

*Gichi-inendamang Anishinaabe-bimaadiziwin (Honoring the Culture): A Case Study
of the No Child Left Behind Act's Influence on Culturally Based Education in a
Bureau of Indian Education School Serving Ojibwe Students in Minnesota*

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By

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Abstract

Historically, American Indian students have not fared well in their formal educational settings. Under the policy of self-determination, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools have been created to provide an educational environment that is more culturally relevant for American Indian students.

The purpose of the study is to determine how the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 influenced the culturally based education at one BIE school in northern Minnesota. The case study was conducted using a focus group of teachers, interviews, and document analysis.

Findings of the study reveal there is a culturally rich environment available to all students at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School including the physical surroundings, language and culture courses, traditional teaching, ceremonies, and the use of elders and other community resources. The Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program, the seasonal activities program, activities and classes offered by the cultural director, tribal government and history courses in the high school, the school's database of cultural lessons and the cognitively guided instruction (CGI) approach to teaching mathematics are some of the major ways that culturally based education is supported and provided. Culturally related course credits are required for graduation from the school.

The results of the data indicate that NCLB negatively influenced the culturally based education throughout the school. The greatest impact was felt by staff in the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program as the restrictions on their hiring practices directly affected delivery of the Ojibwe language. The findings also revealed

that students were taken, on occasion, from Drum and Dance, Cultural Arts, and Ojibwe language classes for test preparation exercises. One final finding was that Title VII monies were used to support Title I activities within the school.

Positive changes occurred as a result of NCLB including teacher reassignment to match certification, increased efforts to align curriculum with state standards, and increased efforts to align curriculum horizontally and vertically within the school. NCLB funding was used for professional development initiatives considered to support culturally relevant approaches to working with American Indian students.

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Definition of Terms

The following terms are used somewhat interchangeably in this study.

American Indian

Any member of the various aboriginal peoples of the Western Hemisphere, with the exception of the Eskimos (Inuit) and the Aleuts. Though the term "Native American" is today often preferred to "American Indian," particularly in the U.S., many Native American peoples continue to prefer American Indian (or Indian). In Canada the name First Nation is preferred (Carr, 2010).

Indian

Indian is the short form for American Indian and used when it is clear that Alaska Natives are not being included (Reyhner, 2006a).

Indigenous

Indigenous peoples are any ethnic group who inhabit a geographic region with which they have the earliest known historical connection. However, several widely accepted formulations, which define the term indigenous peoples in stricter terms, have been put forward by prominent and internationally recognized organizations, such as the United Nations, the International Labor Organization and the World Bank (Indigenous, n.d.).

Native American

Native American is the official term used by the U.S. government to refer to the original inhabitants of the lower 48 states. It was adopted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the 1960s after considerable "consciousness raising" on the part of Native activists to abandon the official use of the misnomer "Indian" (Bellfy, 2001).

Native

Native refers to belonging by birth to a people regarded as indigenous to a certain place, esp. a preliterate people (Native, n.d.).

Ojibwe

The Ojibwe are one of the most populous and widely distributed Indian groups in North America, with 150 bands throughout the north-central United States and southern Canada. *Ojibwe* and *Chippewa* are renderings of the same Algonquian word, "puckering," probably referring to their characteristic moccasin style. "Chippewa" is more commonly used in the United States and "Ojibwe" or "Ojibway" in Canada, but the Ojibwe people themselves use their native word *Anishinaabeg* meaning "original people." Today there are 200,000 Ojibwe Indians living throughout their traditional territories (Redish, n.d.).

List of Acronyms

ABAA.....	Anishinaabeg Bimaadiziwn Alternative Academy
AYP.....	Adequate Yearly Progress
BIA.....	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BIE.....	Bureau of Indian Education
CBE.....	Culturally Based Education
CEO.....	Chief Executive Officer
CEP.....	Center on Educational Policy
CGI.....	Cognitively Guided Instruction
CSPC.....	Creating Sacred Places for Children
DIBELS.....	Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills
FAA.....	Fetal Alcohol Affected
FAS.....	Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
HOUSSE.....	High, Objective, Uniform State Standard of Evaluation
IEP.....	Individual Learning Plan
ITV.....	Internet Television
LEA.....	Local Educational Administration
LIEC.....	Local Indian Education Committee
LLR.....	Leech Lake Reservation
LLRTC.....	Leech Lake Reservation Tribal Council
MAP.....	Measures of Academic Progress
MCA.....	Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment
MCT.....	Minnesota Chippewa Tribe
McREL.....	Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning
NAEP.....	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NCLB.....	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
NIEA.....	National Indian Education Association
NISBA.....	National Indian School Boards Association
NSDC.....	National Staff Development Council
NWREL.....	Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
PE.....	Physical Education
SAT.....	Scholastic Aptitude Test
STAR.....	Standardized Testing and Reporting

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

“...the challenge for postcolonial educators is to transform education from its cognitive imperialistic roots to an enlightened and decolonized process that embraces and accepts diversity as normative” (Battiste, 2000, p. xxix).

The Achievement Gap

Historically, American Indian students, along with other minorities, have not fared well in our nation’s public educational system. A disparity in educational achievement among students exists, and according to the National Governor’s Association, that ‘achievement gap’ is situated along racial and class lines (National Governors Association, 2005). Having gone unattended for decades, and even centuries, the achievement gap is now considered to be “one of the country’s most vexing social problems” (Whittle, 2005, p. 1).

Generally, the achievement gap consists of the differences in educational achievement levels between Whites and minorities, poor and non-poor, and English as first language speakers and English as foreign language speakers. Educational achievement levels are often measured in terms of standardized test scores, retention rates, drop-out rates, placements in special education programs, and enrollment in post-secondary settings (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2004).

The heightened increase in attention to the achievement gap is linked to the nation’s economy. The changing demographics of the population give rise to a concern about the future of the American workforce. People of color currently comprise 28% of the population and projections include an additional 10% by the year 2024. It is expected

by the year 2050 that 47% of the population in the United States will be people of color (Banks & Banks, 2001, p. ix). This demographic profile, coupled with the pervasive achievement gap, means the educational attainment of minorities can no longer be ignored.

The achievement gap levels for the American Indian student are staggering. In 2003-2004 the national graduation rate for American Indian students was 49.3% compared to 76.2% for white students (Editorial Projects in Education, 2007). The American Indian students who graduated in 2000 were less likely to have completed a core academic track than their peers from other racial/ethnic groups (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). The 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report indicated that 83% of American Indian and Alaska Native eighth graders read below grade level, compared to 61% of White students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). American Indian and Alaska Native students scored below the national average on both the verbal and mathematics sections of the SAT college entrance exam in 2004 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). The gap between the average scores of American Indian and Alaska Native students and those of the total student population tested on the SAT widened from twenty-two points in 1996 to twenty-five points in 2004 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). The most recent NAEP report indicates that 74% of American Indian and Alaska Native twelfth grade students read below grade level compared to 57% of their White peers (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007).

In the state of Minnesota the figures parallel the national ones. In 2008, 39% of American Indians in all grades combined made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as required by NCLB compared to 66% of White students. Only 52% of American Indians made AYP in reading as opposed to 77% of their White counterparts (Minnesota Department of Education, 2008b). The ratio of high school graduates to grade 10 enrollees is 54 % for American Indians compared to 87% for Whites (McMurry, 2006). SAT scores for American Indians in 2007 averaged 551 compared to Whites who scored an average 599 (The College Board, 2007). ACT scores for American Indians in the Non-Core test averaged 18.6 compared to 21.2 for Whites (Minnesota Minority Education Partnership Inc., 2006). The Pass Rate on the Basic Skills Test for university admission was 43% for American Indians and 78% for Whites in the math test and 59% for American Indians and 87% for Whites in the reading test (Yecke, 2003). At the University of Minnesota, the six-year graduation rate is 26% for American Indians and 53% for Whites (The Education Trust, 2003). Only 8.8% of American Indians over age 25 have at least a bachelor's degree compared to 27.9% for Whites. This is the lowest for any subgroup in Minnesota (Brown, 2003).

No Child Left Behind Act: A Federal Response

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was signed into law in 2002 as a direct response to the underachievement of minorities and low-income students across the nation. Proponents of the legislation unleashed harsh criticism about the nation's educational system stating that NCLB was needed to put an end to the "emerging defacto educational apartheid" inherent within it (Paige, 2004). The "soft bigotry of low

expectations” (Bush, 2000) was a catch phrase used to decry the nation’s apparent willingness to accept the sustained low levels of minority performance up to this point.

NCLB is considered to be an “evolutionary development and a revolutionary departure from existing policy” (Finn & Hess, 2004, p. 35) by extending the long arm of the federal government into the state’s usual domain of setting the public school agenda. Its central focus has been the forced inclusion of standards and accountability measures injected directly into the public school system. NCLB set a target and requires all states to demonstrate proficiency among *all* students in reading, math, and science by the school year 2013-2014.

States have been allowed to write their own standards and set school-wide performance targets on an annual basis, known as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Each year the individual schools must meet the standards and targets in order to achieve AYP. The measure of AYP is the percentage of students at specified grade levels scoring proficient or higher on a standardized test in the designated content areas as well as the measure of other non-academic areas such as graduation and attendance rates. States and school districts are then rewarded based upon their setting and meeting their annual targets or penalized for targets set, but not met. School districts not making AYP for consecutive years are expected to undergo a series of corrections outlined in the legislation (U.S. Department of Education, 2006).

Soon after its passage, NCLB met with harsh criticism. The high-stakes testing with punitive measures to follow was a major point of contention for vocal critics (Pewewardy, 2002; Tippeconnic, 2003). This in turn led to another major problem –

critics claimed that schools were foregoing teaching of subjects not being tested in order to provide time and space for those subjects under the microscope (Au, 2007; McNeil, Coppola, Radigan, & Vasquez Heilig, 2008; National Education Association, 2007; Nichols & Berliner, 2007). Educational goals such as higher order thinking, the development of critical thinking skills, subjects such as arts and social studies, and general attention to the needs of the whole child were being sidestepped in order to teach to the test (Au, 2007; R. Linn, 2008; Nichols & Berliner, 2007).

Culturally Based Education (CBE)

From an American Indian perspective, the concept of the whole child includes the development of a positive cultural identity. Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) in their book, *Cultural Democracy, Bicultural Development and Education*, have convincingly articulated the importance and necessity of making space for cultural differences in a true democracy. A “culturally democratic environment” would view the students’ language, cultural values, heritage, and learning styles to be among the many important educational considerations. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (2004) reported officially, something American Indian educators and parents have known for some time, that the civil rights and cultural identities of American Indian students are often not supported in public school classrooms.

American Indian communities have long held that merging the local and traditional culture with the educational environments of students will result in higher levels of academic success *and* increased self-esteem (Beaulieu, Sparks, & Alonzo, 2005; Demmert & Towner, 2003; Grotto Foundation, 2007; Indian Nations at Risk Task Force,

1991; Reyhner, 2001; van Hamme, 1995; Willetto, 1999; Yap, Demmert et al., 2005).

Culturally based education (CBE) is the presumptive means for accomplishing this by creating an educational environment conducive to learning as recommended in the “Indian Nations at Risk Report” (Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, 1991).

In general, CBE approaches include the utilization of native languages, pedagogy, and curriculum that incorporate traditional teachings and use of local experts and elders from within the community. Culturally based education is viewed as the differentiation that is required to connect learning to the lives of American Indian students in a way that validates their ways of being and knowing.

The most specific and comprehensive definition of CBE to date has been offered by Demmert and Towner (2003) in their literature review on CBE. They have operationally defined it as having one or more of the following critical elements:

Recognition and use of Native American (American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian) languages.

Pedagogy that stresses traditional cultural characteristics and adult-child interactions.

Pedagogy in which teaching strategies are congruent with the traditional culture and ways of knowing and learning.

Curriculum that is based on traditional culture and that recognizes the importance of Native spirituality.

Strong Native community participation (including parents, elders, other community resources) in educating children and in the planning and operation of school activities.

Knowledge and use of the social and political mores of the community (pp. 34-35).

Demmert and Towner's (2003) operational definition will be used to guide the work of the current study.

As CBE incorporates the local culture of a community, logic follows that the people in the community, including tribal leaders, elders, parents, grandparents, and teachers, would direct its implementation process and set standards for its outcomes. This is in keeping with the most recent governmental policy of self-determination – something for which American Indian people fought hard for since the 1960's (Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, 1975).

Context of the Study

There is an unyielding belief among American Indian educators and advocates that an educational environment conducive to learning requires a cultural context that validates and supports students' lives. Such an environment should connect the lives of students to their school experiences in ways that provide meaning to both. Few educational experiences for American Indians throughout the course of United States history could be considered to engender such a notion.

With the recent adoption of self-determination as the governmental policy for dealings with American Indians, the door to such a notion was opened. Since the 1960s American Indian tribes have been taking greater control of the many forces that impact the lives of their members in areas such as employment, health, and education (Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, 1975; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002; Szasz, 1999).

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is the agency that deals directly with tribes in all matters involving the government and the special trust relationship that exists between them. Whereas earlier BIA policies and programs meant the forced removal of American Indian children from their homes in an attempt to “educate” them, the BIA now enters into contracts with tribes for the direct and local operation of schools serving their children. The mission of the schools is to provide the meaningful and culturally relevant educational experiences that have been mainly non-existent for American Indian students up to this point (Bureau of Indian Affairs, n.d.-b).

While approximately 90 percent of the 624,000 American Indian students in the United States attend public schools, 7 percent attend the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools. There are currently 174 elementary and secondary BIE schools located in 23 states on 63 reservations (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2008a). Minnesota has four BIE schools located on four separate reservations.

Rationale for the Study

Among the critics of NCLB in its current form is the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), an organization begun in 1969 and dedicated to advancing Native education towards excellence. NIEA aims to bring a Native American perspective to the policy table and to assist tribes to become involved “in setting educational priorities for Indian students [including] language and cultural instruction” (National Indian Education Association, 2007, p. 13).

In 2004, the NIEA held hearings throughout the country to hear direct testimony from educators and tribal leaders in the field regarding the impact of NCLB within

schools serving American Indian students. Eleven hearings were held in the following sites:

Washington D.C.
Honolulu, Hawaii
Helena, Montana
Window Rock, Arizona
Albuquerque, New Mexico
Tacoma, Washington
Green Bay, Wisconsin (NCAI Meeting)
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Pine Ridge, South Dakota
San Diego, California
Green Bay, Wisconsin (NISBA Conference)

One of the predominate concerns expressed was the negative and diminishing impact NCLB was having on CBE in the schools. Some testified that Title VII funds, which are to be used specifically to meet the unique cultural and educational needs of students, have been diverted to pay for other programs in an attempt to respond to NCLB requirements. Some reported that “any success [at meeting NCLB standards] has clearly been at the expense and diminishment of Native language and culture” (Gilbert, 2007, p. 1).

Additional concerns brought forth in the testimony included: NCLB was creating a divide between parents and the schools; students were personalizing the failure of their schools; teachers were being driven from the field; and, dropout rates were on the increase. The report concluded that the “focus on testing eliminated the ability of

schools to focus on the broader public purposes of education” (Beaulieu, Sparks, & Alonzo, 2005, p. 7).

Similar concerns to those provided in the hearings have been raised elsewhere. Early in 2006, four concerned groups in Minnesota: Osseo American Indian Parent Committee, St. Paul Public Schools Indian Education Parent Committee, St. Paul Indian in Action, and Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee contacted congressional representatives in Washington about a correspondence from the Office of Indian Education to Patricia Harvey, Superintendent of St. Paul Public Schools. The correspondence was calling for “a gradual shift of focus from history and culture to reading and math” in the use of Title VII grant money allocated within NCLB (Cited in Native American Caucus, 2006, p. 1).

In April 2006 four congressional representatives serving on the Native American Caucus wrote a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, to question the directives that were reportedly coming out of Washington. They voiced strong concern that there was a weakening of the intent of Title VII by combining the grant processes for Title I and Title VII and “this ‘efficiency’ has resulted in the administration of Title VII grants to more often fall within the purview of a Title I program administrator, rather than a Title VII administrator who often has strong ties to the Native American community” (Native American Caucus, 2006, p. 1). Their letter reminded Secretary Spellings that Title VII states:

It is the policy of the United States to fulfill the Federal Government’s unique and continuing trust relationship with and responsibility to the Indian people for the education of Indian children. The Federal Government will continue to work with local educational agencies, Indian tribes and organizations, postsecondary

institutions, and other entities toward the goal of **ensuring that programs that serve Indian children are of the highest quality and provide for not only the basic elementary and secondary educational needs, but also the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of these children** (Native American Caucus, 2006, p. 2).

The congressional representatives' correspondence to Secretary Spellings further reminded her of President Bush's Executive Order 13336 as it states:

This Administration is committed to continuing to work with these federally recognized tribal governments on a government-to-government basis, and supports tribal sovereignty and self-determination. It is the purpose of this order to assist American Indian and Alaska Native students in meeting the challenging student academic standards of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110) in a manner that is consistent with tribal traditions, languages and cultures (Bush, 2004, p. Section 1).

The interested parties initiating the clarification of the Office of Indian Education correspondence represent both public schools and BIE schools in Minnesota. American Indian students currently comprise 2.1% of the total school population in the state (Native American Caucus, 2006). Approximately 90% of American Indian students attend public schools while the remaining 10% attends one of the four BIE schools located on reservations spread throughout the state (Minnesota Department of Education, 2008b).

Whether NCLB is strengthening or diminishing CBE within schools serving American Indian students is of great consequence and should be a concern to both the federal government and American Indian tribes. Rather than debating the merits and/or limitations of the legislation, investigations should be underway to determine its impact. There have been few studies conducted on NCLB's impact as it relates specifically to American Indian students nationwide and there have been none done in Minnesota.

While little is definitively known about the efficacy of culturally based education in leading to student success, the issue of tribal sovereignty is also at stake. The hard won rights of American Indians to control their educational affairs over the past four decades now appear to be lessened as a result of NCLB's implementation process within schools. Reyhner (2001) warns "local control is being threatened by ... the 'Standards Movement' that seeks to control what is being taught through high stakes testing mandated at the state or national level" (p. 24). Beaulieu, Sparks and Alonzo (2005) see NCLB regulations as "narrowing the broad public purposes of schools" (p.6) by altering the "role of Tribal governments and native communities and parents in determining the education purposes of schools and the role of teachers, parents and community members in the education lives of Native students" (p.6). NCLB requires testing in the English language. Tribes are being challenged over their sovereign right to choose the language of instruction for their schools (Winstead, Lawrence, Brantmeier, & Frey, 2008).

Researchers are poised to provide information about the direction and degree of impact that CBE plays in addressing the achievement gap. Assuming that CBE does play an important role in the academic achievement of American Indian students, identifying the federal government's role in support of it, as witnessed within the Executive Order 13336 (Bush, 2004), can only serve to inform both tribal and government officials in future decisions related to educating American Indian students in Minnesota and elsewhere.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the influence of the No Child Left Behind Act on the implementation of culturally based education in a Minnesota Bureau of Indian Education School.

Research Questions

1. In what ways is culturally based education being implemented in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?
2. In what ways is NCLB being implemented in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?
3. In the views of key stakeholders what has been the effect of No Child Left Behind since implementation on the culturally based education in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?
4. What are the trends in student achievement since implementation of NCLB at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?

Brief Description of the School

The school selected for use in this study is the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation. It is located in a rural area east of Cass Lake in the northern part of the state. It is situated strategically to increase the level of access for different communities within the reservation boundaries.

The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School was established on November 10, 1975 and was the first BIA-sponsored alternative to the public schools in Minnesota. A student walk-out in the public high school took place following conflicts students had been

experiencing and this precipitated the school's formation (Robinson, 2006; Schmid, 2007).

The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School has a total school population of about 324 students in grades Pre-K through Grade 12 (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2008). It has been labeled as failing to meet the AYP requirements of NCLB during five of the past six years.

Theoretical Frameworks Guiding the Study

The work of three major researchers and theorists guides the study and subsequent recommendations for action. They are: the theory of cultural democracy (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974); *The Mismeasure of Man* by Stephen Jay Gould, (1981 & 1996); and, Graham Hingangaroa Smith's (2003) kaupapa Māori theory. Brief descriptions of the theories are included. The six sites of struggle outlined in kaupapa Māori theory provide a framework for the comprehensive analysis of the current study's major findings and recommendations for future action.

Theory of Cultural Democracy within an American Indian Context

The theory of cultural democracy provides a framework for more widespread inclusion and acceptance into the mainstream fabric of American society those groups who, historically, have been marginalized either intentionally or unintentionally. Cultural democracy creates space for pluralistic thinking and difference; it demands equity; and it embraces resistance and change as it pushes against dominant values (D. Adams & Goldbard, 1995).

An affirmation of the right to be different is quintessentially embedded within the theory of cultural democracy (Ramírez & Castañeda, 1974). The concept of cultural democracy that Ramirez and Castaneda wrote about relative to Mexican Americans is based upon a bicultural reality that applies to the American Indian as well. An authentic bicultural existence would allow American Indians greater freedom to choose their educational path. In a culturally democratic educational environment, heritage language, cultural values, and learning styles are considered to be educationally important (Ramírez & Castañeda, 1974, p. 31). It follows that the actual and individual needs of American Indian students within an educational environment would dictate the decisions about, and delivery of, any curriculum designed for them.

The Mismeasure of Man

One of the major premises behind Stephen Jay Gould's *The Mismeasure of Man* (1981 & 1996) is that humans are complex organisms whose biological underpinnings can be altered through a complex interplay of environmental and social factors. He argued against the use of psychometric tests to determine one's intelligence, especially when it was used to rank complex variations in either ascending or descending order.

Gould refutes the use of a single test score to be representative of something as abstract as intelligence and it is this part of his arguments that can be applied here as well. In the case of NCLB, the abstraction would be achievement and arguments do abound in today's educational environment to counter the use of single test scores to represent one's academic achievement (Au, 2007; R. Linn, 2008; McNeil, Coppola, Radigan, & Vasquez Heilig, 2008; Moses & Nanna, 2007; Tharp, 1982).

Gould's work provides a framework for questioning the weight given to the narrow focus of a single test used in educational settings. The high stakes attached to the tests, with the fallout often felt among minority and low-income populations, raises the level of importance of such questions (Jehlen, 2007; McNeil, Coppola, Radigan, & Vasquez Heilig, 2008; Moore, 2005; Nichols & Berliner, 2007; Tippeconnic, 2003; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2004).

Kaupapa Māori Theory

Kaupapa Māori theory (G. H. Smith, 1997) is a transformative theory identifying six critical sites of struggle faced by indigenous people. It prompts reflection that is necessary to break out of old thinking in order that a new way of thinking can take hold.

The six sites of struggle for indigenous people identified by Smith (2003) are presented as statements of need including:

A need to understand and respond to the unhelpful divide between indigenous communities and the Academy [federal and state governments]. This impacts indigenous communities in feelings of distrust; lack of access, participation, and success at higher levels of education; an undermining of the capacity to educate beyond the self-fulfilling cycle of educational underachievement; and, socio-economic marginalization.

A need to understand and respond to the new formation of colonization (the false consciousness of 'watching the wrong door' - i.e. the traditional forms of colonization and the need to develop critical consciousness of new economic formations and to get beyond hegemony that holds them in place).

A need to understand and respond to the 'politics of distraction'; to move beyond being kept busy and engaged with liberal strategies. This keeps indigenous people from engaging with the deeper structural issues. A need to move to become proactive around our own aspirations; to take [more] autonomous control.

A need to understand and respond to the construction of an ultimate vision of what it is that is being struggled for; there is a need to develop the 'end game'; to develop

direction, purpose, and impetus in struggle; and, to recognize the incremental gains along the way to realization of the *vision*.

A need to understand and respond to the struggle for the Academy [federal and state governments]; to reclaim validity and legitimacy of our own language, knowledge, and culture; to position our own ways of knowing as being relevant and significant in the ‘elite’ knowledge production and reproduction ‘factories.’

A need to understand and engage with the State to encourage the State apparatus to work for indigenous interests as well.

Smith, in further explicating kaupapa Māori theory, challenges oppressed people to begin the process of confronting hegemonic practices based upon imperialist thinking and behavior. Kaupapa Māori theory’s transformative approach necessarily requires a confrontation on two fronts: one with the colonizer and one with *self*. Whereas energies spent on transformations are most often directed outwardly, kaupapa Māori theory suggests that a radical alteration of *self* is likely required as well.

Smith explains that the *real* revolution that occurred with the formation of language nests in New Zealand during the mid-1980s was not the start-up language programs themselves, but rather an alteration in the mindset of the local people. They began to “shift away from waiting for things to be done to them, to doing things for themselves; a shift away from an emphasis on reactive politics to an emphasis on being more proactive” (G. H. Smith, 2003, p. 2). While Smith contextually refers to the “academy” as the institution of presenting obstacles, it is easily arguable that the federal government in the context of this study could, and does, replace it. The framework presented by kaupapa Māori theory serves as a useful tool for viewing NCLB’s influence on the CBE at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School. It extends to the response and behavior of the local community and school members as well.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

“We move mountains by first moving ourselves, and the way we educate makes all the difference in the world” (Cajete, 1994, p. 69).

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of No Child Left Behind on the implementation of culturally based education at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School serving members of the Leech Lake Reservation in northern Minnesota. This review of literature is divided into three parts. These sections are: Introduction and Background, Culturally Based Education, and The No Child Left Behind Act.

This chapter contains background information along with reviews of key studies related to American Indian education and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Use of the word “research” requires some qualifying statements as it relates to this project. Research in the Western academy typically has meant pure scientific experiments designed to investigate cause and effect relationships between specific variables, some being manipulated and others controlled. This type of research is reductionist in nature and generally dispenses with “other ways of knowing” that come from more holistic approaches.

Indigenous research practices acknowledge broader dimensions of knowing that incorporate such holistic approaches. Native American research values stories and allows for “suspended judgment” to stand in place of Westerner’s “desire to absolutize what are but tenuous conclusions,” something Albert Whitehead refers to as “misplaced concreteness,” (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, p. 6) found within Western science.

The current study acknowledges both Western and indigenous research methodologies. For more on the specifics of the different approaches to research see *Power and Place* by Deloria and Wildcat (2001), *Decolonizing Methodologies* by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), and *Look to the Mountain* by Gregory Cajete (1994).

Introduction and Background to American Indian Education

American Indian students have historically been underserved in the American educational system. Formal schooling, at best, has brought bitter disappointment and frustration for many American Indians; at worst, the destruction of the very sense of Indian knowing, doing, and being. The early assimilative policies of education were designed to “kill the Indian and save the man” (Marr, 2001, p. 1) as though the two could be neatly separated like oil and water. For more than four centuries of colonial domination, such benighted thinking has served as the basis for governmental policies and actions, including some well-intended, that have ultimately led to the disintegration of the American Indians’ once harmonious and balanced lifestyle grounded in traditional teachings (Brookeman, 1990; Charleston, 1994; Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Demmert & Towner, 2003; Freeman & Stairs, 1995; Pewewardy, 2002; Reyhner, 2001).

One of the most catastrophic periods of American educational policy for American Indians took place during the “boarding school era” beginning in the late 1800’s through the first four decades of the 1900’s (Child, 1998). Forcibly removing American Indian children from their families and cultures was seen as the best way to wipe out any vestiges of “Indianness.” An “outing system” was initiated in tandem with the boarding school system which placed students in the homes of Puritans during their

school vacations as a means to further reduce the time children had with their own families (Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969, p. 141). Stripped of their heritage and placed in unfamiliar environments that insisted on different clothes, hairstyles, ways of behavior, and language, American Indian boys and girls were expected to become “civilized” and to carry forward such learning with successive generations (Keohane, 2005).

Indian advocates say the plan to obliterate the Indian culture has never been fully realized. Indian assimilation and relocation programs, and the brutality of those who carried them out, did result in much destruction and loss for American Indian people. But instead of falling neatly in line and blending in, American Indians have resisted acculturation and hung tightly to their Indian ways even as the bled (D. W. Adams, 1995; Brookeman, 1990; Collier, 1938; Marr, 2001; Oakes, 2005; Starnes, 2003).

In tandem with education, other policies were designed to eradicate Indians from the scene. Termination was the government’s policy of the mid-twentieth century (1953-1968). Its intent was the termination of the reservation system (Bowen, 2004; Walke, 2007). The termination policy could have meant the “extermination” of Indian people themselves as again they were expected to leave their homelands to enter life in the big cities and to blend in with mainstream society. With few jobs on the reservations and little economic opportunity available, many Indian people did venture out to try to make a new life in the cities, but most returned home because Indians simply have never fit in with mainstream society (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997).

It is beyond the scope of this study to cover the full extent of the damage done to tribes and their people throughout the decades, and even centuries, of extreme harsh treatment by the U.S. government. Such history has been well-documented elsewhere (Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969; Szasz, 1999).

Many, however, would agree that the myriad of social ills such as poverty, school failure, suicide, alcoholism, child neglect, and abuse is a direct consequence of the policies and treatment handed out by the U.S. government to a once healthy, vibrant, but misunderstood people (Brookeman, 1990; Charleston, 1994; Strand & Peacock, 2002).

The “Kennedy Report” (Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969) outlines clearly one of the most frank and unusually raw renditions of the plight of the American Indian people since the initial contact with Europeans. The report states “Greed for Indian land and intolerance of Indian cultures combined in one act to drive the American Indian into the depths of poverty from which he has never recovered” (p. 9).

Yet, in spite of the devastation, a faint “heartbeat” of spirit among the American Indian people has survived. While it appears there was a period of dormancy of spirit for Indian people, when parents and grandparents “hung up their medicine bags” and encouraged their children to “go the white way” (P. Day, Personal Communication, Summer, 1981), there was a reawakening of that spirit in the 1960s during the time of the civil rights movement (Szasz, 1999). This livened spirit ultimately resulted in a new direction of self-determination as American Indian leaders advocated for greater control

in decisions that affected their lives. As this new era was taking root, American Indian leaders were keenly aware of the challenges that confronted them in their quest to regain control of their lives including the restoration and preservation of languages and traditional tribal teachings.

Decades of laudable efforts by Indian educators and advocates have sprung forth new hope for the future of American Indian education (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997). New directions have been forged as indigenous perspectives have guided the work towards new educational theories and new research paradigms. The deficit model that dominated past research on American Indian education has been laid to rest.

As American Indian advocates and educators seek to sculpt a tribally-controlled educational system, turning to a time in history that was marked by positive and respectful learning and successful entry into adulthood seems appropriate. Early in history, prior to contact with Europeans and formal school experiences, it was not the norm for American Indian children to fail in their learning (Demmert & Towner, 2003; Evans, 2001). Knowledge was gained informally and naturally through the daily rituals of life. Adults served as mentors to teach children and to ensure successful completion of the authentic and meaningful tasks directly connected to daily living. Children were afforded frequent practice sessions following the modeling done by local experts. They observed and were able to see firsthand specific targets indicating success. Practice sessions were devoted to the teaching of sustainable skills that were needed for survival. The skills of hunting, fishing, trapping, planting, sewing, cooking, and building were

expected to be learned by the children as they worked and played their way toward adulthood.

An equally important strand of learning for the American Indian child was a cultural value system steeped in an ecologically-based spirituality that required reciprocal respect between every living entity within the natural universe. The ability for all of nature to co-exist with the living and non-living elements within it depended upon this respect. Within the natural universe, people were but one link in a chain of many with all dependent upon each other (Schulz, 1994; van Hamme, 1995). Learning to live a humble, balanced, and harmonious life with all other living entities should serve as a central tenet for education serving American Indian students (Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Demmert & Towner, 2003; van Hamme, 1995).

Gregory Cajete (1994), in *Look to the Mountain*, provides the best description of an authentic culturally-based education stemming from a tribal perspective. He offers hope in the form of a vision for the educational challenge of bridging traditional teaching with modern education in ways that will serve American Indian students to become ethical human beings who participate in an economy built on a moral foundation. While Cajete and others imagine and write about a vision of what education can once again become for the American Indian student, it is important to stay grounded in the reality of what education is today.

Culturally Based Education

Culturally based education (CBE) in today's educational settings for American Indian students is considered an essential element in order to assist students to

strengthen their cultural identity leading to more positive academic outcomes. A definition of CBE offered by Northwest Regional Laboratory in their work with Yap (2004) states: “Culturally based education incorporates Native language and/or important elements of Native culture. Culturally based interventions are deemed to be planned activities and materials designed to improve education and introduced within the education systems” (p. 2). To broaden the definition beyond the confines of the school, she further stated “Culturally based education, by expressing the values of the tribe and the community, ensures greater endorsement, involvement, and support by parents and community resources. A CBE intervention that is congruent with community goals is maximally efficacious for student academic achievement” (p. 2). Yap, Demmert et al. (2005) have essentially summarized CBE as “not a unitary concept, [but] an eclectic collection of treatments tailored to meet the needs of particular Native student populations in a local school context” (p.1).

With very little exception, a consensus has formed around the proposition that the restoration and preservation of Native languages are central to the survival of Native American cultures (BlueArm, 2000; Cameron, 2004; Deyhle, 1992; Fishman, 1996b). While a concerted effort including home and community is required, tribal schools are also viewed as a valuable resource toward achieving this goal (Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Fishman, 1996a).

Native Language Revitalization Efforts

Language and culture have been described as one and the same or “two sides of the same coin” (Demmert, 2001, p. 10). According to Reyhner (1996), “each language

carries with it an unspoken network of cultural values” (p. 1). He views language as the vehicle for imparting generations of wisdom: language consisting of different words, different ways of saying, and “different ways of being, thinking, seeing and acting” (p. 1).

As a result of this consensus of thought there is a sense of urgency behind every effort undertaken to increase the use of languages. According to linguist Michael Krauss (1996) there are approximately 175 remaining Native American languages in the United States today. He estimates that 155 of those languages will become extinct within the next 60 years unless something radically changes. Other estimates of the existing languages are closer to 200, but all agree that the current rate of loss is rapidly leading to the extinction of many (Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Little & McCarty, 2006). Richard Littlebear (1996) has poignantly issued a warning, “The topic of language death has been ‘dialogued’ to death. Those who are serious about preserving their languages must act now” (p. 239).

There are extreme challenges that lie ahead for Native American language preservation efforts. Cleary and Peacock (1998) have outlined several of them including a lack of sustained funding for current efforts, different dialects, varying degrees of oral proficiency, religious issues, and lack of properly trained teachers to serve in schools and communities with language programs. The efforts underway to restore and preserve Native languages appear to be conducted in a piecemeal fashion without a centrally coordinated mechanism and support system.

Even though the government has a policy on Native American languages, there is little being done to actively promote it. Lomawaima and McCarty (2006) have theorized the use of “safety zones” by the United States government in their policies that alternate between welcoming and allowing or repressing and often criminalizing Native American cultural practices. They refer to times of “safety” as those times when the government offers support, although the support provides little in the way of anything substantive. They have suggested that passage of the Native American Languages Act of 1991 occurred in the safety zone. Schiffman (as cited in Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006) likened the passage of this legislation to “locking the barn door after the horse is stolen” (p. 136).

In spite of the problems and challenges, restoration and preservation efforts are underway in great numbers across the country among many tribes and often in the schools (Beaulieu, Figueira, & Viri, 2006). Language revitalization within schools can take one of several forms – immersion programs, bilingual education, and/or individual language courses. Of the three, immersion programs seem to hold the most promise for attaining the desired goals of restoring weakened or near extinct languages (DeJong, 1998; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006).

Language immersion is defined by Met (1993) as the teaching of language as more than just the “subject” of instruction, it is the “vehicle” of the instruction (p.1). He found that language immersion fosters pride in one’s culture; age-appropriate language skills; as well as, a high degree of language proficiency (p.1). Immersion in another

language does not threaten the primary language, in fact, it enhances it (DeJong, 1998; McLaughlin, 1984; Renker & Arnold, 1988).

The most well-known and successful immersion efforts have been among the Māori in New Zealand (May, 1999) and the Hawaiian Natives in the United States (Yamauchi, 2000). During the 1980s the Māori people of New Zealand and native Hawaiian Islanders pioneered a new approach to revitalizing their languages. They created immersion centers, called “language nests,” in which young children entered into full day learning environments where they heard only their ancestral languages being spoken (May, 1999).

The early childhood Māori language nests, Te Kohanga Reo, are language immersion programs for preschool children from birth through age five. Following ten years of implementation, there were 13,000 children enrolled in 819 Te Kohanga Reo programs (Harrison, 1998). In 1994, bilingual primary schools, known as Kura Kaupapa, were opened to receive students who spent their preschool years in the Te Kohanga Reo programs. Although precise figures on the recent enrollments are difficult to obtain, many consider the New Zealand efforts to be quite successful (Harrison, 1998; Lewthwaite, 2007; May, 1999). It is important to note that the government of New Zealand passed the Māori Language Act in the late 1980s to establish Māori as one of the country’s official languages. The government followed this action with financial resources to develop language programs at different levels of schooling (Government of New Zealand, 1989).

Following the Māori experiment, a similar undertaking was carried out in Hawaii. Punana Leo was the first Hawaiian preschool language immersion program set up and its goal was to produce bilingual children. At the start of the Hawaiian experiment in the early 1990s, only 4.5 percent of the native Hawaiians were native speakers and most were beyond the age of 50 (Stiles, 1997). The effectiveness of the Punana Leo program led to a statewide immersion program, Papahana Kaiapuni Hawaii, which extends through grade twelve (Yamauchi, 2000). A timeline of progressive events indicating the state of Hawaii's commitment to language restoration includes the development of scholarship programs to assist local community members to be trained as immersion teachers, a statewide Hawaiian language speech competition for immersion students, degree programs offered in Hawaiian Language and Literature, and Apple Computer's support of the Hawaiian language by creating software and a Hawaiian keyboard for all new computers (Silva & Donaghy, 2003).

The success of the language revitalization efforts within these pioneering experiments has led to the development of similar immersion programs within many Native American communities in recent years (Greymorning, 1997; Nijhuis, 2003; Pease-Pretty on Top, 2003; Peter et al., 2003; Stiles, 1997; Wetzel, 2006). Studies of a Navajo immersion program that began in 1986 have demonstrated that students in the immersion program outperformed their peers in English-only classes on local assessments of English writing and standardized math assessments. Immersion students were slightly behind their English-only peers on standardized reading tests, but the gap was closing (Holm & Holm, 1995). It must be noted that the researchers reporting the

results were also the co-founders of the program. Other school-based immersion programs, however, show similar results (M. S. Linn et al., 2000). Community-based language programs are springing forth as well as those found within schools (Ayoungman, 1991; Beaulieu, 2006; Clark, 2001; Dementi-Leonard & Gilmore, 1999; Demmert, 1994; Grotto Foundation, 2007). The Pueblos of New Mexico and the Blackfeet of Montana are two groups experimenting with community-based language approaches and demonstrating success. The Cochiti Pueblo began an immersion program in 1996 followed by the Acoma Pueblo in 1997. Both the Cochiti and Acoma communities had conducted surveys on language usage. The Acoma community had “no children of preschool or elementary school-age speaking Acoma as a first language” (McCarty, 2003, p. 157). The Cochiti similarly reported that two-thirds of their population were not fluent speakers of the local language (Romero, 2001). Results of the Cochiti are encouraging. Students involved in the immersion program outperformed their English-only peers on national assessments of English language arts. There is also evidence that Keres, the Cochiti Pueblo native language, is spoken more commonly within the community and fluent speakers are taking more time to share their knowledge (Slims, 2001).

A community based initiative, Nizipuhwahsin (Real Speak), began in 1987 at the Piegan Institute in Montana. Community efforts resulted in the development of a language immersion school serving K-8 students. The school is producing the first fluent speakers of the Blackfoot language in two generations and has a waiting list of students eager to gain entrance (Nijhuis, 2003).

One major question that remains is the degree to which fluency of a language is obtained within any of the various language revitalization programs that exist.

Greymorning (1997), in his study of an Arapaho immersion program, found the goal of fluency to be elusive. While students are learning some conversational language, the depth of language knowledge and ability needed to fully understand the nuances and rich meaning behind Native ways of speaking is not being obtained. Greymorning cites the importance of hiring well-trained fluent speakers who have a “clear understanding of language acquisition” (p. 1) to service such programs.

While the goal of fluency may not be met in language programs offered in schools, researchers cite additional benefits to such programs. Holm and Holm (1995) studying the Rock Point Community School among the Navajo reported “students have considerably more confidence and pride [than Navajo peers in neighboring schools]” (pp. 147-148). Greater community involvement and decision-making with schools (Dementi-Leonard & Gilmore, 1999), decreased dropout rates and improved test scores (Stiles, 1997), and, pride in one’s cultural heritage (DeJong, 1998; Nijhuis, 2002, , 2003; Stiles, 1997) are some of the noted benefits resulting from student participation in Native language acquisition programs.

Based on Demmert & Towner’s definition of CBE, Yap developed a logic model as a rationale for the inclusion of Native languages as an essential component of the curriculum. Her model, “Culturally Based Education Logic Model”, speaks to the additional benefits cited in the research, including:

Native language development

Sense of community

Positive community involvement

Sense of identity

Academic and career aspiration

Enhanced self-esteem

Respect for others and self

Improved attendance, retention, attitude and behavior

Internal attribution

Increased student engagement

Positive cultural climate

Improved academic achievement in reading and mathematics (Yap, 2005b, p. 8)

Bilingual/bicultural programs in schools offer positive steps towards growth in the areas of self-esteem and pride in one's heritage. The best documented American Indian bilingual/bicultural programs are located in Arizona (Holm & Holm, 1995; Jordan, 1995; Stiles, 1997; Tharp, 1982). Most notably is the Rock Point School that has been in existence since 1966. Longitudinal data from the school supports a larger body of research on bilingual education that show cumulative benefits over time for students who learn to read in two languages (Crawford, 1997; Krashen, 1997). Reports indicate the Navajo speaking children who learned to read in the Navajo language first outperformed students in English-only programs and, according to Holm & Holm (1990), the gains increased at each successive grade level. Also studying Rock Point, Rosier and Farella (1976) compared English reading comprehension levels of fourth- and fifth-grade students in the bilingual program against the national scores. Researchers found that an initial one and a half year gap had been reduced to a half year gap in the performance of the students participating in the Navajo-language-first instruction. They also found that the increase in the reading growth rate for students at the school was

faster between second and fifth grade than for students in the non-tribally controlled schools. Their final finding was that half of the fifth-grade students who received Navajo-language-first instruction scored at or above a 5.5 grade equivalent. Prior to the implementation of this program, no fifth-grade group averaged at or above a grade equivalent of 5.0 (Apthorp, D'Amato, & Richardson, 2003).

The Hualapai Tribe in Peach Springs, Arizona began a transformation in the 1970s under the quiet leadership of a local teacher who taught her students using the local language even though it was forbidden by the school administration. With the help of outside linguists, the program eventually developed a bilingual/bicultural curriculum that gained wide support in the community and grew to national prominence (Watahomigie, 1998).

Crawford (1997) advances a word of caution in reporting on current models of language revitalization. He warns that what works in one community may not work in a neighboring community as the contexts and conditions may differ.

Effective Teachers – What They Must Know and Do

“...a teacher has not taught if no one learns” (Darling-Hammond, 2005, p. 6). This quote sharply focuses the connection that is required between *teachers and students* and *teaching and learning*. There was a time, a few short decades ago, when people doubted whether schools and teachers could make a difference in the lives of at least some students. The Coleman report (Coleman et al., 1966) fashioned such doubt when it reported that the greatest variability in student achievement was the result of their socioeconomic background and had little to do with the schools students attended. It is

now known that Coleman's methodology was flawed in that it used aggregated teacher scores in schools as it compared average test scores for all children. The aggregation of scores can lead to distorted findings as was the case in the Coleman study. Whitehurst (2003) provided an analogy of a "man who had his head in the oven and his feet in the freezer but whose temperature, on average, was just right" (p. 1). The averaging of all teachers, effective with ineffective, and the averaging of all students, high and low performing, will often mask what does actually occur.

Doubts do remain in the current educational climate about whether schools alone can ensure that all students progress to an acceptable level of achievement, but increasingly research and experimental school endeavors are providing evidence that schools and teachers do matter (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Marzano, 2007). Recent research supports this intuitive notion and what educators have known for some time, that the role of an effective teacher far outweighs anything else that can be found within schools relative to student achievement, independent from students themselves (Marzano, 2007; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004). Such findings offer a new sense of optimism for educators as they continue to refine the field into a science, but also an art form. The 2004 study by Nye, Konstantopoulos & Hedges is considered by some to provide the most compelling evidence for the strength of the teacher effect because their experiment allowed for random assignment and strong controls of additional factors and variables that are also known to affect student achievement levels (Marzano, 2007). The study was conducted in 79 elementary schools in 42 school districts in Tennessee. No attempt was made to

identify the characteristics of effective teachers, but other research has contributed to such specifics.

Varied lists of research-based effective teacher characteristics do exist to help schools and teacher preparation programs develop a pathway leading to a level of higher quality among teaching professionals. Included in such lists are cognitive ability of teachers, focused training, experience, content knowledge, and professional certification (Center on Educational Policy, 2005; Marzano, 2007; Whitehurst, 2003).

Linda Darling-Hammond, a prolific writer on the need to professionalize teacher education, has synthesized the research and succinctly summarized what teachers should know and be able to do in order to improve student achievement. She believes effective teachers draw on three general areas of knowledge:

Knowledge of learners and how they learn and develop within social contexts.

Understanding of the subject matter and skills to be taught in light of the social purposes of education.

Understanding of teaching in light of the content and learners to be taught, as informed by assessment and supported by a productive classroom environment (Darling-Hammond, 2005, p. 5).

Darling-Hammond (1997; 2005) acknowledges the complexity of teaching and advocates setting standards for teachers that include a knowledge base aligned with teaching content and appropriate teacher credentials as well. All of the knowledge and skills teachers possess must be connected to the specific contexts and learning needs of students in their care in order for optimal student achievement to take effect. In essence, effective teachers know how to adapt what they bring to the learning situation to better meet the needs of their students. This is a part of the art of effective teaching.

Teachers of Native American Students

Bergstrom, Cleary, and Peacock (2003), through their research with American Indian students, have identified several personal characteristics of teachers that make them effective with American Indian students including being caring, fun, mellow, open-minded, flexible, respectful, and patient. This research supports the work of others that report that the teacher-student relationship plays a vital role, either positively or negatively, in the motivation of at least some students to achieve, persist, or drop out (Swisher & Tippeconnic, 1999). The need to develop warm, trusting and caring relationships between teachers and students is paramount as this is the most basic interaction that takes places within schools (Cardenas, 1996; Charleston, 1994; Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Deyhle, 1992; Little Soldier, 1988; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; St. Charles & Costantino, 2000; Swisher & Tippeconnic, 1999). The importance of this factor in student success was demonstrated by Deyhle (1992) and Coladarci (1983) in their work with Native American student dropouts, who reported uncaring teachers as a factor in their decision to leave school. Deyhle reported that nearly one half of those interviewed made such claims and one third of Coladarci's respondents made similar statements.

Rohner (1965) found that teachers who are culturally sensitive and open to becoming involved in the familial and community life of their students are in a position to mitigate some of the students' background factors that are often considered to be beyond the school's control (Traub, 2000). Bergstrom, Cleary & Peacock (2003) also

cite the possession of cultural knowledge on the part of teachers as a requisite element leading to effective teaching.

Klump and Nelson (2005) at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) reviewed research articles and reports relative to cultural competence. Based on 17 of the articles reviewed they summarized the important characteristics of culturally responsive and competent educators as:

Those who foster a climate of inclusion and demonstrate respect and caring for their students.

Those who build bridges between academic learning and students' prior understanding, knowledge, native language and values.

Those who have high expectations for all students.

Those who learn about their students' cultures, languages, and learning styles.

Those who understand that students are at different stages of acculturation (Klump & Nelson, 2005, pp. 3-4).

Darling-Hammond (1997) argues that effective teachers need to be able to do two things in order to prepare students to live in contemporary society: *teach for understanding* and *teach for diversity*. Given that the vast majority of teachers in the United States are White and middle class (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2003), while the student demographics are increasingly becoming more diverse, the need for teachers to become more culturally competent is apparent (Klump & Nelson, 2005; Sparks, 2000). Some would argue that more minority teachers are needed and that recruitment efforts should be underway to meet this challenge (Bergstrom, Cleary, & Peacock, 2003).

Pedagogy

Some descriptions of effective pedagogy flow naturally from the list of effective teacher characteristics. For example, teachers who know how to adapt their knowledge and skills to meet the needs of individual students would likely differentiate their teaching lessons in ways that are beneficial to their students. In broad categories, Marzano (2007) and colleagues have identified three components of effective classroom pedagogy tending more toward the science of teaching. They include:

- Use of effective instructional strategies.
- Use of effective management strategies.
- Use of effective classroom curriculum and design strategies (p. 6).

Marzano's first component of effective instructional strategies was written about and well received in a publication *Classroom Instruction that Works* (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). Researchers at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), conducting a meta-analysis of the literature, identified nine categories of instructional strategies likely to impact student achievement (Marzano, Pickering & Pollock, 2001). The nine strategies delineated are:

- Identifying similarities and differences
- Summarizing and note taking
- Reinforcing effort and providing recognition
- Homework and practice
- Nonlinguistic representations
- Cooperative learning
- Setting objectives and providing feedback
- Generating and testing hypotheses
- Questions, cues and advance organizers

The increased level of specificity provided by researchers at McREL offers classroom practitioners more tools for the important task of delivering high quality experiences that lead to higher order thinking and problem solving abilities. Other research supports the educational trends identified by this study (Ennis, 1989; Newmann & Wehlage, 1993; Savery & Duffy, 2001).

Pedagogy for Native American Students

Researchers studying specific methodologies that work with American Indian students noted similarities, but also some differences from research with mainstream students. Bergstrom, Cleary, and Peacock (2003) reported that using encouragement, explanation, examples and analogies, and not singling out individual students are useful strategies identified for American Indian students in their study. Other research has also identified ‘privatization’ as a useful style of interaction to consider in working with American Indian students (McREL, 1999). A more personal one-on-one approach with close proximity and a softer voice would characterize this approach. This may be one of the most noteworthy differences, as mainstream students appear to enjoy public praise and recognition, while American Indian students are likely to shy away from it. Cleary and Peacock (1998) suggest that finding ways to tap the intrinsic motivation of American Indian students will be more beneficial than any extrinsic motivation efforts.

Research conducted specifically with American Indians students has been scarce, done in piecemeal fashion, and produced mixed reviews. Tharp’s (1999) work at the Center for Research in Education, Diversity and Excellence has been valuable in compiling strategies to guide the important work of educators. Tharp has crafted “Five

Standards for Effective Pedagogy” for American Indian students based upon a preponderance of evidence obtained through experimental, quasi-experimental, qualitative, and consensus-based approaches. The “Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy” are:

Standard I: Joint Productive Activity: Teachers and Students Producing Together (Facilitate learning through joint productive activity among teacher and students).

Standard II: Language Development: Developing Language and Literacy across the Curriculum (Develop competence in the language and literacy of instruction across the curriculum).

Standard III: Contextualization: Making Meaning by Connecting School to Students’ Lives (Contextualize teaching and curriculum in the experiences and skills of students’ home and community).

Standard IV: Challenging Activities: Teaching Complex Thinking (Challenge students toward cognitive complexity).

Standard V: Instructional Conversation: Teaching Through Conversation (Engage students through dialogue, especially the Instructional Conversation) (Tharp, 1999, p. appendix).

Additional Native American research has supported Tharp’s work especially as it pertains to the informal practices used by teachers to engage students more directly in ways that are meaningful to them. Little Soldier (1988) in a New Mexico study of reservation and non-reservation American Indian students found that an informal environment including room arrangement and dialogue, shared decision making, and the use of culturally relevant materials enhanced student learning. McCarty, Lynch, and Benally (1991) also found the use of shared dialogue with open-ended questioning that encouraged students to express ideas within their own cultural context led to increased student engagement.

Researchers at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) conducted a review of the research literature on effective standards-based practices for Native American students and reported “findings that were indeterminate with regard to the effectiveness of culturally congruent practices for Native American student achievement in reading and math” (Apthorp, D'Amato, & Richardson, 2003, p. 1). They concluded that “promising practices were identified . . .but causal conclusions could not be drawn” (p. 1).

This review of literature was a product of Phase I of a three phase study done by McREL to advance the research base on effective teaching strategies that work with American Indian students. Phase II was designed to conduct pilot studies and develop instrumentation tools. Phase III consisted of conducting an exploratory study to identify key constructs and variables along with the relationship between variables as they relate to instruction for teaching American Indian students (Apthorp, D'Amato, & Richardson, 2003).

McREL (2005) did a comparative analysis of mathematics approaches relative to learning and teaching qualities identified through research as particularly influential for success among American Indian students. Those influential qualities were: (1) high expectations, (2) cognitive challenge, (3) emphasis on cooperativeness and helpfulness, (4) making connections to out-of-school experiences, and (5) learning through observation.

One of the approaches studied was the Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) approach, a professional development program that assists teachers to understand how

knowledge of mathematics develops and how children think. It involves a line of questioning and student engagement leading to higher levels of problem solving than simply recalling factual information (McREL, 2005). The CGI approach aligns well with Tharp's (1999) "Five Standards of Effective Pedagogy".

Of interest in this exploratory study was the use of a rubric to measure the teacher's cultural responsiveness to American Indian students' cultural values and beliefs as witnessed in the lessons taught. Seven aspects of culture included in the rubric were:

Privatization (a personal style of interaction using a soft voice and one-on-one communication).

Child-led performance (a de-emphasis on stardom and allowing the student time to develop mastery).

Child-sensitive pacing (time to reflect and think before formulating responses).

Attention to the importance of family relationships (connections to family in class activities and lessons).

Cooperativeness (group harmony in learning tasks).

Connections with everyday life outside of school, with students' norms of experiences (utilization of experiences outside of school).

Opportunity to learn through observing modeling (hands-on practice and use of role models and holistic lessons)(Apthorp, D'Amato, & Richardson, 2003).

In 2005, based on their findings, McREL reported that cooperativeness and helpfulness ought to be key variables of study in future research. Cajete (1997) found that cooperation, egalitarianism, and informality, which are important American Indian dispositions, were found to be norms in the lessons receiving a high rating of cultural responsiveness.

Much has been written about the differences in learning styles between American Indian and mainstream students (Hughes et al., 2004; Jacobs & Reyhner, 2002; La Pointe, 1990; McCarty, Lynch, & Benally, 1991; Pewewardy, 2002; Powers, 2006; Swisher, 1991; Whitbeck, Hoyt, Stubben, & LaFromboise, 2001). Typologies of such differences exist. Examples of learning style typologies (St. Charles & Costantino, 2000) include:

Sensory modality strength (auditory/visual/kinesthetic)

Global/Analytic

Field Sensitivity/Field Independence

Impulsive/Reflective

Cooperation/Individualism

While various typologies do exist to help underscore and categorize some of the general differences that teachers should be aware of, some caution should be considered. It is possible to stereotype students in ways that may be detrimental to their school life as well (Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Pewewardy, 2002; Sparks, 2000). One would expect qualified teachers to be able to utilize information on the differences in learning styles between American Indian and mainstream students in ways that would match their real-life experiences with them in the classroom.

It is important to recognize that American Indians are not monolithic and that the research done to date is often done with American Indian students in single locations and/or schools (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997). The majority of research has been conducted in schools with large populations of American Indians where the focus of tending to the needs of American Indian students may differ from the focus of teachers in schools

where American Indian students are small in number. Also, Indians living in urban areas are different from reservation Indians just as Indians of different tribes have cultural variations.

Curriculum for Native American Students

Since the release of the “Meriam Report” in 1928 (Meriam et al., 1928), all subsequent major reports on American Indian education have advocated for the use of a more appropriate, culturally-based curriculum (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1973; Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, 1991; Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969; Yap, 2005a). Connecting school experiences to the culture, language, and values taught in the students’ homes and communities in a way that honors and validates them is a central tenet of a culturally-based curriculum (Butterfield, 1983; Skinner, 1999; Yazzie, 1999).

Schools, historically, have tended to treat the cultural differences of American Indian students from a deficit perspective, thereby ignoring the need to link new learning and experiences to those that the students bring with them to school. With the eclipsing of the deficit model as the pervasive perspective of cultural differences in recent decades, new approaches, content standards, materials, and assessments are being developed (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997).

While this development brings hope and optimism about the future direction of American Indian education, the piecemeal nature of the undertakings is a concern. As educators and researchers among many tribes are delivering new ideas and products, the fact remains that there are still overwhelming obstacles including limited funding, ties to

rules and regulations required by state and federal governments, insufficient personnel to carry out the tasks, and any number of other diversions to making more substantive progress in this area (Bergstrom, Cleary, & Peacock, 2003; Reyhner, 1993; Szasz, 1999).

With the signing of the two Presidential Executive Orders (13096 and 13336) by Clinton (1998) and Bush (2004), a more focused research agenda to delineate successful pedagogy and curricula for American Indian students has been developed and is currently underway. Correlational research has illuminated some promising practices, but none with causal conclusions. (Klump & Nelson, 2005; Yap, Towner et al., 2005).

In identifying strides that have been made relevant to culturally-appropriate curriculum, the states of Montana and Alaska have served as groundbreakers at the statewide level (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998; Kelting-Gibson, 2006). Their successes may serve as models for other states that have not yet committed to changes at this level.

Montana passed legislation in 1999 that requires *all* of Montana's students, Indian and non-Indian, to know the substantive elements of the history and contributions of the 12 tribes in the state. Students are to understand the distinctions between the tribes and the law requires that the information be presented in a culturally responsive manner. The Montana Office of Public Instruction worked in collaboration with tribes to develop guidelines for delivery of the content. They established a set of seven "Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians" (Office of Public Instruction, 2007). Despite the challenges to implementing the law as envisioned by the activists who worked for its passage, 10 years of the implementation have taught educators much and

they continue to make strides to improve the delivery system and content within it to improve student learning in this area.

In Alaska, a statewide initiative led to the development and adoption of the “Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools”. This is a set of standards being used across the state to provide schools and communities the opportunity to “examine the extent to which they are attending to the educational and cultural well-being of students in their care” (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998, p. 2). The standards address students, educators, schools, curriculum, and communities. They were developed by Alaska Native educators who believed that cultural awareness and responsiveness on the part of schools, teachers, and communities would lead to “the development of culturally-healthy students” (p. 2). The standards were intended to document indigenous knowledge systems of Alaska Natives and to incorporate such knowledge and ways of knowing into the formal school system. The standards were meant to supplement and not supplant the adopted statewide curricular standards.

Similar to the statewide efforts, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, who are treated as the 51st state for federal funding purposes (Norton, 2002), used the “Correlates of Effective Schools” research conducted by Lezotte (2001) to assist them to improve their schools. Lezotte identified these seven characteristics that most effective schools share:

- Instructional Leadership
- Clear and Focused Mission
- Safe and Orderly Environment
- Climate of High Expectations
- Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress
- Positive Home-School Relations

Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task (Lezotte, 2001, p. 3).

In addition to the seven “Correlates of Effective Schools” identified by Lezotte, three additional correlates were added by the Bureau Effective Schools Team (BEST) including cultural relevance, challenging curriculum and appropriate instruction, and shared governance and participatory management (Reyhner, 2006b). Working together with the National Indian School Boards Association (NISBA) a curriculum titled “Creating Sacred Places for Children” (CSPC) was developed for use in the BIA schools. Reyhner (2006) reported that 15 BIA schools that used the curriculum from 2001-2003 showed significant gains in reading for students in grades 3-5 over BIA schools that did not use the curriculum. The CSPC curriculum has expanded into the middle and high schools and continues to be available through NISBA.

Numerous publications of local materials have made their way into school programs and classrooms serving large numbers of American Indian students. These materials are often designed at the local level for use in site-specific locations. The materials are expected to represent the local needs and perspectives of the tribes and communities for which they were written. Examples include:

American Indian Life Skills Curriculum” (LaFromboise, 1995)

Northwest Homesteader: A Curriculum Project for Washington Schools
(Sneddon, n.d.)

Cradleboard Curriculum” (Sainte-Marie, 2005)

Native Child” (Native Child, n.d.).

In Minnesota, there are several Native American curriculum units including:

American Indian Contributions Curriculum

American Indian Family Life Curriculum

American Indian Harmony and Balance Curriculum

Expanding the Circle – Respecting the Past, Preparing for the Future (Office of Indian Education, n.d.).

Assessment

An area currently receiving wide attention by American Indian educators is assessment. A central component of the learning process is the documentation of student learning. It is expected that quality assessment measures, both formative and summative, would be used to inform the decision-making processes of teachers as they target and refine instruction.

Authentic assessment is the term used to underscore approaches to measuring student learning in a manner that demonstrates the ability to use the knowledge gained in real-life contexts. Authentic assessment provides evidence of learning through a variety of means including student portfolios, rubrics, public presentations, document creation such as brochures, publication of material used for a specific purpose, or other performance-based measures connected to real-life situations.

Multiple measures of assessment are generally preferred over single measures to more accurately document student learning and knowledge (Frost, 2006; Jehlen, 2007). Alignment of the assessment choice to the knowledge or skill of interest is considered essential to accurately track student learning.

The decision about what to assess represents the culture of those creating the assessment tools. The use of norm-referenced and English-only assessment tools are

considered to be advantageous for students whose first language is English, thereby shortchanging American Indian students whose English language proficiency is less well-developed than the majority of mainstream students (Bordeaux, 1995). For the American Indian student, as well as other minority students, standardized tests used in public schools are considered to contain a certain degree of cultural bias (Demmert, 2005; Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, 1991). The need for culturally sensitive assessment procedures and tools to be aligned with indigenous ways of knowing becomes eminently significant for American Indian educators and students as they work to develop indigenous models of education. An awareness of the need to develop alternative assessments aligned with student learning styles and indigenous-based content exists, but along with all other developments in American Indian education, it too is occurring in piecemeal fashion (M. Fox, 2005).

Community and Parental Influences

There is a firm belief by American Indian educators and advocates that the local community has a vital role to play in the education of American Indian youth (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998; Clark, 2001; Demmert & Towner, 2003; Elmore, 2000; Foley, 2004; Hughes et al., 2004; Lewthwaite, 2007; Reyhner, 2001). Efforts to re-establish and strengthen the cultural identity of American Indian youth will require the efforts of the local community beyond just the efforts of the schools, even for the tribally-controlled schools found on reservations (Cleary & Peacock, 1998). G. Mike Charleston (1994) wrote in a draft report of the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, “Education cannot be delegated to a small group of employees of the school. It most

certainly cannot be delegated to people from outside the community who leave at the close of the school day” (p. 9).

The apperception of the strength of community-based efforts, each with specific cultural contexts, in teaching American Indian students is abundant in the literature (Charleston, 1994; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Lewthwaite, 2007; St. Charles & Costantino, 2000; Strand & Peacock, 2002). In fact, in Demmert and Towner’s (2003) review of the literature on CBE, referring to the vital role of community, they wrote “Opposition to this point of view from Tribes or Native educators is not in evidence in the printed literature we reviewed” (p. 1). The Native Nations of Canada have recognized the importance of this aspect of educational reform. Their Funder’s Forum of Environment and Education (2001) stated “the role of schooling is to provide a secure, nurturing environment that recognizes the culture of the community and promotes the participation of educational staff, students, families, and the community in making decisions about learning” (Lewthwaite, 2007, p. 4). The New Zealand Education Act of 1989 provides a mandate for the increased participation of the community and parents in the education of the Māori students as well (Government of New Zealand, 1989). In the United States it was the Indian Education Act of 1972 that cemented the notion of increased participation and decision-making among the Indian communities, reinforcing earlier reports that called for it (Indian Education Act, 1972).

Parental involvement in schools is known to increase the academic success of students including achievement, attendance, motivation, self-esteem, and behavior (Butterfield & Pepper, 1992; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 2008). The reverse, non-

participation of parents in the education of their children, has been shown to result in increased decisions by students to drop out of school (Coladarci, 1983; Deyhle, 1992; Strom & Boster, 2007).

Many believe that a lack of parental participation by American Indian parents in the academic lives of their children has as its basis the historical malfeasance of the American educational system (D. W. Adams, 1995; Child, 1994 ; Fuchs & Havighurst, 1973; Keohane, 2005; Marr, 2001; Sanchez & Stuckey, 1999). Remnants of the boarding school era in which children were forcibly removed from their homes and stripped of their cultural identity, including language, live on in stories and memories of American Indian parents and grandparents (Beaulieu, Sparks, & Alonzo, 2005). Schools genuinely interested in the academic success of American Indian students are expected to press for greater collaboration between the school and the home (Butterfield & Pepper, 1992; Littlebear, 1992). Outreach to families that focuses on positive contacts should be on-going (Charleston & King, 1991). Such efforts are viewed as necessary to increase parental perceptions of the legitimacy of schools (Ogbu, 1991).

Spirituality

A final critical element in Demmert & Towner's (2003) definition of CBE is Native spirituality. To define and explicate Native spirituality and its centrality within traditional tribal teachings is beyond the scope of the current project; however, at its core is the absolute desire and need to maintain a sense of balance and harmony in the universe (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Fuchs & Havighurst, 1973; Jacobs & Reyhner, 2002; Reyhner, 2001; Yap, Towner et al., 2005). This basic understanding and acceptance of

the interconnectedness between humans and the rest of nature equates handsomely with the idea of “accumulated American Indian wisdom” (Jacobs & Reyhner, 2002, p. 2) passed down through the generations.

It is generally agreed that Native spirituality should be a requisite element in any Native educational reform effort undertaken (HeavyRunner & Morris, 1997; Powers, Potthoff, Bearing, & Resnick, 2003), even though a well-defined, agreed upon version does not exist. To rediscover and recapture a sense of balance and harmony in the universe would naturally encompass Native youth discovering their own individual sense of self – an end toward which CBE is expected to contribute. Deloria has stated “wisdom ought to be the goal of education” (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, p. 30). Schools, working in tandem with community members and tribal leaders, have an important role to play toward this end.

The No Child Left Behind Act

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) has stirred the nation’s public school system since its inception and continues to rouse heated debate among its strong supporters and ardent opponents. One would expect that seven years of implementation would quell the debate; however, different views on the efficacy of NCLB continue to linger (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007; Gilbert, 2008; R. Linn, 2008; McMurrer, 2008; McNeil, Coppola, Radigan, & Vasquez Heilig, 2008; Oleck, 2008; Reyhner & Hurtado, 2008). The complexity of the law may mean that the full scale of its impact will likely not be known for a long time yet (Abernathy, 2007).

The implementation process from school to school, school district to school district, and state to state varies and this likely serves as one of the reasons for varying opinions about its impact. Given the complexity of the law, it has been difficult for administrators and school boards to determine the best approach to take in implementing it. As different “new directions” have been set forth in response to the law, it makes sense that different levels of impact and outcomes would be felt. The impact of the law would likely differ depending upon how far along states were in the development of standards and accountability systems prior to the law’s passage and upon the interpretation of NCLB’s language, instructions, and even its intent.

In looking for common ground among the supporters and opponents of NCLB, many are in agreement that the law is at least well-intended and it does bring a necessary focus to the achievement gap that exists between minority and low-income students and their more advantaged peers (Haycock, 2005; National Governors Association, 2005; Paige, 2004; Ryan, 2004; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2004). All would agree that there is a need to improve the quality of teaching especially for students in rural and high-poverty schools (Darling-Hammond, 2004). Beyond these basic premises, there is a parting of the ways beginning with the use of a single test, especially norm-referenced ones, to determine success of student outcomes with high-stakes attached to it. The law carries an assumption that the single test score is sufficient to determine student achievement in each of the subject areas tested. This fundamental assumption remains under intense criticism and scrutiny (Au, 2007).

Much has been written about the damaging effects of high-stakes testing within the nation's schools (S. J. Gould, 1981; Kohn, 2004; Nichols & Berliner, 2007; Perlstein, 2007; Sloan, 2007). As by-products, critics claim deskilling of teachers (Apple, 2000); subtractive schooling for minority students (Valenzuela, 1999); narrowing of the curriculum (Perkins-Gough, 2004); low teacher morale leading many to leave the profession (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003); cultural bias in test questions and design (Moore, 2005; Tippeconnic, 2003); and, the re-stratification of education by race (McNeil, 2000). Such claims represent only a partial list of those made about the deleterious effects of high-stakes testing in general. For further review of the multiplicity of claims refer to *The Mismeasure of Man* by Stephen Jay Gould (1981); *Collateral Damage* by Nichols and Berliner (2007); and, *Many Children Left Behind* by Meier and Wood (2004).

For purposes of the current study, literature reporting directly on the impact of NCLB on curriculum in schools in general was reviewed along with a more specific search for literature on NCLB's impact on the culturally based education of American Indian students in schools serving them. Research is mounting on the overall impact that NCLB is having on curriculum in schools. The available literature on NCLB's impact on CBE of American Indian students is scant with few definitive outcomes to report.

Research on the impact of NCLB on professional development of teachers was reviewed, again both among mainstream teachers and American Indian teachers. It can generally be said that the law has resulted in some positive directions for teacher improvement while at the same time hindering progress in other areas.

One final area of review was conducted on the changes in student test scores since the law was enacted. There is a general sense that scores have improved in some areas for some students, but little has occurred that will ultimately close the achievement gap. We begin with the literature on the impact on curriculum.

NCLB's Effect on Curriculum

NCLB has been charged with having a significant effect on the emphasis schools place on certain subjects to the exclusion of others. English, math and science, required by the law to be tested, are receiving more attention both in time and importance than are social studies, physical education, the arts and world languages (Meyer, 2005).

Educator and parental concerns about NCLB's impact on the overall curriculum, supported by a growing body of evidence, are being sounded. The Arts Education Association (2004), the National Association for Music Education (2007), the National Association of State Schools Boards of Education (Meyer, 2005), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (van Houten, 2005), the Council for Basic Education (von Zastrow & Janc, 2004), and the Center on Educational Policy (2007) all have published statements about the need to maintain a more balanced and meaningful curriculum for students.

A major independent watchdog of educational trends and outcomes in public education is the Center on Educational Policy (CEP). In 2007 they published the results of a survey of 349 responding school districts. They reported that 62% of the districts had increased instructional time for English language arts and math at the elementary level since 2001-02. More than 20% of the districts reported increasing time for these

same subjects in middle school. Of the districts reporting these increases, the average increase in instructional time for English was 46% and 37% for math. These increases amounted to a combined 42% more time spent on instruction for English and math than was given prior to NCLB's inception. Forty-four percent of these same districts reported a reduction in time spent on social studies, art, music, physical education, science, lunch, and/or recess. The reduced time amounted to 30 minutes a day on average (Center on Educational Policy, 2007).

A follow-up report by CEP, after dissecting the data provided by the July 2007 survey, found that some districts reduced their time in one subject while other districts did so across several subject areas. Jack Jennings, president and CEO of CEP stated, "Digging deeper into the data, we now know that the amount of time spent teaching reading, math and other subjects has changed substantially. In other words, changes in curriculum are not only widespread but also deep" (National Education Association, 2007, p. 1).

Of special interest is the degree to which such changes affect all or only some students. Von Zastrow and Janc (2004) reported that much of the erosion of curriculum outside of the tested subject areas is occurring in schools with high minority populations. Many are concerned that NCLB is doing more harm than good to the very group for which it is intended to help (Beaulieu, Sparks, & Alonzo, 2005; Meier & Wood, 2004; Reyhner, n.d.; Sunderman & Kim, 2004).

Narrowing the focus of the curriculum within schools, as an unintended consequence of the legislation, has been a major concern since its passage. Such

arguments are likely to persist as future scrutinizing occurs on the intended and unintended consequences of NCLB.

NCLB's Effect on Curriculum in Schools Serving American Indian Students

There is an overall sense...that profound changes are underfoot in Native education and that the Native education community has only just begun to sense the impacts and dangers incumbent in both the intended and unintended consequences of the No Child Left Behind Statute upon the future of Native education (Beaulieu, Sparks, & Alonzo, 2005, p. 4).

While research on the impact of NCLB is growing in abundance in public schools throughout the nation, there is little available research on the impact of NCLB on American Indian education. The National Indian Education Association (NIEA) held hearings in eleven communities around the nation to hear testimony about NCLB's impact in schools and programs serving American Indian youth (Beaulieu, Sparks, & Alonzo, 2005).

NIEA's report, Preliminary Report on No Child Left Behind in Indian Country, followed the hearings and indicates a concern within Indian education that,

narrowing the broad public purposes of schools...is most directly related to the impacts of the statute upon culturally based education including the use of culturally appropriate pedagogy and curriculum that is connected to the social, cultural, and linguistic heritage of the children, the role of Tribal governments and Native communities and parents in determining the education purposes of schools and the role of teachers, parents and community members in the education lives of Native students (Beaulieu, Sparks, & Alonzo, 2005, p. 6).

Only two research projects were found that directly focused on NCLB's impact on American Indian education. A case study of the impact on a bilingual program at Rock Point Community School in Arizona found both positive and negative results (Haskan, 2007). The author reported that the bilingual program was not clearly

articulated prior to NCLB. As a positive measure, the program became more clearly into focus following NCLB, but on the negative side, the involvement of parents and stability of leadership within the school both were diminished. The other study, Native Educator's Research Study, conducted principally by David Beaulieu at the Center for American Indian Studies at Arizona State University, also collected information on the responses of teachers to NCLB. This project selected eight American Indian teachers to participate in a case study to identify issues they currently face in teacher preparation programs and teaching situations following their graduation. Two of the eight teachers under study reported their uncertainty about whether they could remain in the teaching profession citing the demands of NCLB as one of their reasons for being dissatisfied (Beaulieu, Figueira, & Viri, 2006). The study found that federal and state pressures impacted how all of the eight teachers taught. One teacher stated that her "school pushes testing so hard and focuses on raising scores that we are beginning to prepare in first grade for the testing in third grade...I knew that my testing would go down; I was scared about this since the beginning" (p. 68). This teacher voiced her concern that the teaching of reading was about the only thing in school that mattered and in that process "she was ignoring culture" (p. 68).

No studies on NCLB were found among the Ojibwe Indians and none have been conducted within the state of Minnesota to date. It is precisely at this juncture that the current study is located.

NCLB's Impact on Professional Development

As stated earlier, all can agree that students should have access to highly qualified, effective teachers. Research has suggested that the nation's neediest students particularly need teachers who can teach effectively (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006).

NCLB has shed light on this important aspect of educational excellence. The injection of a "highly-qualified teacher" component into the legislation has ensured that school districts and state education offices focus on professional development requirements and practices. The actual implementation process is proving to be more complicated than simply requiring that school districts follow through as put forth in the law (Richardson, 2002).

Outlining the full scale of the complications surrounding the highly-qualified teacher component is beyond the intent of the current study; however, a glimpse at the research on what has transpired in this area is appropriate. Two studies in particular have shed light on the direction that schools should take as they incorporate professional development practices into their school improvement plans.

A "Professional Development Analysis" was conducted by McREL (Snow-Renner & Lauer, 2005) as a part of their larger research synthesis, "The Influence of Standards on K-12 Teaching and Student Learning" (Lauer et al., 2005). A total of 54 articles addressing 37 studies were used for this portion of the project. Most were descriptive, but many used both qualitative and quantitative data. Most of the studies focused on the subjects of math, science, or both combined. Fewer studies were available focusing on language arts and social studies.

The research findings indicate that standards-based professional development can positively affect classroom practices, ultimately leading to higher student achievement. Professional development was found to be more likely to result in positive teacher change if those training activities were of considerable duration; focused on specific content and/or instructional strategies rather than general; characterized by collective participation of educators (grade level or school level teams); coherent; and, infused with active learning, rather than a stand and deliver approach (Lauer et al., 2005, p. 6).

This analysis revealed that standards-based professional development activities are not always aligned with teacher needs. They recommend examining the types of professional development activities teachers undergo with increased efforts to align the selection with standards and needs of the teachers.

While this analysis did not look at NCLB per se, it does offer some direction for schools to consider in planning appropriate and effective professional development activities as they work to align their inputs with their outputs. NCLB does set forth some guidelines that match the findings of McREL's analysis including a focus on content knowledge and student learning. The mandates stated in NCLB expressly exclude one-day workshops and short-term conferences as a strategy for improving teacher effectiveness. NCLB mandates also emphasize the need to evaluate professional development practices to ensure they are linked to student achievement (Lauer et al., 2005).

A 2004 survey conducted by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) indicated that the majority of educators had experienced little positive impact on professional development as a result of NCLB requirements (Mizell, 2004). Nearly half of the 2,000 survey respondents indicated their belief that the law is “having no discernable effect” (p. 1). Thirty-four percent of the respondents indicated that the one day workshops and short-term conferences barred by NCLB were still on-going in their schools at the same level as the previous two-year period. Thirty percent of respondents indicated that there was “significantly more” or “somewhat more” professional development as a direct result of NCLB. More respondents (33%) felt there was no increase in the evaluation of professional development as required by NCLB; however, 24% believed that the legislation has resulted in greater efforts to evaluate professional development at their schools. The overall conclusion offered by the staff at NSDC is that there is a “need for more attention to implementation of the law’s professional development provision” (Mizell, 2004, p. 1).

While direct and solid linkages are not readily available as to the impact of NCLB on effective professional development practices within schools, there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that the development of professional learning communities is the direction schools need to go (Barth et al., 2005). Jay McTighe, in a recent article, suggests there are three roles that members of a professional learning community should undertake: critical friend, analyst of student work, and continuous learner (McTighe, 2008).

Student Achievement since NCLB

The final verdict on NCLB will ultimately come as definitive results are known relative to student achievement and whether or not it succeeds in closing the achievement gap. Some promising results are trickling in following the initial flurry of state activities to respond to the legislation, but these do not come without warnings.

Education Trust in 2005 reported data on student gains in test scores in 29 states and found that all except one increased overall achievement since 2002. They found that the majority of the 29 states reduced the achievement gap between groups of students in math and reading at the elementary level.

Fewer states raised scores in the middle and high school divisions. It was found that some states including Florida and Arizona did narrow the gap in reading, but this was done in a negative manner with the scores of white students dropping rather than the scores of minorities and poor students increasing. Still other states reported an increase in the achievement gap between some student groups. The Latino-White gap and the gap between poor and non-poor students in middle school math increased in some states (The Education Trust, 2005).

Sprinkled amongst such findings was some good news coming out of New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. New York, North Carolina and Pennsylvania raised achievement for all groups of students and managed to accelerate the gains for the lowest-performing groups. Massachusetts raised overall achievement in math and reading while narrowing all gaps including those at the high school level (The Education Trust, 2005).

It was concluded overall that there are consistent trends that are favorable coming out of most states at the elementary level. It is interesting to note that Minnesota was in the “narrows” column for all student groups when looking at the elementary trends. The reading and math gaps between American Indian and White students closed by 2 and 1 percentage points respectively, in the number of students who reached the “proficient” or “meets standard” achievement levels (The Education Trust, 2005).

The middle and high school levels are less favorable and more inconsistent. The Education Trust called these results “disappointing” (The Education Trust, 2005, p. 3).

A more recent report by the Center on Education Policy (CEP), “Answering the Question that Matters Most: Has Student Achievement Increased Since No Child Left Behind?”, indicates that the number of states that have narrowed the achievement gap far exceeds the number of states that have not done so (Center on Education Policy, 2007). The study contains information on all fifty states and looks at data on achievement levels both pre- and post-NCLB. The study did two things to help reduce bias in the results. It limited its analysis to testing data that was possible to compare year-to-year. It also used two separate measures to evaluate achievement, the percentage of students reaching proficiency and effect sizes, a measure based on average test scores that addresses limitations of the first method. Both measures indicated gains in the number of states showing a decline in the achievement gap since 2002. Both reading and math scores were shown to have increased overall in this time period.

Warnings that followed the CEP study note that judgment should not be rendered too hastily as the changes in results could have come about for any number of reasons.

Teaching to the test, creation of more lenient tests, population changes, or any combination of additional factors were possible reasons for the changes in test scores. Some have termed these potential factors as “work-arounds,” meaning finding a way around the system that gives the appearance of making gains that do not actually exist (Guilfoyle, 2006).

It is important to consider reasons behind the increase in test scores for these reasons. It is also important to consider reasons for the success of schools making AYP. Twenty-three states have opted to take a “backloaded” approach to the targeted goal of 100% proficiency among students by 2014 (Center on Education Policy, 2008). This means states have set lower targets early on in the timeframe hoping that the law would change or that they would manage to create conditions for greater increases in achievement as the deadline nears.

Researchers investigating the AYP requirement in schools in the Great Lakes Region made projections based on what they found about the viability of all students meeting the “proficiency” standard by the 2014 deadline. Between 85 – 95% of the schools in the seven state region are projected to fail by 2014. It is projected that Minnesota will see 81% of its schools failing to meet the required target by 2014 although 27 % could be eligible under the “safe harbor” provision (Wiley, Mathis, & Garcia, 2005).

Two other important considerations are discussed in the literature. One involves the possibility that schools might actually cheat in order to make AYP. The other involves the notion that low-scoring students might actually be pushed out of the schools

or retained in certain grade levels to reduce the chance that their anticipated low scores would be used in the annual measure of AYP. A Rice University study investigating high-stakes accountability's impact on school dropouts reported that the higher the stakes in the schools under study, the more severe the dropout problem became (McNeil, Coppola, Radigan, & Vasquez Heilig, 2008).

While these may appear to be preposterous measures, Nichols and Berliner (2007), in their book *Collateral Damage*, discuss Campbell's Law which holds that problems occur when a single high-stakes indicator or measure is used to measure complex social phenomena. In other words, the greater the opportunity for a single indicator to bear down upon social decision-making, the greater the likelihood that corruption will eventually occur. The authors argue that NCLB sets the stage for such corruption to occur in schools relative to the annual testing, scoring, and recording of data. The authors, in fact, cite numerous instances where corruption has occurred under the current climate of high stakes testing in the schools.

With the flurry of activity in all 50 states it is difficult to get a handle on what exactly is happening in terms of student scores. Are there real increases in scores? Are the reasons for narrowing the achievement gap between Whites-Other students legitimate? These questions remain to be answered. Once they are answered, the debate will likely turn to whether the test scores represent real student learning.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The turn of the century was the lowest point for the devastation of Indian culture by disease and persecution, and it's a wonder to me that they survived it and have not only maintained their identity, but are actually growing stronger in some ways. The situation is still very bad, especially in certain geographical areas, but there are more Indians going to school, more Indians becoming professional people, more Indians assuming full responsibility in our society. We have a long way to go, but we're making great strides (Momaday, 2002).

Introduction

This chapter provides information on the basic methodology and methods used to address the research questions of the study. It includes a rationale for the methodology, selected method, a description of data collection and analyses processes.

Rationale and Assumptions for Qualitative Design

As outlined in chapter one, the purpose of the study is to examine the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and its influence on the culturally based education (CBE) at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School. Obtaining a clear and precise picture of the CBE at the school is essential in order to determine the extent and manner by which the federal initiative, NCLB, since passage in 2002, has influenced it at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School.

Given the weight of the consequences, it can be assumed that school leaders and other school personnel have reacted to the requirements of the law and continue to make context-specific decisions based upon their desire to be compliant. The current study is dependent upon on-site visits, conferring with key stakeholders, observing the natural

setting, and utilization of the researcher as the primary data collection instrument. These are all characteristics of qualitative research (Creswell, 2003).

Subjectivity of the researcher is an oft quoted criticism of qualitative research, particularly in case studies (Merriam, 2002; Stake, 1995). Due to the fact that the researcher is the primary data collection instrument, all data is interpreted through the eyes and ears of one person. The values, experiences, and judgments of the researcher influence both the data collection process and its interpretation. Merriam (1998) and Stake (1994) do not view this as a weakness, but rather a strength of qualitative research. Sensitivity and communication are essential skills for qualitative researchers (Merriam, 1998) and a researcher familiar with the culture and norms of a community is better equipped to find and collect relevant data. The researcher in this study is an enrolled member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

Patton (1990) states that qualitative research is used “to discover what is happening and then to verify what has been discovered” (p.60). The verification occurs through the triangulation of multiple sources of data including document analysis, observation, focus groups, and interviews.

The requirements of this study conform to qualitative research in three ways. First, to describe the CBE at the school requires the collection of data from multiple sources: documents, interviews, observations, and focus groups. Second, to document the changes in CBE following the passage of the No Child Left Behind legislation, in-depth interviews and on-site observations by the researcher as well as document analysis

is necessary. Third, the theoretical implications of this study requires inductive reasoning based on all the data collected.

Type of Design

There are different types of qualitative research designs for use in investigations. Merriam (2002) has identified five types that are generally used in the field of education. They are “the basic or generic qualitative study, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study” (p. 11). Other researchers have identified slightly different categories (Creswell, 2003); however, case study is often reported as one method of qualitative research (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2009).

An exploratory case study design is the proposed method to answer the research questions within the current study. According to Yin (2009), “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18).

Case studies can be descriptive, exploratory, or explanatory (Yin, 2009). While much of the current study involves describing CBE practices at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, its primary purpose is to explore the influence and effects of NCLB on the CBE practices. Merriam (1998, p. 19) suggests case studies “are intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system” (Merriam, 2002, p. 19). The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School is a unique bounded system and the influence of NCLB is also unique; therefore, an exploratory case study is the most appropriate research methodology for this study.

Since culturally based education is expected to reflect the local culture and context, it is important to describe CBE at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School by conferring with key stakeholders and reviewing important historical and recorded documents. In addition, NCLB is a recent federal initiative that affects all Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools. Identifying the manner in which NCLB is implemented within the school, looking particularly for its influence on the culturally based education in the school, requires site visitation, observation, and interaction with key stakeholders.

Yin (2009) also provides differing rationales for conducting case studies. These include a critical case, a unique case, a representative or typical case, a revelatory case, and a longitudinal case. It is expected that occurrences at the Buy-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School reflecting NCLB's influence on CBE at the school would be representative of occurrences in similar schools. Claims have been made to suggest that NCLB is altering CBE within BIE schools, but to date, no studies have been conducted to verify such claims.

According to Yin (2009) there are four case study design types. They are a single-case holistic, single-case embedded, multiple-case holistic, and multiple-case embedded designs. The current study is employing the single-case holistic design to describe the CBE at the school and to determine how NCLB has influenced it since passage in 2002. The holistic design allows examination of the CBE from a global nature as well as NCLB's influence upon CBE at the school.

Site Selection

There are four BIE schools in Minnesota, each located on a different Ojibwe Indian reservation. The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School was selected for this case study because it is located on the researcher's home reservation and she has access to and familiarity with many of the key stakeholders in this study. While this familiarity may help the researcher "perceive reality from the viewpoint of someone 'inside' the case study rather than external to it" (Yin, 2009, p. 112), the potential bias must always be foremost in the researcher's mind.

The superintendent of the school was first contacted in July, 2007, and provided verbal permission to proceed with the research preparations. In July, 2008, the superintendent was replaced, and the new superintendent was contacted by telephone and email. He provided written permission on November 5, 2008 to conduct the research at the school (see Appendix A). The Chairman of the Leech Lake Reservation was emailed and informed of the research to be conducted at the school.

The research process, including the letter of permission from the superintendent (see Appendix A), consent forms (see Appendix B), the interview and focus group questions (see Appendix C and D), and the research design were reviewed by the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board in order to protect the rights of the participants. Authorization was granted on December 22, 2008 and the University research code number is 0812E55845.

Data Sources

Data sources include the superintendent of the school, along with the two principals, teachers within the school at all divisions, community members who volunteer and/or serve on school committees, the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program director, a school governance member, and any other people who are determined through the planned process to be of importance to the study (see *Table 3-1*). The process of participant selection evolved once study contacts were made and new information was collected.

Table 3-1 Description of Participants in the Study

Position	Possible Participants	No. Interviewed	% of Possible
Superintendents	2	2	100
Principals	2	2	100
Teachers	40	19	47.5
Paraprofessionals	13	0	0
Elders	6	2	33.3
Tribal Council	5	0	0
School Board	7	1	14

A select group of six teachers from the elementary, middle, and high school divisions was recruited to participate in a focus group. The criteria for selection included teachers who maintain close proximity to the culturally based education practices within the school and those with the longest tenure so that they would have information previous to NCLB.

Table 3-2 Focus Group Participants

Participant #	Position or Division	Years at the School	Native American (NA) or Non-Native (NN)
1	ES	6-10	NN
2	HS	6-10	NN
3	MS	1-5	NN
4	HS	6-10	NA
5	MS	1-5	NN

School documents and archival records were used as additional data sources. The school mission statement, marketing brochures, minutes of meetings, school newspapers, local news articles, Bureau of Indian Education annual reports, and other relevant material provided additional data.

Table 3-3 Document Analysis

Name of Document	Type of Document	Location
Annual Report Card	Website	www.oiep.bia.edu
Bemidji Pioneer Press	Daily newspaper	www.bemidjipioneer.com
Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School	Website	www.bugschool.bia.edu
Cass Lake Times	Weekly newspaper	Cass Lake, Minnesota
Corrective Action Plan	Document	School files
Cultural Curriculum	Document	School files
Curriculum Map	Document	School files
DeBahJiMon	Monthly newspaper	www.llojibwe.com
Growth Report	Document	School files
MCA Results	Website	http://education.state.minnesota.us
Minwaajimowin	School newspaper	www.bugschool.bia.edu
Niigaane	Website	www.llojibwe.com
School Report Card	Website	http://education.state.minnesota.us
Yearbooks	Book	School files

School visitations occurred over a thirteen month time frame (see Table 3-4).

Direct observation of the operations of the school while it was in session was invaluable

in the data collection process. Photographs were also taken and provided detailed information used in the writing of this paper.

Table 3-4 School Visitations

Date	Purpose	Duration
July 20, 2007	Meet with Superintendent	1 hour
June 27, 2008	Introductions	1 hour
January 26-30, 2009	Interviews/Observations	32 hours
March 23-27, 2009	Interviews/Observations	30 hours
July 27, 2009	Interviews	3 hours
July 28, 2009	Follow-up Interviews	3 hours

The researcher collected additional data from specific key stakeholders via emails throughout the data collection and writing phases of this project. The school personnel were able to provide important details and answers to specific questions that arose during the writing of this dissertation.

Data Collection Techniques

Observations

Field notes were kept on observations surrounding the physical environment, day-to-day routines, school activities, after-school activities, teacher/student relationships, and additional school events as they unfolded. Evolving questions were posed to appropriate personnel within the school based upon the researcher's observations.

Interviews

Interviews are "essential sources of case study information" (Yin, 2009, p. 106). A research interview is considered to be a professional conversation (Kvale, 1996) or a "conversation with a purpose" (Dexter, 1970, p. 71). Patton (1990) also asserts:

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe.... We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they have attached to what goes on in the world. We have to ask questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing then is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective (p. 278).

Key stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, and a governance member were interviewed face-to-face using a semi-structured format with interview questions (see Appendix D) for the purpose of determining their lived experiences and perspectives surrounding the research questions of this study. Yin (2009 refers to interviews as "guided conversations rather than structured queries" (p. 106). The researcher used the responses given by the interviewees along with the interview questions to guide the conversations.

Interviews were recorded with permission from the interviewees. This allowed the researcher to accurately capture the perspectives and information gained through the interview. All administrators, including two school superintendents (current and past), two principals, and the language program director were interviewed directly in a one-on-one setting. A school board member, school volunteers, teachers, and school committee members were also interviewed in this fashion.

Focus Groups

Focus groups provide opportunities for synergistic discussions among people who possess knowledge about a selected topic or issue. More specifically, Krueger & Casey (2000) state that focus group interviews typically have five characteristics including (1) people who (2) possess certain characteristics and (3) provide qualitative data (4) in a focused discussion (5) to help understand the topic of interest (p. 10).

According to Krueger & Casey (2000), focus groups offer a more natural setting than an individual interview as the participants influence each other as they do in life.

The goal of a focus group is to collect data of interest to the researcher. To obtain rich data, focus group questions are predetermined, richly phrased, and well-sequenced. A focus group of teachers was interviewed using guided questions (see Appendix D).

Document Analysis

An additional useful source of data collection is written documents and official records. Lincoln and Guba (1985) distinguished between the two citing records as written communications used for official reasons, whereas documents may be less formal. Data collected in written documents can be used to substantiate or refute verbal claims and serve well the triangulation process. According to Yin (2009), every case study is likely to benefit from documentary evidence. Strengths of using documentation, according to Yin, include stability of the material, broad coverage including a long span of time, unobtrusiveness, and its exactness.

Documents viewed in the current study include the following: the school's website, the Bureau of Indian Education's (BIE) website, the Minnesota Department of Education website, marketing brochures, school newsletters, committee meeting minutes, annual reports to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, reservation newspapers, local newspapers, school yearbooks, and any other documentary evidence that surfaced during the collection phase (see Table 3-3).

Managing and Recording Data

All formal interviews and the focus group session were tape recorded. Note taking occurred throughout individual interviews to assist the researcher in follow-up questioning of the interviewees.

All questions and responses were transcribed immediately following the session. Notes were generated based upon the researcher's reflection of the information obtained in the interview or focus group session. A journal of researcher notes and questions for follow-up was maintained and referred to on a continuous, regular basis. Follow-up emails were also used to clarify, explain, or expound upon comments made during interviews.

Data Analysis Procedures

All data collected and transcribed were coded into themes. The data emerged into six major themes and most themes were subdivided into sub-headings. *Table 3-5* shows the themes with the sub-headings along with the number of interviewees that referenced them. The final column in the table includes the number of comments coded within each sub-heading.

An initial read-through of the transcriptions was conducted to begin the process of identifying themes. Each interviewees' topical statements were recorded either as a new topic or a frequency of one already identified. Similar statements were then clustered which led to the formation of the sub-headings used.

Once the sub-headings were formed a second reading of the data occurred. Each interviewee was assigned a number and their statements were separated and numbered.

The individual topical statements were labeled with identification numbers and then cut and pasted under the sub-heading categories. This system allowed for cross referencing of material by interviewee and by sub-heading. It was possible to check for the breadth and depth of each interviewee's statements. It was also possible to check for the range of interviewees addressing each of the sub-headings and the frequency of each.

Table 3-5 Interview Themes and Frequencies

Theme	Sub-Headings	No. of Interviewees	No. of Comments
Curriculum	• Narrowing	9	22
	• Balance	7	11
	• CBE	10	40
	• NCLB (AYP)	7	20
	• NCLB (Testing)	13	29
Students	• Needs	7	10
	• Behavior	3	5
	• Transciency	6	9
	• Attitudes	5	7
	• Poverty	2	2
	• Sp. Ed.	8	13
Staff	• Turnover	7	10
	• HQ (5 pgs)	8	20
	• Attitudes	9	16
	• Pay	1	1
Mission	• Purpose/Values	5	9
	• Why Students Come	3	7
Funding	• Cuts & Not Enough	7	14
Governance	• BIA & Tribal Sovereignty & Tribal Politics	6	12

A timeline was established to sort pre-NCLB data and every attempt was made to follow changes in the school and programs after NCLB's inception. Rival explanations for any changes were explored. Participants were asked to consider rival explanations as well.

Methods for Verification of Trustworthiness

Qualitative methods of research are subjective in nature and their scope is local so the means for assessing the validity of the research differs from that done in experimental studies (Stringer & Genat, 2004). Lincoln & Guba (1985) provide a common set of criteria for establishing the validity of qualitative research. They suggest that *trustworthiness* in qualitative research needs to be established as no objective measures of validity are available. They suggest that to establish trustworthiness procedures need to be in place to attain credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

According to Lincoln & Guba (1985) some of the ways that credibility can be established is through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, participant debriefing, diverse case analysis, referential adequacy, and member checks (p.52). The period of engagement for the current research project includes two full weeks spent at the school spread between two site visits. Additional shorter-term visits to the school took place over the summer of 2009 while assessing the physical setting of the school environment and to continue with the follow-up interviews and document analysis portion of the study.

Triangulation of the data occurred through the collection of multiple and different sources of data. This helps the researcher to clarify meaning by identifying different angles of the phenomenon under study (Stake, 1995). Multiple sources of data add to the validity of research findings. Yin (2009) sites “a major strength of case study

data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence” (p. 114-115). Triangulation is a research methodology whereby multiple and varied sources of data are used to corroborate conclusions. In this study, data from a variety of stakeholders was triangulated with documentary evidence and observations. The current study makes use of interviews, observations, and document analysis to triangulate data.

Diverse case analysis requires exploration of the many possible perspectives surrounding an issue. It is important to ensure that voices, perspectives, and interpretations of all stakeholders are included and to guard against the possibility that only the most powerful are represented.

Referential adequacy refers to the integrity of the interpretations by the researcher. It is suggested that the language and terminology used by the participants be represented as closely as possible to the actual experience taking place during an interview. The researcher’s analysis and synthesis must be carefully crafted to reveal the actual experiences and perspectives of the participants. The final procedure used in this study to aid with credibility is to do a *member check*. Researcher write-ups and understandings were shared with participant members prior to publication of the material in order to verify their actual meaning and intent.

While procedures need to be in place, much of the credibility comes from the researcher and her perspective on the purpose of the research. Knowing that the researcher is searching for the truth to an important question, as opposed to looking for evidence to support a belief or political position, is important. The researcher for this study has no political agenda to fulfill other than to bring light to an important

educational issue by way of uncovering reality. The researcher has not worked directly in any setting impacted by NCLB. The researcher had no preconceived notion of what the actual results of the research questions would yield. The results of NCLB's influence on the CBE within the school could be either positive or negative or there could be mixed results.

Limitations of the Case Study Method

One of the major criticisms made by researchers about qualitative research is its lack of scientific generalizability from the local case to outside situations (Merriam, 1998). According to Yin (2009), the purpose in conducting a case study is not to “enumerate frequencies”, but to “expand and generalize theories” (p. 15). While NCLB's influence on CBE in one school may differ from its influence in another school, the results will likely provide evidence to either support or negate current theoretical propositions surrounding the impact on CBE. It is not that case studies lack generalizability; it is that they offer a different sort of generalizability.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Western thinkers must acknowledge that there are legitimate forms of generating knowledge in the Native community and that this knowledge is valid in its own right, standing alongside that of other cosmologies (Duran & Duran, 2000, p. 99).

Introduction

This chapter presents results of the current study in an attempt to determine the extent of influence that the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has had on the culturally based education at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School. The data is organized into five sections. The first section provides the context of the school including a brief description of tribal sovereignty, school governance, the school's strategic framework, its history, physical setting/environment, and the faculty and student populations. The final four sections are organized around the four research questions guiding the study. The qualitative data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis are presented in all five sections. The four research questions are:

1. In what ways is culturally based education being implemented in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?
2. In what ways is NCLB being implemented in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?
3. In the views of key stakeholders, what has been the effect of No Child Left Behind since implementation on the culturally based education in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?
4. What are the trends in student achievement since implementation of NCLB at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?

Context of the School

Tribal Sovereignty

Sovereignty, in its basic form, encompasses the notion of freedom and power to regulate one's own internal affairs. The sovereignty of American Indian tribal nations exists as a third form of government in the United States, alongside the state and federal governments, as outlined in the *U.S. Constitution* (American Indian Research and Policy Institute, 2005).

The issue of sovereignty often adds complexity to tribal, state, and federal government relationships and issues related to legality, responsibility, control, and funding. While Tribes have gained more legal rights, they increasingly work to position themselves to guarantee their 'effective rights' as nations to impact the daily lives of their members as well (American Indian Research and Policy Institute, 2005; Beaulieu, 2006; Beaulieu, Sparks, & Alonzo, 2005; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Morgan, 2005; Winstead, Lawrence, Brantmeier, & Frey, 2008). The 'effective rights' of American Indian tribes to govern their own internal affairs pertains to their capacity to do so. Structural supports and resources must be in place in order for Indian nations to actively pursue greater control over their effective rights.

Education is one area over which American Indian tribes have sought to increase internal control. The Indian Education Act (1972) and the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (1975) both strengthened the legal rights of tribes to fulfill this goal.

School Governance

The school is responsible to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) which is housed in the United States Department of the Interior within the United States government. The majority of funding comes from federal sources, thus rules and regulations are imposed at that level.

Within this hierarchy, the BIA has contracted with the Leech Lake Reservation Tribal Council (LLRTC) to oversee the fiscal and educational operations of the school. This contract serves as partial fulfillment of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, which allows the federal government to release greater control for the operation of schools and other programs serving the local people to the individual tribes. The LLRTC consists of the tribal chair, secretary-treasurer, and three district representatives, all of whom have been elected by the members of the Leech Lake Band of Chippewa Indians.

A school board made up of seven parents and/or guardians of students provides input for the development of both education and policy at the school. While parental and elder input into the school is deemed important and necessary for effective running of the school, the ultimate control of school decisions at the local level resides with the Leech Lake Reservation Tribal Council.

School's Strategic Framework

Documents reveal that the school's strategic framework consists of separate vision and mission statements, goals, values, and strategies. The vision statement asserts "Promoting Healthy Community through Lifelong Learners". The mission statement

reads “Provide Quality Education for Lifelong Learners”. Five strategic goals are listed and they include: “(a) reading and math proficiency, (b) 90% attendance, (c) language and culture integration, (d) wellness, and (e) post-secondary options”. The values listed as important to the school include: “love, respect, wisdom, humility, bravery, honesty, truth” (Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, 2008a, pp. 1-2).

A list of stakeholders identified in the strategic framework includes students, teachers, administration and parents. The strategic framework document also includes the school motto: “I am smart, I am beautiful, I can do anything”; school symbol: “silver eagle”; and, school colors: “silver and blue” (Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, 2008a, p. 2).

History of the School

The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School has survived a difficult and humble beginning from its early years in the mid-1970s to its current and more stable status 34 years later. It began when parents and the Local Indian Education Committee (LIEC) members requested an alternative educational program for Indian students within the Cass Lake High School. This request was denied by the school board in the fall of 1975 which resulted in a ‘walkout’ from the Cass Lake High School involving 70 students (Schmid, 2007).

On November 10, 1975, approximately 35 students and two teachers opened the doors to a new school that was housed in the local Cass Lake Teen Center. The LIEC approved the use of Johnson O’Malley Act funds for the start-up costs of the new program. The initial weeks of the school have been described as ‘chaotic’ as there were no materials and the planning time to develop an educational program was limited.

Students in attendance spent the majority of their day playing foosball, pool, and cards while the teachers attempted to work with students in small groups to begin some formalized lessons (Schmid, 2007).

Many of the students attending this newly formed school enjoyed the loose atmosphere. The teachers worried about the lack of seriousness they saw from many of the students, but a handful of students appeared resolute to have their new school succeed. With diligence and foresight, coupled with support from the LIEC and other parents, the students and teachers began to define for themselves a program that would honor and validate the local culture and life ways of the Ojibwe people. A sense of purpose and pride was beginning to emerge (Schmid, 2007).

A traditional naming ceremony was held during spring of the first year of the school. A local newspaper headline read, “Alternative School Given Name in Traditional Ceremonies” (Schmid, 2007, p. 1). The article went on to report that 400 people were in attendance to provide support for the efforts and direction that were being taken by the local Indian community to improve the education of their children. Administrators from the Pine Point Experimental School and the St. Paul Red Schoolhouse sent several representatives, including students, to participate in the ceremony as a gesture of support (Schmid, 2007).

Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig translates to Hole-in-the-Day in English and was the name given to the new school. Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig was a local elder who was involved in the Battle of Sugar Point in 1898 (Gordan, 2007). In a November 10, 1975 interview, Eddie Benton Benai stated, “The decision to name the school for Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig was

because he fought for our land, he fought for our people, but uppermost, he fought for the future of our children. And once again, his spirit is walking among us” (Schmid, 2007, p. 2).

Also at the naming ceremony, one of the school’s high school students, Larry Windom Jr., spoke in Ojibwe as a representative of the student body, stating, “Our thoughts shall be like the eagle, free flying, and like the eagle we shall not give up. We shall continue our education, because in the power of the drum, there is the power of caring for each other” (Schmid, 2007, p. 8).

In January of 1977 the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) agreed to fund the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School. The Leech Lake Reservation Business Committee (the precursor to the Leech Lake Reservation Tribal Council) served as the school board with the assistance of a parent advisory council. In May of 1980 the school was granted a seven year accreditation from the Minnesota Non-Public School Accrediting Association and in 1984 the permanent and current facility was completed and opened (Bureau of Indian Affairs, n.d.-a).

In 1998 the governing structure of the school was changed. An elected body of parents was instituted as the decision-making body of the school, replacing the Leech Lake Reservation Tribal Council as the school board. The tribal council serves as the contracting agency with the BIA to oversee the operation of the school. They ultimately hire and fire school personnel and provide the final approval for the implementation of policy as recommended by the elected school board.

The school was selected to receive a Blue Ribbon School award for its work between the years 1994-1996. The award was given by the United States Department of Education in recognition for excellence in teaching in the areas of “(1) Science and Mathematics and (2) Tribal government, Language, and Culture” (Shaughnessy & Morris, 1996). Both of these areas of excellence were part of the Goals 2000: National Educate America Act (Clinton, 1994) and the Indian America 2000 Goals (S. Fox, 1994).

Today the school is on the Bureau of Indian Affairs’s list of “schools in need of new facilities” (Bureau of Indian Affairs, n.d.-b). It has more than doubled in size from its 1984 population and consequently is in need of a new and larger high school facility. The school has recently been placed in ‘corrective action’ status under the NCLB’s adequate yearly progress (AYP) designation system.

School Location

In the center of the Leech Lake Reservation lies 80 wooded acres which house the permanent site of the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School. The school is strategically situated to provide access to all Indian students across the reservation, home to about 5,000 of the more than 8,900 enrolled members of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Indians and which covers 602,889 acres (Minnesota American Indian Chamber of Commerce, 2008). The current site is the fifth location of the school in its 34 year history. The new school initially opened its doors in 1984 to about 150 students in grades K – 12 and has since grown to just under 300 students.

Facilities and Physical Environment

A small bullet-ridden sign on U.S. Highway 2 announces the entrance to the school. At the entrance sits a locally carved and painted sign with a bald eagle perched on top of a wooden post. The bald eagle to the American Indian symbolizes strength and freedom. It is a symbol of honesty, truth, courage, and wisdom. Traditional Indian beliefs hold that the eagle is a messenger to the Creator. Eagles can fly higher than any other bird and its perspective is different from other creatures closer to the Earth (American Eagle Foundation, 2009). The silver eagle was chosen as the school's mascot for these reasons.

As one drives slowly along the winding pavement officially named Silver Eagle Drive, there is a sign that reads "Alcohol and Drug Free Zone." About a quarter of a mile from the main highway, the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig campus emerges. A parking lot sign directs visitors to the main building where another metal sign on the entrance door reads "This campus is routinely inspected by detection canines for prohibited items in order to provide you with a safe learning environment."

The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School's main building is a brick structure that houses the elementary and middle school classrooms along with the administrative offices, cafeteria, library, and cultural room. There are 14 buildings in total and most, with the exception of the main building, are steel-framed or small conventional wooden structures. The steel-framed high school building is the second largest building on the campus. It is separated from the main building, but not by more than a two minute walk. One other steel-framed building located behind the main building is home to the

Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program. There is a separate steel-framed gymnasium that was added in recent years. Other buildings are used as office space for the human resources department and transportation and a few small buildings used by the seasonal activity instructors.

At the far eastern side of the main building is the cultural room. It was once uniquely the “heart” of the school, but now shares this sentiment with the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program and the Seasonal Activities Program. The cultural room is circular, with windows spanning the distance of the outer walls to allow light in and those inside to see the natural beauty of the trees surrounding it. It has a high teepee-shaped, cedar covered ceiling pointing upwards to the sky.

The inner sanctum of the cultural room has dance outfits and shawls – some made by students, storage space for the sacred drum – used daily by students for song and dance, and a freezer used to keep meat between the hosting of feasts which are often sponsored by teachers and students in the cultural classes. The storage area also serves as the office for the cultural director. A life size birch bark canoe hangs from the ceiling along with painted American Indian designs and logos used to enhance the environment.

Outside, there are at least four nature trails that serve as activity-based outdoor classrooms. One is a ropes course used for exercise and strength building. There are additional trails used for hiking year round, bicycling in the warm months, and snowshoeing in the winter. Students are taught how to trap animals along the trails and to identify plants and herbs that have been used traditionally for medicinal purposes.

Two small canopied areas near the high school are referred to as the ‘village’ where several of the school’s seasonal activities program classes take place (see Culturally Based Education section). There is a small steel-framed building for storage of snowshoes, archery equipment, and tools. The canopied areas house a wood burning stove, benches, and a few chairs and provide only slight shelter to protect against the wind, sun, and rain. They are for use in all seasons. The atmosphere of the village area is that of one’s outdoor yard where milling sometimes occurs, but where one could also be steeped in physical projects and tasks. Such projects at the school include cutting and storing wood, gardening, preserving fruits and vegetables, cutting up deer and smoking meat, making repairs, and preparing for hikes into the woods for maple sap collection and boiling of the sap. A photo in a local newspaper showed an instructor carving a ricing pole and a high school boy carving a knocker (a short stick used to harvest wild rice) to be used in the upcoming wild rice season (Custer, 2004).

Directly behind the high school is a football field with goal posts and bleachers that sit amidst tall, beautiful Norway pines and slighter jack pine trees. There are no visible markings to indicate yards or boundaries. It is a plain field overgrown with tall grass that looks more like a natural clearing that one would find along a nature trail. Aside from the bleachers and goal posts, there was nothing else to indicate a sports area.

There is playground equipment near the elementary division. Several new swing sets, a slide, and two see-saws make up that area.

The natural wooded campus is a prominent feature of the outside environment. There is often the smell of burning wood across the campus, signaling activity near the

village area. The outside atmosphere is pleasant and mostly quiet, with an occasional car entering or leaving the parking lot or a string of students walking between the main building and the high school.

The physical environment inside the walls of the school tells *some* of the story that is uniquely Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, but certainly not all. ‘Inspirational posters’ that decorate the walls are intended to create awareness and captivate the minds of students. Native American posters with quotes such as “Dreams – There are no accomplishments or goals you cannot reach...follow your dream” and “The Power to Dream, the Power to Achieve” are dispersed throughout the school. These symbolize the strong belief held by many of the staff that the students can pursue goals and become successful in spite of some of the hardships they experience. Intervention posters and décor, also meant to provide encouragement and hope to students, are found alongside the inspirational posters. One of the most noticeable is a rug in the high school office that has a crossed out circle over the word *drugs* to indicate “no drugs allowed.” Every bathroom stall has a photocopy of a poster stating “Power & Control in Dating Relationships – A relationship full of control is really out of control.” The messages found within these two parallel strategies (inspiration and intervention) appear desperate at times, but are meant to offer hope and encouragement.

Walls are painted with life-size American Indian people and symbols. The high school counselor’s office has an eight by five foot dream catcher hanging from the ceiling that was a gift made by the students.

Trophy display cases are proudly presented inside both the main and high school buildings. Students' participation in the Anishinaabeg Knowledge Bowl, Quiz Bowl, Film & Video Competition, and on sports teams has yielded awards and trophies. First place trophies for the Minnesota Drum and Dance Competition and Singing Contest and the Anishinaabeg Quiz Bowl for 2000 are among them. Second place trophies were awarded for the 1996 American Indian Film and Video Competition, Anishinaabeg Knowledge Bowl in 2005, and the First Nation's Basketball Tournament in 2004. Several third-place trophies for participation in similar events are on display as well. The "Blue Ribbon School" award banner is displayed prominently in the school's main gymnasium.

As one educator said in describing the difference between Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School and a public school, "You just feel the culture when you step onto this campus. Culture is all around. It is everywhere." In walking through the campus it was apparent that he is correct. As well as the physical symbols of Native culture one also hears Ojibwe spoken in the halls by teachers and students. The drum with singing can be heard at different times throughout the day. The smell of burning sage in the cultural room signals smudging (the burning of sage to create a cleansing smoke bath) going on. Elders are visible throughout the school and children greet them with affection. These are some of the more obvious and visible indicators of a school designed to meet the unique cultural and academic needs of American Indian students.

School Staff

The school has three senior administrators, all White, including the superintendent, high school principal, and a combined principalship for the elementary and middle school divisions. A dean of students (this position was eliminated in 2009-2010) was employed full-time along with the director of the Niigaane Program, a curriculum development specialist, a math specialist, and two school counselors. Other administrative positions exist, but these are part-time and combined with teaching responsibilities such as the cultural director and the special education director. The current superintendent is in his second year and the high school principal is in his third year. The administrative veteran is the elementary/middle school principal currently serving her fourth year at the school.

Table 4-1 Paraprofessionals at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School

Paraprofessional No.	Native or White	Working assignment
1	White	Elementary school special education
2	White	Elementary school special education
3	Native	Elementary school special education
4	Native	Elementary school special education
5	Native	Elementary school special education
6	Native	Middle school teacher assistant
7	Native	Middle school special education
8	Native	Middle school special education
9	Native	Middle school special education
10	Native	High school special education
11	Native	High school special education
12	Native	High school special education

Ten of the twelve (83%) paraprofessionals employed by the school are Native (see *Table 4-1*). The majority of paraprofessionals are placed in the special education program. Six Native “elders” are employed and positioned throughout the school (see

Table 4-2). The school employs a total of 46 full-time teachers. Sixteen (35%) of the teachers are Native (see *Table 4-3*).

Community elders play an important role in the school. Six elders have been hired to assist in the seasonal activities program, the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program, drum and dance classes, and Ojibwe language classes. They also serve as informal counselors. This is how one teacher explained their role, “When they [students] are having a bad day, they can go to an elder. They can offer tobacco and a prayer or just talk.”

Elders have traditionally held a place of honor in Ojibwe culture (Beaulieu, Figueira, & Viri, 2006; Kelting-Gibson, 2006; Lewthwaite, 2007; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). Many staff agree with this statement from one teacher, “Our elders should have a place of prominence in our education and in our schools.” Another teacher believes that “intergenerational learning is an important part of us as Ojibwe people.”

Teachers have found that when students “talk to elders, they’ll have more success the next day, calm those behaviors. The cultural stuff here calms the behaviors.” A teacher added, “Elders talking about stories help [students] to connect.”

Table 4-2 Elders at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School

Elder No.	Working assignment
1	Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program
2	Seasonal Activities program
3	Drum and Dance classes
4	Ojibwe language
5	High School
6	Middle School

Table 4-3 Faculty of the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School 2008-2009

Teacher Number	Teaching Assignment	Full or Part-time	Native or White	Gender	Number of years teaching at the school					Highly Qualified	Variance of Certification
					0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20-35		
1.	6-12	F	W	F	X						X
2.	6-12	F	N	M	X					X	
3.	K-12	F	N	F	X					X	
4.	K-5	F	W	F	X					X	
5.	K-5	F	W	F	X					X	
6.	9-12	F	N	M	X					X	
7.	K-12	F	W	F	X					X	
8.	K-5	F	W	F	X						X
9.	9-12	F	W	F	X						X
10.	K-5	F	N	F	X					X	
11.	K-5	F	W	F	X					X	
12.	9-12	F	W	M	X						X
13.	K-5	F	N	F	X					X	
14.	6-8	F	W	M	X					X	
15.	6-8	F	W	M	X					X	
16.	K-5	F	W	F	X					X	
17.	K-5	F	W	M	X					X	
18.	6-8	F	W	F	X						X
19.	6-8	F	W	M	X					X	
20.	K-5	F	W	M	X					X	
21.	K-5	F	N	F	X					X	
22.	K-5	F	W	F	X					X	
23.	K-12	F	W	F	X					X	
24.	K-12	F	W	F	X						X
25.	K-5	F	W	F	X					X	
26.	9-12	F	W	M	X					X	
27.	6-8	F	W	F	X					X	
28.	9-12	F	N	F	X					X	
29.	K-5	F	N	M		X				X	
30.	K-5	F	W	F		X				X	
31.	K-5	F	N	F		X				X	
32.	9-12	F	W	F		X				X	
33.	K-5	F	W	M		X				X	
34.	K-5	F	N	M		X				X	
35.	9-12	F	W	M		X				X	
36.	9-12	F	W	F		X					X
37.	9-12	F	N	F		X					X
38.	K-12	F	N	F		X				X	
39.	K-12	F	N	M			X			X	
40.	K-5	F	W	F				X		X	
41.	9-12	F	W	M				X		X	
42.	9-12	F	W	M				X		X	
43.	K-5	F	W	F				X		X	
44.	K-5	F	N	F				X		X	
45.	K-5	F	N	F					X	X	
46.	K-5	F	N	F					X	X	
47.	9-12	P	W	M					X	X	

Highly Qualified = NCLB classification as a Highly Qualified Teacher

Variance of Certification = Temporary teaching license issued by the state of Minnesota

Several teachers at the school have been there long-term (see *Table 4-3*). One Native teacher has been employed at the school in various capacities for more than 30 years. One non-Native teacher has been with the school throughout its 34 year history serving as the school's first director in the 1970s. One other non-Native teacher has served the school for more than 20 years. There are several teachers, both Native and non-Native, who have taught at the school between 10–20 years.

The extraordinary dedication of many of these educators was made abundantly clear during my visits to the school. The passionate voices of many who were eager to talk with me and share their perceptions, hopes, dreams, and frustrations in working at the school were at times desperate, but more often inspiring. The dedication of these educators came through in their words and sometimes in their anger. It was also made apparent in their generous and selfless deeds.

The rural location means that most teachers and employees have a long distance to drive each day. Several teachers carpool from Bemidji, 33 miles away. One administrator drives 70 miles daily from Park Rapids. Others drive 19 miles from Cass Lake. Staff members also drive from Bena, Ball Club, and Deer River and those are respectively 3, 14, and 20 miles from the school.

The drive from Park Rapids and back each day cannot be overlooked in citing the dedicated efforts of the staff at the school. This administrator, reflecting on her commitment to the school, recalled words of advice given to her by a local elder when she began working at the school. "If you want to impact the kids in this school you need

to be here between three and five years. You are not going to impact the kids in this school until your third year.” After two and a half years at the school she said:

Even this year I feel like there is so much to do. There is SO much that we need to do. How do I get the staff there? It is my job to get the staff there. It is their job to get the kids there. Holding the staff to high expectations and them holding the kids to high expectations will get us there.

This principal had only four days of vacation the previous summer because the superintendent was fired. She had plans to take some needed time away in late February, but not without guilt, stating, “I’m going to be a poor administrator. I’m going on vacation at the end of next month and I won’t be back until March 7th.”

The demands placed on staff at the school are great. One classroom teacher reported having no breaks in her schedule on Monday. All elementary classroom teachers sit with their students during lunch, make their own copies, and decorate their own bulletin boards. There are no assistants to help teachers do any of the classroom preparation tasks.

One staff member reported, “I’m here because of the kids. I love these kids and they need people in their lives who want to be there.” She knew all of the students by name and spoke individually to them several times throughout our lunch time together in the cafeteria. The affection she demonstrated for the students and their affection for her were undeniably evident in their interactions.

This staff member wrote a check for \$10 to pay for a \$4 fundraising lunch sponsored by students. Fundraising lunches are not uncommon. Students sponsored lunches and bake sales during both weeks of my visits. Because of the school’s remote

location, it is primarily the staff that supports these fundraisers. They do so knowing that student clubs would not survive without them.

One of the greatest acts of selflessness can be witnessed in the teacher who has been with the school since its inception. He served as the school's first director until the school became better established. At the first opportunity he relinquished that position to return to the classroom where he had more direct contact with the students.

For a brief interval, this teacher left the school for employment in the neighboring school district because there was no retirement plan at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School. The school is considered a private school and therefore not part of the state retirement scheme. However, his love of the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School and students eventually won out and he compromised by teaching half-time in both schools. As a half-time teacher, his state retirement scheme offered through the public school provides him with only half of the credits of other teachers so he will never reach full retirement benefits, but it does afford him some measure of financial security. This dedicated teacher teaches his morning classes at the public school and drives every day during his lunch break to the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School to teach his afternoon classes.

This same teacher tells stories about his earliest trips to the reservation as a college student visiting friends in the area. He was captivated by the culture and witnessed a strong and willful spirit in the Native people. He encountered a teasing humor among the people in spite of the apparent and pervasive poverty that surrounded them. His respect of the traditional culture and Indian way of life has grown stronger

through the years and his commitment to helping students discover and strengthen their personal connection to their history and culture stems from it.

The best evidence of this man's dedication, commitment to preserving the Ojibwe culture, and selflessness is his recent adoption into the tribe as an honorary member. This was an historic act that had never been carried out by the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Indians in its recorded history.

I was aware of a deep sense of commitment on the part of several teachers at the school; however, there was not enough time in their busy day to meet with me in a formal setting. Our brief conversations in the hallways and cafeteria led me to believe that there must be an abundance of stories that abound involving many of these educators, but with the task before them and limited time, their priority was preparing for their upcoming work with students.

Some teachers seemed less interested in students and perhaps less committed to teaching in general. One teacher who referenced this point commented:

You know a group of teachers is like anybody else. There are the same percentages of those who are in it because their hearts are really in it and then there are those who just look like they are in it for that reason. Teachers are no more perfect than any other group of people in the world. When I come to work everyday, I plan the previous week and I come in and start teaching. When I see blank stares, I have to ask how else to teach this. When three or four students aren't getting it, I plan with those students to come in to help them get it. I want lights to come on. Everyday I try to cover as much ground as I can in every way that I can to help the lights come on....and that's what I would say is that at least 60% of the teachers have in mind. Changing all these different wonderful plans [NCLB] coming at us constantly isn't going to change the hearts of that other 40%.

Faculty Turnover

Often the turnover in administrators occurs at the discretion of the Tribal Council. New council members were elected to the tribal governing board in June 2008 and several reservation employees lost their jobs immediately following the elections. The superintendent at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School was one such casualty. A new superintendent was hired and he brings years of experience working in a nearby school district. One faculty member lamented, “Lots of turnover: Good or bad, right or wrong, that is tribal politics.”

The turnover for superintendents is unusually high. There have been ten different superintendents in the past twelve years (1997-2009). The two principals’ positions have been filled by ten different administrators in the past twelve years as well.

The problem of administrative turnover was mentioned repeatedly during interviews. One long-term staff member said,

New ideas come in every few years. You keep getting a changeover. You get new administration and grandiose ideas that they are going to save the world. There is too much turnover. I’m sure you heard it again and again. If you haven’t been fired out here you haven’t been doing your job.

The turnover rate for teachers is also high, but not as severe as for administrators. According to the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School’s “Annual Report Cards” from 2004-2008 on AYP, the percentage of teachers new to the school per year ranged from 11% to 25% (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2008b). The number of teachers with less than six years experience at the school is 28 or 61% of the full-time teaching staff.

One administrator stated that the turnover amongst teachers is more related to salary issues than anything else including the requirement of NCLB that all teachers be

highly qualified. The salary and benefits at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School are not on par with the public schools in the area. This creates problems for recruitment and retention of faculty. The same administrator complained, “We just can’t get teachers to come out here. We don’t pay what other schools in the area pay....This is a stepping stone, they get paid better elsewhere.”

Table 4-4 Number of Newly Hired Teachers at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School 2004-2008

School Year	Number of New Teachers Hired	Percentage of New Teachers each Year
2004-2005	5	11%
2005-2006	8	19%
2006-2007	7	17%
2007-2008	10	25%

One teacher reported what she called “a revolving door” of teachers who serve short-term until a job in another school district opens up. This teacher suggested the high turnover rate amongst teachers is related to the degree of energy required to work at the school.

Student Population

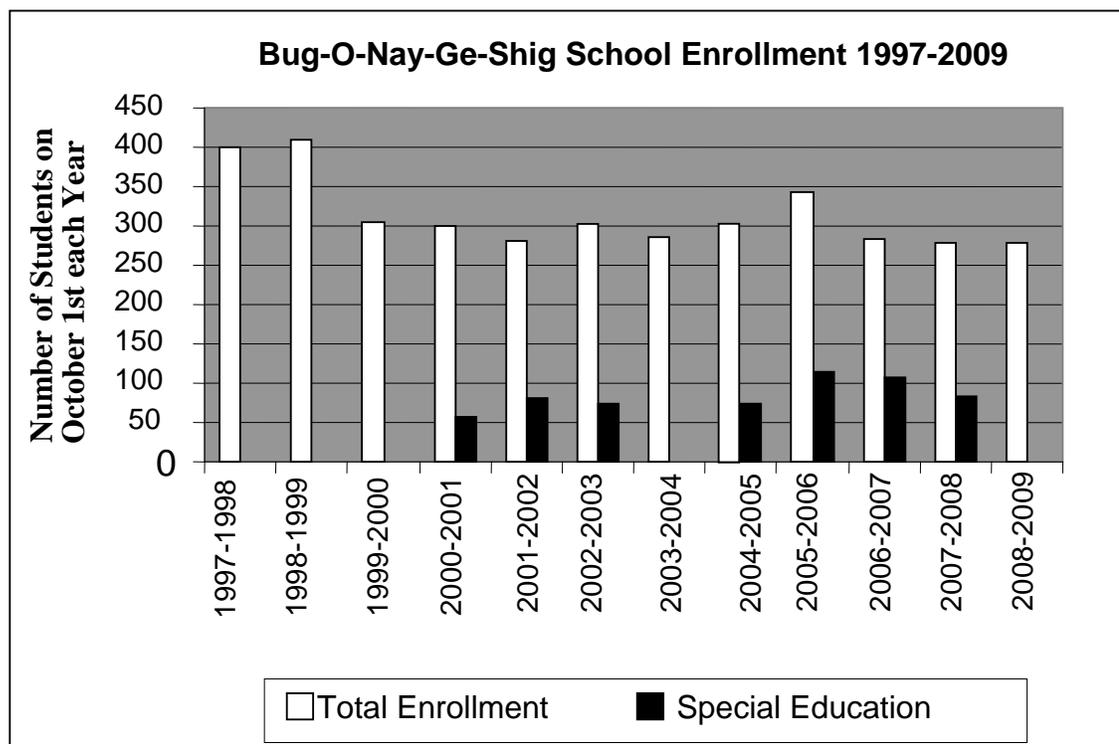
The students at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School and American Indian students elsewhere are the underlying interest prompting the current research study. It is ultimately student outcomes including their hopes and dreams, successes, and failures that matter most.

The school population during March of 2009 numbered 279 in grades K-12. There were 146 students in the elementary division, 63 in the middle school, and 70 high school students. The enrollment peaked at 410 in the 1998-1999 school and dropped the

next year to 305 students (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2008b). The reason given for the drop in school enrollment is that the on-site day care center was closed in 1999. Siblings of students had been allowed to attend the day care center and this was incentive for some families to enroll their children.

The vast majority of students are enrolled members of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. There is a small number of Indian students from neighboring tribes. The majority of students are eligible for free or reduced lunches at the school, indicating family income levels below the poverty line. There are slightly more females (52%) than males (48%) enrolled (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2008b).

Figure 4-1 Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School Enrollment 2000-2009



The task of describing an entire student population beyond demographic information carries the risk of stereotyping, oversimplifying, or over-generalizing. It is

important to recognize that all students at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School have their own set of unique characteristics and life circumstances, even as some general statements about the student population as a whole are offered. The individuality of each student including the potential that each possesses must remain foremost in the mind of any reader attempting to understand the overall scope of the life conditions under which these students live. One should understand that it is precisely the lives of these students that are so important and the ultimate reason for this study.

Difficult living conditions are pervasive for the vast majority of Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig students. Conditions such as poverty, single family homes, and all the expected strife that results from alcohol, drug, and gambling addictions are rampant on the reservation and negatively affect these students.

Every person interviewed referenced the adverse life conditions under which these students live and many talked at length about this reality. They spoke about parents in jail or prison. They spoke about young children taking care of siblings while the parent was at the casino for long periods of time. They spoke about students coming to school without proper clothing and others who came to school hungry. They spoke about students who move from home to home to live with different relatives, trying to escape unbearable situations. One faculty member told of a student who occasionally cries out in class, "Why do I have to be in foster home after foster home? Other kids have their families to live with." This is a reality that requires immediate attention by the teacher and reduces her teaching time with other students. Another teacher commented, "I don't have time to think about NCLB. I'm more stressed out by the students and their

behavioral issues.” One educator spoke generally saying, “We have students here who would never make it in a public school. You have to understand that is the nature of some of our kids.”

The need for small classes serves as one indication of the reality of behavioral concerns. Most elementary grades have two sections and often the number of students in each class is fewer than 10. The school has three designated *turn around rooms* where students can go when emotional outbursts do occur or when someone needs to talk through personal issues. One day during my March visit to the school I heard loud sobs and wailing as I walked through the halls of the elementary school. Any attempt to try to determine the exact nature of the incident felt invasive. It seemed enough to simply know that on the other side of the closed door there was a student in pain and in need of some counsel.

A walk through the halls and visits to classrooms and offices meant witnessing firsthand what some of the teachers talked about during formal interview sessions and in casual conversations. In one empty classroom a student was sleeping on the floor. It was not uncommon to hear students’ swearing as they moved from class to class, but it was also not uncommon to hear laughter and kindness.

The transient nature of the student population, particularly among those in the upper grades, was a frequent discussion point with faculty. Students were described as moving from school to school or even city to city. Staff described this as a problem because students would often miss days of school during the transition between schools.

The difference in curricular programs between schools also meant more time lost for student learning.

Students were reported to come to the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School for one of two reasons (1) to learn about their Native culture or (2) to escape failure in the public school system. One teacher stated it this way, “We have two types of students who go here: Parents passionate about cultural activity and those who can’t make it in public school.” Another teacher added, “There are two different kinds of kids at this school: Those who are here to learn and want to know about culture and those who travel from school to school and are having problems making it in the public system.”

Some teachers mentioned that a small percentage of the student population had been court ordered to attend school and often in those situations the families chose to send them to the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School. Some within this population of students were described as more interested in getting out from under the law than having any interest in getting an education.

Often these transfer students bring difficult behavioral issues with them. The school shows considerable evidence of accommodations that allow for greater flexibility in dealing with behavioral incidents by students. For example, the elders at the school sometimes act as counselors for students who need someone to talk with. The *turn around rooms* were established to give students a safe place to let out feelings. A comment from one teacher summed up the school’s approach to behavior problems this way, “We are putting up with a lot more than what a regular public school would. We

have the bar held here [pause] and...you have to go up and down depending on the student.”

Even with all the consideration given to the individual needs of students, there were 74 incidents of violence and 131 substance abuse incidents reported in the 2002-2003 school year (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2003). Behavioral incidents were not included in the Annual School Reports for subsequent years.

Drug use by students is a real problem for the school. It affects student achievement for AYP and the behavior of the students. One high school teacher stated,

Most of my students have so many issues – a lot of them are chemical. I call it ‘spin dry’. So, I lost 3 already this year – gone [to chemical dependency treatment centers] for 45 days and then they come back – thrust back into the same environment. They [the students] tell you they don’t have a chance.

An elementary teacher shared her concern about drug use, “...kids are starting to use [drugs] at a younger age...there are so many issues. It has gotten down to fifth grade now.”

Not all students are happy with what the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School has to offer them, particularly those students who experienced difficulties in other schools. A teacher reported that “some students don’t like this school. There are problems here and problems there.” Another teacher added,

These kids don’t want to go to Ojibwe [language class]. They don’t want to go to some of these classes. I tell them every day how lucky they are to have elders here to teach them how to make a cradleboard. Oh my goodness! Who wouldn’t want to learn that? They are resistant. They are so resistant.

The number of special education students attending the school is unusually high (see *Table 4-1*). According to the school’s 2007-2008 “Annual Report Card,” 28% of the

Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School students are identified as qualifying for special education services (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2008b). These are typically students who have been identified with learning disabilities and/or emotional difficulties that require specialized support and services. In Minnesota the average public school has about 11% special education students (Minnesota Department of Education, 2008b).

Two teachers commented on special education students who suffered from fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) or were fetal alcohol affected (FAA). A teacher stated, “When you are fetal [alcohol] affected, you can’t get that back.” She went on to give an example of an adopted child who was fetal alcohol affected and not advancing with the rest of her class. She said, “I can’t go back inside of the brain and change that.”

Research Question 1. In What Ways is Culturally Based Education being Implemented in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?

In 2006 the staff at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School surveyed elders in the community to obtain their input in refining the goals and direction of the seasonal activities program. The results of the survey helped the school to formulate the school’s Cultural Curriculum Expectations (Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, 2006) which are as follows:

Respect must be given as well as taught. All people involved should have a firm grasp on how to give as well as receive respect.

Seasonal activities are to be taught in our school. These include hunting, fishing, planting, gathering, and storytelling.

Ojibwe arts and crafts are to be taught in all three levels of education. This should include the traditional ways in which bark, pottery, weaving, beading, outfit making, woodworking, and sewing were used.

Drum and Dance will be available to all students in either daily classes or clubs.

Ojibwe language will be taught daily. Ojibwe is expected to be used in all learning areas throughout the school as often as possible.

Elders will be in classrooms. They will help to evaluate language teachers as well as the language program.

There are three programmatic features of the school that highlight the culturally based education (CBE): (a) the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program, (b) the seasonal activities offerings, and (c) the cultural courses and classes that are offered to all students and required for graduation in the high school. A fourth, less formal, feature of the school's CBE includes the integration of Indian culture in the core curriculum; the use of elders in classrooms to support integration efforts; the use of community members for the same purpose; and, the expectation that all teachers learn some Ojibwe language and use it whenever possible.

Native employees serve throughout all aspects of the school except the administration at the time of this writing. A more detailed look at the various aspects of the school's CBE features follows.

Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program

“Indebweyendizomin niinawind anishinaabeweyaang.” This quote graces the front cover of the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program brochure and the top of the program's website. It translates to “We believe in ourselves as Anishinaabeg [original people]” (Niigaane, n.d.).

As Ojibwemowin (Ojibwe language) is an endangered language with the average age of fluent speakers on the Leech Lake Reservation at 71, the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program has an important mission (Niigaane, n.d.). They adhere to

the notion that if the language dies so does much of the culture. The Niigaane Program's goal is to preserve both.

An important part of the Niigaane Program staff's responsibility is to educate parents about the long-term commitment required to gain fluency in the language and to understand that the teaching of all subjects occurs through the medium of Ojibwemowin. The Niigaane Program staff believes that helping parents to understand the meaning of *immersion* is important in the initial phase of the student recruitment and selection process because the students do not receive the same English language literacy skills as their peers do in the regular school program. One staff member stated, "We need to help parents understand this is not just a cute language program offered in kindergarten. It is a long-term commitment with the real benefits coming *years* down the road." They specify clearly to parents that the language is not the subject, but rather the vehicle used to teach all subjects. They inform parents that the full benefits in terms of their language fluency *and* academic achievements will not come until after five years in the program.

Since parental commitment and understanding of the Niigaane Program are vital to its success, the admissions process for the program is a formal one including application and interviews. Families are provided with a packet of information about the program prior to submitting an application and participating in an interview.

Upon being selected, parents are required to sign an understanding and agreement form signifying their commitment to support their child's endeavor to become a fluent speaker and their willingness to participate actively in this process. Parents are required to attend weekly parent gatherings where Ojibwemowin lessons are

taught. They are also required to volunteer in the school program a minimum of eight hours monthly. They are also asked to use the language in their home and community as much as possible.

Table 4-5 Student Population of the Niigaane Program 2009

Level	No. of Students
Kindergarten	5
Grade 1	8
Grade 2	5
Grade 3	2
Grade 4	1
Grade 5	5

There are currently 26 students attending the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program (Niigaane, n.d.). Students enter the program in kindergarten and move up one grade each year. The staff of the program must write curriculum for a newly added grade level each year. The current student population is outlined in *Table 4-5*.

The Niigaane Program offers all of the core subjects that students normally receive in the mainstream program, but taught using Ojibwemowin and offering a cultural focus. The program is based upon Ojibwe philosophy and values which include a commitment to engage the family members of students in the educational lives of their children both in and outside of the classroom. Students in the program are treated as family members and the curriculum transcends the traditional subjects taught in schools by focusing on the *whole child* and incorporating Native values, beliefs, and traditions. Children are loved and valued as people. Students are immersed in the traditional culture as opposed to simply learning about it. In describing the scope of the program one

Niigaane Program staff member stated, “In the K-12 program they talk about what respect is, but we try to live it here. That’s the only way to teach the kinds of things we are talking about.”

The program advertises small class size, individual learning, a high degree of family involvement which includes weekly language classes, hands-on experiential learning, and elders in the classroom (Niigaane, n.d.). The staff of five consists of a classroom teacher with 15 years of experience teaching Ojibwemowin, a classroom elder hired to support the use of the language across the curriculum, a program director/parent coordinator who oversees the program, a curriculum developer who designs materials and assessment tools aligned with state standards, and a community elder serving as a home resource to assist families as they learn Ojibwemowin.

The Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program staff members are at varying degrees of fluency in Ojibwemowin acquisition, but all are reported to be committed to their efforts to continue to learn the language. This appears to be a well-staffed program, but in reality all staff members are taxed far beyond what would be expected of teachers and administrators in a typical school setting. This group of educators is responsible for writing the curriculum and daily lesson plans for all subjects across the six grade levels served. They plan and conduct the monthly parent education sessions. They remain current on the literature surrounding language immersion programs. They attend workshops as participants and presenters. They meet with the administrators and regular program teachers to plan the transition of students who enter a literacy class in the regular program beginning in grade three. The third-grade literacy

class is a daily 25 minute class whereby students begin to learn to read in English. The list of staff duties is daunting and when one of them is absent, all others in the program bear a heavier load that day.

The Niigaane Program is operated much like a large family. They have their own building located behind the main school building. There are three classrooms, a kitchen area for cooking, and a small office. One has to walk through the first two classrooms to get to the third classroom. Interruptions to the day's lessons may occur at any time. Ojibwemowin is spoken as much as possible, even to visitors. They make every attempt to adhere to the immersion philosophy, although they will converse in English for business purposes when necessary. The receptive language of the students appears good. They often respond using Ojibwemowin, but English can occasionally be heard within conversations as well.

The Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program students are required to participate in the school's breakfast and lunch program because of federal funding regulations so meals are delivered on carts from the school's cafeteria. They would, however, prefer to cook their own meals and set their own menu. One staff member stated, "We'd like to feed them [students] deer meat and rabbit. Instead we have to put all this processed food in front of our kids and then tell them we care about them."

The staff and students eat their meals together at a family-size dining table and converse using Ojibwemowin. Following meals the students share the duties of clearing and cleaning the table, washing dishes, and general housekeeping tasks. The atmosphere is one of a cozy home environment with a large family including extended family

members. The younger students have a rest period in the afternoon similar to the regular kindergarten program.

Seasonal Activities Program

The seasonal activities program is a culturally-based experiential learning program that employs monthly cultural themes. Students are actively engaged in real-life activities that were at one time traditionally life sustaining for the Ojibwe people. The activities are aligned with the seasonal changes as they occur. They make use of the natural world including the area's lakes, land, and forests. The monthly cultural themes are listed in *Table 4-6*.

Two staff members are employed in this program. One Native elder from the local community is hired to teach many of the traditional ways. The other is the non-Native program coordinator who spent many years learning the traditional ways from elders in the community.

Table 4-6 Themes of the Seasonal Activities Program

Month	Cultural Themes
August/September	Wild Rice Gathering
September	Harvesting and Gardening; Food Storage and Seed Saving
October	Hunting and Gathering – Ducks, Deer, and Tanning
November	Netting; Spearing; Fish Processing
December	Arts and Crafts
January	Storytelling; Ice Fishing; Snaring; Trapping
February	Storytelling; Traditional Games; Woodworking; Pow-wows
March	Maple Sugaring
April	Spearing; Netting
May	Gardening; Planting

Source: (Parmeter, 2008)

The instructors said they have witnessed changes in the attitudes of students as they spend time in this program. When asked about the benefits of the seasonal activities

program for students the instructor stated, “I would say more pride. With the cradleboards early on kids just wanted to get them done. Now they are taking pride in working on them so much I can take them down and enter them in contests.”

He further told of students becoming empowered as they progressed through the different classes. On a trip to Itasca State Park students were involved in mapping a nature trail. These same students suggested creating their own trails near the school. Under the leadership of their instructors they cleared trails that are now used to teach them traditional skills and knowledge.

Students conducted a survey of elders and parents asking about the potential uses of their trails and found that the community “wanted more instruction on the traditional skills that would help students gain a better understanding of the value of the natural resources that surround them” (Parmeter, 2008, p. 2). Each station along the trail is appropriately named to match the traditional skills that are taught there. All K-12 students actively participate in the learning stations to some degree with the focus on “Ojibwe traditions and environmental stewardship” (Parmeter, 2008, p. 2).

The thematic offerings within the seasonal activities program are offered twice daily for 90 minute sessions. Students enroll for a semester and receive one full credit toward graduation upon completion. Students may choose to repeat a course and receive additional credit for it. It is common for students to enroll for the 90 minute course all year and receive two full credits.

Middle school students are enrolled in seasonal activities for one quarter every year. They have elective classes that meet every other day for a 45 minute period.

Additional Cultural Courses and Community Events

Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School requires students to have 24 high school credits in order to receive a high school diploma. Of those credits, students are expected to have one credit from the cultural courses for each year they attend high school at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School. A student transferring in for their junior year would be expected to have two culturally-based credits applying towards their diploma.

Beyond the many thematic course offerings in the seasonal activities program, the school also offers Ojibwe history, tribal and US government, drum and dance, Ojibwe language, cultural arts, and a culturally-based advisory group for credit. The advisory group meets daily in the early morning and utilizes a cultural approach. Advisory group time is often spent with members sitting in a circle sharing stories, feelings, and concerns.

Table 4-7 Culturally Based Education Courses at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School

Teacher	Name of Course	Grade Levels Taught
1.	Cultural Arts	K-12
2.	Drum and Dance	K-12
3.	Ojibwe Language	K-12
4.	Ojibwe History	9-12
5.	Tribal/US Govt.	9-12
6.	Seasonal Activities	6-12

In grades K-8 students are also required to attend cultural classes. Ojibwe language classes meet every day for 30 minutes. For students in K-5, alternating days are spent in a 30 minute cultural arts class and drum and dance class.

The school employs a full-time cultural director who is responsible for organizing community events within the school including pow-wows, feasts, and giveaways. He also teaches the drum and dance courses to all students in K-12.

Integration of Native American Culture into the Curriculum

Integration of culture occurs in all divisions of the school and in most classrooms. As one administrator shared, “Culture is a part of the education, a part of every day, every class, at every level of the school.” Some classrooms incorporate more of the culture than others.

All teachers participate in an Ojibwe language class for staff presented weekly by the language and culture teachers. Teachers are expected to use Ojibwemowin as much as possible.

The school maintains a database of culturally based lesson plans that are aligned with the state standards to help teachers integrate Native culture into their teaching. In the past, all teachers were required to write and contribute to this database of culturally relevant teaching plans. Some of these expectations have been lessened in the past few years.

The instructors in the seasonal activities program have created curriculum maps of integrated cross-curricular content. They work to maintain the culturally-based educational program while at the same time focusing on the state standards and benchmarks that are addressed in the annual state assessments.

The seasonal activities program knowledge and skills are being integrated into math lessons as a way to focus on Native culture and address state standards at the same

time. The school administration has committed to using the cognitively guided instruction (CGI) approach to teaching mathematics developed by Carpenter and Fennema (1999). They have hired a math specialist who shadows the instructors in the seasonal activities program for the purpose of learning about and incorporating culturally relevant content into the math curriculum she is developing. She writes math problems for the teachers based on stories told by elders, linking the problems to the contemporary lives of the students.

Cognitively guided instruction is a professional development program for teachers of students in K-6 that emphasizes the importance of teachers knowing the precise mathematical thinking processes that students bring to the learning situation (Carpenter & Fennema, 1999). As stated in Chapter II, CGI is more consistent with the Native values of cooperation, egalitarianism, and informality (McREL, 2005) and Tharp's (1999) "Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy" for Native American children.

Other areas of the curriculum draw heavily upon traditional American Indian values and beliefs. The school utilizes "Creating Sacred Places" (Reyhner, 2006b) resources. They also utilize "Expanding the Circle" (Ness & Huisken, 2002) curriculum which helps students transition from high school to post-secondary experiences. The high school science program focuses on ecology in an attempt to return to being stewards of the earth. Dissection of animals does not occur unless the animals are to be eaten.

Art incorporates much of the Ojibwe culture and language into its projects. Diabetes is pervasive among Native American people and has become a focus of the

physical education program. The Ojibwe language class for the high school is broadcasting via internet television (ITV) to neighboring towns of Remer and Deer River and the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program airs the weather on the local radio station.

The school begins each week with a school-wide gathering in the main gymnasium. Elementary students enter with their classroom teachers and sit together in a circle on the floor. The middle and high school students enter in their own socially-created small groups. They either stand along the gym walls or sit on the floor in the circle. Faculty members typically join the circle as well. The drum is located at the center of the circle and student singers, led by the cultural director, begin their songs. One of the elders offers tobacco and a prayer to the Creator in the Ojibwemowin language. He gives thanks for the many blessings in this life and asks for continued blessings for the students, teachers, and families as they move through the school week. The superintendent follows by welcoming the students back to another week of school and highlights the week's activities in the form of announcements. When he finishes, the drum plays again and several of the elementary students proudly begin to dance around the drum. Fewer of the older students join the dancing and even fewer of the staff members do.

During both of the researcher's week-long visits to the school there was a pow-wow held on Friday afternoon. On both occasions family members began to arrive before the lunch period and ate with the students. During the March visit there was an elder's feast and a giveaway prior to the pow-wow. The cultural director and students

were busy preparing food on an outdoor grill just outside of the cultural room. Tables were set up in the cultural room to seat approximately 40 people; however, many more than 40 people were fed on this day. The morning cultural classes were all involved in the set up, preparation, and cooking. Some who attended the feast also contributed food to share and the cafeteria cooks were enlisted to provide some of the main hot dishes that required an oven. Fried and baked fish, stew made with deer meat, wild rice, goulash, and fruit salad were the main dishes. Most of the fish, deer meat, and wild rice were supplied by the students who participated in the seasonal activities program. The freezer in the cultural room was half full of meat supplied for this purpose.

Adherence to Providing CBE

Although the school's strategic framework, which includes its vision, mission, and goals does not emphasize the importance of providing a culturally based education, one can detect its importance through reading the history of the school and its current program features and course offerings. The physical environment conveys a similar message, leaving one with the impression that providing students a culturally based education is one of the school's primary purposes.

Stepping onto the campus, one immediately senses that the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School is experiencing success in creating an atmosphere with a distinct Native American identity. One staff member, when asked how the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School was different from a public school, said,

Number one, I think the big difference is we're culture first. When you walk on this campus you see culture here. I know a lot of times at Deer River [public school] you would see kids who did not feel comfortable because they were in a so called 'white school' even though 30% [of the students] were Native

American. Here you walk on this campus and you know this is a Native American campus. I think that makes a big difference.

Whether the school is ‘culture first’ depends to a degree upon with whom one speaks. While everyone at the school understands and accepts that providing a rich, culturally relevant curriculum to students is an important part of the school’s mission, there is a slight tension around the school’s *main* priority. One administrator shared a concern by stating,

That will be one of our challenges here that while we embrace teaching the language and culture; the concern is what do you give up to do that. The concern I have about the time we spend teaching language is, what does it cost?

We have to make sure the kids understand they are going to be competing with people from India and Pakistan. We have to help kids understand that we aren’t just competing with kids from Cass Lake. We are becoming much more of a global economy and our competition is from all over the world.

This administrator quoted a teacher who countered him by saying, “No, we need to be teaching the children our language and have them stay here [on the Reservation].” He felt that “she was suggesting that having the academics wasn’t as important as saving the language.”

Several educators voiced strong opinions, however, emphasizing CBE’s priority placement in the school. One educator, when asked about the importance of CBE, stated,

I think it is absolutely necessary here. For example, the drum class is SO important to some of these kids. It has a calming effect....I do know it helps a lot of our kids. When they are having a bad day they can go talk to the elders. They can offer tobacco and a prayer can be said, or just talk. That’s the key to a lot of our things in the school. The biggest thing is it [CBE] makes our students feel comfortable. They don’t feel out of place. They know they belong. If you don’t feel at home, you are not going to have much success. Much is beyond the academic realm. It is the personal things, but it all ties to the academics.

One teacher talked about how NCLB affected what was taught at the school. She felt that students are “hammered every day in school about things other than their own culture in ways of thinking other than their own way. Then we wonder why our kids don’t value our culture.”

Another teacher felt that the “life skills, the way we teach them, are really important because sometimes people sustain themselves through cultural arts because sometimes that’s all there is. We live on a reservation.” She feels that what the school teaches “helps to build self-esteem because it helps [students] to identify themselves as Anishinaabeg [Ojibwe] people and to be proud of who we are.”

One other impassioned educator stated, “I stand firm in my argument that because this is a culturally based school, it [CBE] should be a priority - drum and dance and language. This is who we are.”

Along with the tensions in the priority placement of CBE at the school there is also inconsistency in the staff’s delivery of it. Some staff members are passionate about incorporating CBE into their teaching while others do little or nothing.

A local Native teacher shared her passion of teaching students about the Ojibwe culture through the cultural arts program. She reported that there was very little in the way of curriculum for her to use when she started teaching at the school. She has since designed many of her own culturally based curriculum projects for students across the age span she teaches. Her enthusiasm was apparent as she showed me a variety of class projects for students of different ages. Much of her excitement centered on the idea that she developed these units using only the limited materials available. On display in her

classroom was a model Native village made from natural materials collected from the forest floor just outside of her classroom. Students collected the materials and designed the village as a cooperative group activity, making teepees, horses, fire pits, woods, lakes, and gardens.

She incorporates the use of the Ojibwe language into all of her lessons. She stated, “I have a solid belief about teaching the language - that it could work through the arts.” She views art as a form of self-expression that can be used to help students develop and strengthen their cultural identities. Other projects students work on in the cultural arts program include hand weaving, beadwork, outfit making, portraits, and traditional clay pottery making. Students were currently working on outfit making, with each class completing a piece of an original dance outfit. Upon completion it will be donated to the school’s drum and dance group for use by students throughout the school. This teacher creates and sells her own artwork to supplement her income, but reported that she does not do so during the school year when her energies are needed for her teaching.

One staff member, citing the effort and commitment required to undertake the task of learning about and incorporating CBE into their lessons, stated,

We have made our best effort to integrate the culture into the curriculum and, [sigh] I fought for years to do that. I can only do this for myself. I can’t force another teacher to do that. There is lip service paid to the fact that CBE is carried on in the school. There are so many teachers here that do not know how to incorporate cultural components into their teaching. I feel so passionate about this. I’ve been called a racist because I say we need Native teachers. It’s because I want to see the integration within the curriculum and if you don’t know the culture then you can’t teach it. It takes somebody like [Name omitted] who has been here forever to be able to teach it. Another one of our teachers has been

here a long time and she is making her best effort to incorporate the culture into her teaching. Our new teachers...they wouldn't even know where to start.

A recent non-Native hire may have confirmed her statement by stating, "I don't do culturally based teaching in my class. They have cultural arts, Ojibwe, and drum and dance [classes]." This teacher, although recognizing the importance of providing CBE at the school, did not see it as his role to do so.

Faculty and administrative turnover are viewed as problematic for the school in developing greater consistency in program development. New hires, particularly non-Native ones, have much to learn relative to cultural integration. One teacher cited both administrative and faculty turnover within the school as problematic. Regarding the school's database of cultural lesson plans she stated,

We had a superintendent at one time who was requiring people to write cultural lesson plans. At least one integrated cultural plan per month was expected. I have not put one lesson into that database just to see what will happen. No one has ever come back to me, superintendent or principal, to tell me that this is mandatory and they must be put in there.

The database of curriculum activities and lessons is not being used by teachers here now. Those are not being followed because the teachers who developed them are no longer here. They would rather drive 5 minutes to work than drive 45 minutes to work. That is totally understandable. There is no blame on them at all. It's just that this school takes dedication – an energy that most people don't want to give to their job.

This staff member believes that the school could be doing more to develop a consistent base of culturally related teaching lessons. She sees setbacks in the curriculum development because the turnover of administrators is unconventionally high.

Personnel in the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program expressed frustration in their need to educate new administrators and convince them that the long wait for positive results from immersion programs is worth it. The Niigaane staff has

made appeals to the state of Minnesota Department of Education to consider their special circumstances for test taking and teacher licensure requirements. Administrative turnover has made it difficult to get the support from the administration at the school and that is something necessary in order to make an official request to the Minnesota State Department of Education.

While there is agreement among the staff that culturally based education (CBE) is important, the priority placement and responsibility for delivery of it are not understood by all in the same manner. There is room for clarity to be exacted within the school's mission and how these two important elements, academics and CBE, can be integrated.

Research Question 2. In What Ways is NCLB Being Implemented in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) provides a framework for schools to demonstrate an increase in student achievement represented by test scores, attendance, and graduation rates by the 2014 target date. Schools have freedom within this framework to design their own action plans. Schools may apply for grants available under various title programs within NCLB legislation. They may focus primarily on one area of improvement or they may choose multiple areas that require addressing. Availability of funds awarded through NCLB and other sources, in part, dictates a school's response. The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School has elected to use its funding to focus on professional development for teachers (math, language arts, and behavior management), development of a summer school program to begin 2010, and after school tutoring for the current school year.

Corrective Action Status

The school is currently in ‘corrective action’ status as a result of failing to make AYP for the past five out of six school years. The law requires that a school make AYP for two consecutive years in order to be removed from corrective action status (No Child Left Behind (NCLB), 2002). One educator at the school remarked,

That [making AYP for two consecutive years] isn’t going to happen out here. There are too many influences out here that drive our scores down. You’ve got high mobility out here – students in and out, in and out. Poverty is another...if not THEE biggest impact. It’s inevitable that we will continue to fail because our kids have so many other unmet needs.

When asked by this interviewer about the reasons for being placed in corrective action status one educator reported, “Last year we made a 10% gain in math and a 5% gain in reading. It is our reading scores that put us in corrective action status so we have to deal with it.” She was referring to a 10% decrease in the number of students who were not proficient from the previous year (see *Figure 4-3*).

Corrective Action Plan

T Administrators at the school were required by NCLB to notify parents and the public of its corrective action status and to hold a public meeting of interested parties to discuss and develop an improvement plan. The public meeting was held on February 19, 2009, with only five people in attendance. These five people were school personnel and school board members.

A school improvement committee was formed to incorporate the recommendations from the public meeting along with test results and school records to write the official “School Improvement Plan” (Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, 2008b). The

school improvement committee has identified the following areas as needing improvement:

MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment) scores

Overall attendance

Graduation rates

Staff development (Spaulding, CGI, Responsive Classroom, any other existing curriculum especially for new teachers; Data retreat between grade levels as well as across grade levels)

Students invested in learning and testing; Additional help for disruptive students

Constructed response for reading and math

The report indicates that the analysis was done by looking at MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment) testing data from 2005-2006 and subsequent years, as well as STAR (Standardized Testing and Reporting), DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), and MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) test scores. A data retreat was held in the fall of 2008 with administrators and teachers attending. The school's math specialist, the school's math sub-committee, and the reading sub-committee all reported and made recommendations to the school improvement committee.

After analyzing the data, the school improvement committee noted the changes that have occurred in test scores beginning in the fourth grade. Slight and steady increases in test scores occur through grade three, but starting in the fourth grade, a plateau was reached and scores declined beyond that point. The data also indicated weaknesses across all grade levels in 'constructed response' items for the three year

period of data analysis. Constructed response questions are open-ended or open-response test questions. They require that students create their own answers rather than choose from possible answers.

In response to their findings the committee proposed a continuation of data analysis within and across all grade levels. They plan to increase cross-curriculum integration, offer teacher training to help students develop test taking strategies, and continue with staff development for the on-going initiatives such as CGI and Spaulding. Other areas for improvement were also identified. Science scores need to be raised along with a more consistent curriculum for the middle school reading program. The alignment of curriculum with state standards was also targeted for further refinement.

Suggestions for accomplishing the proposed remedies include twice monthly, hour-long meetings involving all staff to develop and implement the corrective action strategies and/or to provide training in one of the identified areas. Staff development will also occur three times monthly in the mornings before the start of school. One day a week the school day will be extended to help students focus on critical thinking skills and to improve their constructed responses to problems in the areas of math and reading.

Individual education plans (IEP) will be developed for students who require them. It is anticipated that this will help students with disruptive behavior to focus more directly on behavioral goals. The school is identifying and contracting with experts in the various areas of improvement to train teachers who will provide on-site training to other faculty. Funds to pay for this will come from Title I and II staff development funds

and from grants such as the Success for the Future Grant, which includes a category for training and consultants.

The measurable improvement objectives for students in the School Improvement Plan are (a) to increase MCA scores, (b) improve student behavior, (c) increase science scores, and (d) improve the high school graduation rate. Parts of this plan are already underway. It will be up for review by the school improvement team every year with results to be submitted to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the state of Minnesota in August of each year in the school's "Annual Report Card".

Use of Funds

The school has employed a math specialist who is developing math curriculum with a cultural focus across grade levels. She is working to align the math standards with cultural content using the Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) approach. This position has been described in greater detail in Research Question 1.

One administrator reported, "Ninety percent of the staff has received training in CGI. This number is quite high considering it is optional. I have applied pressure to get everyone to participate, but since it's optional you can only do so much." The school originally hired CGI experts, Dr. Judith Hankes and Dr. Running Horse Livingston to conduct training. Since that initial training period the school has partnered with Bemidji State University for on-going training.

The professional development for language arts is directed mainly at the middle school and upper elementary divisions. They are using funds to align curriculum, bring supplemental curriculum into special education, staff development, and after-school

tutoring. The school applied for Reading First funds, but they were denied. They were told to coordinate professional development training with the school district nearby that did receive a Reading First grant. A former administrator stated, “In theory it sounds good. In reality the logistics did not allow this to happen.”

The school board has mandated that staff undergo professional development in the area of behavior management. The K-5 teachers are involved in Responsive Classroom training. Grades 6-12 are undergoing Developmental Design training which is a comprehensive approach to building a positive school climate focusing on social, physical, emotional, and learning needs of students. This approach has six guiding principles that serve as the foundation for building relationships in schools addressing the needs of the whole child. Promotional literature claims, “Learning is possible only after students’ social, emotional, and physical needs have been met” (Origins, 2009, p. 1).

The school has recently been awarded a \$300,000 grant from NCLB funds to address academic interventions. One administrator reported, “This is a big chunk of change above and beyond what we’d normally get.” The money will be used to provide after school tutoring, professional development in the areas of reading and math, and a summer school program.

One additional finding regarding the use of funds at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School demands attention. This particular finding is offered without the advantage of knowing the full context, but by itself offers some knowledge of NCLB’s influence on the culturally based education at the school. In the 2006-2007 school’s corrective action

plan it states: “Ten percent of all sources and 100% of Title VII funding is dedicated to instructional materials and consultant/trainer fees” (Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig, 2008b, p. 3). Title VII funding is meant to “provide culturally based educational approaches for Native students” (Gilbert, 2007, p.2). This document was signed by a former superintendent, school board member and tribal council representative. Tracking this information was difficult, but the printed word speaks volumes especially in light of the fact that several other groups in Minnesota had contacted congressional representatives in Washington about this practice during the same time period (see Appendix F).

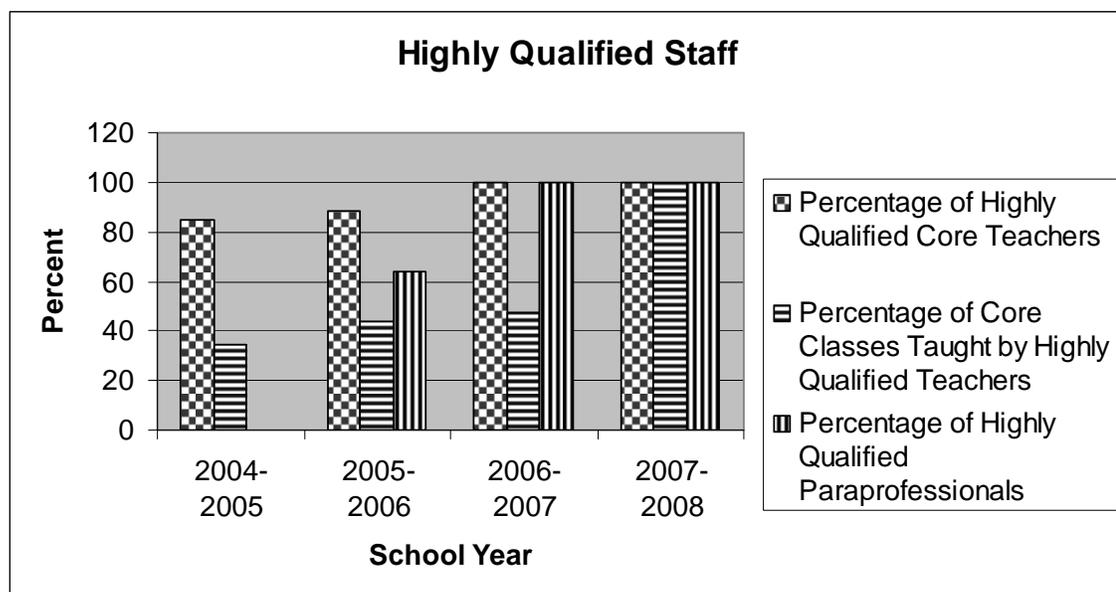
Highly Qualified Requirement

The highly qualified teacher requirement within the NCLB legislation has meant changes for some staff in the school. Under NCLB all teachers of core academic subjects were required to be ‘highly qualified’ by the end of 2005-2006. The core subjects include reading, language arts, English, mathematics, foreign languages, science, social studies, economics, art, and history. The minimum requirements of a ‘highly qualified’ teacher are a bachelor’s degree, a state teaching certificate or license, and depth of knowledge of the subject area being taught. The specific requirements within these areas have been left to the individual states. Minnesota participates in the PRAXIS Series Program (Educational Testing Service, 2008). PRAXIS provides tests and services for states to use in partial fulfillment of their teacher licensing and certification process.

A summary report of the highly qualified teacher status within the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School’s “Annual Report Cards” (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2008b) for the years 2004-2008 is included in *Figure 4-2*. One can see that the number of core area

classes taught at the school by highly qualified teachers has increased from 48% in 2006-2007 to 100% in 2007-2008. One teacher at the school reported that the superintendent serving at that time examined the teachers' licensures and certification papers. Several people were reassigned in order to align teaching assignments with certifications and conform to the requirements of NCLB.

Figure 4-2 Highly Qualified Teachers at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School 2004-2008



Some teachers were happy to remain in their new job placement, but at least one unhappily reported that she went back to college at a huge expense in order to get her old job back after being reassigned. This teacher reported that the re-licensing issue for her was nothing more than “jumping through the hoops and paying money.” She had a middle school license with an Indian studies major and social studies minor so she was not allowed to teach high school social studies. She stated:

I had to get re-licensed using a HOUSSE [High, Objective, Uniform State Standard of Evaluation] application telling the state and the federal government that I am highly qualified in all these areas to teach which is funny because I got

highly qualified in middle school to teach math, science, and reading, but I'm not certified to teach any of those. Yet they were willing to qualify me in those areas.

I paid thousands of dollars to get what I needed to teach high school. By the end of this school year I will be able to [teach in the high school]...I had to get a waiver. I will get my job back. It cost a lot of money, time, and anguish. The good thing that came out of it is I followed my class. I started with them in seventh grade and now I'm with them in ninth grade.

This same teacher reported that preparing for the state PRAXIS test (teacher licensure test) caused her some anxiety. She added:

There are at least two teachers who haven't passed their PRAXIS and they used up their two years of waivers after the first test. They have to pass the test before they can be teachers again. One teacher was let go. The other teacher has this year to pass his test. I was so fearful that I wasn't going to pass this test. Nothing on there is relevant to what I teach these kids. The money they are making developing these tests – I don't get it. It is a money-making capitalistic runaround.

She further stated:

My husband refuses to go back and get his license from the state college. He won't pay all that money to do what he is currently doing. I didn't gain all that much knowledge by going back to college – a little. Not enough to justify spending the \$4,000 we spent as a family. He doesn't see the point for him to spend that money, too.

When asked if her husband was at risk of losing his job [Niigaane Program] she reported:

Right now they have two certified elementary teachers that do not speak Ojibwe. They are not fluent speakers. The state actually has the control of this, but the administration can say this person is overseeing this person and set things up. He is at the whim of the administrators without that elementary degree.

It was reported in the teacher focus group discussion that a math teacher was released because his students performed poorly on the state math test. The teachers in the group agreed that the release of this teacher was good for the school.

Paraprofessionals are also required to be highly qualified under NCLB. *Figure 4-2* indicates increases in terms of paraprofessionals obtaining highly qualified status since 2004. One teacher indicated this was an improvement for the school stating, “We lost a lot of paras [paraprofessional staff] early on, but they started taking their tests so we have gained.” Records of paraprofessionals’ tenure at the school are not included in the BIE “Annual Report Cards”.

Additional NCLB Effects

Curriculum planning appears to have benefited from the demands of NCLB. One elementary teacher in the focus group stated this when asked how NCLB affected her teaching,

...it forced us to look at our curriculum and it forced us to look at what was research based. It forced us to maybe unify a bit more with what curriculum we were using to be more consistent....It helped us to get progress monitoring in place and it sort of forced the alignment of curriculum. We had to have curriculum where we never did before....It attempted to get everybody on the same page.

The seasonal activity program teachers said that NCLB has forced them to create a curriculum map for the cultural activities and align it with the state standards. A teacher stated, “We had to show that we could teach our students *our way* by using the state standards.”

Research Question 3. In the Views of Key Stakeholders What is the Effect of the No Child Left Behind Act on Culturally Based Education in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?

The primary question of concern addressed by the current study is how the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 influenced the culturally based education at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School. President Bush’s 2004 Executive Order 13336 was meant to

strengthen NCLB's support of the "unique educational and culturally related academic needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students" (Bush, 2004, p. 1). The four areas of CBE outlined in the previous section provide the organization for this discussion: (a) Niigaane Program, (b) seasonal activities program, (c) cultural courses, and (d) cultural integration.

The data indicate that the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program felt the greatest negative impact. Slight changes were noted in the integration of culturally based education within the regular program. Greater curriculum alignment in the regular program was reported as a result of NCLB. No staff positions were eliminated as a result of NCLB. A more through discussion follows.

Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program

The Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program has been impacted the most as a result of the NCLB regulations, particularly the highly qualified teacher requirement embedded in the legislation. School employees both within and outside of the Niigaane Program mentioned the difficulty posed by this requirement as it has eliminated some interested Ojibwe language proficient speakers from securing a position at the school. A staff member reported,

NCLB is really crippling our [Niigaane] immersion program because of the licensure issues. There are people in the community who are interested in teaching, but they do not have that piece of paper so they cannot be hired. We are missing out on valuable speakers that want to be in the classroom, that love kids. They don't have the piece of paper that says they can teach.

Elementary certified teachers have been hired in the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program, but they come with little knowledge of the Ojibwe language. One

language proficient teacher is certified by the state of Minnesota to teach Ojibwe language, history, and culture at the secondary level, but he does not have the required elementary degree.

One employee in the program stated that the highly qualified requirement “has a stranglehold on us.” It was reported that much falls to the Ojibwe language proficient elder to teach the classes and they were not hired for this purpose. A Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program staff member explained that,

They [elders] were only hired in the beginning to provide Ojibwe language modeling and support. Their job was originally designed to support the activities in the classroom. And yes, provide Ojibwe language input and modeling, but now it has totally turned when you have this highly qualified teacher with no Ojibwe proficiency at all. Then, we have to go to the elder and say, you need to teach this lesson today. What if grandma doesn't have that training? What if grandpa has not been through that pedagogy?

One other Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program staff member stated this concerning the elders:

The other point of view as Anishinaabeg (Ojibwe) people – it is also required that our elders have a type of licensure which is, at times, a bit embarrassing to ask them or to encourage them that they have to do that. They have been teaching kids most of their lives (chuckle). They probably understand more about kids than the rest of us. There is a problem culturally speaking. Our elders should be at a place of prominence in our education and in our schools, but they don't have what some deem is important to navigate through the modern education apparatus.

The issue of sovereignty has surfaced nationally in response to NCLB's impact in schools serving American Indian students (Beaulieu, 2006; Beaulieu, Sparks, & Alonzo, 2005; Reyhner, 2001). Not surprisingly, the issue of sovereignty surfaced in relation to the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program as well. The most vocal teacher stated,

Another thing regarding the immersion program - this is a sovereignty issue. We are a tribal school and we are a tribal people. We are sovereign. We should be able to teach our kids in any way that we deem fit. The discussion needs to be not IF we can do this, but HOW we do it. We [need to] make sure that we are at [a] minimum meeting the standards that the state requires, but we need to be able to do it in a way that is right for us and makes sense to us.

Staff members of the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program view NCLB as having a direct and crippling effect on the “heart” of their program. There are limitations placed on hiring that hinder them from reaching their goals. Fluent elder speakers who have the expertise are needed for their program to be successful. They are placed in the difficult position of asking elders to work towards the additional requirements of certification – something which has little relevance or meaning to them personally.

Seasonal Activities Program

One commonly reported consequence of high-stakes testing, such as that required through NCLB, is the narrowing of the curriculum (National Education Association, 2007; Perkins-Gough, 2004). This appears to be an effect of NCLB at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School.

Two areas of impact were described by teachers relative to the seasonal activities program. One was the development of a curriculum map that aligned the cultural activities with the state standards. This continues to be a work in progress. Their lessons are a part of the school’s data base of culturally relevant teaching material meant to serve students school wide.

The other reported impact felt in this program is related to the NCLB testing schedule. Testing occurs in the spring during the maple sugar season and the collection

of sap must work around the testing schedule. One staff member stated, “The sap doesn’t stop running while you test kids and you can’t leave the sap there for two weeks. The instructor pulls his hair out trying to make a schedule that works with testing.” The time required for testing is considerable. One administrator reported “We have about five or six days of testing. I hate to see all the days kids lose from learning.”

Cultural Courses

The cultural courses at the school include (a) cultural arts, (b) Ojibwe language, (c) tribal government, (d) Indian history, and (e) drum and dance. The high school social studies classes have remained in tact, but there has been a slight impact in the arts, language, and the drum and dance areas. One teacher stated,

NCLB has meant cutbacks in our CBE. We do drum and dance and that has been reduced to once a week and that is only in the high school, if they want [to enroll in that class]. It used to be more than once a week. I think it used to be three times a week.

The cultural arts classes in the elementary school were cut from 25 minutes per week for 36 weeks to 60 minutes per week for nine weeks, a 40% reduction in instructional time. It is unclear to the cultural arts teacher why this change came about, but she felt it was an improvement as it provided “more quality time” per session. She believed that the 25 minute block provided too little time for students to begin and complete work on a project.

One teacher reported that the reduction in cultural arts occurred to “make room for reading, writing, and math.” She explained that the superintendent in 2007-2008 required students who were “at risk” of failing math and reading be given an additional

half hour of instruction each day in these areas. She claimed that, “the first option teachers took was to pull them from Ojibwe language, PE, or art.”

In addition to the reduction in cultural arts contact time, there are times when students are pulled out of classes to provide them with time for test preparation, test taking, and test make-ups. One teacher stated that students “don’t get pulled out of Ojibwe language, drum and dance, or cultural arts”. However, the cultural arts teacher claimed that, “. . .sometimes kids come in five minutes before class is over. That doesn’t sit too well with me.”

A cultural instructor position was eliminated from the regular school program in recent years but, according to school administrators, this was as a result of school-wide budget cuts rather than anything directly related to NCLB. The number of positions, both professional and paraprofessional, seems to have remained intact throughout the years of NCLB’s implementation process.

The Ojibwe language classes have been only minimally affected by NCLB requirements. Two teachers reported students being pulled out of Ojibwe class for extra math help. One admitted,

I’ve had to take them out of Ojibwe language in order to get them ready for the math test. I had to do this last week. I would say it is isolated – not all the time, but I see the possibility in the future that could happen more.

The culture classes are viewed as a priority by some at the school. One administrator quoted what many at the school seemed to feel, “The school is not going to do away with the culture program. When money is cut back, then those cuts have to be taken from someplace else. You are not going to cut the culture program.”

Cultural Integration

The amount of integration of Native culture into the core curriculum and classrooms is difficult to assess and even more difficult to uncover the effect that NCLB has had on it. It is expected that few teachers would be willing to give a candid account of their commitment to CBE, especially if it is minimal or non-existent. Some teachers do readily admit, “I don’t do culture based teaching in my classroom.” Others feel strongly about the need to integrate the culture into the curriculum, but admit, “I can only do this for myself. I can’t force another teacher to do that.”

There is evidence that teachers have narrowed their curriculum and spend more time preparing for the NCLB tests. One teacher put it this way, “Those tests really do dictate what I am going to teach in the classroom.” With the additional emphasis placed on the tests, it is likely that the amount of cultural integration in the classrooms has also decreased.

Other Areas Affected by NCLB

The CBE is not the only curriculum area affected by the NCLB requirements. The regular music and art classes have also been impacted. A teacher reported,

The kids take both regular art and cultural art for a semester apiece instead of both. That is one way we have reduced the art they [students] are exposed to making room for reading, writing, and math. We don’t have any music program at all anymore.

One administrator commented about the state of Minnesota increasing the academic requirement from two to three years of math in the high school. He said, “With the adding of requirements...kids have to come out of other programs that are electives like art and music, home economics, or industrial arts. They have to come out of

something in order to meet the requirements.” Students can no longer participate in as many of the elective courses as they once did.

The teacher reporting that students are taken from their physical education (PE) classes further stated, “We [Indian people] have diabetes and they [students] need PE” When the PE teacher was asked about this she stated, “They get pulled out occasionally – not too often. It’s just that we don’t want to embarrass anybody and sometimes they get embarrassed being in PE.”

Changes have been made in the core curriculum classes in an effort to prepare students better for the required tests. Teachers reported that they changed their curriculum to match the tests. One teacher complained, “...you cannot teach students with learning, you have to teach towards the test. You have to work as hard as you can to give them the material they need to pass the test.”

The tests do provide valuable data as acknowledged by one administrator, “...the ‘Report Card’ that you get from NCLB gives you depth of data. You can look at it and see all kinds of things with your different populations.” Another teacher in a focus group admitted,

I think it [NCLB] has forced us to look at those who aren’t achieving this year. It has helped us to pay attention to the different groups. It has needed to happen. We’ve gotten extra funding for special education. It needed to happen.

One teacher commented that NCLB has influenced the *school* culture, if not the Native culture, in that “we do not get to do anything fun here anymore.” The same teacher reported that students complained about not being able to have basketball games during the school day any longer. Since many parents do not have vehicles or reliable

transportation, they cannot take their children to evening basketball games so the school used to have games at 1:00 p.m. Games now tend to be held immediately after school so that students have an opportunity to attend them without missing school. A related comment indicated that there was “no time for snowball fights on Friday afternoons anymore.” The teacher indicated that students had become aware of this and voiced complaints about it on occasion.

Research Question 4: What are the Trends in Student Achievement since Implementation of NCLB?

The National Indian Education Association advocates focusing on the ‘broader purposes of education’ relative to American Indian students’ achievement (National Indian Education Association, 2007). Student achievement could be defined in a variety of ways. For example, student achievement at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School could include the level of increase in Ojibwe language proficiency, or an increase in the knowledge of American Indian history, or an improved sense of cultural identity. These measures, along with others, are advocated for by American Indian educators and researchers (Beaulieu, Sparks, & Alonzo, 2005; Gilbert, 2007; Jehlen, 2007).

Unfortunately, these types of measures are not being kept by the staff at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School. There are many reports required by the Bureau of Indian Education reporting system, but alternative assessments are not among them. One administrator voiced deep frustration with all of the required paperwork by stating, “These are the things that drive me nuts and you don’t see that in public school. You only see that with the Bureau [BIE].”

Teachers and administrators do not have the time or energy to be proactive in gathering assessment data that reflects the culturally based education outcomes at the school. One teacher explained it this way:

Everyone is so busy trying to do their job. We got to be reactive rather than proactive and I am a very proactive person. I feel like my job is more reactive. I am putting on band aids and putting out fires here. I didn't want my job to be like this.

Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) – Student Scores

Student achievement at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School is being dictated by NCLB. That definition includes test scores in reading and math, graduation rates, and attendance rates. Science tests have been added as a part of the content area testing requirements, but these are not included in the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations.

It should be noted that individual student growth is difficult to measure for two reasons. Cohort groups are not measured as would be in a value-added model which means that scores from one year to the next represent different groups of students. This problem is nation-wide with the exception of those states allowed to pilot value-added measurement models.

The second area of difficulty is that in Minnesota the tests have been changing every few years, generally increasing in the level of difficulty (Cronin, Dahlin, Adkins, & Kingsbury, 2007). Such changes are a genuine attempt by the legislature to add rigor to the coursework provided for students. It is a commendable move in striving toward greater excellence, but it does hinder the tracking of measurable student progress and growth.

Table 4-8 Percentage of All Students at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School Achieving Proficient or Above on NCLB Tests 1999-2009

Test Used	MCA-I				Revised MCA-I		MCA-II			
School Year	1999 - 2000	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007	2007 - 2008	2008 - 2009
Math % Proficient	41	58	57	49	15	42	18	19	31	19
Language Arts % Proficient	40	51	61	58	52	*	*	*	*	*
Reading % Proficient	*	*	59	62	32	42	35	39	36	27
K-8 Average Daily % Attendance	*	83	79	84	91	88	86	90	91	90
H.S. Average Daily % Attendance	*	*	77	74	85	84	85	84	78	72
Graduation Rate %	*	66	80	50	60	52	48	71	63	55
Adequate Yearly Progress	*	*	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES-under Safe Harbor	NO	NO	NO

* Data not available

In general, student trends at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School have not improved since 2001 as NCLB has intended. There are fluctuations in test results that appear to match the use of different tests (see *Table 4-8*). The test scores of Grade 3 students are slightly behind the scores of their White peers statewide, but beyond Grade 3 the gap grows increasingly wider (see *Table 4-9*) (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2009).

AYP scores and relevant data provided in *Table 4-8* displays the difficulty in tracking student progress as a result of changing tests. It is interesting to note the substantial drop in percentages that occurred in the 2004 and 2006 school years. The

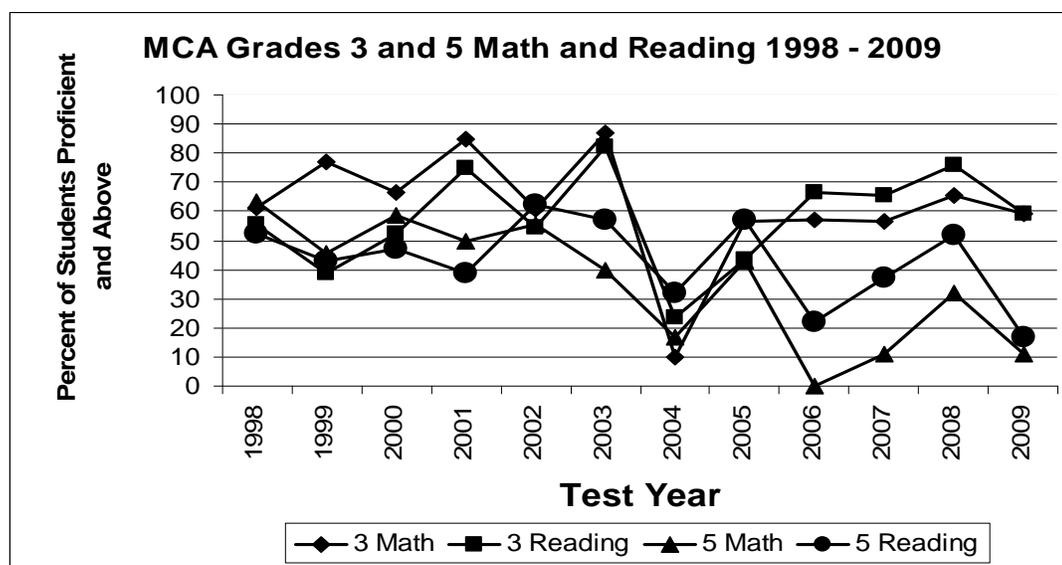
level of proficiency in math dropped from 49% in 2003 to 15% in 2004. The following year shows an increase approaching the previous level of 42%. The following year, 2006, shows another substantial drop to only 18% proficiency. The 2008 math proficiency level shows another substantial increase from the previous year.

The two years of substantive drops in proficiency percentages are the years when revised tests were used. In 2004 the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) were revised to reflect the new state standards (Minnesota Department of Education, 2009). In 2006 the state began using the MCA II tests. One teacher stated,

If they would stop changing the tests on us we could do a better job of preparing the kids for them. We just figure out what one test requires and the kids start doing better on those and then they change them again.

Another teacher added, “Give me a standard and I will get the kids there, but don’t keep moving the standard on me. That’s where the unfairness comes in.”

Figure 4-3 MCA Math and Reading Results for Grades 3 and 5



Source: (Minnesota Department of Education, 2009)

Table 4-8 represents school-wide trends. The graph above (*Figure 4-3*) displays the same trends in only grades three and five student scores for reading and math. The students in the lower grades typically score better than the upper level students. Looking at these grade levels allows one to see similar results.

Table 4-9 provides data on math and reading proficiency across five different grade levels for the 2007-2008 school year. Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig students are compared with all American Indian students in the state and White students in the state. Changing tests was not the only reason given for the school not making AYP.

Table 4-9 Percent of Students Proficient or Above at Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, Minnesota American Indians, and Whites 2008

Grade Level and MCA-II Test	Number of Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig Students Tested	Percent of Students who Scored Proficient or Above on the MCA-II Test in Minnesota 2008		
		Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School Students	All American Indian Students in Minnesota	White Students in Minnesota
3 Reading	21	76	66	86
3 Math	21	76	63	86
7 Reading	16	6	44	71
8 Math	21	24	28	63
10 Reading	11	0	48	78
11 Math	6	0	11	38

Source: (Minnesota Department of Education, 2008a)

When asked about the zero proficiency scores by the grades ten and eleven students at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, a disturbing response was received. One teacher reported, “Some of these students don’t care about the tests. They just fill in circles without even reading the items just to get it over with.” The other teachers in the room shook their heads in agreement with that statement.

One issue in particular that was repeatedly brought up by staff members is the high turnover rate for the administration. Staff members view this as problematic for the school. One teacher stated, “The constant change in administration is a problem. Things are always at loose ends. You just keep your nose to the grindstone.” Another employee stated similar concerns, “With turnover of administrators nearly every year you have to re-educate them. There are always steps taken backwards with every two steps forward.” One administrator cited the heavy turnover rate of both administrators and teachers as an obstacle to improving in the areas of concern to NCLB. This administrator stated the following:

The thing with it is...we’ve improved in a lot of areas with NCLB, but not enough. When you have people new out here every year, teachers and administrators, it sets us back. It seems like if you had some stability then we could start meeting some of the requirements.

The high mobility of students was cited by several teachers as a major cause for the school not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under NCLB requirements. “There are too many influences out here that drive our scores down. You’ve got high mobility out here – in and out, in and out.” Another educator said, “These kids go back and forth from school to school and that hurts us.” Another teacher, when asked about AYP testing for the special education students said, “Some of these kids don’t grow out of their disability. They’ll never get it, even if you read it [the test] to them.”

Teachers felt, “The students we have consistently every year are fine. If they are mobile, they aren’t fine. They come here behind and we have to pick them up.” One teacher called this “Swiss cheese learning – they have so many holes in their learning” as a result of frequent school transfers.

An elementary teacher reported:

I had ten students, six of them exceeded standards in reading and math, all six of them have been in Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School since kindergarten. So, it is a testament of, not necessarily our school, but kids being in one place and knowing what to expect from year to year and building on that knowing they can be successful too.

She went on to say, “Our middle school population is very transient. You get some of that in the fourth and fifth grade population, too. Through grade three we are pretty stable.”

One interesting observation in the data as seen in *Table 4-9* is that grade three students at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School have outperformed the state-wide group of American Indian students in both reading and math by 10% and 13% respectively. The same does not hold true for older students. In fact, the drops in the number of students proficient or above for grades seven reading, eight math, ten reading, and eleven math are substantially lower than the group of American Indian students statewide. Neither group of American Indian students is close to the proficiency level of their White peers in the state at any grade level.

There appears to be a ‘crossover effect’ occurring in student scores at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School. This pattern of student scores has been written about elsewhere (Butterfield, 2003). Basically, student scores are on target through grade three, but beyond that there is a gradual decline and widening of the achievement gap. The ‘crossover effect’ is an intriguing phenomena and worthy of investigation aimed at identifying its causes. Chrisjohn, Townson, & Peters (1988) reported that the ‘crossover effect’ generally occurring in grade four is strongly “related to the dawning awareness in

young Indians of the racist stereotypes held by non-Indians” (p. 259). While there may be some measure of truth to their statement, I suspect there are multiple reasons for the crossover effect at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School.

One elementary teacher commented that “After third grade they [students] start doing things that are not healthy, not all of them, but all of a sudden they haven’t retained information and it seems like you have to start over.” Another teacher observed that “in third grade they are still sponges. As they get older they don’t ‘buy in’ as much.”

It is interesting to note that only 30% of Bureau of Indian Education schools achieved AYP in 2008 (Bureau of Indian Affairs, n.d.-b). In Minnesota, 62% of public schools made AYP in 2008 (Minnesota Department of Education, 2009).

Dropout and Graduation Rates

Public school dropout rates and graduation rates are provided in the *Tables 4-10* and *4-11*. These figures have been taken from the Minnesota Department of Education (2008a). The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School dropout and graduation rates are also provided. They have been taken from the BIE’s “Annual Report Cards” (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2008b).

Table 4-10 Dropout Rates 2002-2007

Dropout Rates: Minnesota Public Schools and Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig Students (2000–2008)								
Group	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
White Students	7%	No Data	6%	5%	5%	4%	6%	5%
American Indian in MN Public Schools	34%	No Data	25%	21%	18%	20%	30%	31%
Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School	11%	20%	19%	No Data	21%	14%	12%	47%

Source: (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2008b; Minnesota Department of Education, 2008a)

Table 4-11 Graduation Rates 2002-2007

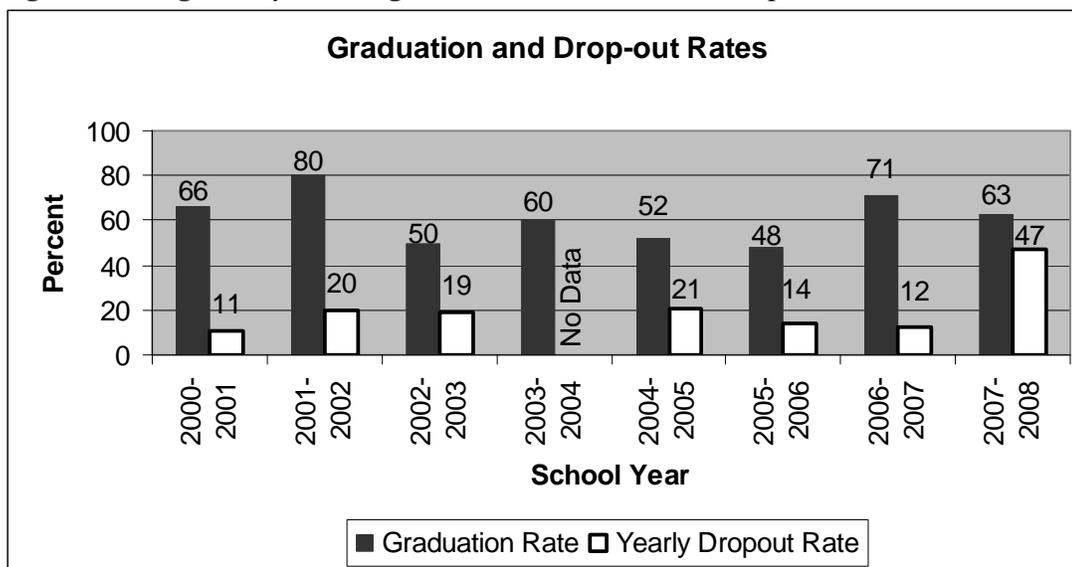
Graduation Rates: Minnesota Public Schools and Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig Students (2000–2008)								
Group	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
White Students	83%	No Data	77%	79%	80%	80%	80%	81%
American Indian in MN Public Schools	43%	No Data	37%	40%	42%	41%	41%	41%
Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School	66%	80%	50%	60%	52%	48%	71%	63%

Source: (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2008b; Minnesota Department of Education, 2008a)

In all years represented the percentage of American Indian students graduating is higher at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School than for American Indians attending public schools in Minnesota. Given the small number of students at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, one must be cautious in assigning much significance to this fact. It does, however, allow one to raise the question, “Does the culturally based education provided at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School contribute to this difference?” This is a question attempting to be answered by on-going research in the field (Beaulieu, 2006; Demmert, 2004; Yap, 2005a). It is a question worthy of additional independent research as well.

A bar graph is provided below (see *Figure 4-4*) depicting a visual image of the trends at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School for graduation and dropout rates from 2000 – 2008. Given the small numbers of students in each grade, the fluctuation in the percentages appears drastic.

Figure 4-4 Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School Graduation and Dropout Rates 2000-2008



Source: (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2008b)

One noteworthy increase took place when the dropout rate increased from 12% in 2007 to 47% in 2008. There is irony in that the school's explanation for this increase actually depicts the school's efforts to recruit students who had previously dropped out of school. The administrator in charge that year reported,

I'll gladly take credit for the increase in those numbers. We went knocking on the doors of all students we knew had dropped out and were still in the area. Those numbers show that if students do not graduate in four years from when they started grade nine they show up as dropouts.

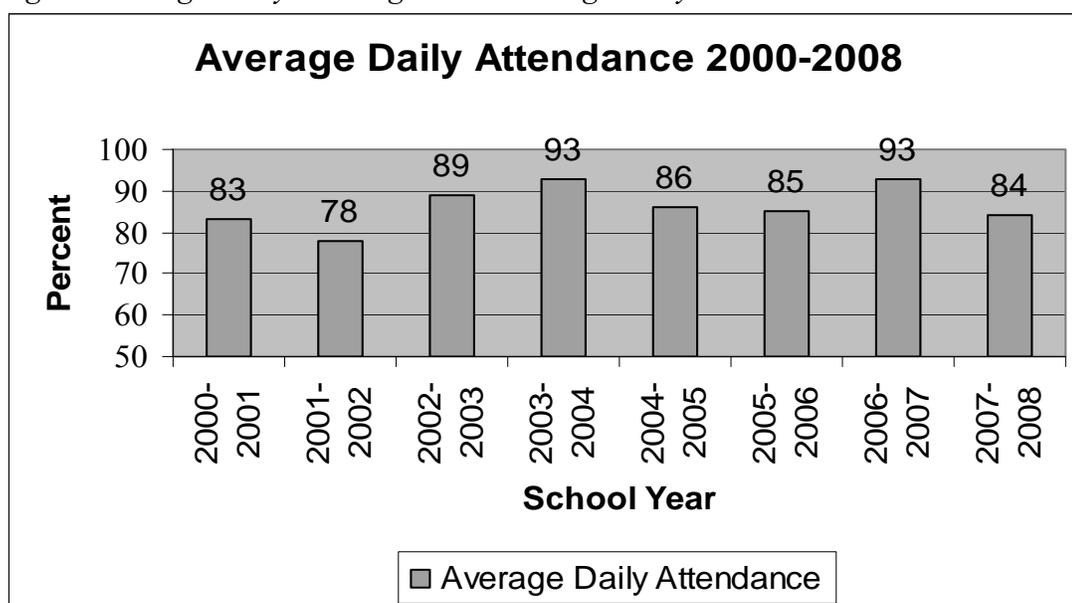
Attendance Rates

The average daily attendance of students is recorded on a school-wide basis in Figure 4-5. The school has on occasion met its goal of reaching 90% average daily attendance. Average daily attendance more accurately portrays what is occurring at the school relative to attendance. In years past, a specific "count week" was used to determine the total enrollment and students were 'rounded up' and delivered to school

on certain days in order to inflate the numbers. Funding for the school is largely based on this enrollment figure.

The average daily attendance has improved following the passage of NCLB. In the two years prior to NCLB the average daily attendance was 80.5% compared to 88.3% after NCLB reporting began.

Figure 4-5 Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School Average Daily Attendance 2000-2008



Source: (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2008b)

The K-8 daily attendance rates are higher than the 9-12 levels (see *Table 4-8*).

One high school faculty member, in learning about the current study stated, “If you can do anything to improve the attendance at the [high] school that would make it all worthwhile.” This teacher felt that the poor attendance in the high school had a big influence on student achievement.

NCLB Intentions Regarding Student Achievement

It is clear from the data in *Table 4-8* that the student achievement at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School has not improved as intended by NCLB. It appears that the goal of

100% proficiency by all students in the 2013-2014 school year will not be met. Student scores show no improvement according to the AYP calculations. Graduation rates have not reached 80% since 2002 when NCLB was first implemented in the school (see *Table 4-8*). The graduation rate during the four years following 2002 averaged only 52.5%. The average daily attendance is the closest to reaching its target of 90% as laid out in the school's strategic framework.

The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School has made AYP for only one of the past six years (see *Table 4-8*). It did so in 2005-06 under the safe harbor provision. Safe harbor is a way in which schools can reach AYP even if they do not achieve the goals set by the state. Safe harbor requires that a school reduce the number of students failing to test at the proficient level or above by 10 percent (Linn, 2008).

As a result of the school's failure to make AYP for five out of the past six years they have been placed in 'corrective action' status. The school, as required by the NCLB legislation, has developed a 'corrective action plan' to address their shortcomings.

Summary of Major Findings

There is a culturally rich environment available to all students at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School including the physical surroundings, language and culture courses, traditional teaching, ceremonies, and the use of elders and other community resources. The Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program, the seasonal activities program, activities and classes offered by the cultural director, tribal government and history courses, the school's database of cultural lessons, the cognitively guided instruction

(CGI) approach to teaching mathematics are some of the major ways that culturally based education is provided and supported.

Within this vast array of cultural offerings, however, there is a lack of cohesion and consistency in the delivery of CBE, and the expectation of delivery, that exists among staff members. This does create tension among them. The two major reasons for the inconsistency and lack of cohesion are the frequent turnover of staff, including administrators, and a weakly documented strategic framework.

While some aspects of culturally based education are sound at the school and other aspects are continuing to develop, there are some negative influences felt as a result of NCLB. The greatest negative influence is felt in the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program where the highly qualified teacher requirement restricts the hiring of fluent Ojibwe speakers in the community who are needed to fulfill their program goals. Other areas of negative influence include the occasional removal of students from cultural classes in order to participate in test preparation exercises and the use of Title VII funds to support activities and purposes that fall under the purview of Title I remediation services.

NCLB legislation sets forth guidelines and provides funds for professional development of teachers as a means to improve the delivery of curriculum. The professional development choices made by school leaders support the culturally based education at the school. These funds are currently being used to implement the CGI approach to mathematics and the behavior management approaches to student discipline.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In early days we were close to nature. We judged time, weather conditions, and many things by the elements--the good earth, the blue sky, the flying of geese, and the changing winds. We looked to these for guidance and answers....Today we are again evaluating the changing winds. May we be strong in spirit and equal to our Fathers of another day in reading the signs accurately and interpreting them wisely (Anonymous, mid-1960s).

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study including presenting the problem, study purpose, research questions, methodology, and major findings. Analyses and conclusions are drawn from the data presented in Chapter IV. These are embedded within the framework of kaupapa Māori theory. A final conclusionary statement is made including a set of powerful questions for consideration.

Summary of the Study

Overview of the Problem

Following the passage of No Child Left Behind in 2001 (NCLB), claims were made that curriculum was narrowed to provide more preparation time for the annual high-stakes tests required within the NCLB legislation (Beaulieu, Sparks, & Alonzo, 2005; Gilbert, 2007; National Education Association, 2007; Wiley, Mathis, & Garcia, 2005). Schools and school districts did all they could to comply with the requirements and avoid the public labels “in need of improvement” or “failing” based upon test scores.

The National Indian Education Association (NIEA) representatives became aware of the criticisms within the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools, as well as other schools serving high populations of American Indian students, and voiced their

concerns in Washington. In April, 2004, President Bush signed Executive Order 13336 stating explicitly that:

It is the purpose of this order to assist American Indian and Alaska Native students in meeting the challenging student academic standards of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110) in a manner that is consistent with tribal traditions, languages and cultures (Bush, 2004, p.1).

The NIEA staff planned regional hearings throughout the United States in order to gather direct testimony from school personnel in schools serving high populations of American Indian students. Eleven hearings were held in 2004 and many reported that culturally based education (CBE) was being diminished as a result of NCLB. Hearings were held in the Midwest, two in Wisconsin and one in South Dakota, but none in Minnesota.

Testimony gathered from the hearings was published in the “Preliminary Findings of NCLB in Indian Country” (Beaulieu, Sparks, & Alonzo, 2005). Testimony included claims that NCLB resulted in a greater divide between parents and the school, higher dropout rates, and students internalizing the failure of their schools when labeled as failing.

Two years later, in spite of the Executive Order 13336, staff from the Office of Indian Education Programs (OIEP) within the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) had reportedly sent a memorandum to the Superintendent of St. Paul Public Schools in Minnesota calling for a “gradual shift of focus from history and culture to reading and math” in the use of Title VII money allocated by NCLB (cited in Gilbert, 2007, p. 2). Members of four Minnesota groups, including the BIA funded Fond du Lac Ojibway School, contacted congressional representatives in Washington about the

correspondence. Subsequently representatives of the Native American Caucus wrote a letter to then Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, voicing their concern and asking for clarification of the OIEP directive. It appeared to many advocates that changes were underway in the education of American Indian students and tribes were not instigating them.

These events during the first five years of NCLB's inception paved the way for the current study. The study purpose and research questions follow.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the influence of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) on the culturally based education in a Minnesota Bureau of Indian Education School. The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, serving the Leech Lake Indian Reservation in northern Minnesota, is the site selected for the investigation.

Research Questions

1. In what ways is culturally based education being implemented in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?
2. In what ways is NCLB being implemented in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?
3. In the views of key stakeholders what has been the effect of NCLB on the culturally based education in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?
4. What are the trends in student achievement since implementation of NCLB at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?

Methodology of the Study

An exploratory case study design is the method used to answer the research questions within the current study. Key stakeholders involved in the school are the main sources of data collection. These include the current and a former superintendent of the school, along with the two current principals, teachers within the school at all divisions, the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program director, and a school governance member.

Interviews were conducted with school personnel during two week long visits to the school. A select group of six teachers representing all school divisions was recruited to participate in a focus group. School documents and archival records were used as additional data sources.

Direct observation of the operations of the school while in session was invaluable in the data collection process. The researcher collected additional data from key stakeholders via emails throughout the data collection and writing phases of this project. School personnel were able to provide important details and answers to specific questions that arose during the writing of this dissertation.

All data were transcribed and coded into themes. Triangulation of the data occurred through the collection of multiple and different sources of data. School documents, BIE reports, and the Minnesota Department of Education documents provided valuable data for corroboration.

Major Findings

NCLB was found to have a negative influence on the CBE at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School in three main areas: (1) the highly qualified teacher requirement restricted the hiring of fluent Ojibwe speakers in the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program; (2) students were occasionally pulled out from their cultural classes and physical education to receive additional instruction in academics; and, (3) Title VII funds were diverted to support Title I activities.

NCLB had a positive influence in the school as well. Teacher certification was upgraded and aligned to match teaching positions. Efforts to align the curriculum horizontally and vertically were undertaken. NCLB provided funds to support professional development in areas that support the CBE at the school.

Research Question 1. In What Ways is Culturally Based Education Being Implemented in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?

The findings of the study reveal that the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School has a visibly rich, culturally relevant environment in all three school divisions. There is Native culture within the physical environment and evidence of a rich curriculum interspersed throughout the school. Findings also reveal that the emphasis on culturally based education in the school has increased throughout the school's 34 year history. The culturally based education at the school includes high school courses offered for credit and required for graduation; the expectation of some Ojibwe language usage throughout the school; cultural integration in all content areas and classrooms; the use of elders and other community resources; drum and dance offerings; and, an emphasis on cultural arts.

The recent additions of the seasonal activities program and the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program have strengthened the base of American Indian culture realized at the school (see Chapter IV for a detailed description). These additions are more congruent with a progressive view of culturally based education whereby the notion of culture is not so much contained in lesson plans, subject areas, and course content, but rather viewed as consistent with the more complex and fluid practices that occur in the natural course of daily living (Hermes, 2005).

It is important to remember that culturally based education (CBE) within tribal schools is continuing to evolve. It is doing so while under the constraints of a highly regulated Western school system that does not lend itself easily to the type of teaching and learning contexts that is necessary in order to assist in the development of self-actualized, culturally competent American Indian students (Hermes, 2005).

The current state of CBE as it has evolved at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School is the major focus of the analysis and conclusion section. Suggestions are made, where possible, to connect the school's current CBE efforts to the more fluid notions expressed by some researchers and elders (Hermes, 2005).

Analysis and Conclusions

In spite of the vast richness of Native culture in evidence throughout the school, there are obstacles that hinder the implementation of CBE. Pockets of tension exist among the staff as to the precise role of CBE and its priority within the school. There is fragmentation in the delivery of CBE stemming from the different attitudes of teachers toward their responsibility to provide it, their inconsistent use of the database of

culturally integrated lessons, and the frequent turnover among staff, including administrators.

It should be noted that the debate over academics and CBE should not be viewed as an either/or binary situation. It must instead be viewed as a both/and situation. This would require explicit language and clear understanding as to how CBE and quality academics can be integrated to support each other. It is expected that the impending research of NWREL and partners will help to bridge these two constructs (Yap, Towner et al., 2005). It is also expected that elders and other community members will be key to delineating the essential local perspective as CBE continues to evolve.

One likely contributing factor to the confusion over the role of CBE is the school's vaguely documented strategic framework and mission statement. The strategic framework is written in bulleted form with little narrative explanation. Cultural integration and traditional values are listed as goals, but specific statements delineating means or responsibilities are lacking. The mission statement simply reads, "Provide Quality Education for Lifelong Learners" (Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, 2008a). The *quality* aspect of education is left open to a wide range of interpretation. The impassioned teachers who view CBE as the most important feature within the school become frustrated when they see others who are less committed. Others who view academics as the highest priority of the school are more apt to interpret *quality* as something that supports their interests.

Douglas Reeves (2002) suggests that strategic leadership, an active and on-going process carried out by leaders, should replace the practice of creating a traditional

strategic plan document that often is relegated to a shelf. Reeves suggests that the mission statement of an organization should be brief and passionate, but referred to often and tied to all decisions made by leaders within the organization. All personnel decisions including hiring and firing, all program decisions, and all allocation of resources should support the mission statement and subsequent goals that follow it.

Similarly, kaupapa Māori theory cites the need for a well-founded vision, one that provides direction, purpose, and impetus toward the goals within it. Bennis & Nanus (1985) and Sparks (2000) provide compelling arguments for the creation of a collective vision. A well crafted vision, brought to life through strategic leadership and aligned with a passionate statement of the school's mission, might serve to better ensure the sustainability and viability of the culturally based education at the school.

The Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program would likely benefit from a well-defined school-wide vision and mission statement. The program does have its own purpose and philosophy documented in explicit language. Since the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program resides within the larger Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, which does not have clear and explicit language, tensions between the Niigaane program staff and administrators do surface.

Additional structural support mechanisms may be needed to help secure the credibility and sustainability of the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program. The data indicate that much of the Niigaane staff's time is spent helping parents to understand and accept that it takes years of immersion before the benefits of language acquisition and academics take hold. In other words, time is still required to develop the

needed trust even among their participating clients. As the Niigaane program is in its early stages of development it will require substantial, long-term support from its immediate governing bodies and administrators.

The Niigaane program staff is working fastidiously to keep pace with the heavy demands placed on them. However, without some additional ‘propping up’ strategies they will continue to be overburdened, leaving the program vulnerable to a host of consequences. This includes staff burnout, credibility questions, and possibly weak implementation.

The Niigaane program could use coordinated support efforts between the BIE and the Leech Lake Reservation Tribal Council. Official tribal requests made to the BIE asking for greater flexibility in NCLB requirements and improved dialogue would be a good starting point. Tribal requests should carry weight in accordance with the US government’s policy of self-determination. This relationship link should be strengthened and utilized as a support strategy. The Minnesota Chippewa Tribe certainly has a stake in the success or failure of the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program so they should add their weight to developing needed structures. They would be the likely political body to engage with the Minnesota State Legislature and the Minnesota State Department of Education, both of which should be held accountable to support heritage language immersion programs throughout the state.

Kaupapa Maori theory addresses the need for indigenous people to gain legitimacy for their language and culture and to position indigenous ways of knowing as relevant. It also addresses the need to enlist the state apparatus to work for indigenous

interests. The Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and the Leech Lake Reservation Tribal Council have long served as leaders to engage the state and federal governments to improve the quality of life for the American Indian people in the state. They must be the leaders in assisting the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School and others to engage the BIE and state of Minnesota officials to work for the inclusion of American Indian cultural interests in the NCLB legislation.

The theory of cultural democracy includes a vision of a society that embraces diversity and recognizes the potential gain for *all* of its members when cultural groups coexist with dignity. It demands equitable access to resources, leading to cultural legitimization. State officials in both the legislature and the Department of Education would serve their constituent members well by developing inclusive policies and practices in their dealings with American Indians.

Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program

It is important to take a holistic view of the issue of heritage language loss and revitalization efforts among the Ojibwe people in Minnesota. While the 26 students currently enrolled in the Niigaane program appear to be making significant strides in the development of their heritage language skills, the broader goal of reversing the language shift that is occurring among the Ojibwe will require a more comprehensive plan. Research indicates that, while school-based programs have an important role to play and can do much to add to the growing number of heritage language speakers, such programs alone are not sufficient to respond to the current rate of language loss taking place among American Indian tribes. The symposia held in the mid-1990s in Arizona

strongly concluded that school programs are better than nothing, but will not be sufficient to reverse the language shift that is taking place today (Cantoni, 1996).

The Niigaane program staff should continue to take a leading role to assist the broader American Indian community to develop more fluent speakers, but the expectation that they would be the only vehicle, or even the major one, is not sound. It might serve to remind the interested community that Demmert's operational definition of culturally based education within an American Indian context reaches far beyond the school walls (see Appendix E). The local community members need to be involved extensively in all aspects of the design, delivery, and support of culturally based education for their youth. Elders have a major and unique role. The governing bodies have major political and educational leadership roles. Parents and all other interested parties must become vested in the development and support of a more comprehensive plan as well.

An additional factor that impacts the Niigaane program is the high rate of administrative turnover. This requires constant effort by the Niigaane program staff to educate incoming administrators about their special circumstances and needs in order to gain their support. Language immersion programs are relatively new and few administrators have experience with their philosophy and practices. The issue of administrative turnover is not the result of NCLB, however. Rather, it is reflective of the internal, sometimes dubious, political malaise found within the reservation political system.

The frequent upheaval felt at the school with each incoming administrator is something for which the Leech Lake Reservation Tribal Council must take responsibility. Ten superintendents in a twelve year period cannot be viewed as anything other than deleterious to progress at the school. New administrators bring new directions and agendas, especially considering the school's vaguely documented mission statement. Elmore (2004) defines school improvement as change in the desired direction sustained over time. With the rapid pace of administrative turnover there is little opportunity at the school for sustained change.

It is incumbent that the Leech Lake Reservation Tribal Council conducts an internal check on the frequent politically motivated hiring and firing practices at the school. How this impedes progress at the school is a topic for another study, but one worthy of investigation.

Seasonal Activities Program

The seasonal activities program is well developed and serving students in meaningful real-life contexts. Monthly themes are determined by the seasons and natural elements that accompany them. Their efforts to align cultural content to the Minnesota state education standards are commendable. They are doing so in a way that preserves the integrity of their overall program and purpose.

The data indicate that the seasonal activities program staff at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School has begun the process of reaching into the local community. They conducted surveys to gain input from elders and parents in the community thereby lending credibility to the program. Other community members have been actively

engaged in participatory and advisory roles on site. Elders evaluate the overall program and provide continuous feedback to refine and focus the program with the aims of providing traditional knowledge.

While the school's seasonal activities program is a great beginning, other strategies to reach into the community need to be developed and coordinated to strengthen what is occurring. Just as the Niigaane program cannot be the sole provider of language immersion opportunities for the reservation, the seasonal activities program cannot be the sole provider of traditional knowledge teaching. They are doing much to reach a small population of local youth, but more is needed to reach the broader community.

Again, the Leech Lake Reservation Tribal Council is the likely body to promote increased opportunities for preserving and passing on traditional knowledge at the community level. Community seminars and meetings, language institutes, summer camps for all ages, and work setting incentives to encourage heritage language acquisition and cultural preservation activities are some examples of what could be organized (M. S. Linn et al., 2000; McCarty, 2003; Pease-Pretty on Top, 2003; Reyhner, 2006a).

Some believe that strengthening the traditional knowledge base among families and community members is the best way to deter students from turning to gangs as a place to belong. Richard Littlebear (cited in Reyhner, 2005) sees the gang symbols and rituals as filling a void in the lives of American Indian youth. He suggests that traditional cultural symbols and rituals could replace gangs in a meaningful and positive

way. A broader community approach that promotes a strong cultural identity among members would seem to support the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School's task of improving academic success through culturally based education.

The data suggest that students in the seasonal activities program have become more comfortable participating in activities that are unfamiliar to them. Increased willingness of students to participate supports the idea that a culturally based education promotes a positive cultural identity for some students.

Other Areas of Culturally Based Education

There is data to indicate that some students are not interested or ready to embrace the culturally based education provided. While some teachers voiced frustrations or surprise at students' lack of interest in CBE, it should be kept in mind that a holistic approach to education begins with accepting and accommodating for the student wherever he or she is developmentally in all areas of importance. It is important for the school to consider the needs of students according to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy and make educational and support plans based on those determinations. Students with greater emotional needs may require a different program than the one provided to mainstream students.

The Ojibwe cultural room is a *safe haven* for students, promoting a sense of community spirit. Under the leadership of the cultural director, the Ojibwe culture room and activities serve as a major life force and a unifying thread for the entire school. The feasts, pow-wows, and give-aways, organized and prepared by the students and cultural director, regularly bring the entire school and parts of the community together. This long

standing cultural feature of the school is well understood by the community members who continue to participate in the many school initiated activities.

The various aspects of the culturally based education program provided at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School are in different stages of development. The long standing features of the school seem better positioned in comparison to the newer features of CBE such as the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program. It is important for the school staff and local community members to be aware of and understand the various stages of development in their culturally based education. Adjustments may need to be made in the level of support provided for the different aspects of CBE as they continue to evolve.

Marzano, Waters, & McNulty's (2005) meta-analysis of research on school leadership identified 21 responsible leader behaviors. Situational awareness was cited as the leading responsible behavior found among effective leaders. Effective school and community leaders would need to demonstrate situational awareness regarding the evolving nature of CBE at the school, along with the political and cultural contexts within which the school exists, and develop strategies to support it accordingly.

Research Question 2. In What Ways is NCLB Being Implemented in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?

The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School is currently in 'corrective action' after being labeled as failing to make AYP for five of the past six years. NCLB regulations dictate that five percent of funding is to be spent on professional development for teachers; however, schools in corrective action are required to spend ten percent.

Within this framework school personnel do have options in how they respond to the requirements of the legislation. Throughout past years Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School has realigned teaching assignments to meet the highly qualified teacher requirement of NCLB. Staff training in the areas of math, language arts, and behavior management has made up the remaining focus as a response to the legislative stipulations.

Analysis and Conclusions

It is interesting to observe how schools implement NCLB, given that there are choices within the framework of reform it provides. The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School's decision to reassign teachers to positions that better match certifications holds promise over time. Research suggests that students achieve at higher levels when taught by teachers professionally certified in their teaching areas (Center on Education Policy, 2005; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Marzano, 2007).

While the school's decision to reassign teachers may have caused anxiety, stress, and financial burden on some at the school, it has to be considered to be in the best interests of the students to have done so. Because NCLB places emphasis on this aspect of teaching, the decision makers at the school will need to develop new strategies to attract and retain properly certified teachers in the future.

This could be something that NCLB helps to fund, especially in schools located in rural areas where the highly qualified teacher requirement is felt most acutely. It is generally considered that NCLB is under-funded. Some state and school district officials have questioned the constitutionality of NCLB's mandates for this reason (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007; Lecker, 2005).

Strategies to attract and train “home grown” teachers who would stay in the area should be considered. Beaulieu and Figueira (2006) wrote about this strategy in their work on the Native Educators Research Project. It should be noted however, that professional certification of teachers alone is not sufficient to ensure the delivery of quality education. A host of additional factors such as cultural sensitivity, knowledge of subject matter taught, and ability to differentiate for student needs is also important when recruiting for a prospective pool of teachers.

Given that the federal government is responsible for the education of American Indians and children in the military, a far reaching strategy might be to investigate reasons for the differences in salary and benefits between the two teaching forces. Perhaps there is room to re-negotiate the status of teachers in the BIE schools to federal employee status, which would help considerably to attract and retain teachers.

The professional development choices made at the school indicate continued commitment to providing culturally based education while working to improve the academic success of students. Research on Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) suggests that this approach to teaching mathematics produces higher order thinking skills in students and that it fits well with indicators considered to be culturally responsive to American Indian students (Bowman, 2003; Carpenter & Fennema, 1999; Hanks, 1998; Lipka et al., 2005; Tharp, 1999). A math specialist has been hired to write curriculum that incorporates cultural knowledge into the math program. She works closely with instructors in the seasonal activities program and utilizes their expertise of traditional and local content knowledge. This effort undertaken in the school may be one

of the best examples of how culturally based education can be merged with the goal of increasing student success in content areas.

As the school is in the initial stages of training faculty and developing a culturally based math curriculum, (CGI), the results will not be known immediately. Such efforts, along with results of McREL's (2005) research on CGI in American Indian contexts, should be carefully examined. The school deserves credit for its selection of an approach requiring a long-term view that supports the culturally based education, rather than a short-sighted approach aimed solely at meeting AYP.

The Responsive Classroom and Developmental Design (Origins, 2009) were the behavioral management approaches selected by the school for their professional development in this area. Again, the school deserves credit for its selection of professional development opportunities that match the needs of the student population served. These approaches are based upon mutual respect and relationship building which are both highly valued in American Indian communities (Beaulieu, Figueira, & Viri, 2006; Lipka et al., 2005; State Advisory Council on Indian Education, 2004).

Language arts is the other area targeted for professional development in the school improvement plan. This area of professional development is the least well-defined at the time of this writing. It may be that having more than two major professional development initiatives at one time is not healthy, realistic, or financially feasible.

The Bug-O-Nay Ge-Shig School was required to develop a corrective action plan as a consequence for not making AYP for consecutive years. Developing such a plan is a

requirement under NCLB, but it appears that it is an exercise in futility. The targeted goals for making AYP are unrealistic given the needs of the student population provided in the testimony of teachers and the statistics found in the school's "Annual Report Cards" (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2008b).

It is expected that the school will again be labeled as failing to make AYP, which will place the school in the *restructuring phase* of NCLB's designation system at the end of the current school year. This raises interesting questions about likely consequences because this phase generally requires major reform activities such as replacement of staff, lengthening the school year, or a takeover by the state.

In the case of Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, only lengthening of the school year seems feasible. This option would require considerable additional funding and that is not likely to occur. Firing of staff would not help to improve student achievement because so many of the teachers are dedicated and committed and would be difficult to replace. A takeover by the state cannot happen as the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School is under the jurisdiction of the federal government. Any takeover by the BIE would be in direct conflict with the policy of self-determination (Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, 1975).

The federal government's response to the school entering the restructuring phase of NCLB will be interesting to observe. Such a scenario gives rise to images of a frustrated parent who has exhausted attempts to bring a non-compliant child into line. Any reputable child psychologist understands that threats should not be made unless one intends to carry them out. It seems safe to say that the unique circumstances of the BIE

schools were not considered when the consequences within NCLB's framework were laid out.

One final point that needs to be addressed in considering how NCLB is being implemented in the school is the issue of the Title VII spending. Even while the full context of the Title VII spending is unknown, since it was written about in the school's corrective action plan, it can sufficiently be surmised that the funds were being used for purposes more directly related to Title I. This is a major finding as it coincides with the events taking place throughout other parts of the state. When the Office of Indian Education (OIEP) advocates for the "gradual shift from history and culture to reading and math" (Native American Caucus, 2006, p. 1), it is viewed by American Indian advocates as a weakening of the tribe's right to self-determine (Beaulieu, Figueira, & Viri, 2006). It appears to be a direct violation of President Bush's Executive Order 13336 claiming support for meeting "the academic needs of students in a manner that is consistent with tribal traditions and culture" (Bush, 2001, p. 1). One has to seriously question the intent and the weight of the Executive Order since it is an arm of the federal government itself advocating for the shift in use of funds. There is direct conflict between the rhetoric of the federal government and its actions. Such a finding gives the appearance of one more case in a long line where the federal government does not follow through with its promises in its dealings with American Indians.

Diverting Title VII funds to support Title I activities and program goals further fuels the belief held by American Indian advocates and educators that cultural interests, although endorsed, in reality matter little to the federal government. It cannot simply be

an oversight, as proven by the OIEP directive to gradually shift the use of these funds. However, it is not known whether the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School was abiding by the directive coming out of the OIEP or if it was truly the local community freely deciding to use Title VII monies to support Title I activities and goals. One would expect the federal government to prohibit such a shift in spending if there was a genuine interest and desire to abide by the Executive Order.

Research Question 3. In the Views of Key Stakeholders What has been the Effect of No Child Left Behind on the Culturally Based Education in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?

The influence of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is being felt to some degree in all parts of the school with some areas more deeply affected than others. There are some positive changes that have occurred as a result of NCLB, particularly in the areas of curriculum and professional development. There are also clear and distinct negative effects influencing the culturally based education (CBE).

Some members of the school have felt tension and anguish as a result of NCLB. Others tend to ignore it as they see the 2014 targeted goal of academic proficiency by all students as unrealistic. Still others felt the daily toil of the job overshadowed the demands of NCLB. One person spoke favorably about the NCLB requirements saying, “It needed to happen here.”

Comments in the next sections are centered around (1) the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program, (2) Seasonal Activities Program, and (3) Other Areas of NCLB’s Influence on CBE.

Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program

If a single word was to be selected as the one to encapsulate the stakeholder views of the overall influence of NCLB on the culturally based education at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, based upon the data presented, it would have to be ‘conflict.’ There are pockets within the school where the word ‘tension’ might be more appropriate, but conflict gets at the core of comments expressed most often.

A major conflict was expressed around the issue of tribal sovereignty by teachers in both the Niigaane Ojibwe Language Immersion Program and the regular program. This comes as no surprise as the issue of tribal sovereignty surfaces frequently in discussions of American Indian issues (American Indian Research and Policy Institute, 2005; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002, , 2006; Szasz, 1999; Wassegijig, 2005).

Unfortunately, the notion of tribal sovereignty is somewhat of a misnomer. Though there are laws and legal language to support tribal sovereignty, the reality of tribe’s ability to regulate their own internal affairs is often not fully realized.

The federal government is responsible for the education of American Indian students, but the rules and regulations attached to the funding are often too stringent to allow much freedom in educational decisions. Tribes are bound by the rules and regulations of NCLB and they are particularly costly to the goals of the Niigaane program.

The idea of a culturally democratic environment, even at a school whose purpose is to provide one, is jeopardized when rules and regulations suppress program goals and remain inflexible. Such regulatory obstacles are actually a form of oppression. Erica-

Irene Daes (2000) describes this best by stating, “For the oppressed ... a stranger is always by their side, blocking their chosen destination, saying to them *Not that way.*”

For the staff in the Niigaane program, whose purposeful work is the advancement of a culturally democratic environment, the “Not that way” message leads to forthright frustration and feelings of being irrelevant. Daes further states that the constant message of “Not that way” too often results in immobility, inaction, and self-isolation (2000, p. 5). It is important for the Niigaane staff and their supporters to guard against such outcomes as they continue to struggle under the weight of the regulatory obstacles.

There is an obvious conflict between American Indian interests at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School to legitimize their language and culture and the rigidity of NCLB’s highly qualified requirements. NCLB regulations are a stark contrast to the language within the Executive Order 13336 which states:

The United States has a unique legal relationship with Indian tribes and a special relationship with Alaska Native entities as provided in the Constitution of the United States, treaties, and Federal statutes. This Administration is committed to continuing to work with these federally recognized tribal governments on a government-to-government basis, and supports tribal sovereignty and self-determination. It is the purpose of this order to assist American Indian and Alaska Native students in meeting the challenging student academic standards of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110) in a manner that is consistent with tribal traditions, languages, and cultures (Bush, 2004, p. 1).

The fact that the federal government education policies in 2010 would usurp the tribe’s widely accepted legal right to maintain and revitalize Native languages (U.S. Congress, 1990), while claiming to support them (Bush, 2004), is a gross violation of the government’s federal trust relationship with tribes. This can only be viewed as a setback in the struggle for the legal rights of tribes to reclaim their languages and culture that

was finally won through passage of the Native American Languages Act (NALA) (U.S. Congress, 1990).

Following the passage of NALA, American Indian advocates set their sights on gaining the *effective rights* to regain their language (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Office of Civil Rights Evaluation, 2004; Walke, 2007). Effective rights refer to the capacity of tribes to follow through on freedoms gained legally. NCLB regulations are compromising the goals of the Niigaane program by restricting the hiring of fluent speakers as instructors for the program.

The fifth site of struggle addressed in kaupapa Māori theory is the need to reclaim legitimacy of one's own language, knowledge, and culture and to position one's way of knowing as relevant and significant (G. H. Smith, 1997). This is the important work that American Indian tribes have before them. From an indigenous perspective, NCLB negates the legitimacy of one's language and culture. It does little to support indigenous language acquisition goals. In fact, it hinders such goals.

Seasonal Activities Program

Aligning cultural lessons and content to state standards can only be viewed as a positive outcome of NCLB regulations. It may serve as a good example of how it is possible to merge culturally based education with the goals of improving student performance in the content areas. One should keep in mind, however, that state standards should be developed to be more inclusive of diversity and cultural differences. The Minnesota State Department of Education has a role in advocating for educational equity and it should include "to guide us as we make the transition from a relatively

homogenous state to a multi-racial, multi-cultural state” as suggested by the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership (2009, p. 19). The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School is certainly working to adapt their CBE to meet the state standards.

The major area of difficulty posed by NCLB for instructors and students in the seasonal activities program revolves around scheduling. The collection of sap in spring has been difficult as students are required to participate in the annual state tests occurring at the same time. Paraphrasing the comment of one teacher, ‘the sap doesn’t stop running until nature tells it to do so.’

From an outsider’s perspective this may appear to be a minor inconvenience, but from the combined perspectives stemming from the works of Ramírez and Castañeda (1974) and Gould (1996), others take a different view. The value of test taking juxtaposed with the value of collecting sap, with testing taking precedence, leaves little room for students and instructors to feel culturally validated. For these students, and the adults who teach them, it may be viewed as a direct violation of the very essence of their identity. This also conflicts with the language in President Bush’s Executive Order 13336 which claims that NCLB supports the academic and unique needs of American Indian students in a “manner that is consistent with tribal traditions, languages, and culture” (Bush, 2004, p. 1).

It can be argued that it is not NCLB, per se, that sets forth the test schedule, but rather the state of Minnesota. This argument then becomes a part of the ‘politics of distraction’ addressed in kaupapa Māori theory (G. H. Smith, 2003). Lines of reasoning and logic become blurred. Issues become entangled within discussions and soon the real

points of interest are lost. Those without the power must use their limited time, energy, and prized resources attempting to untangle the issues and create space for their objectives as a part of the on-going struggle to gain power over their interests.

How detrimental this conflict is to the seasonal activities program or students is not known. It does, however, indicate that further dialogue and engagement with the state is necessary to reach a compromising solution.

Other Areas of NCLB's Influence on CBE

Other areas of culturally based education experiencing a negative impact are less tangible, but may be of equal importance. While no CBE programs or positions have been eliminated to date, there are reports of students missing Ojibwe language classes, physical education (PE), and cultural arts on occasion in order to prepare for the required tests. Although this may not appear profound, there are subtleties within this practice that are worth examining.

For example, as diabetes is a growing problem among American Indian youth (Gilbert, 2008), the importance of PE classes for these students should not be overlooked. In fact, health and fitness should be a major priority of Bureau of Indian Education schools as they develop and design programs for American Indian students. Although the data indicate that students are only occasionally pulled out of these classes, the fact that it happens at all raises questions about NCLB's unintended consequences.

If the tests are perceived as narrow in scope and irrelevant to the lives of these students, as stated in question four below, and given that the school is currently implementing a corrective action plan – which means that they have been failing the

tests anyway - maintaining the program that will be most beneficial to students should be a priority. Tyack and Cuban (1995) suggest that teachers' resistance to school reform efforts that go against their professional judgment may be wise in the long run. It is difficult to argue that the health and physical fitness of students should not be one of any school's top priorities.

Given the consistent 'failure' of the school according to NCLB and the expectation that the school will continue to 'fail' according to NCLB, it makes sense that students remain in their current program rather than be pulled out for test preparation exercises. Many staff members expect that they will be placed in NCLB's "restructuring phase" following this year's failure to make adequate yearly progress (AYP).

Research Question 4. What are the Trends in Student Achievement since the Implementation of NCLB at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?

Data collected on student achievement at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, as defined by NCLB, indicates that the goals of NCLB will not be reached by 2014. From all accounts, both perceptions held by staff within the school and the actual student scores to date, the gap is simply too wide to overcome.

Analysis and Conclusions

Unfortunately, the reporting of student achievement at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School is limited to the narrow definition provided by NCLB. That definition includes standardized achievement test scores, attendance rates, and graduation rates. Despite calls by American Indian researchers and advocates to broaden the definition of student achievement (Jehlen, 2007; R. Linn, 2008; Shurtleff & Loreda, 2008), the Bureau of Indian Education has yet to do so. The BIE Annual Report Cards closely match the

requirements under NCLB. The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School has not advanced the definition of student achievement within their data collection system either.

Of the three indicators of student achievement under NCLB, standardized test scores are generally deemed to be the most important. This practice of giving a high level of credence to the use of a single test score produced on a single day to determine student achievement is a practice that needs to be questioned (Stephen Jay Gould, 1996; R. Linn, 2008; McNeil, Coppola, Radigan, & Vasquez Heilig, 2008; Moses & Nanna, 2007).

It is precisely at this point that an argument can be made that NCLB, with its limited focus, sets schools and students up for failure. It is not surprising that students who live in poverty, experience hunger, or attend schools with high rates of teacher turnover and have fewer resources are not as prepared to take these tests as students who come from homes and attend schools with plentiful resources. Families that exist in *survival mode* are often using their energies to provide for the most basic of needs: food, shelter, clothing, and enough warmth to make it through a Minnesota winter. Things that middle and upper income families take for granted become baneful for families living in poverty. Keeping a car operational and filled with enough gas to get to and from work can require an entire day's focus. There is little time left over to sit and read a book at the end of a long stressful day, especially with the expectation that the next day will be the same as the one that just ended. Students living in poverty are surrounded by stressful situations that breed a sense of hopelessness and despair. It is difficult for schools to counter such feelings. These students are at a disadvantage when it comes

time to take a test that measures their level of academic achievement. Too often these students attend schools that are also in short supply of resources.

Given the level of unmet need among so many of the students at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School and the lack of resources available at the school, it should be no surprise that the data on the student achievement indicate that the expectation that all students will be proficient in all areas by the 2014 deadline is an unrealistic goal. These results reach beyond the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School. A study done in the Great Lakes region projected that 81% of schools in Minnesota would fail to make AYP in 2014 based upon their current levels of achievement at the time of the study (Wiley, Mathis, & Garcia, 2005). With so much failure occurring and an even greater level of failure being projected, one has to question where the real source of failure lies.

There is value in the tests students take, assuming they are well-designed and inclusive of the diverse knowledge and understanding found within a heterogeneous population such as the one that is forming in Minnesota. One can assume that the tests in Minnesota are being incrementally tailored to align with the state standards as they seem to change so often. Trying to ascertain the validity of the tests given in Minnesota was beyond the scope of this project.

Despite their limitations, test scores at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School do yield some information. Student achievement scores dropped at the school when the state revised its Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) tests. During both years of revised assessments, 2004 and 2006, there were significant drops in the percentage of students who scored at proficient levels (see *Figure 4-4*). Educators at the school expect

to show some improvement in scores if the target would remain constant. The data do show slight increases in years when tests were familiar, but major increases would be required if AYP is to be realized at the school.

Several teachers reported that students who spend their entire school career at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School actually do well on state tests. There is no documentation to support this claim other than the anecdotal reports by teachers. The school would serve itself well to be proactive by documenting the kinds of successes that employees believe happen at the school. Maintaining such records would build greater credibility in the community. The requirements of the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) drive the record keeping system at the school. As the BIE's paperwork is extensive, it is likely that adding new tasks is simply overwhelming.

Grade three students at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School have performed better than the rest of the school in comparison to their White and American Indian peers in the rest of the state. They outperformed the statewide population of American Indian students by ten percent, but one must be judicious in assigning too much significance to this because the number of students used in the comparison is small. The figures simply allow one to raise questions about the comparisons, but they would need to be answered under more reliable conditions (see *Table 4-10*).

The attendance rate at the school has improved slightly throughout the years of NCLB. The average attendance rate prior to NCLB was 80% and it has increased to 88% in 2008-2009 (see *Table 4-9*). The NCLB target is 90% attendance. This improvement is significant because the school now reports average daily attendance and this is a better

measure of the time students spend in school, rather than using a count week at the school as they did prior to NCLB.

Graduation rates for the six year period provided averaged 57% for Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig students (see *Table 4-12*). This is higher than the statewide average for American Indian students which has not risen above 42% in the same period (Minnesota Department of Education, 2008b).

Dropout rates of students at the school remain high. Once again, the small population of students means greater fluctuations in percentages with the movement of even one child, so caution must be used in the interpretation of this data. One interesting statistic is Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig's increase in the dropout rate from 2007 to 2008 when it moved from 12% to 47%. This increase represents the school's efforts to re-enroll students who had dropped out of school. The school started the Anishinaabeg Bimaadiziwn Alternative Academy (ABAA) in an effort to get more of these dropouts to graduate from high school. Educators made this effort knowing it would hurt them in their overall graduation rate which is used as a secondary indicator to determine AYP.

Alternative assessments and growth measures should be considered for use in the BIE schools. There are likely causes for celebration occurring in the schools and these should be recognized. A local definition of progress could be broadened and exacted to include:

- Measure of knowledge and understanding of the local history and culture

- Measure of growth in learning the Ojibwe language

- Increase in parental involvement in the school

- Personal student growth in all areas of healing (counseling, meeting with elders, sweats, additional involvement in spiritual quests)

Reduction in bullying and other disruptive behaviors

These represent some of the additional types of progress that could be assessed and used to measure progress at the school. The local community would be better suited to identify more specifically the measures that would demonstrate growth and progress within the areas deemed important to them.

Alternative academic assessments that measure student understandings and knowledge should be developed in a manner that is sensitive to the local culture. Such assessments should be developed with the help of local experts who will identify the most worthwhile knowledge and understandings representative of an indigenous perspective. Technical assistance offered by the BIE should offer specialized assessment training, on-site consultants, writing support, and funding for purposes of creating local assessments aligned with indigenous teachings. Certainly academic assessments to ensure progress in the core areas of reading, writing, math, and science are important. But, balancing these assessment needs with a local *flavor* is not an unrealistic expectation. One teacher mentioned the cultural clash that exists within the current state assessments in the area of science when she stated:

The Anishinaabeg people don't dissect animals if they aren't going to be eaten. Our high school biology classes do not engage in this practice as public schools do. So to be tested on this gives an unfair advantage to some while handicapping others.

The development of assessments based on local values and knowledge systems is an appropriate expectation and the BIE should support the BIE schools to undergo this task.

Is the focus of NCLB where it needs to be in order to get all students to achieve at a high level in our educational system? This is a question that begs answering. It is

interesting to look back in history when people openly viewed the ‘less fortunate’ in society with disdain and downright prejudice. While borrowing from Stephen Jay Gould’s (1996) examples in his book *The Mismeasure of Man*, although not precisely from his arguments regarding biological determinism, it is interesting to note the language and the attitudes that existed in earlier times. A look back in time revealed some startling, and sometimes shocking, ideas that were held about races of people, alcoholics, criminals, and prostitutes, as evidenced through the use of some horrific language. The less fortunate in society were called “morons, feeble-minded, or dull” (Gould, 1996, p. 191).

For some scientists and writers of that time, the less fortunate in society were relegated to the bottom rung of society’s ladder as witnessed in a statement by Goddard when he spoke to a group of Princeton undergraduate students:

Now the fact that workmen may have a ten year intelligence while you have a twenty. To demand for him such a home as you enjoy is as absurd as it would be to insist that every laborer should receive a graduate fellowship. How can there be such a thing as social equality with this wide range of mental capacity? (cited in Gould, 1996, p. 191).

In earlier times, the lower achievement test scores among American Indian students of today would have been used to justify the beliefs about their innate mental weaknesses. Today, such ideas are politically unpalatable, even if they have not been totally abandoned. New theories have redefined the problem as environmental rather than residing within the individual (Gould, 1996). So the question that needs answering is: where does the blame get placed today?

NCLB has made the politically correct shift away from blaming the individual students and races of people; however, it has shifted blame to the teachers and schools for their “soft bigotry of low expectations” (Paige, 2003). There is an appearance of sympathy and understanding about minority populations in the language used to promote NCLB, but one has to question the shift in focus from blaming students, to blaming teachers and schools. What will the researchers and advocates a hundred years from now say about the narrow focus of blame assigned to teachers and schools by NCLB? Will they write about a sort of tunnel vision held by government officials who lacked the ability to see a more comprehensive view of the *cracks in the system* that all contribute to the achievement gap? Is it possible that we could make greater and quicker progress by using a more sensible and pragmatic approach to remedying the problem of the achievement gap?

Certainly, NCLB deserves credit for the plan to disaggregate scores among the different populations to include those typically underserved by schools and society. Certainly, also, NCLB raises an important issue about the need for highly qualified teachers in all schools across the country. NCLB, too, deserves credit for insisting upon professional development that has evidence of effectiveness and sustainability.

NCLB legislation has provided a window of opportunity that should be expanded upon in any future reauthorization bills. Policymakers should conduct a review of the legislation in order to build upon its strengths and correct its weaknesses.

If there is genuine sympathy and understanding for minority populations who lag behind their White peers, as suggested in the initial language, then the government needs

to develop a more deliberate and focused arm of NCLB that will address the broad-based and devastating issues minority people face. For example, NCLB should have a specific plan to address the unique problems that exist within BIE schools. Such a plan should have been laid out immediately following the signing of the EO 13336 (Bush, 2004) containing language of support for the unique needs of American Indian students.

How might NCLB address the unique needs at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School in a way that supports the unique cultural and academic needs of its students as purported in EO 13336? The following personal suggestions are offered:

Include a local perspective to more broadly define ‘success and achievement.’

Support the use of alternative assessments to measure student success and achievement.

Assist school personnel to develop realistic assessments that better align with the goals of the special education population of students in the school. Require a standard of excellence that is appropriate for this population.

Acknowledge the specialized knowledge of fluent Ojibwe speakers and broaden the definition of ‘highly qualified’ to include them in such programs where the specialized knowledge is needed.

Earmark special funding for heritage language immersion programs in recognition of the urgent need to reverse the current rate of language shift that is occurring.

Provide and fund a professional development plan that would allow the fluent Ojibwe speakers either working or volunteering in the Niigaane program to become certified teachers if they desire to do so.

Provide funding to assist regular program teachers to pay for the necessary coursework in order to become highly qualified.

Require the Bureau of Indian Education to provide technical assistance to schools for the purposes stated above.

Work with tribes to better coordinate the educational services of the tribal colleges to meet the training needs of the people employed within BIE schools.

NCLB proponents should also identify ways to increase the teacher tenure at the school, perhaps by providing more incentives for teachers to stay on. The threat to fire teachers, as laid out in the restructuring phase of NCLB, is not a wise strategy in the overall scheme to respond to the achievement gap. The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School teachers are highly qualified under NCLB and are also some of the most committed and compassionate teachers a school would hope to attract. Threatening them or penalizing them for the fact that not all students passed a test on a given day does not make sense. Rather, it adds to the fray.

Conclusion

This study serves as a grim reminder that the federal educational policies continue to work against American Indian people in their efforts to legitimize their culture and language at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School. If one takes time to look at past efforts by the federal government to educate American Indians, the word to be applied to almost every attempt has to be 'failed.' Testimony provided by Mr. Lloyd New, then director of the Institute for American Indian Arts, at a congressional hearing in 1968, spoke eloquently to this issue:

For almost five centuries the American Indian has been subjected to a process of attrition which has slowly eroded the roots of his cultural (and economic) existence. His physical ways have been completely obliterated in many areas and, presently, his spiritual existence is in extreme jeopardy. The many and varied attempts that have been made to 'help' him, and particularly 'educate' him, have been largely unsuccessful.

Perhaps in part because it was assumed that the sooner the Indian was forced to abandon his ways and join the melting pot of America, the better off he would be. But he has displayed unique resistance to that idea, possibly because

his psychological relationship to the land was different from that of the immigrant groups who eventually surrounded him. Failure on the part of those who have dealt with the Indian to understand the basis of his tenacious observance of his own cultural mores has resulted in the abortion of almost every attempt to assist him. Even now, various kinds of human salvage operations, such as urban relocation, employment assistance, on-the-job training, and other rehabilitation efforts are, at best, only stopgap efforts to meet his worldly needs, while failing miserably to provide the cultural and emotional substance required to put his life in balance (Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969, p. 139).

Unfortunately for the students at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, NCLB must also be added to the list and stamped as ‘failure,’ if indeed it was another attempt to educate American Indian students. First of all, given the consequences to be undertaken during the restructuring phase, it is likely that the BIE schools were not even considered when the NCLB legislation was written. This comes as no surprise. Just recently Congresswoman Betty McCollum from Minnesota introduced legislation that would address BIE school exclusion from NCLB’s “Race to the Top” funds that would provide them access to increased educational funding. Congresswoman McCollum stated:

I introduced this bill to address the extreme lack of funding that perpetuates adverse conditions and unmet basic needs in Indian country. Not including BIE schools was an oversight and we’re trying to fix it. We must prevent the first Americans from becoming an invisible people in the eyes of the federal government (NIEA, 2010, p. 1).

Second, even if BIE schools were considered in the writing of the NCLB legislation, the narrow focus and unrealistic insistence on students passing a statewide test as the single determinant of a school’s success or failure, appears vacuous. There is an obvious disconnect between the daily lives of many of the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig students and the statewide tests. The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School staff understand this

and work hard every day to assist the students at the school ‘to put their lives back in balance.’

The federal government fails to recognize that in their attempts to deal with the ‘Indian problem’ of the past, they have created the ‘Indian problem’ of today. Poverty, high rates of alcoholism, depression, suicide, and gang activities – these are the problems that face too many American Indians today. NCLB’s issuing of negative citations and publicly labeling of others as “failing,” when they are working diligently to improve the lives of American Indian students, is a highly damaging insult. It does nothing to ease the difficult life conditions that many students face, nor does it ease the difficult job of the dedicated teachers who are trying to counter those life conditions.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this study is the challenge presented to the Leech Lake people, including the Tribal Council, to conduct their own internal self-examination as a means of creating change. Kaupapa Maori theory provides insight towards obtaining the lasting transformation that indigenous people seek. A willingness to look internally, as well as outwardly, requires risk, but this should not be an insurmountable task. American Indian people have a history of facing difficult tasks and situations with bravery and courage. In fact, the values of importance laid out in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School’s strategic framework include: “love, respect, wisdom, humility, bravery, honesty, [and] truth” (Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, 2008, p. 1-2). These Ojibwe values would suggest a willingness to undergo a thorough internal self-examination that could result in real benefits to both the school and the broader community.

Based on the current study, the internal issues that need examining among the Leech Lake people include the constant political hiring and firing of superintendents at the school, a more clearly defined vision and strategic framework to guide the school, and the need for a more deliberate focus on language revitalization, both in the community and statewide. Taking a broader and more holistic view, there is a need for the American Indian political bodies in the state to spearhead a comprehensive statewide plan that would address American Indian educational issues in a unified, efficient, and culturally sensitive manner. Every federal, state, county and tribal agency should be invited to participate in the development of such a plan with the expectation that they would have an on-going role in the execution of it as well. American Indians in the state of Minnesota have a history of charting new ground in ways that have improved the lives of American Indians nation-wide. Opportunities to chart new ground still abound.

A final aspect of importance to the current study is its capacity to spark “learningful conversations” (Senge, 1994) between and among all of the agency and organization members referred to above. Vogt, Brown, & Isaacs’ (2003) *Catalyzing Insight, Innovation and Action* provides stimulating fodder around the topic of alternative thinking which would be useful within such “learningful conversations.” They suggest the use of powerful questions as a means to stimulate new and deep thinking. They state, “A powerful question ... has the capacity to ‘travel well’ – to spread beyond the place where it began into larger networks of conversation throughout an organization or a community. Questions that travel well are often the key[s] to large scale change (p. 4).” Likewise, Marilee Goldberg in *The Art of the Question*, states “A

paradigm shift occurs when a question is asked inside the current paradigm that can only be answered from outside it” (cited in Vogt, Brown, & Isaacs, 2003, p. 3).

Subsequently, to encourage ‘learningful conversations’ to occur, a list of questions is offered (Appendix G). If one or two of the questions travel well beyond the pages of the current study, perhaps some new and other thinking will generate proactive measures of the sort that will truly benefit American Indians of the Ojibwe nation in Minnesota. Gregory Cahete (1994) asserts,

Indian people must open avenues of communication and establish a reflective dialogue toward evolving a contemporary theory for Indian education that originates from them and their collective experience. It is time for Indian people to define Indian education in their own voices and in their own terms. It is time for Indian people to enable themselves to explore and express the richness of their collective history in education. Education for Indian people has been, and continues to be, a grand story, a search for meaning, an essential food for the soul (pp. 27-28).

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Appendix A

BUG-O-NAY-GE-SHIG SCHOOL

15353 SILVER EAGLE DR. NW

BENA, MINNESOTA 56626

(218) 665-3000

FAX (218) 665-3024

1-800-265-5576

November 5, 2007

To Whom It May Concern,

Patricia L. Broker, a graduate student at the University of Minnesota, has been in contact with the school administration at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School regarding her proposed research study. The school has agreed to participate in this project. We require a background check of people involved with the school and Patricia has begun this process. If further information is required do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Jeff Lindstrom
Superintendent

P. Broker
Grade 2 Teacher
Shanghai American School

Appendix B

CONSENT FORM

A Case Study of the No Child Left Behind Act's Influence on the Culturally Based Education in a Bureau of Indian Education School Serving Ojibwe Students in Minnesota

You are invited to be in a research study of how the No Child Left Behind Act has influenced the culturally based education in your school. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a key stakeholder who understands the No Child Left Behind Act and culturally based education in your school. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Patricia Broker, graduate student in the Department of Educational Policy and Administration at the University of Minnesota.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to find out how the No Child Left Behind Act has influenced how the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School implements its culturally based education.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

1. Participate in a focus group discussion or an interview for about one hour
2. Have your responses recorded on tape for future reference and clarity
3. Respond to additional questions later to help clarify information given in the focus group

The questions I will ask you are designed to answer the following research questions:

5. In what ways is culturally based education being implemented in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?
6. In what ways is NCLB being implemented in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?
7. In the views of key stakeholders what has been the effect of No Child Left Behind since implementation on the culturally based education in the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?
8. What are the trends in student achievement since implementation of NCLB at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?

CONSENT FORM (Continued)

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

The anticipated risk in this study is that of identification. I will make every possible effort to protect your identity. Only I will have access to your name, which I will keep confidential. No names will be used in any report of this study. I will keep the tape recordings locked and no one will have access to them other than me. Your participation is strictly voluntary and your time and thoughtfulness is appreciated. I hope this study will further our understanding of how to make the best schools possible for American Indian children.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be stored securely and only I will have access to the records. All tape recordings will be erased when my research is finished.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota or the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time with out affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is: Patricia Broker. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at 763-742-7141 or Pat.Broker@saschina.org or contact her advisor, Dr. Gerald Fry, at 612-624-0294 or gwf@umn.edu .

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Appendix C

Interview Guide for Superintendent and Principals

Personal Questions:

1. How long have you served as an administrator at Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?
2. Have you served in any other capacity within the school previous to your current position? If so, in what capacity? For what period of time?
3. How did you learn about and decide on this particular school to work?

Culturally-Based Education Questions:

For my research project, it is important that I understand clearly what it is about Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School that makes it a unique cultural educational experience for your students and staff. I would like to obtain a list of the ways your school provides culturally based educational experiences for your students. What are the unique cultural aspects of your school?

4. Can you begin to describe for me what it is that makes the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School different from a traditional public school?
5. Follow-up questions based on responses.
6. How important do you think culturally based education is to the academic success of your students (perhaps at the end of the interview)? Are there benefits beyond the academic realm for your students? Please explain.

NCLB Related Questions:

Again, for purposes of this research project, I need to understand clearly how NCLB has affected any of the culturally based education within your school? I would like to know if there are cultural aspects within your school that have been strengthened as a result of NCLB. I would also like to know if there are cultural aspects that have been diminished within your school as a result of NCLB.

7. Could you comment on this please?
8. Would you say that NCLB has had a more positive or negative effect overall on the CBE within your school?
9. At what point beyond passage of NCLB in 2002 did your school feel any impact of the legislation?
10. In what ways did your school feel the impact of the legislation?
11. In your opinion, has NCLB affected the school's ability to carry out the unique cultural aspects of your school either positively or negatively?
12. Have you been able to maintain all of the unique cultural aspects of your school since implementation of NCLB?
13. Have you been able to add any new unique cultural aspects to your school as a direct result of NCLB?

Appendix D

Interview Guide for Teachers' Focus Group

Opening:

1. Please state your name and how long you have been working at the school?

Introductory Transition:

2. How did you learn about NCLB and its requirements for your school once the legislation passed?

Transition:

3. Think back to when you first became aware of NCLB. What were your first impressions of its intent?
4. What were your impressions of the practicality of implementation?
5. How did your view change, if at all, as you became more familiar with the law and its requirements?

Key Questions:

6. How has NCLB changed your teaching if at all?
7. What changes have occurred in your classrooms, either directly or indirectly, as a result of NCLB?
8. How has the highly qualified teacher requirement within NCLB influenced your school?
9. How would each of you describe the culturally-based education of Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School?
10. What influence has NCLB had on the culturally-based education in your school?
11. Some of you have mentioned ways that NCLB has (strengthened/diminished) the culturally-based education in your school. Could you address the ways in which NCLB has (strengthened/diminished) the culturally-based education in your school if any?
12. Are there changes that you see taking place in terms of student achievement?
13. What do you see happening with the disposition and attitudes of your students?
14. How would each of you describe the overall influence NCLB has had on your school?

Ending:

15. If you could provide direct feedback to policymakers about the law what would you like to tell them?
16. Is there anything that we missed?
17. Is there anything else you would like to share that you did not get a chance to share regarding NCLB and its effect on your school and students?

Appendix E

Demmert and Towner's Six Components of Culturally Based Education

1. Recognition and use of Native American (American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian) languages.
2. Pedagogy that stresses traditional cultural characteristics and adult-child interactions.
3. Pedagogy in which teaching strategies are congruent with the traditional culture and ways of knowing and learning.
4. Curriculum that is based on traditional culture and that recognizes the importance of Native spirituality.
5. Strong Native community participation (including parents, elders, other community resources) in educating children and in the planning and operation of school activities.
6. Knowledge and use of the social and political mores of the community.

(Demmert & Towner, 2003, pp. 34-35).

Appendix F



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Margaret Spellings
 Secretary of Education
 U.S. Department of Education
 400 Maryland Avenue, SW
 Washington, DC 20202-0001

April 21, 2006

Dear Secretary Spellings:

It has come to our attention that the U.S. Department of Education and the Office of Indian Education have been advocating for a "gradual shift of focus from history and culture to reading and math"¹ in the utilization of formula grants under Title VII of the No Child Left Behind law. We are concerned that this guidance contravenes the self-determination clause found in the law and reaffirmed by the President's 2004 Executive Order regarding Native education.

Therefore, we write to request written clarification on the Department of Education's policy regarding the use of Title VII funds to support Title I activities, the percentage of Title VII grants that include culture and Native language in their activities and programming, and the Department's efforts to consult with the National Advisory Council on Indian Education regarding the implementation of the President's Executive Order.

As outlined in law, Title VII should be used to expressly meet the "unique education and culturally related academic needs" of Indian children. It is our expectation that this confusion be resolved before the Fiscal Year 2007 grant cycle so that schools can focus the appropriate resources provided by Title VII in serving the needs of Native students guaranteed to them by the law. As the law dictates, Title VII funding should be allocated for that purpose and should not be siphoned off to support the goals of other titles of the NCLB law, at the expense of Native culture and the children set to inherit it.

We share in many of the concerns recently expressed by leaders in the Native American community regarding Title VII. The elimination of parental involvement and student incentives in Title VII has weakened the abilities of educators to engage students and their families in critical aspects of the student's education. Native education leaders have also expressed concern that Title VII grants are being advised to not include culture in the activities of the grant. Furthermore, there is a great concern that the combining of the grant process for Titles I and VII has eroded the critical role Title VII plays in the education of Native American children. This "efficiency" has resulted in the administration of Title VII grants to more often fall within the purview of a Title I program administrator, rather than a Title VII administrator who often has strong ties to the Native American community. All of these factors have led to the gradual weakening of the intention of Title VII.

By law, Native children are required to have access to culturally relevant and appropriate curriculum that support their academic achievement so that they may meet the standards that all children are to meet. In fact, Title VII states:

¹ Correspondence from Bernard Garcia, Group Leader, Office of Indian Education, US Department of Education to Patricia Harvey, Superintendent, St. Paul Public Schools, received November 4, 2005.

It is the policy of the United States to fulfill the Federal Government's unique and continuing trust relationship with and responsibility to the Indian people for the education of Indian children. The Federal Government will continue to work with local educational agencies, Indian tribes and organizations, postsecondary institutions, and other entities toward the goal of ensuring that programs that serve Indian children are of the highest quality and provide for not only the basic elementary and secondary educational needs, but also the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of these children. (emphasis added)

Also, as you know, President Bush's Executive Order is clear in its desire to protect Native Language and culture in the education of Native children. The Executive Order states:

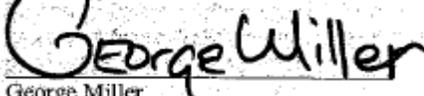
This Administration is committed to continuing to work with these Federally recognized tribal governments on a government-to-government basis, and supports tribal sovereignty and self-determination. It is the purpose of this order to assist American Indian and Alaska Native students in meeting the challenging student academic standards of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110) in a manner that is consistent with tribal traditions, languages, and cultures.

This Executive Order is very clear in the Administration's intention to follow the law and support Native children in meeting the academic standards of No Child Left Behind in a way that is consistent with Native cultures, and tribal traditions and language.

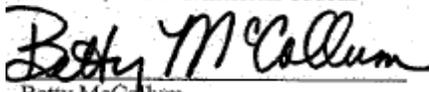
Enclosed are copies of resolutions that originated in the State of Minnesota as a result of hearings conducted across Indian country regarding Title VII. These resolutions are in support of Tribal sovereignty and self-determination in the education of Native children and support the law that allows local education agencies to meet the culturally-relevant academic needs of Native Indian children with Title VII resources. In addition, these documents clearly articulate the need for the Department of Education to address the disparity between what is law and what is practiced in regards to Tribal language and culture in the education of Native children. Research has shown that Native children perform better academically when learning includes references to language and culture. We must confirm and strengthen our commitment to Native children so that they too can succeed academically, while preserving their historic cultures and traditions.

We look forward to hearing from you on this important matter and we hope you will work with us to ensure the Department of Education abides by the law governing the role of local educational agencies in meeting the culturally relevant needs of American Indian children. Thank you for your time and consideration.

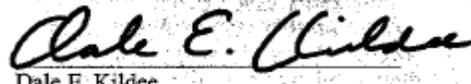
Sincerely,



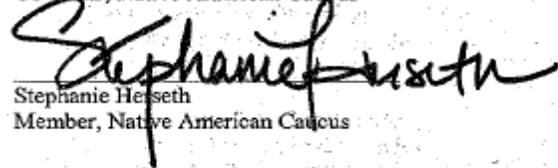
George Miller
Senior Democrat
Committee on Education and the Workforce
Member, Native American Caucus



Betty McCallum
Committee on Education and the Workforce
Member, Native American Caucus



Dale E. Kildee
Senior Democrat
Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness
Co-Chair, Native American Caucus



Stephanie Helseth
Member, Native American Caucus

Appendix G

Internal Examination Questions

1. What is the level of awareness among the Ojibwe people in Minnesota regarding the rate of language loss that is occurring? Can more be done to prevent it? Is this even the direction they want to move in?
2. If the awareness of American Indian people is low regarding the current rate of language shift taking place (Cantoni, 1996), how can it be increased? How can they know what they don't know?
3. What new partnerships could be formed to increase language revitalization efforts?
4. What is required for the many smaller piecemeal efforts that are currently ongoing to become a part of a more comprehensive plan to address issues of importance to American Indian people? Can this occur in a culture of cooperation and mutual benefit amongst responsible parties without blame (federal government, Bureau of Indian Education, Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Leech Lake Reservation, other reservations in the state)?
5. Is the priority of the Minnesota Department of Indian Education to represent the state of Minnesota or Indian people in the state?
6. If the current approach to American Indian issues is piecemeal, whose responsibility is to spearhead a comprehensive, proactive approach?
7. Does the current culture of tribal politics on the Leech Lake Reservation need to change or is it the best it can be?
8. What is required for a change in tribal politics on the Leech Lake Reservation to occur if it is determined that it should be changed?
9. What is required for American Indian people to change the culture of 'Right or wrong, that's tribal politics?' What assumptions lie behind the statement 'Right or wrong, that's tribal politics?'
10. To what degree can traditional teaching and knowledge be merged with contemporary society?
11. Is the trust status relationship between American Indian tribes and the federal government more harmful or helpful?
12. What happens when values we espouse conflict with our behavior?
13. How can the culturally based education within the BIE schools become more fluid and less 'packaged?' Whose responsibility is it to create conditions for this to occur?
14. To what degree are equal opportunities granted? To what degree are equal opportunities taken?
15. What is required for a highly regulated organization to break patterns of being reactive to external influences to create space for a more proactive stance?

16. Is it possible for a highly regulated organization to achieve true self-determination?
17. To what degree are American Indian people willing to compromise the goals of true self-determination in order to maintain the trust status relationship?
18. What would an efficacious relationship between the federal and tribal governments look like? Between the state and tribal governments?
19. What are the broad purposes of education? Who gets to determine education purposes? Educators? Economists? Politicians?
20. Under what conditions in the land of opportunity can opportunity become diminished?
21. How much money and power is too much?
22. Are we a true democracy if cultural democracy is not realized?
23. To what degree does the lack of resources at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School contribute to the achievement gap among its students? Do these students have equal access and opportunity?
24. What is required for American Indian people to achieve a state of balance and harmony in their lives? How might American Indian people throughout the country assist each other to develop conditions for such a state to occur?