

ROCKFORD AIPAC

American Indian Parent Advisory Committee



R.A.I.S.E Newsletter

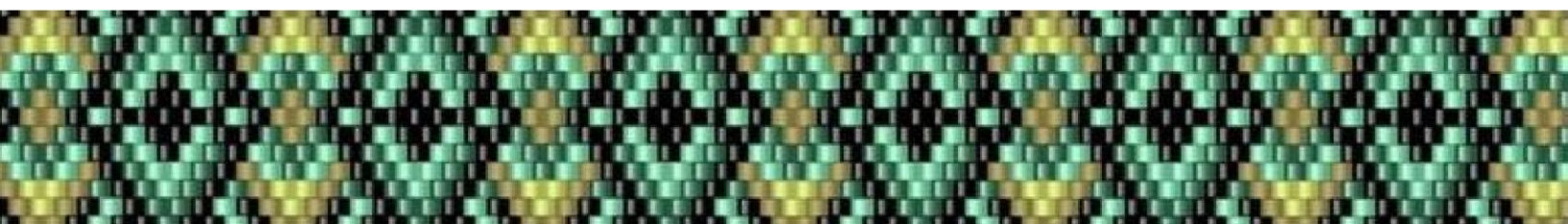
ROCKFORD AREA INDIGENOUS STUDENT EDUCATION – September 2025



Pictured above: At the Middle School greenhouse, our Three Sisters planting beds are flourishing. The corn, beans, and squash are thriving together, alongside sunflowers and pumpkins.

Welcome to September 2025 RAISE Newsletter!

As we begin a new school year, AIPAC continues its commitment to supporting Native students through academic, cultural, and community opportunities. Thanks to all the families who, in partnership with the ISD 883, make these programs strong. Rockford AIPAC exists under Minnesota Department of Education's Office of American Indian Education guidance to support Indigenous students in five areas: postsecondary readiness, academic achievement, culturally relevant curriculum, positive self-image, and intercultural awareness.



Feature: The Three Sisters Garden

At the Middle School greenhouse, our Three Sisters planting is flourishing with corn, beans, squash, sunflowers, and pumpkins.

The “Three Sisters”—corn, beans, and squash—form one of the most enduring Indigenous agricultural systems. Corn provides structure, beans enrich the soil, and squash shades the ground. Together, they embody reciprocity, balance, and resilience.

Long before colonization, Indigenous communities cultivated this symbiotic system, blending ecological knowledge with cultural identity. Today, heirloom varieties such as Mandan Corn, Hidatsa Beans, and Winnebago Squash reconnect us with ancestral wisdom and keep traditions alive.

A Symbiotic System

Corn offers stalks for beans to climb, beans fix nitrogen in the soil, and squash suppresses weeds while conserving moisture. Each crop sustains the others—structurally, nutritionally, and environmentally. Indigenous stories also describe the sisters as spiritual beings who protect one another, reflecting values of community and reciprocity.

Heirloom Varieties: Seeds with Deep Connections

While the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Winnebago (Ho-Chunk) are not always thought of as “Minnesota tribes,” their histories and seeds are deeply connected to this region through trade, migration, and cultural exchange.

- **Mandan Corn** – cultivated for centuries along the Missouri River in present-day North Dakota, Mandan Corn spread east through trade networks that reached Minnesota. Hardy and quick to mature, it embodies resilience and ceremonial importance.
- **Hidatsa Beans** – developed by the Hidatsa, close agricultural relatives of the Mandan, these beans carried warrior symbolism and sustained communities across the Northern Plains. Their seeds also became part of Minnesota’s Indigenous food traditions.
- **Winnebago Squash** – rooted in the Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) Nation, originally from Wisconsin and later displaced west, this squash was also grown and traded in Minnesota. With its sweet, storable flesh, it represents sustenance and cultural survival.

Reviving Indigenous Agriculture

The wisdom of the Three Sisters offers timeless lessons in balance, sustainability, and community. They show us how to grow food in harmony with nature and live in relationship with the land, each other, and our ancestors.



Driver's Education

Rockford AIPAC is pleased to announce the availability of scholarship money for driver's education, both behind the wheel, and the classroom portion. Funds will be allocated on a first-come, first-serve basis. The school portion is through Rockford Community Education, and the behind the wheel portion is through A+Driving School. Email perry.buffie@rockford883.org if you have any questions or want to register.

School Supplies

Rockford AIPAC has many, if not most, of the school supplies on your student's classroom list. If you are in need of any school supply refills, email perry.buffie@rockford883.org to arrange a pickup.

Field Trips

AIPAC plans quarterly field trips to offer RAISE students enriching cultural experiences. Some trips are for all K–12 students, while others are age-specific. Last year included visits to the Mille Lacs Indian Museum, the Minneapolis Institute of Art and Minneapolis American Indian Center, and the Science Museum of Minnesota.

We are planning this year's trips now—**please share your ideas!**

Field trips support our mission to foster culturally relevant learning, positive self-image, and intercultural awareness.

Calendar of Events

- October 1—AIPAC Business Meeting, District Office, 5 pm
- October 13—Indigenous Peoples' Day
- November 1 - 30— National American Indian Heritage Month
- November 5—AIPAC Business Meeting, District Office, 5 pm
- December 3—AIPAC Business Meeting, District Office, 5 pm
- January 7—AIPAC Business Meeting, District Office, 5 pm

- Craft Nights—Most Mondays, 4:30–6:30 pm, Middle School Cafeteria
- Family Fun Gatherings—Dates to be announced

For full details and the most up-to-date schedule of AIPAC meetings, events, and activities, visit our shared Google Calendar: [RAISE Calendar](#)

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0?cid=MjFmZWY5NjFjODE5OTEzZTBhYjY3ZWMyY2MyOGQ3NjhiZmJkMDg5NTAwNDRjZmFIYjVjODEzYmU1ZGRhYmNIOEBncm91cC5jYWxlbnRhci5nb29nbGUuY29t>

Stay Connected

For questions, supplies, or event info, please contact:
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