

Native American Open Hearing

Monday, September 23, 2024

Big Bear | Hospitality Room

In Attendance:

Brian Nolan, Megan Causley, Sandy Sawyer, Jeanine Sherman, Jocelyn Nolan, David Houghton, Steve Knauf, Lisa Burnside, Kimberly Lee, Cristina Menard, Jennifer Blair, Kaden Blair, Dr. Barb Light, Theresa Thompson, Amanda Handziak, Angela Love, Symantha Morley

Dr. Barb Light welcomed everyone.

Dr. Light discussed mission and goals of Indian Education Program.

Dr. Light Introduced names of current board members.

- Mr. Steve Knauf asked if there were any individuals interested. If you are interested, please email nauffer@icloud.com
- Secondary-aged students can be on the committee.

Mrs. Morley discussed academic support and professional development implementation.

Ms. Handziak discussed Cultural Support. (Native Youth Council, Bulletin Boards, Celebrations and activities, First Indigenous culture night, Angeline Bouley (author), thirteen moons).

Dr. Light discussed policies and procedures.

[Indian Education \(saultschools.org\)](http://saultschools.org)

Reviewed Parent Survey Responses.

Dr. Light opened the meeting up to the audience for comments and suggestions.

- Mrs. Causley – Discussed parent concerns and stating it is a parent/school partnership to control bullying and vaping.
- Audience members asked how we introduce Ojibwe language.
 - Buildings have wall signage that have both English and Ojibwe.
 - Language introduced – SAMS does word introduction.
- Mrs. Sawyer asked about the process to modify IPPs as she believes they are aligned with the Title VI grant verbiage.
 - If changes are desired, Sault Area Public Schools will ensure we follow Title VI Grant verbiage.

- Mrs. Causley stated that some of the concerns shared in the parent survey are school wide concerns not just Native American. To start tackling some of the concerns (ex: vaping), it is a joint effort between parents and the school.
- Committee discussed having members on the Native Youth Council that are not Native American.
- Ms. Lee asked about data collection from our students attending Sault Area Public Schools.
 - Another school in the district asked the students to complete a survey and learned some valuable information.
- Ms. Burnside, YEA provided valuable information.
 - Mrs. Stephanie Sprecker is the New Director.
 - There is a higher education program that has scholarships available and will share a list with Mrs. Causley.
 - Youth development fund – can get application online.
 - YEA expanded services after school program.
 - The relationship between Sault Schools and Tribe is strengthening.
 - The program goes until 5:30 and has a native youth council open to all but must be native to hold a position.
- Mr. Houghton asked about Sault Schools implementing different days of recognition.
 - Friday Michigan Indian Native American Day.
 - May- National Native American day.
 - Recognize those days by presentation, guest speaker.
 - Evening with the Arts – The Drum and Dancers
- Mr. Nolan would like to see more Ojibwe introduced in the schools. The more the language is used, the more people become aware of the culture/heritage.
 - Feedback from audience:
 - Look at the online option for Ojibwe.
 - Anything with a label in English have one in Ojibwe.
 - Big Bear person (Yvette) who teaches Ojibwe – reach out to collaborate.
 - Sight word sheets in Ojibwe.
 - Look at PLC for incorporation Ojibwe in the classroom.
 - Can a tribal endorsement elder come in as a teacher?
Unfortunately, no.
 - Dr. Light stated that there is a program going on right now that could help individuals with Ojibwe background receive help with obtaining a teaching certification.
 - Look at setting up consistent guest speakers.
 - Post pronunciation guide.
- Mr. Knauf: Blossoms – books that are in both English and Ojibwe and pronunciation.
- Ms. Menards: Can schools implement a pow wow social? During school hours, can we look at incorporating cultural activities that includes ALL students. Look at bringing in Drum/Dancers.

- Ms. Burnside stated we could collaborate on implementing and finding space/time for Drum/Dancers.

Dr. Light thanked everyone for coming.

The Native American Parent Committee plans to meet the 3rd Monday of every month in Sault Area Middle School Library.

Links:

Blossom Blog: Blossom to Build a Bilingual Publishing Tool for Storytelling in Indigenous Languages (iblossom.com)