

Equitable Distribution of Effective Educators in BIE's Schools
Reno, NV Purposeful Listening Session with NIEA
October 7, 2016

Participants: Tribal leaders, community members, school board members, teachers

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

Quinton Roman Nose – Cheyenne, TEDNA Executive Director:

- There are potential candidates within schools and opportunities to grow your own programs within schools.
- Collaborate with other organizations like TFA to recruit Native teachers.

Pam Quarter – Lumbee:

- Operational definition of effective educator, great teacher. How is BIE defining it and how are stakeholders defining it?

Betty Ojay – Navajo:

- Housing is a problem and connected to recruiting good teachers.
- Potential way to address the issue is to have higher pay/salaries.

RoseMary – Rosebud Sioux Tribal Education Department:

- Need to look at how human capital is used in schools.
- Students want the teachers to follow them every year. Otherwise, students have to adjust to new expectations and new people.
- There may therefore be quality teachers who do not necessarily meet the data, at least within a year.
- How classrooms are structured has an impact.
- Follow kids for 2-3 years.

Darrick Franklin – Navajo Nation:

- Something that hinders students are the social and emotional needs of the students - several key factors that play into the success of students in the classroom. There is a need for teachers who understand these needs and issues.
- The BIE should include an emphasis on social and emotional needs of the students.

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

Summary

- We don't want to pigeonhole teachers by just one measure.
- We need to think as leaders about how we can move from wishing for a teacher pipeline program to having it.
 - How can we collaborate to make these programs?
- What happens after the hiring? How are teachers retained?
- Need to work harder to get the right and the most relevant incentives.

Clara Daily – School Board Member with Navajo:

- There are teachers coming from overseas through a particular program. These teachers have in some cases a very strong accent that makes it different for them to understand.

Fred Fallit – Principal of Shanto – Navajo:

- Teacher shortages – to be addressed, there needs to be a change.

Nathan Dunn:

- Incentives and policies that create incentives come from the top, the administrators.

Roberta Gorman – Teacher, Community Leader, and School Board Member:

- Need to have people to come back to the grassroots – have the Washington level leaders come to speak with the students, elders, and community members.
- Need to better understand and identify some of the other factors important to success such as culture and language.

Noreen Kelly – Navajo School Board, Wingate:

- There are great teachers in the schools, but there is a need for a top down support for them.
- Recently, there was a plan for students to go on a trip, and it was approved by the principal, but was later cancelled/not approved.
- Give teachers an incentive to stay after schools, at least once a month. Helps to keep an interest in education.
- What do the students want? What teachers do they want to retain?

Respondent:

- Teachers are very underpaid, including in overtime pay for extracurricular activities involvement.
- There is also a need to assist with housing.
- Teachers are bombarded with just trying to make the grades. Too much focus on testing and not enough on fine arts and other areas that the students really enjoy. Need to look back at what tests are actually effective.
- Work for students to retain identity, language, and culture.

Respondent:

- Politics of education is also important. Who is in power in Washington has an impact. Congressional delegations have their own priorities.
- Access to healthcare and career pathways does not exist.
- Can't compete with neighboring communities due to lack of funds. Washington leadership must determine funding priorities.
- Teacher shortage – tribal communities and the BIE are smaller and don't always have to follow the same trends as the larger economy, so there is possibility to break this problem faster.

Respondent:

- Federal programs that create incentives, such as student loan forgiveness (example: IHS).

Angela Barney – Navajo:

- Problem with the new structure.
- Problems are with the principals
- There is a statutory provision that allows them to select in partnership with the school board.
- Is the closing of the equity gap part of the BIE reform?
- Pay scale equal to the DOD pay scale.
- Concern that a tribal takeover would result in losing teachers.
- BIE does well with the benefits – less of a need for housing.
- Confusion as to who to listen to and who to get instructions from.
- Relying on a lot of non-certified teachers to teach.
- Is the presentation on the website and is it part of the reform?

Respondent:

- Needs assessment that is culturally appropriate.

Respondent:

- School boards are an important part of this process and need to be educated on their roles – difference between BIE operated and tribally controlled, how those school boards affect the operation of their schools.
- Expectations of the school board.

Respondent:

- Collaborate with BIE to establish incentives.

Darrick Franklin:

- There is segregation between BIE schools and grant schools. Need to make sure that teachers and administrators are getting the same kind of training, information, and support.

Respondent:

- Each state as the Praxis test for teachers and cut scores. Will the BIE be certifying teachers or leaving it to the states?

John - BIE

- Collaboration between tribes and the BIE on student loan forgiveness program.

Respondent:

- Federally qualified health board that used a loan repayment program. Some stayed because they stayed so long trying to pay off loans.

Respondent:

- Need to consult with the tribes.

- Sometimes you have to do the hardest things to succeed, which might be teacher certification.

Respondent:

- Make a recommendation to colleges and programs that there is a requirement regarding teacher degrees.

Respondent:

- Maybe have BIE accept any state certification regardless of where the individual is teaching.

Randall:

- Provide scholarships for potential teachers that have a teaching requirement (similar to IHS), and have a strong communication plan on it so students are familiar with it.
- Hiring needs to be faster, otherwise we will lose candidates. Speed up the background check if possible.

Major Themes

Major themes that appeared from the listening session include:

- Partner with outside programs to bring additional teachers, but need to make sure they know the context.
- Teachers lack incentives to remain (e.g., underpaid, not enough supports, overworked)
- Cultivate better relationship between BIE and tribes.
- Ease barriers to teachers working in BIE schools (e.g., teacher certification process, loan forgiveness).

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