

Arizona Department of Education
Native American Dropout Prevention Workgroup Meeting (NADPI)

November 15, 2007

2005 North Central Avenue, 1st Floor Conference Room (106/107)

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Welcome – Debora Norris, **Introductions** - Leon Oosahwe

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Leon Ben: Increasing teacher pay is the most important thing we can do right now, secondly we need to look at getting more training for teachers, especially for Native Americans. With the impending retirement of Dr. Bush June 30, 2008, I will be the only Native Superintendent. Thirdly, ELL, Native Language Immersion and the State's position is of great concern.

TANF rules on school attendance - Debora Norris: In the three years I've been at ADE, DES has worked much more closely with the ADE Tribal Liaisons, much more cooperation exists between agencies. Families that are habitually truant usually have more than one child not attending school.

Many times with TANF benefits, no one checks on the families after they received funds. Many times they do not want to penalize or withhold the funds, because poverty is at 27%, and higher concentrated pockets of poverty also exist in the community. The Director of DES is very reluctant to reduce benefits. Truancy laws are not enforced. But the TANF rules do hold penalties for truancy:

1st offense 10% reduction of benefits

2nd offense 15% reduction of benefits

3rd offense 25% reduction of benefits

State Law / Districts / TANF have not sat at the same table to coordinate efforts on truancy. Currently the contract with DES provides benefits to the following tribes: Pascua Yaqui, Hopi, Salt River, San Carlos Apache, Gila River, White Mountain Apache and the Navajo tribe.

Lenny Dempsey: At Pascua Yaqui, we strictly enforce the TANF penalties using law enforcement and sanction them as soon as three days are missed. We call the parent and remove all benefits. We do the same with other programs too – Tempe Union, Elementary / Kyrene / TUSD, we've been effective in Guadalupe.

Debora Norris: Sharing information with TANF and following up is a manpower issue. Many parents also "work the system" to avoid the penalties.

Bonnie Talakte: Do you account for patterns of improvement?

Lenny Dempsey: Yes we do that, and it works! Once the child is back in school, we reinstate the benefits.

Leon Ben: This is very good, but the tribe still has to own the problem, the schools are doing enough. It would be much easier for the tribes to enforce.

Debora Norris: The power of this workgroup is that we can make recommendations and make a model for all to follow. TANF is an available tool.

Bonnie Talakte: We should invite Tribal Leaders next time to talk about TANF for the February meeting and use it as leverage.

Debora Norris: The PSA's on attendance were effective in San Carlos.

Leon Ben: More communication between Bylass/San Carlos; Cibeqe/Whiteriver is necessary.

Bonnie Talakte: I can do a presentation at ITCA on Truancy Codes.

Leon Ben: It needs to be school specific, not tribe specific.

Eileen Hill: Cibeqe has a Truancy Officer, they have education codes that were amended three years ago. Nearly 250 students go off the reservation, then we can not get the information back.

Lenny Dempsey: We used a "Release of Information" form to get around the FERPA regulations. It has been extremely beneficial, we also gathered email address of all the contacts as well.

Bonnie Talakte: Can Whiteriver enact these same policies?

Leon Ben: A form would be very good to see how the money is spent.

Lenny Dempsey: Also for Title I

Leon Ben: And for JOM

Lenny Dempsey: Using referral forms for behavioral problems / missing homework, etc. – that's how we follow up.

Debora Norris: Our recommendations could be given to Tribal Councils, a vote on IGAs, release forms, truancy codes.

Lenny Dempsey: IGA is hard, so we work with individual principals, with sovereignty issues, tribes are reluctant to address.

Bonnie Talakte: But as the NADPI Workgroup, we can address all of these issues.

Leon Ben: Perhaps another purpose of the summit would be to recruit new NADPI members.

Eileen Hill: Whiteriver needs support, once kids receive their Tribal monies, they are gone.

Debora Norris: A major goal of this workgroup could be to assist all tribes in having Truancy Codes.

Bonnie Talakte: A Representative from each tribe could be a member of this workgroup.

Leon Ben: Attendance policy sounds better, an all school policy perhaps with monetary awards.

Debora Norris: We should strive to have this accomplished in the next two years, including the "Template Release Form".

Lenny Dempsey: One setback we will have is by state law, at age 16 they don't have to go to school, but many schools, like San Carlos have it set at 18.

Bob Coccagna: The Feds have certain standards that don't necessarily agree with the Tribal ones, they can be very different.

Leon Ben: If we don't increase funding for teachers all of this is a mute point. Colorado is also facing these same tough issues.

Bonnie Talakte: We will call a special meeting of the NADPI Workgroup to address these topics.

Eileen Hill: Tribal Education Directors need to attend for this to be really effective.

THE FOLLOWING ARE RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE NADPI WORKGROUP:

IN TWO YEARS EVERY TRIBE / DISTRICT HAS:

- 1) A working attendance code**
- 2) Tribal TANF programs enforce attendance rules**
- 3) The NADPI Workgroup produces a “Template Release Form” to share with principals, Districts and Tribes.**
- 4) Tribal benefits, allocations, services and other payouts are attached to school attendance for students AND parents.**
- 5) Mandatory attendance is required until age 22 or until graduation date, listed in all Tribal Codes.**

A motion was made to accept these recommendations by Leon Ben, seconded by Leon Oosahwe. The vote was unanimous by the NADPI workgroup in attendance to accept ALL of the recommendations.

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National Dropout Conference “Sum it Up” wrap up. All NADPI Workgroup members in attendance also attended this conference, which was held September 14-16, 2007 in Phoenix.

Bonnie Talakte: There were ten workshops in the Native Strand, with six Native presenters, they were:

- *Preventing American Indian Dropouts* – Dr. Jon Reyhner
- *The Hoop of Learning Program: An Early-College Bridge Program for Native Americans* – Ted Hibbeler
- *Keeping Kids in School Utilizing a Tribal Mandatory Attendance Code* – Jana Narcia
- *Education as a Priority Focusing Resources on Outcomes* – Gary Loutzenheiser
- *Response to the Dropout Crisis: How Two Arizona Tribal High Schools are Collaborating with their Communities to Address the Dropout Crisis* – Bonnie Talakte
- *American Indian School Dropout Prevention in Arizona: What We Know and Where We Are Going* – Dr. Michael Niles
- *Junior Achieving a College Education (ACE): The Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community’s Vision to Help Its Children Reach Post Secondary Educational Goals* – Chris Mcintier
- *It All Adds Up: Honoring the Past, Respecting the Present, Dreaming the Future* – Deborah Grunloh
- *The Nine-Voices Cultural Model for Native American Youth Dropout Prevention* – Dennis Bowen Sr.
- *NADPI Alchessay’s Comprehensive Approach* – Jeffery Fuller

Presenter Evaluation Results:

|                                                                        | Strongly Agree | Agree      | Neutral   | Disagree  | Strongly Disagree | N/A      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|----------|
| The goals of the workshop were clearly stated                          | 57             | 37         | 6         | 3         | 0                 | 0        |
| The goals of the workshop were met                                     | 74             | 115        | 7         | 1         | 0                 | 0        |
| The information presented will be useful                               | 57             | 42         | 1         | 3         | 0                 | 0        |
| The handouts will be useful for me                                     | 52             | 40         | 7         | 0         | 1                 | 3        |
| The visuals were a positive component of the workshop                  | 53             | 38         | 11        | 1         | 0                 | 0        |
| The presentation was clear and well organized                          | 51             | 42         | 7         | 4         | 0                 | 0        |
| The presenters were responsive to participants' questions and comments | 61             | 29         | 9         | 0         | 2                 | 4        |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                                                          | <b>405</b>     | <b>343</b> | <b>48</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>3</b>          | <b>7</b> |

|             | Counselor | Superintendent | Principal | District Personnel | Instructional Staff | Other |
|-------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------------|-------|
| # Attendees | 39        | 1              | 4         | 15                 | 3                   | 54    |

Debora Norris: Many Tribal members also went to non-native presentations, registration costs were too high however, for the general native population.

Bonnie Talakte: Yes, it was unfortunate that the hotel, although very nice was too expensive.

Bob Coccagna: 250 people were expected, 380 actually attended.

Bonnie Talakte: In future conferences, NADPI Workgroup members could present.

Lenny Dempsey: I thought it focus more on best practices for Native American Communities. A special strand for teachers would have been nice as well, as they are the first line of offense / defense.

**Next year's NADPI Education Summit – Bonnie Talakte**  
**The NADPI Workgroup will decide upon the following:**

- A. Conference Theme
- B. Time of Year / Location
- C. Attendance Cap
- D. Length of Summit

Laurie Larson: There's a conference planning checklist to help everyone make these decisions. (See attachment)

Debora Norris: TANF and Tribal codes should definitely be at least one presentation.

Leon Ben: One day is better, a Saturday or Sunday.

Debora Norris: Other sessions could be geared towards getting fathers more engaged with their child's future. The recent Fatherhood Conference was very well attended.

Leon Oosahwe: Gila River does a good job, closer examination of the Native American teacher / student relationship would be another issue.

Debora Norris: Gender balance is also important.

Bob Coccagna: Looking at the gender trends and the recent AIMS audit, the failure rate was 51% male and 49% female.

Lenny Dempsey: A roundtable discussion of these recommendations for the conference would be great for the next meeting as well.

Bob Coccagna: Should we have an annual Dropout Prevention Conference? Should it be restructured?

All: Annual – yes

Leon Oosahwe: And at every future National Dropout Conference there should be a Native American strand.

Lenny Dempsey: Bonnie could recommend this to the National Dropout Board, as she is a member.

Leon Ben: A theme for the conference could be Native Voice, use a mission statement. Use impact aid issues, the need for Native Language learning, AYP, AIMS and how it all relates to dropouts. We really need to focus on the dropout rate, it gets bigger each time, if we don't deal with it now. Maybe the title of the conference could be: "Defining the Dropout Problem", one day will not be enough, Fort McDowell would be a good location or Hondah.

Eileen Hill: Workshops are best, we should focus on just the grantees to be more effective

Lenny Dempsey: Yes, I agree.

Leon Ben: I think it should be opened to all tribes

Leon Oosahwe: We should use the Town Hall model over 2 days, on the last day come together to define the issues and recommendations.

Leon Ben: We can also invite vendors to help offset costs. You could use a Burden Basket as a logo.

**The NADPI Workgroup members voted unanimously to have the Arizona Native American Dropout Prevention Summit in April 2008 on a Wednesday, Thursday & Friday at the Hondah resort in conjunction with the White Mountain Apache Education Conference & Youth Conference on April 23, 24 & 25.**

**JOM Tracking System-** Eileen Hill

We have two issues we need to address, one is Attendance. How do we track this for JOM? With so many schools there's no effective way to keep it up to date as the rules also change. Our info is also used by TANF

and many others so we have to be accurate, TANF does not have a tracking system. TANF relies on our rates, which we don't have. How do we upgrade from paper records? Secondly, every year it's a struggle with the budget nationally, to continue funding (which is based on the student count) we need accurate numbers. The higher the student count, the better, but Whiteriver has been a huge disadvantage.

Bob Coccagna: The state is looking into ways to improve, the SAIS system is not quite there, we're also trying to track personalized learning plans. Currently we only have the school report cards. On the Federal side, they are working on reauthorization.

Lenny Dempsey: I'm a computer science guy and built ours from the ground up. I used the Tribal Enrollment database. I used the Tribal ID Number as the key match. I know CRIT has also built there own software geared just for JOM, I'll put you in touch with them.

Bob Coccagna: How do you track Career Plan?

Lenny Dempsey: Yes, we are also incorporating career plan into our database.

Bonnie Talakte: Developing a Tracking System would be a good topic for the summit.

**Date and Time of Next Meeting** – February 15, 2007, 10:00 a.m., ADE Central Avenue Facility