**Indigenous Education for the State of South Dakota**

Prepared for: Tribal Education Directors in the State of South Dakota

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**Introduction and Statement of the Problem**

Since the beginning of the Self-Determination Era of Federal Indian Education policy (Wilkins, 2011), many initiatives have been developed, largely at the state and federal levels, to improve academic, socio-emotional, and social/civic outcomes for Indigenous students in the United States. Despite these policy shifts however, trends in data indicators as they pertain to Indigenous students remain problematic. In 2016, 28% of the nearly 644,000 Native American and Alaska Native students in the United States were attending high-poverty schools (compared with 5% of their White peers) and 70% graduated from high school, relative to a national average of 87% (US Department of Education, 2016). From 1994-2018, Indigenous students remained the lowest performing racial group on standardized reading tests (US Department of Education, 2019). Within the state of South Dakota, statistics are even more dire. In South Dakota, Native American youths are 2.5 times more likely to die by suicide than their White peers (South Dakota Suicide Prevention, 2020), and while 13.1% of South Dakota residents were living in poverty in 2019 (United States Census Bureau, 2020), these numbers were nearly 4x higher for residents of the Rosebud Sioux Indian Reservation (at 48.4%) and the Pine Ridge Sioux Indian Reservation (at 54%).

In the year prior to the Covid-19 pandemic (2018-2019), 54% of South Dakota students were proficient in English Language Arts and 46% were proficient in Mathematics, and the statewide high school completion rate for all students was 90%. In the same year, these statistics were quite different for students who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native at 23% proficiency in English Language Arts and 14% proficiency in Mathematics with a 54% high school completion. White students in the state were the highest performing of any racial group with 61% and 53% proficiency in ELA and Math respectively and 90% high school completion.

In public schools on Tribal Reservations in the state, the statistics were worse yet and can be explored in the table below.

***Table 1.1: 2018-2019 Outcomes in Districts Serving Predominantly Native American Students "Not available" denotes that there was no reportable data due to small sample size (Source: State of South Dakota Report Card)***

| District/Reservation | % ELA Proficiency | % Math Proficiency | % High School Completion | % College/ Career Ready |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Todd/Rosebud | 8 | Not available | 69 | Not available |
| Oglala Lakota/Pine Ridge | 8 | Not available | 31 | Not available |
| Eagle Butte /Cheyenne River | 17 | 9 | 72 | 12 |
| McLaughlin/Standing Rock | 7 | Not available | 76 | Not available |



In public districts with more diverse student populations, the gaps in outcomes across lines of race illuminate a clear discrepancy in student experience.

***Table 1.2: 2018-2019 Outcomes by Racial Identity (Native American/White) "Not available" denotes that there was no reportable data due to small sample size (Source: State of South Dakota Report Card)***

| District | % ELA Proficiency (Native/White/ All) | % Math Proficiency (Native/White/ All) | % High School Completion (Native/ White/ All) | % College/ Career Ready (Native/ White/ All) |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rapid City | 23 / 50 / 55 | 15/ 52 / 48 43 / 91 / 84 9 / 49 / 40 |
| Sioux Falls | 22 / 61 / 51 | 15 / 56 / 44 46 / 94 / 87 Not available /41 / 32 |
| Aberdeen | 39 / 63 / 60 | 23 / 56 / 51 94 / 95 / 95 Not available/ 53 / 46 |
| Chamberlain | 29 / 67 / 55 | 15 / 55 / 40 86 / 100 / 95 Not available/ 42 / 29 |

While these data points are discouraging, we do not believe that they represent a deficit or lack of ability of Indigenous students. What these data represent, rather, is a lack of a clear, state-level, Indigenous-informed approach to education that values the wholeness of all young people. Furthermore, standardized testing measures do not encompass the entirety of the student experience and are not representative of all of the values, vision, and beliefs that are deeply held by young people, their relatives, and communities. These data, however, do provide insight into one component of schooling (government-defined "academic achievement") in South Dakota that has major impacts upon the opportunities available to students both during and after their participation in public schooling.

Currently, the South Dakota Department of Education is complicit in the continued exclusion of Indigenous knowledge[1] content from state education standards, citing that this ensures "schools have the ability to teach about all cultures that make up the fabric of South Dakota" (Strubinger, 2021), and that the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings, as a separate set of standards, are sufficient for informing curriculum despite the fact that over 50% of educators reported a lack of familiarity with them (Matzen, 2021).

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[1]Throughout this document, we refer to "Indigenous Knowledge" and "Indigenous Knowledge Systems." Margaret Bruchac (2014) defines Indigenous knowledge as "distinctive understandings, rooted in cultural experience, that guide relations among human, non-human, and other-than human beings in specific ecosystems." Indigenous Knowledge Systems are often Tribally and geographically-specific and encompass the thought, philosophies, and epistemologies of a group.



This lack of inclusion has devastating effects on the state as a whole, including the perpetuation of inaccurate historical narratives about the United States, and the active exclusion of the recognition of Indigenous peoples and Tribes as contemporary, sovereign nations. This erasure lays fertile ground for hostility towards Native Americans in the United States (Adams et al., 2021), impacting the day-to-day lives of young people across the nation. A 2016 study conducted by the Reclaiming Native Truth Project found that 78% of Americans said they know little to nothing about Native Americans, and many were unsure Native Americans still exist in today's society. The same study also illuminated toxic beliefs about Indigenous peoples in the United States, including the belief that Native Americans are a "vanishing race," that they are

"conquered and broken peoples, alcoholics and addicts drowning in poverty while living off of government benefits," and a pervasive belief that Native Americans are corrupt and getting rich off of Tribal casinos (Echo Hawk, 2016 and Reclaiming Native Truth, 2018). It is clear that the state-sanctioned exclusion of Indigenous history and contemporary Indigenous issues from public education is setting the stage for racism and hostility towards Indigenous peoples. **When Indigenous history, knowledge, and culture are not included in public schooling practices, a great deal of room is left for individuals to rely on misinformation, caricatures, and stereotypes to develop their understandings of Indigenous identity and history.** There is research to suggest, however, that explicit inclusion of Indigenous knowledge systems and priorities in state-level education approaches positively impacts all students at the academic, socio-emotional, and social levels.

**Indigenous Education for All and Academic Success**

*"The thing that has always been missing in Indian education, and is still missing,* ***is Indians****"* *(Deloria, 2001).*

According to prevalent statistics, many Native American families and relatives will not experience the joyous occasion of the graduation ceremony, even for graduation from high school. While 90% of White students across South Dakota experience the highlight of graduation, latest statistics show 45% of Native Americans graduate on time (South Dakota State Report Card, 2020-2021). Across the United States 85.8% of all students are counted as graduated in the 4-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate with 74.3% of American Indian/Alaskan Native students counted as graduated (IES/NCES National Center for Education Statistics, 2018-2019).

Before reaching the graduation ceremony, several measures can help monitor a student's progress towards successfully completing high school, one being proficiency on achievement tests. As noted above, gaps are found in achievement test proficiency between Native and non-Native students. What is to account for these inequitable results? "Understanding these educational inequalities requires a broader look at the social, cultural, political, and economic barriers across Indian Country" (Hopkins, 2020, p. 4).



In striving towards academic success for all students, it is crucial to clarify the differences between what is termed *Indian schooling* and *Indigenous education* (Pratt et al., 2018). What has been foisted on Native students is an institutional process of schooling from the boarding school era that continues today. In public schools in South Dakota, Indigenous students often articulate feeling excluded and that they do not feel included, valued, or honored in the school setting. Parents are frustrated and angry. Hopkins (2020) states what is possible: "By contrast, Indigenous education refers to how Native peoples have survived and resisted this colonizing, assimilative agenda by asserting their sovereign right to educate their children according to their own cultures, languages, and knowledges" (2020, p. 5). As noted by Hopkins,

Indigenous education is "place-based" and "refers to the explicit challenge and resistance by Native peoples toward Indian schooling's colonizing, assimilative agenda, what is called "*decolonizing education*" (2020, p. 5). Decolonizing education is necessary as the negative effects continue today as Western epistemologies, rather than Tribal knowledge, are what school design and content are based upon (Hopkins, 2020).

In the midst of what may seem to be insurmountable gaps, there are bright spots, including efforts in Oregon and Washington focused on a model of Indigenous Education for All. These two states are not alone in providing Indigenous Education for All. They are joined by North Dakota (2021), Wyoming (2017), Montana (1999), and Hawaii (1978) with more states in the pipeline. In Aotearoa, New Zealand, efforts to embed Indigenous Education for All are a living example of what can happen when national recognition of the horrific effects of colonization lead to systemic change across the country. Māori people experience powerful success with programs affirming their language, culture, and identity (Bishop, 2021; Riki-Waaka, 2021, Tate, 2017, Webber, 2018). South Dakota could become a leader in the work to pursue equity and ensure all students, including Native students, thrive in academic endeavors if leaders prioritize Indigenous Education for All.

## *North Dakota - Century Code Amended*

The 67th legislature of North Dakota passed Senate Bill 2304, which was signed into law by Governor Burgum April 23, 2021. SB 2304 revises the North Dakota Century Code and decrees four weeks of mandated study of the "Native American story" across Social Science disciplines as a graduation requirement for students in all public and non-public schools in North Dakota. The law requires "a mandated four-week instructional course, developed in collaboration with federally recognized Indian tribes in the state, encompassing the Native American story, including: (1) Contributions of Native Americans to the sociology of North Dakota; (2) Current tribal relations with the state and the United States; (3) Tribal history; (4) Tribal sovereignty; (5) Culture; (6) Treaty rights; (7) Socioeconomic experiences; and (8) Current events" (Senate Bill 2304).



## *Oregon – Tribal History/Shared History*

Oregon has prioritized the academic success of all students. Partnerships between the nine federally recognized tribal nations and the state of Oregon have been in place since legislation was passed and executive orders took effect in 1975.

> ORS 172.100-.140 established the Commission on Indian Services "for the purpose of improving services with American Indians in the State of Oregon" and [was] comprised of representatives of the nine tribes and members of the Legislative branch, making Oregon the first state in the nation to lead the way in this important work (*State of Oregon Government to Government Agency Education Cluster Meeting Manual 2014*, p. 2).

These efforts were further strengthened when Governor Kitzhaber signed Executive Order 96-30, which established the Government to Government Education Cluster, which provides for "consultation on matters of mutual concern." This Executive Order realized how critical it was to recognize Tribal Nations as sovereign. Partnerships proceed through the use of "clusters" focused on various areas of import to government and residents. The Education Cluster meets on a quarterly basis with stakeholders, including Tribal leaders and State entities, to review the plan and determine what is best for all students to meet Oregon's 40-40-20 goals, including 100% of Oregon high school students graduating by 2025.

Oregon has pushed forward with efforts to see all students thrive and continues to review, update, and secure a better future for Oregonians. In the *American Indian/Alaskan Native Student Success Plan 2020-2025* data showed insufficient progress of Native children in academics. In response the State increased its efforts. "By engaging the wider community through public community conversations and data analyses, OIE [Office of Indian Education] worked to center the voices, needs and experiences of AI/AN students and youth" (*American Indian/Alaskan Native Student Success Plan 2020-2025*, p. 2). The *American Indian/Alaskan Native Student Success Plan* was passed by the Legislature in 2019 and now informs the work for equity and excellence.

Statistics noted in Table 2.1 below are taken from Statewide Annual Reports pre-pandemic. The pandemic has challenged students, families, educators, educational systems, and exposed inequity in access to the internet and virtual instruction. As a result during the Spring of 2020 many school districts across the United States received waivers for annual assessments; some statistics are unavailable.



***Table 2.1: Outcomes in Oregon Districts***
***(Source: Oregon Statewide Report Card 2017, 2019, 2021)***

| **Student Group** | **% of ELA Proficiency High School 2016-2017** | **% of ELA Proficiency High School 2018-2019** | **% of Math Proficiency High School 2016-2017** | **% of Math Proficiency High School 2018-2019** | **% of Ninth Grade on Track to Graduate 2016-2017** | **% of Ninth Grade on Track to Graduate 2018-2019** | **% of Graduation Rates** CTE concentrator/ non-CTE concentrator **2019-2020** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| American Indian/ Alaska Native | 53 | 55.3 | 17 21.3 | 70 74 | 88.3/ 67.2 |
| Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander | 52 | 56.3 | 19 17.6 | 76 79 | 91.4/ 76.6 |
| White | 74 | 71.3 | 39 36.3 | 85 87 | 95.0/ 84.0 |
| Multi racial | 73 | 69.4 | 36 35.5 | 84 85 | 92.9/ 81.0 |
| Black | 43 | 42.6 | 11 11.9 | 76 79 | >95/ 76.3 |
| Hispanic origin | 57 | 54.7 | 20 19.3 | 77 80 | 94.4/ 79.5 |
| Asian | 79 | 77.1 | 56 55.8 | >95 >95 | >95/ 92.2 |

*Washington – Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State*

In 2005 the State of Washington passed House Bill 1495 encouraging the teaching of tribal history and culture in school districts with reservations of federally recognized tribal nations within their boundaries. The legislation was introduced by State Representative John McCoy and included the word "required." Legislators changed the word "required" to "encouraged" much to the dismay of tribal leaders and Representative McCoy (Hopkins, 2020, p. 155). As is the case in South Dakota, when the curriculum was not required, it was not taught in the K-12 setting. Nor did universities adopt the *Since Time Immemorial* curriculum in teacher preparation programs. Students lost out, as did educators, families, and communities.

During the 2015 legislative session, the State Senate passed SB 5433, which mandated the *Since Time Immemorial* curriculum to be taught in all schools or to teach another "tribally-developed" curriculum. The *Since Time Immemorial* curriculum has now been approved



by all 29 federally recognized tribes in the state. The curriculum includes required, "ready to go" lessons for early learning through seniors in high school. In addition, specific implementation assistance on lessons is provided by teachers and librarians across the state.

Comprehensive programming ensures the success of all students by taking a three-pronged approach in curriculum, which is inquiry-based, place-based, and integrated across disciplines. The work spans Pre-K to Grade 12 and beyond to post-secondary learning and is

focused on four main content areas: Social Studies, English Language Arts, Environmental and Sustainable Education, and Social- Emotional Learning (SEL). The curriculum is rich and robust, utilizing Essential Questions[2] for all grade bands and focuses on historical issues as well as contemporary perspectives to provide a counter-narrative to erasure. One recent development is that Tribal Nations are creating specific curriculum to emphasize the place-based nature of the content (Lynn, 2021) and help all students, families, and local communities build community and partnerships, hold a greater respect for the land, and honor the sacredness of locations. Indigenous Native people have always valued and honored the land.

The topic of tribal sovereignty starts being defined and studied in Fourth Grade when students learn about **the inherent right to sovereignty: not given, not taken.** Over the years, the topic is developed more fully with particular discussions of government to government relationships, required consultations, and protocols. Students learn they are to be the leaders of sovereign nations and hold dual citizenship (Lynn, 2021).

Results are promising with increased proficiency in English Language Arts and Math as well as improved graduation rates as noted in Table 2.2 below.

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[2] The Essential Questions for all grade bands Pre-K through high school and informing post-secondary studies, include the following:

- How does physical geography affect the distribution, culture, and economic life of local tribes? ● What is the legal status of tribes who negotiated or who did not negotiate settlement for compensation for the loss of their sovereign homelands?
- What were the political, economic, and cultural forces consequential to the treaties that led to the movement of tribes from long established homelands to reservations?
- What are ways in which Tribes respond to the threats and outside pressure to extinguish their cultures and independence?
- What do local Tribes do to meet the challenges of reservation life; and as sovereign nations, what do local Tribes do to meet the economic and cultural needs of their Tribal communities? (*Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State*)



***Table 2.2: Outcomes in Washington Districts (Source: Washington State Report Card, 2019, 2020)***

| Student Group | % of ELA Proficiency 2014- | % of ELA Proficiency 2018- | % of Math Proficiency | % of Math Proficiency | % of Graduation Rates 2013 | % of Graduation Rates 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | 2015 | 2019 | 2014-2015 2018-2019 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| American Indian/ Alaska Native | 27.6 | 31.2 | 21.9 22.4 | 52.5 | 69.8 |
| Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander | 33.5 | 35.9 | 27.5 25.8 | 62.3 | 77.3 |
| White | 56.6 | 67.0 | 49.7 55.7 | 79.4 | 84.7 |
| Two or more races | 53.4 | 62.3 | 46.4 50.6 | 76.2 | 83.9 |
| Black/ African American | 33.1 | 41.6 | 25.8 27.9 | 65.4 | 76.3 |
| Hispanic/ Latino of any race(s) | 34.4 | 42.4 | 28.4 31.4 | 65.6 | 77.7 |
| Asian | 66.5 | 77.9 | 65.2 73.9 | 84.1 | 91.1 |

*NACA (Native American Community Academy) and the NACA Inspired Schools Network (NISN)*

The Native American Community Academy began as one public charter school in Albuquerque, New Mexico and has now expanded to schools in other areas: Shiprock, Santa Rosa, Raices in Las Cruces, and an in-development school in Rapid City. More schools are on the way. The goals of NACA are to:

1. Build youth to be confident in their cultural identities
2. Encourage youth to persevere academically
3. Support physical, emotional and spiritual wellness in youth
4. Prepare youth academically & emotionally for college
5. Strengthen youth to take their role as leaders (*NACA Mission and Vision*, n.d.)

In order to measure academic progress, NACA and the NISN utilize the academic growth of students as measured by NWEA with MAP testing (M. Kull, personal communication, January 5, 2022). Measuring growth pinpoints the trajectory of students toward meeting academic goals. Although the starting point of Native students may be lower than that of non-Native students, NWEA assessments offer a picture of progress to date and what is possible as students continue to learn. The growth model can illustrate data that may be more encouraging than a straight comparison of test scores of Native students to non-Native students. Indeed, students can grow at faster rates than expected. Results for Native students at NACA are improving as shown in the *Tribal Education Status Report* prepared for the New Mexico Public Education Department for 2018-2019. American Indian student performance in English Language Arts increased from 16.9% in 2016 to 21.8% in 2018. In a similar vein, the performance of American Indian students in Mathematics increased from 10.4% in 2016 to 12.6% (*Tribal Education Status Report*).

As shown by efforts underway in Oregon, Washington, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Hawaii, as well as other countries, Indigenous Education for All can lead to students' academic success. Succeeding in academic efforts, through learning to think critically, mastering content, increasing attendance rates while decreasing dropout rates, graduating, and preparing for post-secondary endeavors, opens doors to leading more fulfilling, productive, meaningful futures for all students.

**Indigenous Knowledge and Socio-Emotional Development**

*"By cultivating culturally vibrant and affirming learning environments in lieu of "one size fits all" approaches, educators honor assets found in Indigenous knowledge, values and stories as models of vitality and empowerment for all" (Kana'iaupuni, Ledward & Malone, 2017).*

Academic achievement is a crucial component to ensuring that all students have equal access to opportunities beyond their primary and secondary schooling. Additionally, research has shown that prioritizing socio-emotional development during schooling both supports academic achievement and also equips students with invaluable life skills like self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision making and (academic) perseverance. Such skills have been determined to be some of the key "non-cognitive" factors that can positively impact student success in terms of academic performance, graduation rates, future career outcomes and even increased civic engagement, to name a few (eg. Farrington et al., 2012; Metzger et al., 2018). Socio-emotional development has been a core component of a variety of Indigenous systems of knowledge, the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings being a prime example of it by dedicating multiple standards to kinship, harmony and way of life (OSEU 4, OSEU 7). Thus, the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies across the state would benefit Native and non-Native students alike in a multitude of ways.

Connected to academic achievement, the promotion of students' socio-emotional development within school districts has overall translated into higher

achievement as well as high school completion and college going in diverse populations (Jackson et al., 2020). A critical aspect of socioemotional development during adolescence and young adulthood is the development of individuals' social and political identities, for which schooling environments have been determined to be primary socialization sources (Escuin Checa & Taylor, 2017). Further, past research literature has linked clear socio-political identities with increased sense of resilience, autonomy and competence in students across different populations (Flum and Kaplan, 2012; Kroger et al., 2010).

When it comes to the development of said identities, all students' experiences in the classrooms are required to be a combination of three levels of exploration, "[...] aimed at exploring new identity positions (in-breadth exploration), further specifying already existing self-understandings (in-depth exploration) and reflecting on self-understandings (reflective exploration)" (Verhoeven, Poorthuis & Volman, 2019). In order to significantly promote individual identity development and socio-emotional learning (SEL), explorations must be meaningful and supported within the classroom climate (Verhoeven, Poorthuis & Volman, 2019). In other words, the inclusion of indigenous systems of knowledge in content standards and curricula could support all three levels of identity exploration for both Native American (*in-depth, reflective*) and non-Native (*in-breath, reflective*) students alike, operating as one of the strongest cultural pathways to socioemotional development (Sabina & Wan, 2017) available within school settings.

While the potential positive impact of supportive education systems has generated multiple interdisciplinary perspectives that attempt to encapsulate the concrete effects of socio-emotional wellness on student achievement amongst minority students (McGee & Stovall, 2015), foundational social psychology research points to the direction of generalized socio-emotional positive outcomes across all populations: Comprehensive representation of Indigenous knowledge and history in content standards and learning materials can effectively function as a form of extended, vicarious and imagined intergroup contact (Dovidio & Hewstone, 2011). Intergroup contact (this is, the interaction between two or more diverse groups) has been proved to foster more positive intergroup relationships and reduction of negative stereotypes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; McKay, 2018).

Considering all of this, it is paramount to point out that, according to research, positive socio-emotional development linked to exposure to Indigenous knowledge in school settings goes further than just the theory. Recent studies have shown the significant overlap between culturally responsive teaching and trauma-informed practices and how both pedagogical frameworks "are designed [through the promotion of SEL] to optimize the learning environment so all students may reach their fullest potential" (McEvoy & Salvador, 2020).

Further, case studies like the one carried out in Hawai'i by Kana'iaupuni, Ledward and Malone (2017) showed the positive effects of implementing (Hawaiian) Culture-Based Education (CBE) as a framework for all schools in the state, from public schools and Western-focused charter schools to Hawaiian-focused and immersion school models (p.323S). In

Hawai'i, CBE has been used as a pedagogical approach focused on "acknowledging the legitimacy of different cultural heritages", "engaging children *through* culture and respecting culture as *content* worthy of learning" and "teaching students to know and praise their own and others' cultural heritages" (p.316S). High inclusion of CBE practices varied across all types of schools, from teacher use of CBE strategies during class (teaching *culturally*) to the content covered in the curricula and materials (*teaching culture*). For those reasons, a concrete and specialized rubric was developed to assess the implementation of CBE's general components (Hawaiian Indigenous Education Rubric - HIER) and evaluate its correlation to teaching standards (p.323S). Study results indicate a positive effect of high exposure to CBE practices on students' sense of belonging and aspirations (p.329S), with high-CBE school environments increasing sense of belonging "more than six-fold and self-efficacy [increasing to] 11 times higher" (p.332S).

**Cultural Education Approaches and Social/Civic Outcomes**

*"Unfortunately, culturally sustaining and revitalizing education has not been implemented consistently or systematically, 'despite widespread agreement among researchers, educators, and tribal leaders that culturally responsive schooling works and is needed'." (Castagno, et.al, 2016 in Stanton, 2019)*

The benefits to adopting a statewide, comprehensive approach to incorporating Indigenous knowledge and histories into education standards and school curricula extend to the social and civic realms for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike. While there are no current studies that specifically examine the impacts of incorporating Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings (OSEUs) into state standards (because this has not yet been done), several states and programs have enacted similar policies with a range of positive social and civic impacts on students. These examples, rooted in an Ethnic Studies framework[3], illuminate a possibility for education in South Dakota, steeped in culturally responsive and sustaining curricula, and for the benefit of all students in the state. Policymakers in South Dakota can use these as examples to learn from in designing a new, Tribally-informed approach to Indigenous Education for All.

In the early 2000s, the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) in Arizona developed a Mexican American/Raza studies program (MAS) alongside the Social Justice Education Project and a model for "critically compassionate intellectualism (CCI)" (Romero, 2014, p.52). This program was particularly effective in supporting Mexican-American students, but also benefited students with other racial identities as well.

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[3]There are a wide range of processes that have been utilized in incorporating Indigenous Knowledge Systems into public schooling, ranging from standards-based approaches to re-design of schooling frameworks entirely. Engaging in this work through the lens of the Ethnic Studies approach is one of the more highly-researched methods, however it is not inclusive of all ways of thinking about Indigenous Knowledge inclusion. A statewide approach should be

The MAS program closed the achievement gap for Mexican-American students, closed the gap in graduation rates between Mexican-American students and their peers, raised college matriculation rates, and nearly eliminated suspensions and expulsions of Mexican-American students. The program took a critical approach to education, adopting a philosophy that "all people's actions and identities are shaped by their sociohistorical context and political positionality" (Cannella, 2014, p. 172). This included the recognition that White students are also victims of dominant ideologies that do not teach about mutual respect for all humanity. While this may seem like a victimizing stance, this approach allows students to see each other as fully human, connected by their common humanity, and to work through issues alongside one another across lines of difference.

The approach of the MAS was focused on combating social and historical trauma in an effort to support students in humanizing themselves and each other, emphasizing that the Indigenous theoretical framework they had adopted (the Nahui Ollin) was applicable to everyone rather than a particular ethnic or cultural group. The impacts of this program, in addition to those mentioned above, included increased "compassion and consciousness toward others" (Cannella, 2014, p.186), increased capacity for students to navigate ideological tensions both inside and outside the classroom, reconciliation of self-esteem issues related to identity, and increased civic engagement. Despite these benefits, however, the program was challenged and ultimately disbanded by state-level policy on the basis that policymakers (who had not attended any of the classes nor met with any of the students) believed the program to be anti-American, divisive, and focused on ethnic solidarity rather than individualism (Romero, 2014).

The National Education Association (NEA) defines Ethnic Studies as "the interdisciplinary study of race and ethnicity, as understood through the perspectives of major underrepresented racial groups" and includes "units of study, courses, or programs that are centered on the knowledge and perspectives of an ethnic or racial group, reflecting narratives and points of view rooted in that group's lived experiences and intellectual scholarship" (NEA, 2020, p.2-3). **On a similar note, they found that curricula that do not incorporate these view points tend to result in the disengagement of non-Euro-American students from academic learning.** Furthermore, curricula that actively teach about race and racism have more positive impacts than curricula that simply take a contributions approach, or that recognize diverse groups with the omission of direct conversations on race and racism. The NEA has found that embracing Ethnic Studies curricula that include a systemic analysis of race and racism helps students understand and embrace multiple perspectives and produces higher levels of critical thinking in students (Sleeter and Zavala, 2020).

Presently, there is a discussion at the state level in South Dakota about the importance of treating students as individuals, rather than members of a group (South Dakota State News, 2021), stoked by a fear that culture-based learning and race-based analyses are anti-patriotic indoctrination. A great deal of research, however, shows that approaches to instruction that engage students in cross-cultural conversations on race and racism through an Ethnic Studies

lens positively impacts students from both dominant and non-dominant racial groups. **It is imperative that the State of South Dakota policymakers consider this data thoroughly in their decision-making.**

**Recommendations**

Given the depth of research explored in this document, there is overwhelming evidence that the State of South Dakota should adopt an Indigenous Education for All framework for the academic, socio-emotional, and social/civic benefits of all students in the state. Our recommendations to initiate this process are as follows:

1. Create 5, 10, and 15-year plans in partnership with Tribal representatives to implement an Indigenous Education for All strategy in South Dakota.
2. Ensure that Indigenous Knowledge Systems, including but not limited to the OSEUs, are included in state standards for all content areas through a process of consultation with Tribes and education experts.
3. Develop a process for and execute an annual, holistic evaluation for the purpose of understanding the degree to which these programs are enacted in schools across the state.
4. Develop and execute a state-wide Indigenous Education for All needs assessment for educators, school/district administrators, and state education officials in order to create data-driven professional development opportunities in consultation with Tribal Nations, which is centered on providing students with a full understanding of diversity in the state and nation.
5. Develop a localized protocol for teacher/school/district evaluation that is rooted in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and for the purpose of improving academic, socio-emotional, and social/civic outcomes among all students.
6. Incorporate examinations and analyses of racism, sexism, colonization, and other forms of cultural domination into school curricula, and ensure that educators are equipped to navigate these conversations in healing and healthy ways.
7. Ensure that the accreditation process for South Dakota schools involves the explicit inclusion of the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings and the history and culture of South Dakota's nine federally recognized Tribal Nations.

**Conclusion**

In summary, an extensive body of academic research and scientific studies across multiple disciplines have established the relevance of providing students with culture-based education opportunities. Said opportunities, when implemented in several other states and countries across the globe, have translated into positive effects on multiple educational equity indicators. Given

all school districts across the state of South Dakota would translate into significant positive effects on academic achievement, socio-emotional development and social/civic outcomes for all South Dakota students.