

***Equitable Distribution of Effective Educators in BIE's Schools***  
**Choctaw, MS Purposeful Listening Session**

December 9, 2016

9:00AM

**Participants: Choctaw district staff (including school leaders, cultural and language staff, and lead teachers), BIE staff**

**Session Attendees** [see table at the end of this document]

***Introductions and Framing***

Brad Jupp, Acting Implementation Officer and Acting Chief Academic Officer:

***Purpose of today's session***

- Acquire wide range of stakeholders to give us best thoughts on how to solve critical policy problems. This is not a consultation.
- Reestablish relationships with stakeholders in their communities. This conversation will evolve over time that would be about the state of the BIE faculty. We will do an annual report.
- Meet the expectations of U.S Department of Education (ED). ED is putting pressure on States to be more engaged with the people that are served.

Brad Jupp, Acting Implementation Officer and Acting Chief Academic Officer:

***Framing***

- These sessions will be posted on a webpage, along with the final policy document.
- Feel invited to voice your views based on your professional station.
- Encourage diversity to flourish.
- Equity gap is a term used to describe a problem in a public school in general. NCLB calls for States to make plans to ensure poor and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers. Typically equity gaps occur between demographic categories of students, such as a rich and poor students or students of different ethnicities. This is a challenge in our schools.
- ED is asking us to use data to identify gaps, consider root causes, and propose strategies.
- We cannot do some of the analysis that other States do because we do not have good data practices. We do not know our faculty. We also have a challenge in regards to state assessments since our students are taking assessments across multiple states. The data we *do* have has allowed us to determine two indicators: rural index and student achievement/student growth comparison.
- We have three hypotheses and we have thoughts on the causes of BIE's equity gaps. Causes include: ineffective recruitment and retention of educators; limited professional and career development opportunities for educators; differences in expectations and understandings about lifestyle and culture between recruits and community.

- In regards to timeline we are in the second phase of drafting the plan. From there we will learn from successful schools, we will identify and support schools in need, and then report progress and revise plan.

Brad Jupp, Acting Implementation Officer and Acting Chief Academic Officer:

- **How can tribal leaders and educators collaborate with BIE to attract and retain effective, experienced, and qualified teachers?**

Principal:

- I had to work on building/networking with universities. Also, we have benefited from retired public school system who are still relatively young and they are experienced.

Curriculum Coordinator:

- It is important that when teachers come in they know our children and know the culture. We have grade level meetings, we have pacing guides and this serves as an opportunity for teachers to open up to and learn from one another. This opens up the dialogue for culture as well. The consultants hold grade-level meetings.
- Those consultants then go to visit various classrooms and provide support based on the grade-level meetings.
- There are reports that are created that go to our principals and Mr. Germany.

RTI coach:

- We have many assessments that inform us of a child's path and we can direct the appropriate resources. We do feel like we have many good resources and teachers who come in are surprised by that. We appreciate the tribe that provides those for us.

Culture and Language Teacher:

- If teachers are not accepting of a student's culture, the student does not feel comfortable. Teachers need to come through a session on learning about our people.

Lead Teacher:

- I am one of those retired teachers, and I wanted to make sure that my personality would mesh with the students and so I taught summer school with the community during various summers. This helped me a lot. I now want more language and culture sessions. There are things that I still have no clue about. This is now my 13th year with the tribal community.

Brad Jupp, Acting Implementation Officer and Acting Chief Academic Officer:

- **I want to ask some questions about the Choctaw cultures, potential employees through summer school, and academic culture serves to attract and retain. What role does the tribe and community play in development in culture 101 course?**

Title I Coordinator:

- The Choctaw language course is payed for by Title I federal programs.

Culture and Language Teacher:

- Principals submit a list of new employees. We set up a class at the beginning of the first and second semester (or one or the other).
- I took a look at the survey of what students thought of the teachers. We looked at their issues and problems, and we realized it was all cultural issues. We came up with basic guidelines for the unit. For example, our community uses first names as a sign of respect, also our personal space is larger than yours. Also, a sign of respect for our culture is to look down, while with you, a sign of respect is to look people in the eyes. We used our community to teach the staff.

Juanita Mendoza, Chief of Staff:

- **How do schools engage with the parents, especially earlier on with the language barrier?**

Respondent:

- In the old days before teacher assistants, an older student would do the translation. Now most of us are acultured. We do have parent meetings and parent advisory boards. Also, with this new grant, we are going to bring parents inside the school in the language class.

Brad Jupp, Acting Implementation Officer and Acting Chief Academic Officer:

- In some big city districts, they are test driving teachers during summer school. **Does the school system here ask teachers who are newly retired to consider teaching here?**

Teacher:

- I worked summer school with the tribe and was recruited that way. I was not a retired teacher.

Special Education Coordinator and Lead Teacher:

- Getting the “years” in is a teacher’s concern. Many young teachers do not want to come in this way.

Principal:

- There is an incentive to teach in MS in rural/poverty schools. The repayment of loans is an incentive (William Winner money), but does not apply to tribal schools.

Coordinator:

- It is important that principals notice “bright stars” from student teaching/summer schools and spread the word to others who may need teachers.

Principal:

- I hired a new teacher this year. I came in with the inclination of academic first as this was how I was trained. To then walk the plank of academics/cultural blend has been a challenge.
- I have had to learn about how to blend the culture.
- Academically you want them to be the best but I know culture and maintaining culture is very important to the community. I don't know where academics fit in the community but I do not think it is unimportant to the community. I have had to learn to do this walk and it's been challenging. I have told students, "I am talking to you and you need to look at me."

Special Education Teacher:

- I think it's important to connect with other Native American communities so we can learn from one another.

Lead Teacher:

- I wish there could be an honor's program so students could learn from other native cultures and tribes. It would be nice for them to see other Native students who are doing well with projects.

Principal:

- I applaud BIE on what you are doing. We need the right people first. We need to be recruiting and getting our name out there and boastfully communicating what we can offer.
- As a principal, I am always recruiting. I worked in a neighboring school district and I had never heard of the Choctaw school district. Our facilities are the best I've ever worked in. I also appeal to a more moral mission-minded person.
- You need to sell what you got (e.g., tech, low student/teaching ratio). It is important that teachers know what our vision and mission are. It's important for teachers and students – clear expectations.

Curriculum Coordinator:

- We have received a grant (MS math and science school associated with Columbus University) and other folks have seen how bright our students are. We knew how bright they are.

Brad Jupp, Acting Implementation Officer and Acting Chief Academic Officer:

- Professional development (building skills and knowledge about your craft) and career development are different. You create clear steps to go beyond without just going into administration. In this community it is clear that there are opportunities for teachers to develop without leaving. That isn't always the case in our other communities and we would want you to think about how we can bring you as leaders to other communities. **What can BIE do in collaboration with its tribal educators and tribal leaders?**

Education Leader:

- We need to organize the community system - build pathways, local line leadership to build a shared strategic shared calendar, develop ongoing and constant recruitment. Also, we should establish an internal data system (e.g., anticipated teacher shortage). We need to somehow work out an expedited background check system. Is there is something already out there that we can utilize, we want to do that.

Brad Jupp, Acting Implementation Officer and Acting Chief Academic Officer:

- About the data system, we do not want to supplant the tribe's interest in having a common data system. **Would it be helpful from your perspective if there was a pool of data (that was transparent) about your staff that was shared across the nation?**

Education Leader:

- I don't think it would hurt.

Brad Jupp, Acting Implementation Officer and Acting Chief Academic Officer:

- Let's expand to thinking about other partners. **Who else helps you? How have you build partnerships?**

Professional Development Coordinator:

- We have outreach with a university and the director's wife taught here. We have curriculum and director meetings.

Special Education Coordinator:

- We also keep our eyes open and send teams to go place to look at good things we are hearing about.

Education Leader:

- We do need help in regards to the praxis test and things like that.

Brad Jupp, Acting Implementation Officer and Acting Chief Academic Officer:

- We welcome anyone who wants to stick around, we welcome any final words, we welcome any written thoughts.

Principal:

- I want to add onto planting seeds and recruitment.
- If you go into an elementary classroom, half want to be a teacher or fireman. Somewhere along the lines they change their mind. If we can sow those seeds, that would be good.

Brad Jupp, Acting Implementation Officer and Acting Chief Academic Officer:

- There are lots of districts that have similar thoughts. Do you have any advice on "grow your own?" There is a challenge in growing your own though. **Can BIE help them develop their own programs?**

Coordinator:

- We do have points of connection with universities.

Principal:

- We also have teacher assistants who are interested in being educators and we need to support their endeavors.

Lead Teacher:

- Talking about these students, I see some former students who dropped out of college. I think, can we have some sort of mentoring program for these college students who aren't receiving the same supports. And can we have a program where some students can gain some necessary hours in our schools.

Educator Leader:

- At the beginning of high school, I think it's important to have career fairs. The key is whether the student would like to relocate outside the reservation, or would you like to stay here? If you stay, there are certain jobs that would be good career choices on the reservation (e.g., healthcare, education).

**Major Themes**

**Major themes that appeared from the listening session include:**

- Retired teachers are recruited into the tribal school system.
- Principals are heavily involved in recruiting for their schools.
- A culture/language introduction course is critical for new teachers. Teachers enjoy the education and would like to see more.
- There is need to cultivate a "grow your own" program, but there is also a need to support tribal students who enter college to graduate.

**List of Participants**

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