

Teacher Background Information for Presenting American Indian Standards

Co-Created by the SPPS Office of American Indian Education and the SPPS Office of Teaching and Learning

We must always begin by Acknowledging the Land and Tribes: All land in Minnesota is the traditional homeland of the Dakota. The two main tribes in Minnesota today are Dakota and Ojibwe, though others like Ho-Chunk have also resided here.

Curriculum Requirements and Scope: Minnesota State Standards mandate that all school districts integrate American Indian State Standards into all content areas. When planning lessons, prioritize the Dakota and Ojibwe tribes, but feel free to include other tribes (even those outside of Minnesota) if they fit the lesson well.

Overcoming Teacher Discomfort: It is understandable that teachers who are not American Indian may feel uncomfortable presenting this content due to fear of inaccuracy, perpetuating stereotypes, or causing offense. However, it is essential to overcome this discomfort. Past absence of this content has allowed misinformation to define American Indian people. As educators, we must now provide a more accurate and current representation.

Language and Spelling: Dakota and Ojibwe are oral languages, meaning there is no single correct way to write them. Be prepared to see wide variations in spelling among teaching resources. Resources will include links to audio pronunciations.

Core Purposes of the American Indian Standards: 1. To make the curriculum more culturally relevant. 2. Provide more accurate information and correct stereotypes. 3. Place American Indians in a current context. 4. Highlight Indigenous thought, contributions, and perspectives. 5. Ensure a quality education that meets the state standards.

Addressing Historical Trauma: Lessons may include American Indian history, which can expose past traumas. Educators must be prepared to address a wide range of student emotions (anger, guilt, indifference) in a nurturing and respectful manner. American Indian people must be included in the curriculum not as a relic of the past, but as a source of Indigenous wisdom and contemporary contributions.

Minnesota Native American Essential Understandings for Educators

Essential Understandings

1.MN is home to Native Americans whose identities, cultures, and experiences vary greatly.

2.The Dakota and Ojibwe people in MN have distinct cultures.

3.Native Americans have a strong and unique connection to the land of MN.

4.Tribes are sovereign nations, in reality and under the law.

5.Native Americans in MN have faced unique hardships throughout history which have resulted in long-lasting disparities.

6.Tribes and Native people make important contributions to the well-being of other Minnesotans.

7.Native American Minnesotans have a legacy of important accomplishments.

Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
boisforte.com

Gichi-Onigaming / Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
grandportageband.com

Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians
redlakenation.org

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
llojibwe.org

White Earth Reservation
whiteearth.com

Fond Du Lac Reservation
fdlrez.com

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
millelacsband.com

Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
shakopeedakota.org

Prairie Island Indian Community
prairieisland.org

Upper Sioux Community
uppersiouxcommunity-nsh.gov

Lower Sioux Indian Community
lowersioux.com

(MN Native American Essential Understanding for Educators (UnderstandNativeMN.org, 2024))