed at speakers and learners of Indigenous languages and provides linguistic analysis and documentation training. They also offer

¹⁰⁸ Seikmann, S., Webster, J.P., Samson, S.A. & Moses, C.K. (2017). Teaching our way of life through our language: Materials development for Indigenous immersion education. *Cogent Education*, 4: 1362887.

¹⁰⁹ University of Alaska Fairbanks. (2023). *Alaska Native Language Center*. Retrieved <https://www.uaf.edu/anlc/>

¹¹⁰ University of Arizona. (2023). American Indian Language Development Institute. Retrieved: aildi.arizona.edu/.

¹¹¹ Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute Retrieved: <https://www.ualberta.ca/canadian-indigenous-languages-and-literacy-development-institute/index.html>

a range of courses designed for Indigenous language teachers that teach Indigenous language pedagogical methods and materials development.

In Action: Promising Model ~ Partnering with Tribal Colleges for Teacher Training

For the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Head Start Program in North Dakota, the Tribe is collaborating with external partners and moving ahead to implement an immersion classroom, with an eventual goal of operating the Head Start program as a full immersion program in the future. To develop a plan to achieve their goal, they reached out to the National American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Collaboration Office (NAIANHSCO). The NAIANHSCO director was able to travel onsite and support the community in:

- an assessment of language learning resources,
- creation of a strategic plan, and
- creation of formal partnerships with the local tribal college and elders.

There have been some setbacks with staff turnover and fluent first speakers passing away, but they have also experienced success, with a recent three-day language intensive class for teaching staff. As part of their long-term strategy to build a fluent early childhood workforce, they are to provide language coursework for credit by the Tribal College for 15 staff members.

These and other initiatives funnel academic resources to support and sustain revitalization efforts to help communities build stronger teachers and programs. They support intra-community and intra-language collaboration and sharing, and help teachers provide Indigenous language curriculum and content that aligns with both state requirements and cultural traditions and needs. Much like The University of Arizona, the University of Hawaii also integrated the *Kahuawiola Indigenous Teacher Program Education Program* housed within their College of Hawaiian Language program. One of the driving factors within the establishment of Kahuawiola was to develop Hawaiian educational structures and systems to develop, protect, nurture, and enrich young adults and children and by doing so, early education teachers can get certified with an emphasis on language acquisition and cultural identity development.¹¹²

“Our mission is to provide critical training to strengthen efforts to revitalize and promote the use of Indigenous languages across generations.”

~ University of Arizona’s American Indian Language Development Institute

Recommendations for Increasing Certified Teachers

One of the primary barriers to long-term sustainable Native American language instruction is the lack of certified teachers who speak a Native language. Teacher recruitment and retention is a

¹¹² Office of Hawaiian Affairs (2022). *Native Hawaiian Language Preservation and Maintenance: Community Based Research*. Retrieved: www.oha.org/wp-content/uploads/2022annualreport_WEB.pdf

primary focus of BIE's and ED's reform efforts to improve and increase human capital. Partnerships with local colleges and universities that offer education courses and Native American language classes are being examined. Recommendation for increasing certified teachers in a 2016 report published by the U.S. Department of Education, DOI, and HHS include:

- Market existing professional development grants as potential avenues for developing specialized programs in colleges that can educate individuals to be both proficient in the language and mechanisms to support the creation of licensed teachers.
- Create a “fast track” to a Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Early Childhood Education credential for Native American language speakers (fully funded with wraparound support)
- Use scholarships and loan repayment flexibilities as tools to create incentives for Native American language speakers to pursue teaching degree.¹¹³

Policy Development and Political Advocacy

This section describes targeted policy and advocacy projects used within the United States that relate to Native American literature revitalization. These examples are within the context of the wider policy and legislative environment and history described in this review and include a snapshot of efforts at the state and inter-tribal levels. Notwithstanding the treaty and trust obligation as federal rights, implementation of education in the United States generally is under state control, per the U.S. Constitution's Tenth Amendment which reserves rights to the states in the following language: “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”¹¹⁴ Of course, this sets up a conflict between states' rights versus sovereign tribal government rights which both find their origin in the so called, “commerce clause” noted in the introduction of this literature search. Also as noted above, the U.S. Constitution Supremacy Clause would suggest Indian education is a pre-eminent right. Nonetheless, as 93% of Native American students are educated in public schools, this dichotomous dilemma remains. What follows is a sampling of state legislation mandating Native curriculum (often including Indigenous languages and cultures). Next, a political advocacy implementation strategy used by the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona with respect to Native curriculum implementation is shared.

Native Education Curriculum Advancement at the State Level

One successful state-level policy initiative was led by tribal leaders in Montana.¹¹⁵ The Montana Indian Education for all Act was passed in 1999 and has been backed by annual funding since 2007.¹¹⁶ The act requires publicly funded educators to integrate Indian content across the curriculum at all grade levels. Educators in Montana have a legal obligation to teach all inhabitants about the state's first inhabitants. This act, which focuses on the development and implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy, has led to the revitalization and maintenance of Indigenous languages in the state. Montana has the highest percentage of speakers in Cree, Blackfeet,

¹¹³ U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Interior (2016). *A New Chapter for Native American Languages in the United States: A Report on Federal Agency Coordination and Support*. Retrieved: [a_new_chapter_for_native_american_languages_in_the_united.pdf \(hhs.gov\)](#)

¹¹⁴ U. S. Const. amend. X

¹¹⁵ Carjuzza, J. & Ruff, W.G. (2017). Revitalizing Indigenous languages, cultures, and histories in Montana, across the United States and around the globe. *Cogent Education*, 4: 1371822.

¹¹⁶ Native American Rights Fund. (2023). Montana Indian Education For All. Retrieved June 15, 2023, from [narf.org/cases/montana-indian-education-for-all/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20Montana%20Legislature%20passed%20the,Fyant.](#)

Cheyenne, Crow, and Salish. In 2013 the Montana Senate also passed SB 342 which set aside funding for each of the state’s tribes for immersion classrooms with 50% of the classes to be taught in a Native American language. The bill was later amended to allow for a more phasing in of Native American languages, starting at 30%, then moving to 40% and 50% in the following years.

In Hawaii, a nonprofit has led Native language revitalization. A non-governmental organization, Aha Punana Leo,¹¹⁷ was established in 1983 to revive the Native Hawaiian language. This organization helped “lift a 90-year ban on teaching Hawaiian in public and private schools.”¹¹⁷ The organization consists of a volunteer board of Hawaiian-speaking educators who seek to revitalize Hawaiian as the daily language for their families and communities. They believe that environments where only Hawaiian is spoken fuel the lifeblood of the people and are essential for the continuation of the Hawaiian culture and way of life.¹¹⁸ The language teaching approach consists of “language nest” preschools, model K-12 schools, and an extensive support system, which includes administrative support, curriculum development, human resources, telecommunications, and scholarships. The “language nest” recreates an environment where Hawaiian language and culture are taught and circulated in the same way that they traditionally were in the home.¹¹⁸ The active board, leveraging a dedicated community of parents and political connections, was able to remove policy that was inhibiting Hawaiian language education across public and private schools. Table 8 is a compendium of legislative mandates across Montana, Hawaii and seven additional states.

Table 8. Compendium of legislative mandates across several states as part of an Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona project

State	Year	Requirement	Link
Montana	2023	Funds exclusively for Native content in curricular development	MT Link
Hawaii	1978	The state shall promote the study of Hawaiian culture, history and language.	HI Link
Arizona	2004	Requires incorporation of Native American history into the curriculum	AZ Link
Connecticut	2021	Inclusion of Native American studies as part of social science curriculum	CT Link
New Mexico	1978	“[T]he assistant secretary [for Indian Education] shall: “provide assistance to school districts ...in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of curricula in Native languages, culture and history.	NM Link
North Dakota	2021	The North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows: Three units of social studies, including: One unit of U.S. history, including Native American tribal history	ND Link
Oregon	2017	“The Department of Education shall...Develop a curriculum relating to... tribal history, sovereignty issues, culture, treaty rights, government, socioeconomic experiences and current events...”	OR Link
Washington	2015	“[W]hen a school district...reviews or adopts its social studies curriculum, it shall incorporate curricula about the history, culture,	WA Link

¹¹⁷ ‘Aha Punana Leo. (n.d.). *The Hawaiian Language Shall Live*. Retrieved; ahapunanaleo.org/english-home-landing.

¹¹⁸ Wilson, W.H. & Kamana, K. (2001). ""Mai Loko Mai O Ka 'J'ini: Proceeding from a Dream": The 'Aha Punana Leo Connection in Hawaiian Language Revitalization". In *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*. Leiden, The Netherlands: BRILL.

State	Year	Requirement	Link
		and government of the nearest federally recognized Indian tribe or tribes...”	
Wisconsin	1989	Each school board shall “include instruction in the history, culture and tribal sovereignty of the federally recognized American Indian tribes and bands located in this state...”	<u>WI Link</u>

This is a project the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona is working on. It is not intended to be a full environmental scan of all states but a sampling of states that have taken a step toward systemic change to ensure and sustain culturally appropriate curriculum in consultation with tribal nations. Some state legislation uses language like “collaborate” or “partner” with tribes, however, unless the legislative language stipulates “consultation,” includes measurable objectives, and funds these objectives, the commitment may end up a goodwill notion or a mere platitude.

Additionally, drawn from a project the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona¹¹⁹ is working on, Table 9 shares a sampling of policy implementation stages observed in advancing Native curriculum legislation which include Native language revitalization efforts.

Table 9. Key component sampling from an Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona project.

Action Stage	Key Component Sampling (with linked state examples)	Link
Advocate	Create an ongoing public education campaign to increase base of support. Deploy bipartisan policy messaging that transcends political parties.	<u>MN</u> <u>MI</u>
Mandate	Integrate Native education as a constitutional right for all state citizens (Native and non-Native). Forge intergovernmental MOUs and policies between Native nations and state to formalize/ sustain educational relationships and ongoing consultation.	<u>HI, MT</u> <u>OR, WI</u>
Design	Forge formal tribal-state curriculum design partnership(s). Provide funding to tribes/Native orgs to design Native education curricula.	<u>MI, OR</u> <u>MI</u>
Implement	Enact school administration directives to teachers to teach curriculum. Create Native-led curriculum development/TA centers (physical/online).	<u>MT</u> <u>OR, WA</u>
Sustain	Allocate long-term state funding for curriculum design/implementation. Document and share implementation best practices by schools/districts.	<u>MT</u> <u>WI</u>

¹¹⁹ ITC of Arizona (2023). The teaching of Native education nationally and its implications for Arizona: A policy brief produced by the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona. Retrieved: itcaonline.com/

National-level-led coalitions and advocates at local, regional, tribal, inter-tribal and national levels have been integral in maintaining a focus and building momentum on the vital need for Native education curriculum advancement of language revitalization. For example, the National Coalition of Native American Language Schools & Programs is a national advocacy organization that supports Native language legislation enhancements to increase infrastructure for supporting the ongoing efforts of communities and schools.¹²⁰ They support language revitalization through strengthening public policy and bring together schools that offer bilingual or immersion programs in Indigenous languages. They also advocate for Indigenous education for learners of all ages and levels.

Tribal Nation legislation can also support language revitalization. In 2019, the 24th Navajo Nation Council approved the creation of the *Diné Bizaad* Subcommittee.¹²¹ This subcommittee provides policy guidance and support and is responsible for maintaining the Navajo language. They will coordinate with educators, schools, school boards, elders, youth, and universities.

The US Department of Education funds initiatives to integrate Native languages and cultural instruction into the curriculum to restore “values and lifeways historically excluded from formal education of Native American students.”¹²² They do this through the Native American and Alaska Native Children in School program, whose aim is to reduce the achievement gap between Native American youth and their peers. The evaluation of this program found that the most reported benefits were gains in revitalization of the Native languages and cultures, in addition to increases in students’ English language proficiency. Reported challenges included staff capacity, low family engagement, and lack of assessment data to assess programs.¹²²

Language Classes

Language classes are another strategy for Indigenous language revitalization. Language classes take many forms ranging from learning root words, simple phrases, verb and noun use, syntax, to conversation and even full immersion environments. Language classes can be designed for children or adults. The tribal Head Start programs under the Administration for Community and Family Living under the HHS has long understood the value of Native language instruction in early education. Today, it is reported that nationally, about 44,000 Native American children and their families are served by Head Start.¹²³ Almost one-half of these children and families are served by 146 Native American Head Start programs in HHS Region XI which are the Head Start programs under tribal administration or through a consortium of tribes. The Family and Child Experiences Survey (2015) found that most parents of children in HHS Region XI said it was important that

¹²⁰ National Coalition of Native American Language Schools & Programs. (n.d). *Revitalizing Native Languages*. Retrieved: <http://www.ncnalsp.org/>

¹²¹ The 24th Navajo Nation Council. (2019). *Council Establishes Dine Bizaad Subcommittee*. Retrieved June 15, 2023, from navajonationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Council_Establishes_Dine_Bizaad_Subcommittee.pdf.

¹²² U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, *Study of the Native American and Alaska Native Children in School Program: FY 2011 and FY 2013 Cohorts*, Washington, D.C., 2018.

¹²³ Head Start (2023). American Indian and Alaska Native Programs. *Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center*. Retrieved: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/programs/article/american-indian-alaska-native-programs#:~:text=Today%2C%20Head%20Start%20programs%20serve,AIAN%20and%20non%20tribal%20programs.>

their child learn a Native language. Further, within the Tribal Head Start classrooms, slightly over half of children receive Native language lessons.¹²⁴

Many Native language courses are provided outside of formal educational systems, making them widely available and accessible. The Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival is an organization that supports both the archiving and spread of Indigenous languages, throughout California, and internationally.¹²⁵ One of their initiatives is the Master Apprentice Program (MAP), a training program that matches a language learner with an Elder speaker of the language. This approach helps to make sure that Native languages in California do not die when fluent language speakers pass away. The MAP program provides intensive one-on-one teaching and learning. Masters and apprentices apply as a team to the program, and if they are approved, they receive direction and support, along with initial training and materials.

Support for Native Language Speakers

Another approach to language courses, is offering support for those who have a good understanding of an Indigenous language, but rarely or never speak it. These individuals are known as “silent speakers.” The First People’s Cultural Council offers a program called the *Reclaiming My Language* that provides funding for silent speakers’ courses.¹²⁶ The funding can be funneled toward facilitators, teaching materials, and ongoing support. The *Upper Nicola Band* is one of seven Canadian first nations that make up the *Syilx Okanagan Nation* (there are also *Okanagan Nation Tribes* in the U.S.). While this program is situated north of the U.S.–Canada border, the relations of tribal nations across the border transcend as Indigenous languages know no borders and what efforts are practiced in Canadian First Nations may be replicable to other Native tribes, villages and Native Hawaiians.

Another example is the Native American Community Academy¹²⁷ (NACA) which is a public charter school in New Mexico that serves children and youth from kindergarten to grade 12. It has a diverse student body, with students from over 60 different tribes. It focuses on personal wellness, cultural identity, and academic preparation. It offers a wide range of courses, founded in Indigenous philosophy and culture. Many of the courses, like Native literature, Indigenous history, and Indigenous art are taught in English, however, they also offer courses in Lakota, Navajo, Tiwa, Keres and Zuni. Thus, the language courses are offered within a context of immersion into Native American philosophy and culture. To spread this model, the NACA Inspired Schools Network¹²⁸ supports leaders in Indigenous communities to develop education and school systems which promote Indigenous culture, identity, and community investment, while providing rigorous academic curriculum. It runs a 3-year fellowship program, where the organization exposes fellows to high performing Indigenous schools to teach them about different approaches to Indigenous school design and delivery. As such, the organization supports the spread of Native American language classes that are offered within a broader curriculum that supports Indigenous culture and community. These NACA-inspired approaches are examples of culture-based education.

¹²⁴ US Department of HHS ACF (2015). American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey. ICPSR. Retrieved: <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/ICPSR/studies/36804>

¹²⁵ Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival. (2020). *Master’s Apprentice Program (MAP)*. Retrieved June 15, 2023, from aicl.org/programs/https-aicl-org-wp-content-uploads-2020-01-aicl-master-apprentice-program-invoice-2020-pdf/

¹²⁶ First Peoples’ Cultural Council. (2023). *Reclaiming My Language: A Course for Silent Speakers*. Retrieved June 15, 2023, from fpcc.ca/stories/reclaiming-my-language-a-course-for-silent-speakers/

¹²⁷ Native American Community Academy. (2023). *Who We Are*. Retrieved: nacaschool.org.

¹²⁸ NACA Inspired Schools Network. (n.d.) *What if education reflected the needs of our communities?* Retrieved: nacainspiredschoolsnetwork.org/.

This educational approach assumes that issues of culture, language, community, and socialization are and central to learning. It develops learners with the following qualities:

1. Strong, positive Indigenous identity and active involvement in cultural community
2. Active and practical traditional spirituality
3. Understands and demonstrates responsibility to family, community, and broader society
4. Shows continuing development of cognitive and intellectual skills
5. Knows, understands, respects, and applies kinesthetic activity for physical development¹²⁹

Such an approach is naturally holistic, community-embedded, and tied to ancestry, while focusing on the development of future generations.

Overall, language classes are a common revitalization strategy, but rarely develop new language speakers without an immersion environment in which to practice and sustain acquisition of language lessons. However, language classes create interest in the language, and can catalyze ongoing revitalization support through other initiatives. The *Sičaŋǵu* is doing great work and creating an ecosystem of language in their territory. It began with two questions: How do we revitalize the Lakota language? And how does our community want to teach our children?

Wakanyeja Ki Tokeyahčl is an immersive Lakota education that prioritizes the holistic well-being of Lakota students and the regeneration of the Lakota language and a way of life. By centering Lakota language, culture, and Indigenous identity, *Wakanyeja Ki Tokeyahčl* is reclaiming and rebuilding the foundation of the *Sičaŋǵu* education system.¹³⁰ A powerful thing, the *Confederated Salish and Kootenai in Montana* are involved in, is the apprenticeship programs to revitalize their language. Students selected are able to participate in a full immersion program for two years as paid tribal employees and at the end of that two years graduate with an associate's degree and then enter the teacher education program. This model is creating language speakers. Paid apprenticeships are posted.¹³¹

In Action: Salish School of Spokane

The Salish School of Spokane's mission is to support Salish language revitalization through cultural renewal and community building. They hold cultural events and run several language programs, including Community Language Classes. These classes are free for parents of students who attend the Salish School of Spokane, and a requirement for their children to attend the school. Parents must complete at least 60 hours of classes a year. The school offers courses four evenings a week and provide instruction for a range of language proficiency.¹³²

¹²⁹ Demmert, W.G. (2011). What is Culture-Based Education? In *Honoring Our Heritage: Culturally Appropriate Approaches for Teaching Indigenous Students*, (Reyhner, J., Gilbert, W.S., & Lockard, L., eds.). Northern Arizona University, pp. 1-10.

¹³⁰ Sičaŋǵu Co Website (2023). *Nurturing young people and the Lakota way of life*. Retrieved: <https://www.sicangu.co/wakanyeja>

¹³¹ Cahr-Koota News (2021). The Salish language educator development (SLED) and cultural and language studies (CALS) programs' apprentices to earn degrees this spring. *Salish Kootenai College*. Retrieved: http://www.charkoosta.com/news/the-salish-language-educator-development-sled-and-cultural-and-language-studies-cals-programs-apprentices-to/article_94e7f864-60d3-11eb-9bc0-e7779da5b890.html

¹³² Salish School of Spokane Website. Retrieved: <http://salishschoolofspokane.org/>

Bilingual School

According to the Office of English Language Acquisition in the US Department of Education there are multiple general benefits to being multilingual, multiliterate, and multicultural in today's global society. Knowing more than one language from birth, acquiring a new language through school, or learning languages later in life, can provide tangible advantages in many areas. Benefits are seen in four broad areas including:

- Cognitive benefits include attention control, mental flexibility, delay in onset of age-related cognitive decline, increased intellectual flexibility.
- Educational benefits include higher academic achievement, increased high school graduate rates, increased creativity, higher levels of abstract reasoning, and enhanced mental awareness.
- Economic benefits include greater job and business opportunities, higher occupational status, and higher demand for employment.
- Sociocultural benefits include understanding of other cultures, increased empathy development, enhanced connection to heritage cultures, promotes global awareness and reduced discrimination.¹³³

Some communities provide bilingual education as a means of supporting both Indigenous and English language skills among students. The Rock Point Community School in Arizona has one such program. Bilingual instruction began in 1967 with the mandate to provide quality Navajo education.

In Action: Rock Point Community School, Navajo Nation, Arizona

The bilingual education program at Rock Point is one of the most well-known and documented bilingual program in the United States. This program hired local Navajo speakers and trained them to teach Navajo to children. The school brought college-level courses to their new teachers, and many of them earned a teaching degree through this approach. This approach reduced teacher turnover. At the time, the teachers developed most of the teaching materials themselves, although more resources are available today. The school develops curriculum that intentionally develops community cohesion, through teaching tribal history, geography, and government, Navajo clanship.¹³⁴

Students are taught to read Navajo in kindergarten, and English reading instruction begins in the second grade. Education is conducted in both languages, and the proportion of English language education increases as students' progress through the grade levels. About two thirds of classes are taught in Navajo in kindergarten. That slowly decreases over the years, and by the sixth grade, about one third of instruction is in Navajo. The students were evaluated against their peers in non-bilingual schools in 1988 and exceeded in academic achievement.¹³⁵ Moreover, attendance at

¹³³ US Department of Education (No date). *Benefits of multilingualism*. Office of English Language Acquisition. Retrieved: https://tlc.rutgers.edu/images/pdf/benefits_of_multilingualism.pdf

¹³⁴ Reyner, J. (1990). Effective Native Language Education Practices and Native Language Survival (Jon Reyner, Ed.). In *Native American Language Issues*. Choctaw, OK., pp. 95-106.

¹³⁵ Rock Point Community School. (1988). *Internal Evaluation Report*. Rock Point: AZ.

the school is very high, with an overall 94% attendance rate, indicating a high-quality educational experience and educational satisfaction.

Experts such as McIvor and Anisman¹³⁶ and Hinton¹³⁷ suggest that bilingual programs do not prevent language erosion, but rather help maintain language proficiency and use.

In Action: Promising Model ~ Bi-Lingual Public Charter School

At the 2014 Native American Languages Summit, the Lower Kuskokwim School District presented a promising model for long term integration of the language into the curriculum. One key is the support of the School Superintendent. At the district level, decisions about hiring, curriculum, and resources can be supported or thwarted by the superintendent/chancellor. Recognizing the importance of the continuation of the language, the Lower Kuskokwim School District has fully embraced teaching the Yupik language. The District has a full time curriculum developer, because as times change, the curriculum needs revising to remain current with the standards. They also have an evaluator who analyzes the school data to help refine their approach, to make sure they are getting academic results for the students. Currently, the school district is offering full immersion in grades K-3 and as the grades increase, they gradually increase the English learning, while maintaining the Yup'ik language.¹³⁸

Immersion Practices

Practices that fully immerse students in an Indigenous language are the most successful at producing and sustaining new speakers of the language⁹⁰ There are four models of immersion practices:

1. Cross-generational/community-based
2. Early childhood focused
3. K-12 immersion
4. Adult-focused immersion

In Alaska, Central Yup'ik speaking elders are integrated into summer culture and language programs and act as tradition bearers and language advocates.¹³⁹ Students enrolled in the Alaska Fairbanks Kuskokwim summer Yup'ik Language Proficiency Program are matched with Yup-ik speaking Elders, in a modified master-apprentice model and the Elders provide opportunities for the learners to practice the language and to provide access to local ways of saying and doing things that are essential to language development and cultural identity.

Of course, when an Indigenous language is regularly spoken at home, this is a type of immersion practice. Family language practices are crucial to the maintenance and revival of Indigenous languages.¹⁴⁰ Native Hawaiian language speakers' experience practicing their newly acquired

¹³⁶ McIvor, O., & Anisman, A. (2018). Keeping our languages alive: Strategies for Indigenous language revitalization and maintenance. In Y. Watanabe (Ed.), *Handbook of Cultural Security* (pp. 90-109). Edward Elgar Publishing.

¹³⁷ Hinton, L. and Hale, K. (2008). *The Greenbook of language revitalization in practice (3rd Edition)*. California: Academic Press.

¹³⁸ U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Interior (2016). *A New Chapter for Native American Languages in the United States: A Report on Federal Agency Coordination and Support*. Retrieved: [a_new_chapter_for_native_american_languages_in_the_united.pdf \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/a-new-chapter-for-native-american-languages-in-the-united.pdf)

¹³⁹ Alexie, O., Alexie, S., and Marlow, P. (2009). Creating space and defining roles: Elders and adult Yup'ik immersion. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 48(3), 1–18.

¹⁴⁰ Spolsky, B. (2009). *Language management*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

language skills with family members, demonstrates that immersive practices within a family setting are important to augment formal training.¹⁴¹ Within the family setting, learners are exposed to everyday vocabulary, and traditional pronunciation and use. Acquiring these language skills is important to learners and is an expression of cultural identity.¹⁴¹

Early childhood focused programs, such as the previously mentioned “Language Nest” approach used by ‘Aha Punana Leo, embed young children in traditional language and culture, simulating a traditional home environment that teaches in traditional ways.¹¹⁸ This model was first developed in New Zealand and is considered one of the world’s most successful language revitalization strategies.⁸⁶ High quality, culturally relevant programs such as this one are especially important considering the disparities that parents of dual language learners in early care and education report. This includes difficulties finding high quality, affordable programs for their children, as compared with parents in English-only speaking households.¹⁴² Other communities like the Longhouse people from Mohawk Territory have also taken the “Language Nest” approach, which originated from mothers wanting to create an opportunity for their children to learn *Kanien’Keha* at an earlier age within their homes and not through immersion schooling. Forty years later, the Longhouse people continue to thrive with an established curriculum for all grades.¹⁴³

The K-12 immersion programs require considerable funding and teaching materials to ensure their success. Typically, full immersion is provided from kindergarten to the fourth grade, and gradually more English-language teaching is introduced. Adult immersion programs are often held for small groups of learners, where the groups live together for several days or weeks, sharing meals and conversing with Elders. One example of a successful immersion program is the Accelerated Second Language Acquisition Program that S. Neyooxet Greymorning has led in the Arapaho territory.¹⁴⁴

In Action: Promising Model ~ Immersion Charter Public School

The Chief Tahgee Academy-Language activists from the Nez Perce Tribe in Idaho tried for many years to have the language taught in their local schools, but they were not as successful, because they lacked the “highly qualified” teachers that the school district required. To start a language immersion school, community members applied to the State of Idaho to operate a public charter school. Chief Tahgee Academy was started three years ago and is currently using federal grants as well as state funding to develop the curriculum and teacher professional development necessary to become a fully resourced elementary school.¹⁴⁵

Much research has revealed educational concerns of tribal members in relation to the education of their children. A priority for Native American students attending public schools is for the education system to be used to preserve their lifeways and language rather than allowing the

¹⁴¹ Higgins, C. (2019). The dynamics of Hawaiian speakerhood within the family. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2019: 255.

¹⁴² Office of English Language Acquisition. (2022). *Dual Language Learners in Early Care and Education*.

¹⁴³ Stacey (2016) Second Language Speakers and Language Revitalization in Kahnawake. *University of Victoria*.

¹⁴⁴ Greymorning, S. (2005). Weaving the fibre for instruction and acquisition of North American Indigenous languages. Te Toi Roa, Indigenous Excellence: *WIPCE Official Handbook* (p. 191). Hamilton, Aotearoa-New Zealand: 7th World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education.

¹⁴⁵ U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Interior (2016). A New Chapter for Native American Languages in the United States: A Report on Federal Agency Coordination and Support. Retrieved: [a_new_chapter_for_native_american_languages_in_the_united.pdf \(hhs.gov\)](#)

system to continue assimilative practices. Research conducted by Dr. Jason Cummings and others found that one public school serving the tribes students partnered with the local tribal college, as well as local language leadership, to create five dual-language immersion classrooms, for three full language immersion classrooms, used culturally relevant instruction, and including a music program that uses traditional Native American songs in the programming to better serve students and families.¹⁴⁶ This same concern for the preservation of Native American Languages and lifeways has been echoed throughout all of WHNAA's listening session and tribal consultations in 2022 and 2023.

Indigenous Case Study Analysis of Language Revitalization Efforts

The Native language revitalization efforts mentioned in the previous section were operationalized into the categories of documentation and preservation, curriculum and resource development, teacher training and post-secondary efforts, language classes, bilingual education, and immersion efforts for ease of understanding. However, dedicated efforts to revitalize Native languages over the generations rarely happened categorically. Native American communities have endured forced assimilation at the hands of the federal government. However, tribal bands, clans, families, and individual efforts have permeated over the centuries to maintain Native ways of life and language. Many of these efforts were out of survival and may be discovered through more deliberative ethnographic inquiry relying on oral tradition recounting such experiences. The following descriptions take a case study approach to summarize a systemic and long-term approach that transcends formalized accounts and emphasis the persistence of Native people to retain their language.

An ethnographical and historical account, one early Native language preservation effort began in March 1890, when Walter Jesse Fewkes traveled to Calais, Maine to work with the *Passamaquoddy* Tribe to test out the new phonograph technology. Over three days, Fewkes made recordings on 35 wax cylinders. Thirty-one of these cylinders remain. He recorded songs, vocabulary, numbers, and important *Passamaquoddy* cultural narratives. Peter Selmore, Noel Josephs and Perle Lacoot have been identified as three key individuals who Fewkes worked with the most. These are the first sound recordings ever made featuring Native American voices. Fewkes made contact with members of the *Passamaquoddy* Tribe through his benefactor Mary Hemenway from Boston who had a friendship with Mrs. Louisa Brown in Calais, Maine.

Esunomawotultine is the *Passamaquoddy* name for song two on cylinder 17. *Esunomawotultine* means "let's trade." It was sung on the cylinder by Peter Selmore, who also provided the cultural narrative. This narrative is found in Fewkes' Calais Field Notebook and was written up in the *Journal of American Folklife* 1890. The song and dance are common to *Passamaquoddy*, *Maliseet*, *Mi'kmac* and *Penobscot* communities. According to Nicholas Smith, the Wabanaki had at least three different types of trading dances. "The important gift-giving trait was an element in two of them. One was the trading dance of the ceremonial prelude to the actual trading at fur trading posts. I have called another the hunter's trading dance ... The third was the misunderstood peddler dance, a dance song in which the Indian satirizes the peddler as a highly motivated businessman. They despise greedy traders. The peddler was apparently ignorant of the

¹⁴⁶ Cummings, J., Chang E. (2020) Safe Zones, Dangerous leadership: Decolonial leadership in settler-colonial school contexts. *Journal of School Leadership* 30 (6): 519-540. Retrieved: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346452059_Safe_Zones_Dangerous_Leadership_Decolonial_Leadership_in_Settler-Colonial_School_Contexts

importance of the gift-giving role in Indian culture." According to Smith, who interviewed Elders about the various trading dances, the peddler dance cannot be considered a trading dance song, but it added humor at social gatherings.¹⁴⁷ This account demonstrates not only a unique effort to preserve Native culture and language but also provides a rich cultural context and resources for being able to hear language as spoken in the late 1800 that may help to recreate.

Another such ethnographic review involves a Native woman's who efforts led to the introduction of Ojibwe language offered as college credit bearing courses. In 1941, Angeline Beaver Williams (Biidaasigekwe), 73, an Anishinaabe Elder left her home on Sugar Island in the St. Mary's River between Michigan and Ontario to travel to North Carolina to teach at a linguistic institute. A fluent speaker of Anishinaabemowin, she did not speak English which underscores the amazingness of her courage, leadership and possibly envisioning the future. Her lectures were simple traditional legends and stories with a few descriptions of everyday life and references to her grandchildren. Much like the Passamaquoddy story above, these stories were an anthology of stories of Nanabush and how in a comic way, he went about naming things and lessons learned; albeit the hard way. The collection of these texts is retained at the Smithsonian Institute with the manuscript located at the National Anthropological Archives. This compilation was eventually produced into a book called, *The Dog's Children: Anishinaabe Texts Told by Angeline Williams*.¹⁴⁸ Fifty-three years later, Angeline's great-great grandson Dr. Aaron Payment would teach at the local university near her homeland. Dr. Payment recounts his intent in the early 1990s to follow the emerging trend to bring Native languages to college campuses and collaborate with Don Abel (a fluent speaker from Manitoulin Island) and the entire university language faculty in English, Spanish, French and German to craft a 16 credit sequence in Anishinaabemowin.¹⁴⁹ Facing racism, Dr. Payment recalls a faculty member insisting that a PhD was necessary to teach these courses and that he could not support a university course, "you learned on your grandmother's lap." It's ironic that the *Dog's Children* would be the lynch pin requirement as a formal text for gaining approval by the university's academic senate. To this day, Lake Superior State University offers Anishinaabemowin I and II first and second semester (16 credits) toward a total of 30 credits which constitute a minor in Anishinaabemowin.¹⁵⁰

Yet another great-great grandchild of Angeline Williams, Angeline Boulley, most recently extended access to the *Anishinaabemowin* language through her popularized New York times best sellers in *The Fire Keeper's Daughter*¹⁵¹ and *Warrior Girl Unearthed*¹⁵² by infusing her fictional stories with a rich depiction of Anishinaabe life as seen through the eyes of an *oshkiniigikwe* (young woman) including traditional lessons embedded throughout and use of Anishinaabemowin language and translations. The great grandson of Angeline Williams, Henry Boulley, Sr was reared by Angeline Williams during his language acquisition formative years and is the fire keeper father to the "Fire Keeper's Daughter" and language expert behind his daughter Angeline's books.

¹⁴⁷ Passamaquoddy (2023). *Esunomawotultine*. Retrieved: <https://passamaquoddypeople.com/digital-heritage/esunomawotultine>

¹⁴⁸ Bloomfield, L, Nichols, J. (1991). *The dog's children: Anishinaabe texts told by Angeline Williams*. The University of Manitoba Press. Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

¹⁴⁹ Payment, A. (2023). Personal Interview conducted for this Literature Search.

¹⁵⁰ Lake Superior State University Website: *Academic Catalog*. Retrieved:

<http://webteam.lssu.edu/catalog/cmscatalog1516/anishinaabemowin-ojibwe-language-and-literature-minor.php>

¹⁵¹ Boulley, A. (2021). *The fire keeper's daughter*. Henry Holt and Company. New York.

¹⁵² Boulley, A. (2023). *Warrior girl unearthed*. Henry Holt and Company. New York.

The same fluent speaker who collaborated to create these language courses, Don Abel, would go on to teach Anishinaabemowin courses in the mid-1990s which was an early incarnation of the comprehensive language immersion program offered at Bay Mills Community Tribal College. This four to six year Anishinaabemowin Pane immersion program is designed to facilitate language students' acquisition of Anishinaabemowin by developing their ability to understand the content of fluent speaker's speech, respond to that speech appropriately, and produce an advanced level of spontaneous Anishinaabemowin speech.¹⁵³

It takes about 2,000 hours of listening to any language in its full natural form. At the end of 3 years of full-time Pane ('pun-ay') immersion, students will have approximately 1,890 listening hours. Understanding spoken Anishinaabemowin will most likely be above 90% by this time.

~ Bay Mills Community Tribal College

At the end of 3 years of full-time Pane ('pun-ay') immersion, students will have approximately 1,890 listening hours. As adult learners, students will be encouraged to speak when they are ready, not forced. In the fourth year and all the way through the sixth year, students will continue to build comprehension. Through games and activities—no stress, no pressure—students will have opportunities to speak and interact with speakers and other students.

Summary of Native Language Revitalization Efforts

The language revitalization strategies described throughout this report are varied, localized, and often blended in practice. There is little evidence in a conventional or Western science sense, regarding which strategies are successful, although immersive practices seem to have the greatest evidence base. Academics are unsure, however, why one practice might work in one location and another in a different one. To help answer this question and develop a theory of why revitalization strategies work, Wiltshire and colleagues (2022) conducted a realist review of these language revitalization strategies.¹⁵⁴ Through their review of 125 programs and analysis of 13 initial theories, they found that since revitalization efforts require sustained effort over time, and often a range of skills and resources, that 'strengthening communities' was a constant theme. Thus, language revitalization through community strengthening is how programs become sustainable. Establishing communal environments that promote community interaction can strengthen relationships and identity. The more the community interacts, the more exposure to language they receive.

In analyzing the convergence of events in the case study review, it is easy to see influences on outcome efforts. From a traditional perspective, some may even recognize or interpret Indigenous wisdom embedded in a longitudinal lesson this account may represent. This is but one story of

¹⁵³ Bay Mills Community College Website. *Anishinaabemowin Pane Immersion Program*. Retrieved:

<https://www.bmcc.edu/anishinaabemowin-pane-immersion-program>

¹⁵⁴ Wiltshire, B., Bird, S. & Hardwick, R. (2022). Understanding how language revitalization works: A realist review. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 10.1080.

countless others of survival, adaptation and possibly even envisioning into the future of how to transcend the seemingly insurmountable circumstances Native people have faced to not only survive but to emerge in an era of phenomenal resilience, self-determination, self-governance, revitalization, and reclamation of Native languages.

Conclusion

President Biden's Proclamation in establishing Indigenous Peoples Day in 2021,¹⁵⁵ recognized that Native languages encompass a vibrant cultural history of Native communities. Native languages tie Native Americans' and Native Hawaiians' present to their ancestral past with key traditional and Indigenous concepts accessible only through their Native language. A traditional belief widely shared by many tribes is that their purpose is embedded in their language with their very identity as a people and sovereignty inextricably woven in their language. Tribal leaders continue to advocate for support for the revitalization of and preservation of Native languages, making clear that their languages serve a vital purpose in all aspects of sovereignty, governance, education, health, and identity.

“We must never forget the centuries-long campaign of violence, displacement, assimilation, and terror wrought upon Native communities and tribal nations throughout our country.”

~ President Biden

An effusively positive recognition celebrated by many on Indigenous Peoples Day and all year round is the disproportionately high representation of Indigenous Warriors (*Ogitch'da* in some languages) who fought for our collective freedoms and liberties as Americans long before the Native Vote was memorialized in 1924 in the *Indian Citizenship Act*. In World War II, the United States depended heavily on Native American Languages to turn the tide of the war, many Native American soldiers from over 20 Tribes were Code Talkers, including the Assiniboin, *Cherokee*, *Cheyenne*, *Choctaw*, *Comanche*, *Cree*, *Crow*, *Fox*, *Hopi*, *Kiowa*, *Menominee*, *Navajo*, *Ojibwe*, *Oneida*, *Osage*, *Pawnee*, *Sauk*, *Seminole*, and the *Sioux*. After World War II the U.S. government established the *National Language Resource Center* to ensure the need for expertise and competence in foreign languages. In honor and memoriam of Code Talkers, many Native Americans have expressed their recommendation that funding be reallocated to help revitalize and assist the maintenance of the Native American languages that helped this country during WWII.¹⁵⁶ Our warriors helped win the war, maybe their legacy will help save the very languages that play a key role in winning the war. If the nearly a billion acres of ceded Indian Territory and subsequent perpetual treaty and trust obligation were not enough to recognize the legal, moral and ethical obligation to revitalize Native languages, then perhaps a debt of gratitude for our enduring freedoms and liberty is.

¹⁵⁵ The White House. (2021). *A proclamation on Indigenous Peoples' Day, 2021*. Retrieved: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/10/08/a-proclamation-indigenous-peoples-day-2021/>

¹⁵⁶ US Army (2017). *Comanche language helped win World War II*. Retrieved: https://www.army.mil/article/178195/comanche_language_helped_win_world_war_ii

The education committee of the WHCNAA acknowledges the historic role the United States played in imperiling Native languages. The committee seeks to work with Native communities on a renaissance of language through the development of a 10-year national plan on Native language revitalization.¹⁵⁷ Historically, the United States imposed policies to deliberately dispossess Natives of their lands and targeted their children through forced assimilation. These education policies designed to assimilate devastated Native communities, families, and children with disastrous and destructive multi-generational impacts are still felt today. Those who study federal Indian policy, understand the tragic legacy and mission of Indian Boarding Schools, and the manifestation of historical and inter-generational trauma^{158,159} as evidenced in the worst of the worst statical outcomes in the *Broken Promises Report*.¹⁶⁰ Healing can only come about if the antecedent factors like Native language loss is confronted through Native language revitalization. The WHCNAA Framework for the 10-year national plan on Native language revitalization respects the need for tribal nations and Native Hawaiians to drive the development of the plan through collaboration and more importantly through formal consultation. This engagement is integral to the success of this plan as Native communities know what is best for themselves.

This literature review took the form of a legislative, regulatory and policy scan as well as a review of the array of Native language revitalization efforts by tribes, coalitions of tribes and advocates and researchers in implementation. The result is intended to be a starting point in continuing to build a compendium of traditional and tribal promising and best practices and steeped in the professions of linguistics, curriculum design, instruction, and increasingly with the use of technology to simulate the scarcity of language immersion opportunities for practice. The next step in all-of-government approach by the Biden Administration to revitalize Native languages will include sharing this information with tribal nations and stakeholders, interviews with key informants, tribal listening and engagement sessions, formal tribal consultation and reflexive review following preliminary reporting during the 2023 White House Tribal Leaders Summit and other relevant convenings. This continued engagement will afford the opportunity to revise this document as a tool and guide in the effort to write the 10-year national plan on Native language revitalization.

¹⁵⁷ White House Council on Native American Affairs Education Committee (2022) *Framework for the 10 Year National Plan on Native Language Revitalization* Retrieved: <https://sites.ed.gov/whiaiane/files/2023/04/Framework-For-10-year-National-Plan.pdf>

¹⁵⁸ Brave Heart, M. Y. H. (2000) Wakiksuyapi: Carrying the historical trauma of the Lakota. *Tulane Studies in Social Welfare*, 21-22, 245-266.

¹⁵⁹ Brave Heart, M. Y. H. (2004). The historical trauma response among Natives and its relationship to substance abuse: A Lakota illustration. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 35 (1), 7-13.

¹⁶⁰ U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. (2018). *Broken promises: Continuing Federal funding shortfall for Native Americans*. Retrieved: <https://www.usccr.gov/files/pubs/2018/12-20-Broken-Promises.pdf>

Appendix A. WHCNA Listening Sessions

In preparation for developing the 10-year national plan on Native language revitalization, several tribal consultation/ listening sessions were held in 2022 and 2023 by the WHCNA Education Subcommittee partners. Table 10 lists the schedule of listening sessions held.

Table 10. Tribal Consultations/Listening: White House Council on Native American Affairs

Date	Topic
June 7, 2022	Native Language Listening Session
June 29, 2022	White House Council on Native American Affairs Tribal Leader Engagement Session on Native Languages
September 14, 2022	10 Year National Plan on Native Language Revitalization Consultation for Tribal Leaders
October 4, 2022	Native Language Summit: Speaking Sovereignty
November 14, 2022	Federal listening session at the White House Native Youth Forum
December 1, 2022	WHCNA Engagement Session with Education and Health Committees at Tribal Nation Summit
February 27, 2023	Listening Session on the 10 Year Language Plan
February 28, 2023	Native Hawaiian Engagement Session on the 10 Year Native Language Plan
March 8, 2023	NIEA Federal Panel on Native Languages