



NEW MEXICO NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION REPORT SUMMARY

PRESENTED BY:

◆ NEW MEXICO INDIAN EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

◆ NATIONAL YOUTH INDIAN COUNCIL

➤ THE NEED FOR NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION REFORM

New Mexico American Indian/Alaskan (AI/AN) students enrolled in the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) and New Mexico Public School systems have a long history of low performance. As far back as anyone in the AI/AN community can recall, very little effort has been made by the state and BIE school systems to address the dropout rate, the attendance problems, the lowest proficiencies scores, and other problems encountered by AI/AN students. Today, AI/AN students, parents and community members continue to experience the prevailing sense of disenfranchisement from BIE/New Mexico Public School Systems.

➤ New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) School Grades and Native American Indian Students' Math and Reading Proficiencies

The NMPED instituted the School Grade Policy for the State School Districts in school year 2011. This program was formulated and made policy without any input from the Tribal/Urban AI/AN communities who represent over 34,000 Tribal/Urban AI/AN students. As the Urban Native American Indian non-profit organizations and the Tribal/Urban AI/AN communities reviewed the NMPED School Grades, it was very apparent that the major concerns of our communities are not being met by this new grading policy. Over the past 10 years our AI/AN students have never achieved a math or reading state average higher than 41%. With this in mind, the Tribal/Urban AI/AN communities and urban Native American Indian non-profit organizations concern is that the reading and math proficiencies should have a higher priority in structuring the grading formula.

➤ Who Can Help the Native American Students?

Currently there are no *unique* educational projects initiated by the New Mexico Public Education Department to specifically address the education proficiency problems of all the 34,925 AI/AN students attending the public school systems. The Albuquerque Urban Native American Indian non-profit organizations asked the APS Superintendent to create special programs to enhance reading, math and language proficiency for the APS Native American Indian students two years ago. His reply to the representatives: *"I will not create any special programs for the Native American Indian students now or in the future."* After reviewing the 2011 Native American Report, it was found that the proficiency percentages in math and reading and low NMPED School Grades indicates that something is needed to boost our children's low proficiencies. Just maybe, the APS School Board will review the same statistics and take the initiative to do something positive and create some unique programs to help APS AI/AN to close the achievement gaps by 30 or more points.

➤ **Are Urban Native American Indian Students Not Native American Indians?**

As far as this community knows there is no BIE funding for primary education for the urban Native American Indian students attending public schools. The majority of these 34,925 students are holders of Tribal Identification Cards (Certified Degree of Indian blood) that show they are members of federally recognized tribes and nations throughout the United States, and these Urban AI/AN students should be eligible for same educational funding that tribal students receive on the reservations. 78% of all AI/AN live off the reservation.

➤ **Reform, Reform, Reform**

We must reiterate the need for reform of the Public and Federal education systems for our AI/AN students in the BIE/public schools as it is long overdue! It is a challenge that requires the participation of every concerned adult, both at the school sites and in the Urban/Tribal AI/AN communities. Here in New Mexico there is a tremendous need for greater participation of the surrounding tribal leaders, inasmuch as the majority of our urban AI/AN children attending the New Mexico BIE/public school systems

are Navajos, Apaches and Pueblos.

➤ **Why Is the New Mexico Indian Education Act Not Enforced?**

Our state representatives must mandate adherence and participation in the New Mexico *State Indian Education Act* and the New Mexico Public Education Department *Indian Education Policy*. The tribal and urban communities have been pleading for help in the education of their children for the past 80 years and it seems their pleas have once again fallen on deaf ears.

➤ **Participation By All Who Can Make a Difference**

Our communities have requested that school district superintendents attend the Tribal and Urban Government to Government (G to G) meetings to discuss our educational needs and wants. The Albuquerque Native American Indian non-profit organizations representatives have yet to see the APS Superintendent attend these conferences in person. We also still see very little or no attendance by the 26 Public School districts superintendents that have large Native American Indian student populations in their school districts. Also, the Governor of New Mexico and most of the Tribal Governors/Presidents have failed to attend the G to G meetings in the past.

The State Public Education Department, the Secretary of the Bureau of Indian Education and our State/Congressional representatives must take steps to reform our education system now! We need accountability from these groups! If State and Federal Education laws are not adhered to by our public and BIE school systems, then some kind of major disciplines must be administered.

