Final Report

South Dakota
Native American Student Achievement Advisory Council

Members of the Native American Student Achievement Advisory Council, April 28, 2015

Submitted to the Office of the Governor

November 25, 2015

Dedication

Uŋkičhiŋčapi kiŋ iwaštepi kta čha lečhuŋk'uŋpi.

We all do this so that our children will reap the benefits.

The Native American Student Achievement Advisory Council dedicates this report and the proposed solutions within it to the Native American students of South Dakota. During several of the council's meetings, members heard from students across the state who shared their personal stories. Council members learned that students want their teachers to have high expectations for them, and they welcome school work that is challenging and engaging. As students described their favorite teachers, they talked repeatedly about how the teachers cared for them as individuals, but also pushed and supported them in taking on challenging content. Having culture and language as a part of the school, as well as having teachers who understood the importance of the culture and language to their students, was another common theme in the students' discussions. The proposed solutions contained within this report, and the conversations behind them, represent a positive step in the direction of discovering and implementing ways to better serve South Dakota's Native American children.

Background

On February 2, 2015, Governor Dennis Daugaard issued Executive Order 2015-2 calling for the establishment of the Native American Student Achievement Advisory Council (NASAAC). In April, the Governor announced the appointments to the council. These appointments represented key stakeholder groups, including tribal leaders, Indian Education Advisory Council members, state legislators, K-12 educators, higher education officials, and community and state leaders.

This council was convened to examine the following issues:

1) Factors affecting achievement of students;
2) Effect of non-traditional schools on student achievement;
3) Methods of financing, establishing, and authorizing non-traditional schools; and
4) Other issues related as determined by the council;

The council was tasked with reporting to the Governor no later than December 1, 2015.

While the Executive Order outlined what the council was to examine, the council further defined its scope of work to include the following:

1) Articulating an overall vision of the key elements needed to serve the needs of Native American students well and positively impact their achievement;

2) Summarizing the current state of Native American student achievement and identifying those key factors that impede its progress;

3) Seeking expertise to inform the development of recommendations to the Governor by accessing resources at the institutes of higher education in South Dakota, the federal resources available through various programs and centers (e.g. Comprehensive Centers; Content Centers; Regional Education Laboratories) in order to maximize resources and efficiencies;

4) Identifying and understanding non-traditional school structures and funding;

5) Identifying and understanding successful programs already in place in South Dakota;

6) Providing specific, actionable recommendations to the Governor for pathways both within the current educational system and outside the traditional structure with a focus on enabling entities to take action in the 2015-16 school year to begin the work of improving Native American student achievement now due to the sense of urgency.

The council met five times (see schedule of meetings below).

Table 1. Schedule of NASAAC Meetings

Dates	Location
April 28-29, 2015	Capitol Lake Visitor Center, Pierre, SD
June 15-16, 2015	South Dakota School of Mines, Rapid City, SD
August 26-27, 2015	Sinte Gleska University, Mission, SD
October 6-7, 2015	Flandreau, SD, and Sioux Falls, SD
November 17, 2015	Pierre, SD, MacKay Building

The council members represented a variety of stakeholders from across South Dakota and are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. NASAAC Membership

Member name	Region
David Archambault Sr.	Ft. Yates, ND
Dr. Roger Bordeaux	Mission
Rep. Shawn Bordeaux	Mission – State Legislator
Amy Boutchee	Pierre
Stephanie Charging Eagle	Dupree
Dr. Karen Gayton Comeau	Rapid City
Dr. Charlotte Davidson	Brookings
Dr. Nadine Eastman	Eden
Steve Emery	Pierre – Secretary of Tribal Relations
Gordon Jones	Flandreau – Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, tribal secretary
Sen. Troy Heinert	Mission – State Legislator
Dr. Sherry Johnson	Eden
Beau LeBeaux	Porcupine
Linda Foos	Wagner
(Richard) Tuffy Lunderman	Mission
Dr. Urla Marcus	Spearfish
Larry Mendoza	Eagle Butte
Stacy Phelps	Rapid City
Duane Ross	Flandreau
Jesse Taken Alive	Ft. Yates, N.D. – Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, council member
Nick Tilsen	Porcupine
Maurice Twiss	Batesland

The council's work was facilitated by the South Dakota Department of Education and the North Central Comprehensive Center at McREL International. Funding for the council was provided by the Bush Foundation based in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Introduction

The members of the Native American Student Achievement Advisory Council (NASAAC) undertook the task of examining the educational framework, systems and experience for Native American students in South Dakota with a strong sense of urgency. The issue of Native American student achievement has long been part of the conversation in South Dakota, and previous efforts to address the achievement gaps that exist for Native American students have fallen short; yet most of the issues remain the same. Council members clearly voiced the conviction that the underlying causes do not in any way reflect the capabilities of Native American students, but rather, are a call to action for discovering innovative solutions that will best serve the needs of these students. Indeed, it was noted during the first meeting of NASAAC that the dismal achievement gap data for Native American students do not reflect poorly on the students but on the system. The way the current system is serving Native American students is not working.

With the convening of this historic council, members pledged to listen to each other and walk hand in hand to make a better future for Native American children. The members of NASAAC recognize that bold action is necessary and that the status quo will no longer be acceptable. As NASAAC members shared their ideas and visions for creating educational options that meet the needs of Native American students, the path forward was started.

Factors Affecting Achievement of Students

During its first meeting, NASAAC members reviewed data available from the South Dakota Department of Education, including the graduation rate data shown in Table 3 below, which illustrates the sense of urgency:

Table 3. Graduation Rates in South Dakota 2009 - 2014

Graduation Rate						
Year	**2009**	**2010**	**2011***	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**
All	89.21%	89.23%	83.3%	83.32%	82.68%	82.74%
White	91.9%	92.16%	87.9%	88.84%	87.98%	88.49%
American Indian	66.25%	68.68%	49.36%	46.7%	49.16%	46.98%

(Source: South Dakota Department of Education)
*Note: In 2011, the calculation for graduation rate changed to the adjusted 4 year cohort method.

While many other data points could be shared, what matters are the children, stories and factors behind the data. During its first meeting, the NASSAC discussed at length the factors that its members identified as hindering the achievement of Native American students. Through sharing their stories, experiences and expertise, the NASAAC members identified key factors that impact Native American student achievement. See Appendix I for a complete list of the factors identified by the NASAAC. Some of the major factors are:

- Historical/generational trauma
- Racism
- Teacher quality
- A lack of culturally relevant curriculum and methods
- Social issues

Historical/Generational Trauma

Many NASAAC members shared personal stories of historical trauma, especially as it relates to the legacy of boarding schools in the United States and in South Dakota specifically. While today's students did not experience the trauma of forced assimilation firsthand, they bear witness to the trauma experienced by their parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. In addition, the lack of understanding of the history and culture of South Dakota's Native American people and of tribal sovereignty within the mainstream society perpetuates racial stereotypes and racist attitudes.

Racism

Racism is a major factor in relations between Indians and non-Indians in South Dakota. Council members agreed that this issue must be addressed and factored into perspectives as South Dakota moves forward with creating a better environment for all of its citizens. Council members pointed to the historical policies of federal and state governments and their lasting impact on Native people. Being cut off from homelands, forced assimilation and boarding schools have affected generations of people who have had their identities targeted. In short, the issue of racism cannot be ignored when having serious dialogue and seeking solutions for children today.

Teacher Quality/Recruitment/Retention

The issue of high quality teachers is a topic of great interest nationally at the present time, as well as in South Dakota. Council members expressed concerns about high rates of teacher turnover, the lack of community engagement or commitment of some teachers, lack of adequate housing for teachers near reservations, and the need for more Native American teachers. Another major theme from both council members and the students who spoke to the council at their second meeting was a pervasive culture of low expectations for Native American students.

Culturally Relevant Curriculum and Methods

Council members identified the lack of culturally relevant curriculum and culturally responsive teaching methods as another major factor affecting the achievement of Native American students. Several council members discussed the fact that too often Native American students do not see themselves or their culture reflected in the curriculum. This message was reinforced by the students who spoke to the group at its second meeting. Many members expressed concerns about maintaining Native languages and discussed how empowering it is for students to learn their Native languages and carry forward the traditions of their tribes.

Social Issues

The issues of poverty, alcohol and substance abuse, high rates of suicide, and mental illness are all significant factors affecting the achievement of Native American students. While these social factors may not directly be a part of the current educational framework, the NASAAC made strong note that South Dakota's young scholars are highly affected by them and all contribute to a less stable learning

environment and experience. It was also strongly noted these issues and factors are closely tied to, if not a direct result of, historical/generational trauma and racism.

Understanding What Works: Successful Programs and Effective Alternative Models

After identifying the factors that impact Native American student achievement, council members turned their attention to the effect that non-traditional schools and programs have on achievement. While the members discussed many ideas, the key themes that emerged fell into several categories: autonomy – of curriculum, budget, staffing; strong school culture; strong leadership; decisions driven by needs of students - focus on the student as a whole person.

To deepen their thinking about what alternative models have the potential to be most effective, council members participated in an activity to describe the ideal school for Native American students. Through this activity, the following common characteristics of that ideal school emerged:

1. Culturally relevant curriculum that is founded on values, culture and language
2. Caring teachers who are involved in the community
3. Learning that is relevant to real life
4. State-of-the-art technology
5. Learning outside the current boundaries of the traditional school day – free structure
6. Appropriate metrics to define success (i.e. not just summative assessments)
7. Positive tribal involvement
8. Student-led learning; project- or problem-based learning
9. Educating the entire person with the goal of creating leaders
10. Comfortable, visually appealing school building that instills pride in students

In order to inform these ideas about how best to serve Native American students, NASAAC members gathered information by listening to the most important stakeholders – students – and by learning about successful programs in South Dakota, Montana, New Mexico and Colorado. Through various presentations and site visits to schools that offer alternative models to the traditional K-12 public school experience, NASAAC members gained firsthand knowledge of the struggles and successes Native American students experience each day in South Dakota and a deeper understanding of successful alternative models for educating students.

Successful Local Programs

Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) at Wagner Community School

The JAG intervention model is a multi-year program which lasts up to 60 months. Students are recruited in the 8th grade to attend JAG instructional classes during the 9th, 10th, 11th and/or 12th grade, and they receive support services for one year following graduation. JAG specialists provide an array of counseling, employability skills development, career association, job development, and job placement services that will result in either a quality job leading to a career after graduation or enrollment in a postsecondary education and training program. (http://www.jag.org/jag-model/multi-year)

Students from Wagner Community School, a K-12 public school, shared their stories and attributed much of the success of the JAG program to the relationships that are built – relationships between the students and JAG specialists, and relationships among the students themselves. Another important theme from the JAG students was the integration of culture into the curriculum. Teachers at Wagner incorporate the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings and Standards into the curriculum in order to engage students and

have them see themselves in the curriculum. Students shared that this is a powerful experience for them, and it makes a difference in their educational experience.

Linda Foos, superintendent for Wagner Community School, and Margo Heinert, state coordinator for the JAG program, shared data to further support the success of the JAG program. In 2002, there were only four Native American high school graduates from the school. In 2015, there were 38 Native American students graduating from Wagner. According to Foos, the graduation rate at Wagner is 89%, which is higher than any other school with a significant population of Native American students.

Wolakota Project

The WoLakota project supports students in high-need schools in South Dakota by pairing trained mentor-teachers with new teachers and providing what are referred to as *Courage to Teach* circles, which are used to support the new teachers. Mentors help their novice teachers to embed the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings (OSEU) into daily instructional practice, complementing the existing state standards. The OSEU are a set of Indian education standards that represent the essential understandings and standards of the Lakota culture. The OSEU address the achievement gap of Native American students by providing an opportunity for Native students to embrace their identity and by promoting cultural understanding among non-Native students and teachers. Lakota Elder Dottie LeBeau states: "When we approach teaching with one worldview…we create systems of failure in our schools." The word "WoLakota" implies balance and coming together, and this program is focused on recognizing multiple worldviews in order to create systems of success where students and teacher can thrive and learn together (http://www.wolakotaproject.org/).

Learning specialists from TIE who have helped to lead the WoLakota work talked with the group about the importance of guiding new teachers to embrace and incorporate the OESU. Jeannine Metzger, a principal in Oglala Lakota County Schools, shared her school's positive experience with infusing the learnings of elders into the classroom.

Evidence of success for this program comes from significant changes in teacher turnover for participating schools. Currently, there is a 100% retention rate for the 50 teachers who participated during the 2014-15 school year.

GEAR UP South Dakota

The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduates Program (GEAR UP) is a U.S. Department of Education effort that began in 1999. The program is designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. A significant piece of South Dakota's GEAR UP program is a cohort-based, summer residential pre-college enrichment program, which serves a large number of Native American students.

The council conducted its second meeting at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology at the same time the summer enrichment program was being held on campus. Students from the summer program spoke to the council, sharing their suggestions for factors that contribute to a positive educational experience. The students mentioned factors such as high academic expectations, support from caring adults, and a sense of self-confidence, all of which can be enhanced through cultural awareness.

Spanish Immersion Program, Sioux Falls School District

As part of the fourth NASAAC meeting, several members visited the Spanish Immersion Program in the Sioux Falls School District. This program serves as a model for a Native Language immersion school that

could have Lakota or Dakota or Nakota as the primary language. Principal Tracy Vik shared the story of how the immersion program was born, echoing what was heard throughout the site visits: A small group of committed parents and community members had a vision for how they wanted their children educated and took action to create the school they wanted to have. The program in Sioux Falls started small but has grown quickly to over 400 students in the elementary school and 136 students in the middle school. While the program started by serving students who traditionally did well in the regular public school system, the school is now serving a more diverse population of students and meeting a critical need in Sioux Falls.

Montana's Indian Education for All

Montana's Director of Indian Education Mike Jetty and his colleague Donnie Wetzel presented information, via Skype, about their state's "Indian Education for All" efforts. The presenters indicated the importance of students being able to see themselves present in classrooms, policies and curriculum, and they shared numerous examples at the state and local level to support that. Their efforts include an emphasis on student leadership opportunities. The duo reported that they have seen increases in achievement and declines in drop-outs due to these efforts. Through conversations with NASAAC members, it was noted that Montana had both legislation, as well as funding, to support its efforts.

Alternative Models in New Mexico and Colorado

From the start, NASAAC members expressed interest in seeing firsthand successful alternative schooling models. Members volunteered or nominated others to participate in site visits to several schools engaged in non-traditional methods of delivering instruction. In September, two NASAAC members, along with the Department of Education's Director of Indian Education Mato Standing High, traveled to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to visit the Native American Community Academy. In October, a different group of NASAAC members and Director Standing High traveled to Denver, Colorado, to visit nine schools over the course of two days. A summary of each visit and the lessons learned follows.

Native American Community Academy, Albuquerque, New Mexico

(Note: In addition to the site visit, NACA leaders also came to South Dakota and presented to the council during its second meeting.)

The Native American Community Academy (NACA) is located in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and is a charter school in the Albuquerque Public School system. NACA's Executive Director, Kara Bobroff, along with several of her staff, hosted the group on a visit to both campuses of NACA, one located in the heart of Albuquerque and the other in the law school at the University of New Mexico. In addition to the NACA visit, NASAAC members visited the Corrales International School, a dual language charter International Baccalaureate school and had the opportunity to have a question and answer session with the public school district's Director for Charter Schools Mark Tolley.

The school motto "Where Education, Community and Culture Come Together" and its focus on educating the whole child through immersion in culture, language, and spirit exemplify the attributes that NASAAC members would like to have for Native American students in South Dakota. By focusing on the whole child and engaging the community in development of the school, NACA has provided a student-centered, culturally rich learning experience where students thrive and excel. NACA is founded on the following core values and beliefs:

Mission: To engage students, educators, families, and community in creating a school that will prepare our students to grow from adolescence to adulthood and begin strengthening communities by developing strong leaders who are academically prepared, secure in their identity and healthy.

Vision: Our vision is of a thriving and dynamic community where students, educators, families and Native community leaders come together, creating a place for students to grow, become leaders, and prepare to excel in both college and life in general. The NACA community and experience will help students incorporate wellness and healthy life practices, community service and an appreciation of cultural diversity into their lives.

NACA Goals

1. Build youth to be confident in their cultural identities.
2. Encourage youth to persevere academically.
3. Support physical, emotional and spiritual wellness in youth.
4. Prepare youth academically and emotionally for college.
5. Strengthen youth to take their role as leaders.

NACA Core Values

Students and staff are encouraged to demonstrate behavior and attitudes that represent each core value as it relates to the overall community. Students are encouraged daily to address how the core values are applied in many settings, including social interaction as well as academic application.

Respect – Having concern for harmonious relationships; honoring yourself, your peers, your family, your elders, your ancestors, your teachers, your school, your community, your tribe/nation. Having courteous regard for others' feelings and values. Respect helps people get along better with each other.

Responsibility – We are responsible to our People; past, present and future, as well as our environment and other living things. Being responsible is a form of trustworthiness; being accountable for your words, actions, and conduct in all that you do.

Community/Service – We belong to the NACA community as well as the communities of our neighborhoods, cities, pueblos, reservations and nations. This means that, along with rights, we have the responsibility to provide service to make our community a better place for all.

Culture – We honor and value our own cultures and those of others. We recognize we are influenced by many cultures, including Indigenous, youth, and contemporary western cultures and are mindful in how this impacts the development of identity.

Perseverance – Indigenous people have endured because of the perseverance and determination of those that came before. We make our ancestors proud by remaining constant to a purpose, idea or task in spite of obstacles. We engage our innate strengths and build relationships with others that support us in developing to our full potential. (http://www.nacaschool.org/about/mission-and-vision/).

Reflection – Indigenous thinking and learning is a reflective process involving a deliberate looking inward, self-awareness and contemplation of deeper meanings. We support this reflective practice to encourage thoughtfulness, personal growth, profound learning and meaningful change.

The NACA visit was documented for the other members of the council through a short video that can be accessed below or here http://nccc.mcrel.org/video/NCCC_NACA.mp4 :

Click to play 2:45

Native American Community Academy (NACA)
Albuquerque, New Mexico

This video provides a snapshot of why NASAAC members found NACA to be a good model for South Dakota.

Denver School Site Visits

In October, four NASAAC members arrived in Denver and set out to visit nine schools in two days. Through the coordination efforts of member Dave Archambault, the group was able to visit these nine schools to observe classrooms and have discussions with school leaders, teachers and students.

From the visit to the historic Escuela Tlatelolco Centro De Elementary on the first day, to the visit to Adams County District 50 at the end of the second day, NASAAC members soaked in the positive learning environments and the factors that made them work. Nita Gonzales, principal and daughter of the founder of Escuela Tlatelolco, shared her passion and vision for ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds see themselves and their history reflected in the curriculum of the school. She cited examples of students feeling empowered because they know their value as human beings through a consistent focus on culture and social justice. Standing in the rain at Compass Montessori in Jefferson County, NASAAC members trudged through the recently harvested farm, where students engage in everything from harvesting crops of carrots, squash, and onions, to tending to goats and chickens, to sheering sheep for spinning wool. The Denver visit is documented in a short video that can be accessed below or here http://nccc.mcrel.org/video/SDNASAAC_Vist_COSchools.mp4 :

Click to Play • 1:28

Denver School Tour
Denver, Colorado

This video documents some of the nine schools visited in Denver in October and captures what made these schools stand out as good models for South Dakota.

NASAAC members saw firsthand how providing students with autonomy, structure, and purpose for learning created vibrant learning environments. Through conversations with leaders at each school, NASAAC members heard several themes emerge:

- Students must be at the center of the learning and have autonomy and choice;
- Teachers act as facilitators and create conditions for students to learn and explore;
- Project-based and hands-on opportunities for learning engage students and address academic standards;
- Shared vision and belief is critical – from the principal to the teachers to the students to the support staff;
- Fidelity of implementation matters – training and ongoing collaboration must occur.

These themes align well with the vision for an ideal school described on page seven of this report. The Denver visit energized NASAAC members, as they were able to see concrete examples of how schools can provide alternative models within the current K-12 public school system. The visiting members were also quick to realize many of the successful methods and perspectives observed can be implemented within the current framework of South Dakota education without having to create a whole new classification of schools. For example, South Dakota schools can implement concepts like individual and project based learning without having charter or Montessori schools.

Proposed Solutions

It is important to the NASAAC to propose solutions identified as achievable and effective. After careful consideration of the factors affecting student achievement, the positive impact that alternative methods can have, and experiencing some of those models firsthand, the council's conversations started to coalesce around three potential solutions. While many ideas were discussed, council members were cognizant of recommending solutions that are practical from an implementation standpoint. At its fourth meeting in Flandreau, council members voted with a green card or a red card to indicate general agreement (green) or general disagreement (red) with each of the three proposed solutions considered. Some members chose to indicate ambivalence, or a desire to have more information, by showing yellow cards. At its fifth and final meeting in Pierre, the council came together one last time to recap and proceed with making final recommendations to the Governor as well as the South Dakota Legislature. A fourth solution emerged at the council's last meeting. Once again, the group voted to indicate agreement, disagreement or ambivalence using colored cards. The group's final solutions, along with a description of the issue that the solution is intended to address, are described on the following pages.

Solution: Establish three pilot innovation schools with the goal of redesigning the educational experience to improve the achievement levels and graduation rates of the state's at-risk Native American students.

Current Issue: Traditional school structures are not conducive to meeting the diverse needs of today's learners.

FINAL VOTE: 15 greens; no other colors displayed

This solution can be operationalized by establishing a grant application process for eligible schools to apply. Priority will be given to applications that demonstrate the ability to:

- Implement an instructional program in Dakota/Lakota/Nakota language in order to revitalize and preserve Native languages
- Reach high concentrations of students performing below state averages for English Language Arts and Math proficiency
- Provide effective programming leading to postsecondary readiness and work readiness
- Recruit and retain highly effective teachers and administrators
- Mandate the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings across the curriculum
- Implement the "whole child concept" with a focus on physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being
- Provide a school environment that recognizes and supports the diversity of the student population and promotes a sense of belonging
- Commit to five fundamental goals:
    - To instill self-confidence through cultural identity
    - To nurture strength and perseverance
    - To support the development of the whole child
    - To prepare youth academically and emotionally for college
    - To prepare and empower youth for leadership roles
- Provide access to an educational facility
- Develop a strategic plan for strong collaboration and community support
- Develop a sustainability plan

Proposed timeline: Three-year process beginning July 2016; innovation schools to open fall 2019

Proposed funding: Not less than $2 million but not more than $2.5 million (start-up funds)

Legislation: Bill during 2016 Legislature for authority

Solution: Implement "Indian Education for All," a plan to promote better understanding of South Dakota's Native American culture among all students.

Current Issue: Lack of cultural understanding among teachers, administrators, school board members, students, and community members leads to a school environment that discourages student learning.

FINAL VOTE: 14 greens; no other colors displayed

This solution can be operationalized by:

- Mandating the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings (OSEUs) and revise according to regular state revision cycle. Verify use through the state accreditation process.

- Embedding the OSEUs into the "unpacked" state content standards, beginning with the social studies standards and continuing through all core content areas

- Creating units and lessons for use by South Dakota educators to ensure the OSEU are utilized in a culturally relevant manner
    - Begin with units/lessons for social studies
    - Expand to other core content areas

- Providing professional development for teachers to support implementation of the OSEU and to include:
    - Unpacking the standards
    - Instructional methods
    - Instructional content
    - Relevancy

- Revising existing undergraduate-level South Dakota Indian studies course required for certification in South Dakota to reflect the OSEUs

Proposed timeline:

- 2015-16 Embed OSEUs in "unpacked" social studies standards
- 2016-17 Develop OSEUs social studies units/lessons and provide professional development for teachers to support implementation
- Embed OSEUs in other core content areas
- 2016-17 Revise South Dakota Indian studies course with implementation in 2017-18

Proposed funding: To be determined

Legislation: Not necessary

Solution: Establish initiatives to support recruitment and retention of high quality teachers.

Current Issue: Schools in rural, isolated areas experience significant challenges in recruiting and retaining high quality teachers.

FINAL VOTE: 13 greens; no other colors displayed

This solution can be operationalized by:

Part A:

- Supporting the work of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Teachers and Students in its efforts on teacher recruitment and retention and to raise the salaries of teachers across South Dakota;

- Establishing a scholarship to incentivize paraprofessionals currently working in South Dakota school districts with high concentrations of students performing below state averages for English Language Arts and Math proficiency to pursue full teacher certification (partnership between tribal colleges and Board of Regents institutions). Utilize available options, including online.

Part B:

- Expanding the mentoring program for early career teachers working in South Dakota school districts with high concentrations of students performing below state averages for English Language Arts and Math proficiency (WoLakota Project)

Proposed timeline:

- Fall 2016 Implement scholarship program for 10 individuals to complete degree in 4 years (with intent for continuous funding)
- Fall 2016 Continue WoLakota program, serving 20 teachers

Proposed funding: To be determined

Legislation: Bill during 2016 Legislature to set up scholarship program

Solution: Conduct an annual review of relevant data to understand: 1) where the greatest challenges exist, and 2) where progress is being made so successful efforts can be studied and replicated.

Current Issue: Historically, there has been a lack of coordinated action by state, tribal and federal governments to implement solutions that address the often-talked about issues affecting the education of Native American children.

FINAL VOTE: 7 greens; 2 yellows

This solution can be operationalized by:

- Engaging South Dakota's Indian Education Advisory Council, whose members include key stakeholders, in:
    - Conducting an annual review of graduation rates, college readiness rates, and other appropriate and available data relative to the public schools in their locales
    - Reviewing similar data from tribally operated and Bureau of Indian Education schools in their locales, assuming those entities are willing and able to share aggregate data
    - Using this data to provide Council members with a clear picture of where the highest needs exist and to inform: 1) their recommendations to the state Department of Education, and 2) their own efforts locally to improve outcomes for students

Proposed timeline: September 2016 and annually thereafter

Proposed funding: Additional funding not necessary, as this would fall under the work of the Indian Education Advisory Council

Legislation: Not necessary

Conclusion

As the council's work comes to a close, council members would like to recognize the many students and educators who shared their experiences in an effort to inform the council's work. A special thank you is due to the Bush Foundation as well for its financial support, which made this work possible. In closing, the council respectfully requests consideration of these proposed solutions as a positive step in breaking down the barriers of cultural stereotypes and building up our Native American students.

APPENDIX I:

Current and Historical Factors Affecting Achievement of Students

(This is a record of the list compiled by NASAAC members on April 28, 2015)

• Attendance - bullying; home life; • Historical/generational trauma • Low vocabulary entering school • Parent education/training • Relationships • Poverty • Writing skills • Lack of Indian involvement in public school decision making • Socialization patterns • Wrong definition for achievement • Mission and vision of the institution of education • Drugs and alcohol • Cultural discontinuity • Participation in student activities • Self-advocacy skills • Lack of Parent engagement • Low self-esteem • Low expectations • Indian education is low priority for state and federal legislators • Racial stereotypes - racism • Teacher education • Teacher quality and retention • Access to information; kids learn differently than before - technology • Life relevancy • Inadequate training for teachers of Native American students • Suicide and the mourning process	• Teach for America or non-local teachers • Lack of Native American or local teachers to teach Native American children • School funding • Lack of teacher housing • Geography – 50 miles from nearest school • Trust • Lack of support outside community • Transient students – kids who move from school to school • Quality of books, relevancy of materials • Language • Community integration • Diet/health • Lack of a culturally relevant curriculum • All adults think they are educators • Unwritten curriculum or hidden - socialization – putting kids in their place – dehumanizing effect of schooling • School to prison pipeline • AD/HD and autism; other learning disabilities • Lack of motivation/want • Lack of supportive environment • Caring • Social media • Gender recognition • Ignorance of the establishment • Early childhood education • School leadership
• Autonomy of curriculum development • Control of operating budget – finance, est., authority • Flexible scheduling • Control over who gets to attend • Alternative assessment • Multiple assessments • Adapting to individual learning styles • Empowers the student • Low student to teacher ratio	• Independent school board • Make decisions for the students not the adults • Goal is to create leaders – increasing the scores is a part of that • Insulation from politics; board it appointed; mission-driven members • Virtual high school • Good governance

• Extended learning times • Strong school culture • Strong school leadership • Motivation and community wants it • Whole different vision and mission statement - refreshed	• Lack of hierarchy at the school – lateral/shared leadership • Flexibility in structure • One to one relationships with an adult in the building • School leadership • Basing the school on CTE • Language school