SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS AND AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS

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Dedication

This project is in dedication to my ancestors and to those relatives who are yet to come.

In memory of both my parents, I am grateful to my late father who was always encouraging and believed in a good education. He instilled in his children the pride of being Ojibwe. And to my late mother whose love held our family together and nourished our pride for our culture.

Unbeknownst to my son, Masen, it was for him that I made the effort to complete this doctorate program. When days got long and I struggled with finishing this project, I would think of him. I wanted him to know that his mother could do it! As well as the importance of getting an education.

This project is also dedicated to the little 10-year-old girl who sat on her school bus and was teased on her daily ride to school. She promised herself that when she grew up she would help those that could not speak up for themselves. This journey has come full circle and that little girl has been able to keep her promise.

Abstract

This is a descriptive case study design that will describe the professional practices of school social workers in a public school setting on an Indian reservation with a predominate American Indian population (about 90%) in order to understand what school social workers do to meet the needs of American Indians students. The case study design was used to better understand the role of three school social workers when working with American Indian students to include a detailed description of their daily tasks and activities. This study addresses a gap in the literature on how school social workers can provide services to American Indian students that are consistent with accepted professional principles and standards.

The foundation question of this study is as follows: What are the professional practices of school social workers with American Indian students in a public school setting on an Indian reservation. The sub questions that will guide this study are:

1. What are social school workers doing to help American Indian students?
2. Are the experiences of school social workers consistent with accepted professional principles and standards?

The findings from this study yield important information on how these three school social workers approached their professional work with American Indians. They adhered to some of the professional principles and standards outline by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), however, it is not evident if or how they practiced all of them.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The wellbeing of American Indian children and their families have been impacted by a number of persistent social, economic and related issues connected to historic "coercive assimilation" policies of the federal government, such as the removal of Indian children and youth from their families and communities to be educated in boarding schools or into adoptive and out-of-home placement with non-Indian families, the allotment of Indian reservations and the destruction of the Indian land base and economic potential of Indian communities, and the relocation of Indians to urban areas and other enduring policies tied to the federal government's desire to acquire and exploit Indian lands and resources (Indian Education: A National Tragedy, A National Challenge, 1969, p. 21). These historic events resulted in the devastation of American Indians and their communities, a national attitude of racial discrimination and intolerance, and a failure of public schools to educate many American Indian children (Indian Education: A National Tragedy, A National Challenge, 1969). Persistent poverty, social and health problems, discrimination, violence, alcohol and substance abuse and out-of-home placement impact the wellbeing of American Indian children in higher percentages than the general population and in ways that impact their ability to meet educational goals. The Annie E. Casey Foundation (n.d.) concludes that the wellbeing of children is essential for them to achieve their full potential.

National Indian organizations have developed a collaborative focus on improving the wellbeing of American Indian youth, recognizing its associated importance to

improving Indian children's health and educational outcomes. The goal of this collaborative effort was to identify specific recommendations for tribal governments and other stakeholders to improve the social, emotional, mental, physical, and economic wellbeing of children and youth (National Indian Child Welfare Association, 2015). Tribal governments are dependent on future youth leadership that will sustain and grow their communities, so improving the lives of American Indian youth is essential. Improving the wellbeing of Indian children and youth will positively impact educational outcomes.

School social workers rely on collaborations with outside agencies to improve American Indian students' lives. Professional practice for school social workers includes a collaborative focus on students and their families within a school and community setting. Other professional associations also direct and guide social work practice. The Minnesota School Social Work Association (MSSWA) created a manual explaining school social workers play a key role in the social and emotional development of students by attending to their basic needs, developing social skills and fostering a caring and nurturing environment. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) directs social workers to advocate on behalf of vulnerable and marginalized groups and ensure that they receive services that are culturally responsive. Ambrosino, Ambrosino, Heffernan, & Shuttlesworth (2016) define an advocate as a "social worker who fights for the rights and dignity of people in need of help" (p. 33). A school social worker focuses on the social and environmental contexts of student life and experiences to positively impact the wellbeing of students and improve education outcomes. However, aspects of the actual role and experiences of public school social workers may or may not align with

American Indian students' needs and/or may be impacted by factors that mitigate their ability to be effective with them. School social workers may not have the specific skills or knowledge to work with culturally unique students, families and communities. This study focused on what school social workers are doing in the school to help American Indian students.

Background and Significance of the Study

American Indian students' education is in crisis and there is an urgent need to provide services, which has major implications for school social worker professionals. Nationwide, the achievement gap remains high resulting in a lost generation of youth who are ill-prepared to attend college and unable to contribute to their own tribal communities. During 2010-11, in nine states with high American Indian populations the graduations rates were less than 60% (Shotten, 2014). In Minnesota, the graduation rate is particularly devastating at 53% for American Indian students compared to the general student population at 82% (Minnesota Department of Education, n.d.). The status dropout rate measures the percentage of 16- to 24-year-old young adults in the United States who are not enrolled in school and have not earned a high school credential (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017, p. 78). For Minnesota American Indian students, the status dropout rate was 20% and 6% for the general student population for this same period (Minnesota Department of Education, n.d.).

Helping American Indian students can be especially challenging for school social workers because most are vulnerable and at-risk for experiencing higher dropout rates, more behavior problems (e.g. high absenteeism), and are amongst the students with the lowest grades (Torres, 2017). American Indian students in Minnesota experience more

disciplinary actions, such as school suspensions or expulsions (Minnesota Department Education, n.d.) and more bullying than amongst other students in general (Campbell & Smalling, 2013). Not only do they encounter barriers in school, but they also face challenges outside of school. American Indians endure childhood trauma (Forester, Gower, Borowsky & McMorris, 2017), suffer disproportionately from physical and mental health concerns (Stumblingbear-Riddle & Romans, 2012), are overrepresented in the child welfare system, and are among the poorest people in the United States (Weaver, 1999). Schools are limited in their capacity to provide a wide range of services for American Indian students that support student learning, however, school social workers have the skills and knowledge to mitigate the social, economic and health related issues that negatively impact their learning. American Indian students and families need allies in the schools to overcome these barriers.

The role of the school social worker is defined by several organizations. The National Association of School Social Workers (NASW) sets principles and standards for school social worker services, which includes knowledge and understanding of the education system. The School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) (n.d.) define school social workers as: "Trained mental health professionals with a degree in social work who provide services related to a person's social, emotional and life adjustment to school and/or society" (p. 1). In Minnesota, to practice being a school social worker a person must have a degree in social work from an accredited program, dual licensure by the Board of Social Work and the Minnesota Department of Education and pass a national examination provided by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) (Minnesota School Social Workers Association, n.d.). There requirements

ensure school social workers meet professional standards and conduct. According to the MSSWA manual, it outlined the role of school social workers, licensing requirements, professional development, legal mandates, student evaluation and assessment procedures, school services, special education policies and procedures, children's mental health and professional resources provided by experts in the field. This manual lacks specific information on how to work with American Indian students. However, it does refer to the NASW Code of Ethics (n.d.) on cultural competency which emphasizes that school social workers develop specialized knowledge about the population of students they are serving and understand the role of culture in the helping process.

School social workers are uniquely situated given their responsibility to provide services to American Indian students. Their working relationship with students and their families plays a pivotal role in improving American Indian students' social, emotional, mental and physical wellbeing so that students are better prepared to learn. In Minnesota, the Indian Social Work Aide (ISWA) program was developed by American Indian educators and parents when they recognized the need to have trained professionals working with American Indian students with special needs. One of the job responsibilities of the Indian Social Work Aides was to "form a bridge between the non-Indian school and the Indian home and to communicate cultural and institutional concerns between them" (Stuecher, Grossman, Hakala, & Kozlowski, 1985, p. 11). This program emphasized the need to have advocates that understood American Indian students' unique cultural and educational needs.

School social workers are distinguished from other professions in their emphasis on serving marginalized and oppressed populations utilizing an ecological systems

perspective (Richard & Villarreal Sosa, 2014). The ecological framework is the "influence of external environment on the functioning and progressive adaptation of individuals" (Powers, 2010, p.446). This allows school social workers to look at the relationship between all three systems (e.g. school, home and community) when providing services to a student (Powers, 2010).

School social workers have multiple tasks that include these three levels of practice:

1. Micro practice - individual, group and family counseling;
2. Mezzo practice - conducting social development studies, promoting children's social competence, developing peer-based conflict resolution strategies, reducing social conflict in high school, helping develop individual family service plans and integrating disabled children in the school, in-service training of teachers and consultation, and administrator and teacher consultation and;
3. Macro practice - developing home-school partnerships, advocacy, consultation, community partnership, interdisciplinary team collaboration, needs assessment, and program and policy development working on behalf of child protection (Masset, Kelly & Constable, 2016; Agresta, 2004; Allen-Meares, 2004).

School social workers must be able to relate to every aspect of a student's life and work one-on-one with children, families and teachers as well as with school programs and policies. School social workers shall recognize barriers to academic progress relating to cultural issues within the school for American Indian students and use culturally

appropriate services. Given the social issues that impact American Indian students' wellbeing and its relationship to poor education performance and education outcomes, there is a large unmet need for school social workers and the application of a wide range of their professional practices. As documented in the literature review there is also a great need for social workers to develop specialized knowledge and understanding of American Indian culture to effectively serve them.

Are school social workers prepared to work in culturally diverse public school systems? There has been increased attention on the need for culturally sensitive support and interventions because they have been effective strategies for improving student achievement when working with culturally diverse children and families (Caple, Salcido, & di Cecco, 1995; Weaver, 1999; Crosby, 2015). Teasley & Miller (2011) suggest more qualitative studies to explore school social workers' perceived efficacy at forming relations with children of color to better understand the relationship building process in the reduction of negative behaviors in school. In an earlier study, Teasley (2005) suggested school social workers must also inform teachers of differences in cultural values and promote diversity. The NASW (n.d.) has standards for culturally competent practice that mandate social workers be aware of potential differences in values, customs and beliefs. Specific to American Indians, social workers must be informed of the history and culture of the families and tribal communities with which they work. They must obtain professional development and training in these areas to provide more effective and efficient services to American Indian students.

School social workers focus on the sociocultural, physical and mental health needs and environmental contexts of a student's life and experiences in order to

positively impact their wellbeing and improve educational outcomes. Despite concerns about improving American Indian students' academic performance outlined in the literature review, their educational outcomes continue to lag behind other non-Indian students.

There is a lack of research describing the ways in which the school social worker relates to and engages with American Indian students. School social workers are equipped to understand and assess the educational, social, emotional and behavioral functioning of individual students within the context of multiple environments. However, American Indian youth are still at higher risks of low academic performance because of both the school environment and personal factors. The school social worker could be an intervening influence but, must recognize the linguistic and sociocultural uniqueness of American Indian students. This preliminary study contributed to the literature related to American Indian youth and school social work and may inform the need for professional development and training.

Context

This study took place at School District A located on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation. School District A has a large majority of American Indian students, schools with large American Indian populations are disproportionately affected by violence and substance abuse, which negatively impact student readiness and their ability to learn (Beaulieu, 2000). In 2017, there were 228 high school students enrolled in School District A: American Indians 90% (205); White 7% (15); Hispanic/Latino 1% (3) and Two or More Races 2% (5) (Minnesota Department of Education, n.d.). Of all the students, 26.3% receive special education services; 76.8% receive free/reduced lunch and

2.6% are homeless (Minnesota Department of Education, n.d.). The school is located in Cass County. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2017), the unemployment rate for Cass County is at 6.7% and the percentage of families living below the poverty level in Cass County is at 12.9%. It is not unusual to see higher percentages of unemployment and families living below the poverty level on or near Indian reservations, which places them more at risk to poor health and low educational attainment.

Purpose of the Study and Research Question

The purpose of this study was to describe the professional practices of school social workers in a public school setting on an Indian reservation with a predominate American Indian population (about 90%) in order to understand what school social workers do to meet the needs of American Indians students. This study addresses a gap in the literature on how school social workers can provide services to American Indian students that are consistent with accepted professional principles and standards. American Indian students are considered at-risk students because they struggle with poverty, health problems, discrimination, violence as well as out-of-home placement. These factors make it difficult for students to learn resulting in poor academic performance. School social workers are equipped to understand and assess on multi-levels students' educational, social, emotional and behavioral functioning but may not recognize American Indian students' linguistic, cultural and social heritage. Some of the services school social workers engage in are counseling, advocacy, interdisciplinary team collaboration, community partnerships, and program and policy development. Oftentimes, the school social worker's role is not understood or valued (Garrett, 2006) and may be confused with other professionals in school. School social workers are

frequently unsure of their role in schools due to a lack of a uniform definition of their job at the local, state and national level which leaves them vulnerable (Richard & Villarreal Sosa, 2014; Garrett, 2006). In addition, we cannot assume that services being provided by school social workers are in fact, sufficient or culturally appropriate. Lewis & Keung Ho (1975) argue that social workers have not effectively served American Indians because they lack an understanding of American Indian culture, carry stereotypical images and biases about American Indians, and use inappropriate methods and techniques. They suggested social workers must show respect for the cultural background of American Indian clients and recognized the importance of including extended family in interventions (Lewis & Keung Ho, 1975). These barriers may impact their effectiveness when working with American Indian students. How do school social workers provide services to American Indian students when their role is not well defined or culturally appropriate? This study describes what school social workers are doing in the school to better understand how they attempt to meet the needs of America Indian students. This study identifies standard social work practices that are implemented in a culturally appropriate manner.

Research Questions

The foundation question of this study is as follows: What are the professional practices of school social workers with American Indian students in a public school setting on an Indian reservation. The sub questions that will guide this study are:

4. What are social school workers doing to help American Indian students?
5. Are the experiences of school social workers consistent with accepted professional principles and standards?

Role of Researcher

I will begin this section of the narrative in the first person. I am a member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, an elder for my tribal community and a former student with preconceived notions about public schools which brings a potential bias to this study and thus is a limitation. However, I bring to this study the cultural understanding of the students, their families and the tribal community which can also be considered a strength for this research project.

I began my elementary education at the local public school on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation where I am an enrolled member. I experienced racism from my peers and feelings that my teachers did not care for me. I was called derogatory names on my school bus. I read a story in my 3rd grade textbook about Indians scalping the whites. In the textbook, there was an Indian man wearing a headdress on a horse holding a tomahawk over the heads of frightened white people. I felt comfortable telling my parents about these school experiences. Fortunately, upon seeing the book, my father tore out the pages and wrote a lengthy letter to the teacher. I didn't read the letter, but imagined he wrote about how the textbook had false and harmful information. I gave the textbook and letter to my teacher the next day and do not recall seeing that book again. One of my sisters wanted to be in advanced math placement, because some of her friends were in that class. Her teacher asked her, "Are you sure you belong here?" The problems I saw or experienced made me realize how important a study would be focused on school social workers, since they can be allies for students and their families.

During the 9th grade, I decided to leave my local high school because of the hostile school climate and attended St. John's Preparatory High School (St. John's) in

Collegeville, Minnesota. I enjoyed my educational experience at St. John's because I felt the students and teachers cared for me. The school created a supportive and welcoming environment by giving me a scholarship, recruiting other American Indian students, providing a school counselor who held support group meetings for American Indian students, and arranging a host family for me that I keep in touch with today. Following graduation from St. John's, I continued my education at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. Today, I am on the faculty for the Department of Social Work at Bemidji State University, preparing social worker students to work cross-culturally, particularly with American Indian families. During my work experience as a trained social worker employed by the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe as the Coordinator for the Tribal Employment Program; I gained first-hand knowledge of tribal communities in Northern Minnesota and understood the economic challenges that young families faced when trying to get out of poverty, as well as the challenges to providing culturally appropriate services which makes this study significant to me.

I see some of my own negative experiences in elementary school being recreated in my son's classrooms. In kindergarten, my son was told that Indians were bad by another student. In the first grade, he was given a coloring book that depicted the "first" Thanksgiving that had images of a stereotypical Indian and a white pilgrim. I met with his teachers and the principal about how harmful it was to give him that coloring book. The principal agreed and said it was "antiquated," but they took no ownership of the incident. In his 3rd grade class, there was a poster on the teacher's wall listing the "10 Indian Commandments." I mailed a packet of information on the seven Anishinaabe teachings to his teacher, letting him know that the "10 Indian Commandants" was

culturally inappropriate and that he might want this information when working with future American Indian students. As a mother, I felt that my comments were ignored and that there was no reconciliation for what was happening to my son. I imagine other American Indian parents face similar challenges but are unable to advocate for their children, which is why this study is so important to me.

As an American Indian mother, trained educator and social worker, I view the role that my father and I played to be like that of a social worker. My father advocated for my academic success and educated teachers on American Indian culture, as I did for my son. The future of American Indian children and youth depend on the advocacy of school personnel so that students can reach their full potential. The standards for professional practice for school social workers focus on improving the wellbeing of students and on the social and environmental contexts of student issues that impact their wellbeing. School social workers are equipped to understand and assess the educational, social, emotional and behavioral functioning of individual students within the context of multiple environments. School social workers can be advocates as well as assist other school personnel and professionals within the school and in the community to successfully assist and meet the needs of American Indian students. This study is important because it describes what school social workers do in school settings when working with American Indian students to inform school social work practice and may support the need for professional development and training.

Assumptions

1. There is the assumption that American Indian students have needs that are unmet in the current public school system.

2. There is the assumption that school social workers have particular knowledge and skills that could be beneficial to American Indian students.
3. There is the assumption that culturally based preventions and interventions are both effective and desirable.

Limitations of the Study

This preliminary study describes what school social workers are doing to help American Indian students and understanding the limitations and possibilities of social work practice in any particular setting is important. One limitation to this study is that it cannot be generalized to other public school settings serving American Indian students. According to Creswell & Miller (2000), the small number of school social workers in this study is not representative of the larger population, therefore the study is not generalizable. Also, this study is unable to draw a conclusion to the extent, appropriateness or efficacy of school social work practice among American Indian students. Another limitation is it cannot determine whether school social worker practice mitigates the barriers of at-risk students or makes a difference on academic progress and performance of American Indian students. Finally, because of privacy and confidential concerns observations from school social workers having counseling sessions with students or general student interactions were not included. These restrictions were included in the Institutional Review Board application. The implications for further well-designed studies is necessary to address these limitations.

Summary

American Indian students face many barriers in and outside of school that affect how well they perform in school. Students need allies in school who can advocate for

them while keeping them connected and school social workers can do just that. This study was important to me because it describes school social work practices with American Indian students who faced similar challenges to mine. This study acquired new knowledge and expanded on the existing literature on school social work professional practice among American Indian students in order to gain a better understanding of school social work practice which may support the need for professional development and training. The findings may also be transferable to other school settings with large American Indian populations.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The literature review has five sections: 1) Definition of wellbeing; 2) Challenges to the wellbeing of American Indian children including information on historic content, boarding schools, out-of-home placement, poverty and health concerns that are disproportionately represented in the American Indian population; 3) Experiences American Indian students encounter that serve as a barrier to positive educational outcomes; 4) The current status of American Indian education nationally, in the state of Minnesota and School District A on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation; and 5) The professional role of school social workers and its relevance to enhancing the wellbeing of American Indian students.

Definition of Child Wellbeing

Child wellbeing is essential for healthy growth and development; however, American Indian children continue to face more challenges then non-Indian children. There are many indicators of wellbeing in the literature from multiple disciplines. The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) (2015) suggests it is necessary to understand wellbeing within the context and worldview of American Indians which includes historic events of tremendous loss of land, culture, language, traditions, and spirituality that have impacted and continue to impact American Indian children and families. Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment (2005) developed a conceptual model on wellbeing, based on Hawaiian worldview, which include five domains: social and cultural, material and economic, physical, emotional, and cognitive. The Annie E. Casey Foundation also identified five domains as indicators of a child's wellbeing:

education and skill attainment, behavior, positive relationships, emotional, and physical health (Ripper & Ortiz, 2012). There are many indicators of wellbeing and one that is often used in research is identifying milestones for children to reach that predict their success in school, which include strong attendance and being proficient readers by age 8 (Ripper & Ortiz, 2012). However, many American Indian children are unable to reach these milestones due to the challenges they face in their own lives, which impacts their ability to learn and succeed in school.

Challenges to the Wellbeing of American Indian Children

Historic Context

To understand the context of child wellbeing of American Indian children one must understand the lingering effects of historic federal Indian policies and practices on American Indian communities, families and their children. American Indians have a troubling history of persistent and oppressive policies aimed at forced assimilation of tribal members, created to defy tribal sovereignty and erode their sense of identity as tribal members by taking away their culture, values, beliefs and way of life. Prior to European contact, traditional child rearing practices and beliefs allowed for a natural system of child protection, whereby relatives or community members watched over the children and educated them in the skills they needed to develop (Hand, 2006). Children were "perceived as gifts from the Creator" and the protection of children was the responsibility of the entire tribal community (Cross, 1986, p. 285). However, starting in the 1860s, the federal government and private agencies established boarding schools that took American Indian children away from their families and communities and placed them in institutions with harsh conditions (Warren, 2014). During the 1960s and 1970s,

the child welfare system continued the trend of child removal from their homes and communities. At the same time, The Child Welfare League of American sponsored the Indian Adoption Project, placing hundreds of American Indian children out west into non-Indian homes on the east coast (Lucero & Bussey, 2014).

American Indian communities suffered from relentless political oppression, which continued with relocation and termination policies during the 1950s and 1960s creating economic instability for tribal communities. During the relocation area, families who relocated to urban areas no longer were eligible for federal services and most lacked the education and skills to do anything but menial low-paying jobs (Wilkensin, 2005). Termination acts were passed to "reduce tribes' dependency on the federal government, create equality and facilitate self- reliance" (Weaver, 2014, p. 14). However, every terminated tribe deteriorated, and tribal members found themselves poorer, with no health care, suffering from a "painful psychological loss of community, homeland and self-identify" (Wilkensin, 2005, p. 81). The outcomes of these federal government policies had a major effect on American Indian communities that lead to persistent poverty, poor health and lack of self-identity, which increased the risk for child maltreatment.

Boarding Schools

Early education polices relative to American Indians were put into place to remove children from their tribal communities and isolate them from their "cultural and linguistic heritage" (Torres, 2017, p. 332) to expedite the assimilation process. The federal government's policies about the education of American Indian children began with federally funded missions and boarding schools (Smith, 2004) which employed different tactics and threats to coerce Indian parents and tribal leaders to force their

children into attending off-reservation schools (Warren, 2014). Children were taken from their home and forced to attend boarding schools for five to eight years at a time (Lomawaima, 2000, p. 3), which became more formalized between 1869 to 1870 under President Grant (Smith, 2004). In 1879, General Richard Henry Pratt founded Carlisle Indian School the first federal off reservation boarding school (Bowker, 1993). His motto was: “Kill the Indian in him and save the man” (Warren, 2014, p. 262). During their time in boarding school, American Indian children could not use their language or their Indian names (Cross, Earle & Simmons, 2000). They also could not practice their spirituality (Smith, 2004). At that time, rampant cases of sexual, physical and emotional abuse were discovered but little was done (Smith, 2004) as well as malnourishment (Lomawaima, 2000, p. 3). Bowker (1993) summarized the purpose of the boarding school which became increasingly mandatory by federal law in the 1890’s (Warren, 2014) as, “the philosophy underlying the establishment of Indian boarding schools, that the way to 'civilize' the Indian is to take Indian children, even very young children, as completely as possible away from their home and family life" (p. 36). The effects of American Indian children going to boarding school were many. Not only were children removed from their families for extended periods but they did not learn traditional parenting skills which repeat the impact of boarding school on future generations (Peacock, 2002). Children also lost the ability to communicate to their elders and to learn about their culture, history and language (Peacock, 2002). Smith (2004) wrote that much of the dysfunctionality in Native communities, such as increased violence, unemployment, loss of language and culture, child abuse, mental health disorders and substance abuse could be traced back to the boarding school. The consequences of

American Indians attending boarding schools resulted in the loss of language, loss of traditional parenting skills, and low self-esteem for many generations (Peacock, 2002). These issues remain today where dropout rates of American Indian students remain high (Peacock, 2002). Removing children from their tribal communities caused the erosion of family and kinship networks making it difficult to pass along traditional knowledge thus hindering the ability of generations of American Indian children to learn and embrace their culture and find a sense of belonging within their community (Lucero & Bussey, 2014). These practices are at odds with modern views of education and social work, which regard home and family as essential social institutions to raise children (Bowker, 1993). One of the greatest strengths in American Indian culture is the extended family. The 1929 Meriam Report recognized the devastating state of American Indian education and called for a new approach, replacing boarding schools with day schools so that children may remain within their families and communities (Tippeconnic, 2000).

The outcomes for children attending the boarding school can be associated with historical trauma, resulting in overrepresentation of mental health issues in some people (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1998). Historical trauma is "the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations including one's own lifespan, which emanates from massively traumatized group history" (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1998, p. 111). Researchers have found children who were in boarding school are now elders in the community and from their trauma may experience emotional stress such as, anger, avoidance, anxiety and depression (Day, 2014). The child of a boarding school survivor may behave as if he or she was at boarding school and will pass this behavior on to their children (Mehl-Madrona & Mainguy, 2014). This intergenerational trauma passes down

from one generation to the next. Yellow Horse Brave Heart (1998) claims that the social problems in American Indian communities are the result of chronic trauma and unresolved grief across generations because of the boarding school experience. For many American Indian families, historic policy decisions such as forcing children to attend boarding school, combined with current oppression practices lead to families distrusting the current educational system.

Out-of-Home Placement

The child welfare system became another avenue that state and federal governments used to force the assimilation of American Indian children. American Indian children are disproportionately overrepresented in the child welfare system in the United States. A 1974 survey by the Association on American Indian Affairs gave Congressional testimony that states with large American Indian populations had about 25% or more of their American Indian children removed from their families and placed in foster, group, and adoptive homes; residential schools; and other institutions (Cross, Gustavsson, Nora, & MacEachron, 1996; Stehno, 1982). This practice undermined the preservation of Indian tribes by the removal of children. Kinship networks were destroyed which meant tribal elders were unable to pass on to younger generations the language, cultural practices and values of their tribe (Lucero & Bussey, 2014). Gonzalez & Gonzalez-Santin (2014) quoted the testimony of William Byler, executive director of the Association on American Indian Affairs, about the destructiveness of this policy on American Indian families. He wrote, "The wholesale removal of American Indian children from their homes, we believed, is the most tragic and destructive aspect of American Indian life today" (Gonzalez & Gonzalez-Santin, 2014, p. 131). The child

welfare system was responsible for weakening American Indian children's community and moving children into non-Indian homes to grow up in (Lucero & Bussey, 2014). During this same period, the Child Welfare League of American arranged the adoption of one third of all American Indian children into white families (Lucero & Bussey, 2014). These practices lead to the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978, which provides a framework for keeping American Indian children in their own tribal communities. It recognized there is "no resource more vital than to the continued existence and integrity of Indian tribes than their children" (Cross, 1986, p. 283). This policy was set in motion to prevent further devastation of tribes and recognize that tribes know what is in the best interest of their children and supports American Indian children through the preservation of their culture.

The disproportionate number of American Indian children in out-of-home placement remains high today. According to the NICWA (2015), American Indian children are overrepresented in out-of-home placement at a rate 2.7 times greater than their proportion in the general population. Nationwide, 2% of American Indian children are placed in out-of-home care, although they represent 0.9% of all children in the United States (NICWA, 2015). In Minnesota, 17.5% of American Indian children are more likely to experience out-of-home placements than white children (Minnesota Department of Human Service, 2016). These percentages signify that American Indian children are overrepresented in the child welfare system.

American Indian children in Minnesota are placed in care at an earlier age and serve longer periods of placement (Redhorse et al., 2000) and children who were in care for longer periods of time experience more multiple placements (Minnesota Department

of Human Service, 2016). Children in out-of-home placement face challenges when going to school because they are moving from home to home, school to school and may be experiencing abuse at home. This influences how well they do in school. Weinberg, Oshiro, & Shea (2014), analyzed the effectiveness of education liaisons improving educational outcomes for children in foster care. They understood that children in out-of-home placement experience poorer school grades, lower scores on standardized tests, grade retention, higher rates of behavior problems in schools, increase rate of suspension and receive special education services at a higher rate and having a supportive adult in school improved school performance (Weinberg, Oshiro, & Shea, 2014). American Indian children may be more likely to experience poor educational outcomes mentioned above because they are disproportionately placed into the child welfare system.

Poverty

Poverty is another outcome of federal policies, which also impedes the practice of raising healthy children. According to The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2016), 36% of American Indian children live in poverty in the United States compared to 22% of the national average during 2014. Not only are American Indian children living in poverty, but they also live in communities with high rates of poverty, 31% compared to 14% for the general population (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2016). The study also documented the number of American Indian teens who were not in school and not working at 13% compared to 7% of the general population during that same period (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2016). According to Native Youth Report (2014), one in three American Indian children live in poverty and lack clean drinking water and proper sanitation removal. Kids Count (2014) reported in Minnesota during 2016, the number of

American Indian children living in poverty was 36%. Past research shows that poverty negatively affects children and is a contributing factor to "high dropout rates, engaging in high risk behavior, and having poor health and developmental outcomes" (Day, 2014, p. 94). Willingham (2012) illustrated how children from low-income households are subject to poor overall health, poor nutrition and poor access to health care, which makes them more susceptible to missing school. In addition, poor children are exposed to several risk factors like stress, substandard housing, and crowed households, which are known to affect academic performance (Willingham, 2012). Wealthier household income is associated with the likelihood of a child graduating from high school and attending college because it provides access to opportunities (Willingham, 2012). A large percentage of American Indian families live in poverty and their poor socioeconomic status can have a negative impact on the wellbeing of the children causing long-lasting effects on their education and health status.

Health

Many of the previously mentioned social issues impact American Indian children and can lead to health issues that affect their wellbeing. This section will discuss obesity, trauma, substance abuse, suicide and violence.

Obesity.

In the U.S., American Indians disproportionately have obesity and diabetes, when compared to Whites. It is estimated that "40% of American Indian adults have obesity compared to 28% among whites and similarly, 20% of American Indians are estimated to have diabetes versus 12% of whites" (Chodur, Shen, Kodish, Oddo, Antiporta, Jock, & Jones-Smith, 2016, p. 2). The 2010 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Pediatric

Nutrition Surveillance report documented that the highest prevalence of obesity among children aged 2 to 4 years was among American Indian children 21% compared with 17.6% of Hispanic, 12.1% of non-Hispanic white, and 11.6% of black children (Arcan, 2013). In another study published by Indian Health Services, in 2015, the prevalence of overweight and obesity in American Indian children aged 2 to 19 years was 18.5% and 29.7%, respectively and boys had higher obesity prevalence than girls (31.5% vs 27.9%) (Bullock, Sheff, Moore & Manson, 2017, p. 1502).

Bullock et al., (2017) wrote that key contributors to obesity include the poverty, food insecurity, social injustice, trauma, stress, forced cultural change, and displacement leading to cultural disintegration and other chronic illnesses among American Indians. American Indian children who live on or near a reservation are more likely to be affected by type two diabetes, food insecurity and obesity compared to all children of similar ages. Findings from studies suggest that those living on tribal lands may be more likely to experience the high cost of food and transportation problems due to distance when purchasing healthy foods and low food security (Chodur et al., 2016). Chodur et al., (2016) confirmed that in rural communities with a high concentration of American Indians have lower healthcare access compared to rural areas without American Indian populations. Poverty, paired with other risk factors (access to food) may contribute to these health disparities and affect a child's ability to go to school and learn (Day, 2014; Chodur et al., 2016). These inequities have an impact on the health and wellbeing of American Indian children and schools are in a position to respond because of the amount of time children spend in school, especially in schools serving American Indian children on reservations.

Trauma.

Approximately, 80% of youth in the United States experience adverse childhood experience (ACEs) through victimization and this has been associated with poor academic performance, emotional and behavioral problems and substance use (Larson, Chapman, Spetz, & Brindis, 2017). Forster, Gower, Borowsky, & McMorris (2017), study analyzed the non-medical use of prescription medication among adolescents and their exposure to ACEs and described adverse childhood experiences as: "verbal, physical and sexual abuse by a caregiver, parental substance misuse or abuse, parental intimate partner violence, and parental incarceration, often co-occur and have a strong, graded relationship to health behavior problems" (p. 1). ACEs are "traumatic stressors that, when experienced during childhood, negatively impact numerous behavioral health outcomes among adults and the likelihood of poorer outcomes increases as the number of ACE experienced increases" (Forster et al., 2017, p. 1). Among traumatized youth, there is evidence of cognitive impairment and developing a psychiatric disorder, which will impede school progress (Overstreet & Mathews, 2001). Also, trauma victims suffer from overwhelming stress, which makes it difficult for them to trust others, regulate emotions and behavior, and resolve conflict in an appropriate manner (Overstreet & Mathews, 2001). Stress impacts the victims' brain development and they have a difficult time with "sustaining attention, memory and executive function" which are all critical for school success (Overstreet & Mathews, 2001, p. 742; Lucero & Bussey, 2015).). Youth exposed to poverty and victimization are more likely to have anxiety, depression, conduct disorder, post-traumatic stress, thoughts of suicide, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) have lower grades than their peers who have not experienced

victimization (Larson et al., 2017). The frequency of victimization also had a significant impact on attention problems and poor academic achievement (Larson et al., 2017).

According to Kenney & Singh (2016), their study reviewed parent-reported ACEs and developmental, emotional and behavioral outcomes for American Indian youth and found that American Indian children were more likely to have had eight to nine ACEs and concluded that "school problems, grade failures, and need for medication and counseling were 2-3 times higher among American Indians experiencing three or more ACEs versus the same comparison group" (p. 1). Exposure to trauma may be a common and chronic experience for many American Indian youth resulting in poor developmental outcomes and poor school performance.

Substance Abuse.

Research suggests there is a connection between chronic exposure to trauma and the development of substance abuse and that this places youth at a higher risk of dropping out of school (Larson et al., 2017). According to Lucero & Bussey (2015), trauma victims will use alcohol or drugs to numb the pain. In general, alcohol use begins early for American Indian youth and they are more likely to drink more heavily and more frequently and suffer from greater heath, economic and social consequences than any other racial/ethnic group in the U.S. (King, Vidoureck, & Hill, 2014). By the 12th grade, 80%-90% of American Indian youth are drinking regularly (Patchell, 2015; Lowe, Liang, Henson, & Riggs, 2016) and the death rate from too excessive drinking is twice as high as the overall U.S. population (King et al., 2014). SAMHSA (2013) reports that American Indians "over age 12 have the highest rates among any racial/ethnic group in the U.S. of substance dependence and abuse (12.7%) and current illicit drug use (21.8%)"

(Lucero & Bussey, 2015, p. 102). Researchers found a connection between trauma exposure and development of a substance use disorder for American Indian youth. Lucero & Bussey (2015) reported in their study that a high percentage of American Indian clients who were in substance abuse treatment experienced trauma and described that clients who have been repeatedly victimized especially at a young age, oftentimes use drugs and/or alcohol to numb the pain.

Characteristics of American Indian youth who are "most likely to use substances are those who have close ties to substance using peers, do not perform well in school, do not strongly identify with American Indian culture, and come from families where family members abuse substances" (Lowe et al., 2016, p. 998). According to Martinez (2015), the most significant factor for urban American Indian youth not to engage in substance use is disapproval by their friends and family members. Alcohol and substance abuse are a serious health concern for American Indian youth that will affect school performance and peer substance use preventions groups can be an effective intervention that school social workers can carry out.

Suicide.

Stumblingbear-Riddle & Romans (2012) analyzed protective factors that fostered resilience in American Indian youth and noted that American Indians suffer higher incidences of "alcoholism (570%), accidents (212%), suicide (70%) and homicide (41%) compared to the general U.S. population" (p. 1). Their study implied that unresolved emotional stress may develop into these chronic problems (e.g. alcoholism and suicide) associated with the impact of colonization among American Indians (Stumblingbear-Riddle & Romans, 2012). Suicide disproportionately affects American

Indians. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from 2003 to 2014, a total of 1,531 American Indians committed suicide and more than one third (35.7%) of suicides were youth ages 10–24 years old. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among American Indian youth "between the ages of 10-34 and the suicide rate for this age group is one and a half times the national average" (State of Native Youth Report, 2017, p. 17). Larson et al., (2017) reported that, "70% of children and adolescents with mental health disorders do not receive treatment mental health services, with minorities and lower socioeconomic youths disproportionately not receiving treatment" and if not treated can lead to disability and/or suicide (p. 675). These social problems (e.g. poverty and child maltreatment) and health issues play a role in the challenges to raising healthy American Indian children and in their ability to do well in school.

Violence.

American Indians youth experience 2.5 times the rate of violent victimization than for all other races and higher levels of traumatic events (Lucero & Bussey, 2015). The Child Maltreatment Report 2016, American Indian children had the highest rate of victimization at 14.2 per 1,000 children. American Indian children experience slightly higher rates of violence in their homes than the national average and are physically and sexually abused and neglected at a rate of 12.4 per 1,000 American Indian children compared to the national rate of 9.2 per 1,000 children (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, n.d.). In Minnesota, American Indian children were 5.2 times more likely to be involved in maltreatment reports than white children (Minnesota Department of Human Services, n.d.). According to Bigfoot & Schmidt (2010) American Indian

children who have been abused or neglected have higher rates of mental health disorders, substance abuse, being involved in the juvenile justice system, becoming pregnant and have worse educational outcomes (truancy and grade repetition). Child maltreatment has negative impact on the wellbeing of American Indian children which will impact their capacity to learn.

Jones & Galliher (2005) also investigated the experiences of American Indian late adolescents and young adults with racial microaggressions. This research investigated 114 American Indians and links between microaggression experiences and self-reported ethnic and cultural identification (Jones & Galliher, 2015). Jones & Galliher (2015) reported an overwhelming majority of the American Indian participants experienced daily discrimination. Only two participants denied being victimized by racial microaggressions (Jones & Galliher, 2015). The articles stated, "Ethnic identification correlated with reports of microaggressions, with stronger Native identification relating to more experiences of daily racial discrimination." (Jones & Galliher, 2015, p. 6). This study did not analyze the impact of racial microaggressions on the academic performance of American Indians students, however, this study shows the frequency American Indian students encounter microaggressions which if occurring at school could lead to students not wanting to go to school.

Barriers to American Indian School Success

The 1969 Kennedy Report and the 1991 Indian Nations At-Risk Report suggested that tribal language be used and promoted within schools and the 1972 Indian Education Act mandates that schools develop programs to meet the culturally specific academic needs of American Indian students (Tippeconnic, 2000). However, despite these

recommendations the unique cultural and academic needs of American Indians have not been met. Many school factors inhibit the success of American Indian student's in school. This section will elaborate on school factors that inhibit American Indian student success.

Cultural Differences

Traditionally, the care and education of children was the responsibility of the entire tribal community. American Indian families, before European contact, shared in the tasks of working together in order to survive (Hand, 2006). Child-bearing and child rearing were among the most important roles of both Ojibwe women and men. Relatives or community members watched over the children "making sure they were properly cared for, well-treated, and educated in the skills they needed to develop." (Hand, 2006, p. 24). Women and elders cared for the children until the age of seven, then girls stayed with their aunties and grandmothers and boys went with the men (Peacock, 2002). Peacock (2002) wrote how girls learned how to raise crops, gather plants and tan hides and boys learned how to make canoes, bows and arrows and how to fish and hunt. Different ways of teaching included babies being raised in a cradleboard where they learned through "observation and listening" (Peacock, 2002, p. 71). Children also learned valuable lessons through storytelling. Peacock (2002) wrote, "Our ancestors' stories were filled with both obvious, simple teachings and deeper, more subtle meanings" (p. 73). American Indian education was taught (and still is in some families) with different practices focusing on "storytelling, oral tradition, collaboration, reflection and implicitly sharing knowledge" (Elder, p. 1). Through storytelling children learn right from wrong, how to behave and socialize (Weaver, 1996). Children are taught not to be opinionated

or make hasty decisions and that collaboration and cooperation are culturally valued (Ingalls, Hammond, Dupoux, & Baeza, 2006). In reaching conclusions, "children learn to strive to see other people's perspectives and come to a reasonable conclusion that is harmonious with others." (Ingalls et al., 2006, p. 17). Adults teach them to be respectful of one another.

Cultural differences or cultural incongruence is a school factor often cited in the literature as a reason why American Indian children do not perform well in school (Butterfield, 1983; Reyner, 1992; Marsiglia, Cross, & Mitchell-Enos, 1998; Rahman, 2013). According to Butterfield (1983), the possible contributing factors for American Indian students not doing well in school are low expectations of the teachers, lack of parental involvement, lack of American Indian role models, culturally biased tests, poor teacher preparation and not incorporating Indigenous language. He wrote, however, that the most significant reason for school failure by American Indian students was lack of culturally relevant curriculum. American Indian students did not believe that school curriculum was relevant to them for who they are and what they did (Coladarci, 1983). Several scholars write about cultural incongruence in the classroom and define it as curriculum that does not reflect the culture of American Indian students and their communities and represents dominant values such as individualism, acquisition, and the accumulation of wealth (Butterfield, 1983; Ledlow, 1992; Reyner, 1992; Marsiglia et al., 1998; Agbo, 2001, Power, 2005; Rahman, 2013). These current school values run contradictory to American Indian values, which may result in student failure. Rahman (2013) argues that these values and unwritten rules favor or reflect the dominant "white" culture. These expectations form part of the learning process and do not "match up"

culturally with American Indian students resulting in an education disadvantage (Rahman, 2013, p. 660). Power (2005) wrote that differences in forming interpersonal relationships and curriculum and the unfamiliarity of discipline, instructions and evaluation create a "cultural gap" (p. 338). Other research identifies "lack of curriculum that accurately reflects the experiential linguistic and cultural background" of American Indian students as a reason for school failure (Butterfield, 1983, p. 52). It is difficult for American Indian children to understand and navigate curriculum that run counters to American Indian values and beliefs (Butterfield, 1983). Several researchers acknowledge that American Indian values often have little or no priority in mainstream school curriculum or school life (Butterfield, 1983; Marsiglia, et. al., 1998; Agbo, 2001). Marsiglia et al., (1998) writes that cultural difference may play a role in student failure. Demmert (2005) took from his own personal experience and wrote that culture influences learning. The implications for American Indian children are that they learn to devalue their own knowledge and culture while accepting another value system. American Indian children develop a rational, progressive, competitive spirit and become materialistic and consumerist with Eurocentric beliefs resulting in high school dropout rates and low performance (Grande, 2004; Marsiglia et al., 1998). Ledlow (1992) argued that it is not only "cultural discontinuity" but also economic and social issues that play a significant role in causing American Indian students to dropouts (p. 5).

Past research shows that there is a difference in the learning styles of American Indian students and white students, which affects their learning. Hilberg & Tharp (2002) defined learning style as; "habitual patterns of preferred ways of doing something that are consistent over long periods and across a variety of activities" (p. 1). One study analyzed

the effect of the learning style on the success or failure of American Indian students living in Belcourt, North Dakota and non-Indian students living in Crookston, Minnesota. Backus (1993) discovered the American Indian students in this study exhibited an abstract random learning style in which the attributes were: "sensitivity, emotion, personalization, imagination, interpretation, holistic view, aesthetic appreciation, part of a social group, discussion, reflection upon feelings, flexibility, and adaptability" (p. 8). The learning style for American Indian students is "a global or holistic style of organizing information; a visual or mentally representing information in thinking; preference for a more reflective style in processing information and a preference for a collaborative approach to task completion" (Hilberg & Tharp, 2002, p. 1; Dykeman et al., 1995). Dykeman et al., (1995) pointed out that American Indians are less verbal and speak in lower tones than other Americans and a White teacher may appear rude and aggressive to them. American Indian students want to learn the whole context of a concept first. The conclusion of the study was a mismatch between learning style and teaching method may influence the dropout rate for American Indian students (Backus, 1993). The learning style of the non-Indians students was concrete sequential. The characteristics of this learning style are "orderly, step-by-step, structured, practical, accurate, factual, according to standards, directions-orientated, organized, hands-on, reliable, detailed, particular, and exact" which is the teaching style of many classrooms (Backus, 1993, p. 8).

School Climate

Many studies report that a hostile school climate is an indicator for why American Indian students do not persist in school (Perry, 2009; Campbell & Smalling, 2013; Goodstar-Johnston & VeLure Roholt, 2017). Hendron & Kearney (2016) defined school

climate as the "quality and character of school life" noting a positive climate promotes healthy development and academic learning (p. 109). School climate includes microaggressions and school violence. Microaggressions are "everyday insults" or "put-downs" (Sue et al., 2007). They are brief commonplace verbal, behavioral or environmental indignities and demeaning exchanges sent to people of color by well-intentioned white people who are unaware of the hidden messages being sent to them (DeAngelis, 2009; Sue et al., 2007). Michaels (2010) defined microaggressions as "events involving discrimination, racism, and daily hassles that are targeted at individuals from diverse racial and ethnic groups (p. 2). This creates an unsafe school environment for American Indian students (Perry, 2009). Goodstar-Johnston & VeLure Roholt (2017) described the correlation between microaggressions and school climate for American Indian students. The study used a community-based mixed-methods study to explore the experiences of American Indian students in school (Goodstar-Johnston & VeLure Roholt, 2017). Their report expressed that American Indian students experience difficulty in maintaining relations with teachers and felt isolated (Goodstar-Johnson & VeLure Roholt, 2017) and often feeling bullying (Campbell & Smalling, 2013). Their findings suggest that American Indian students experience racism on a daily basis, which contribute "to their feelings of lack of safely, discomfort and invisibility" (Goodstar-Johnson & VeLure Roholt, 2017, p. 42). In addition, persistent and ongoing racism resulted in serious health and mental health consequences (Goodstar-Johnson & VeLure Roholt, 2017) but further research is needed.

Campbell & Smalling (2013) research analyzed the 2010 Minnesota Student Survey to determine the extent to which American Indian students are victimized in

Minnesota schools compared to other racial/ethnic groups. The MSS was conducted with Minnesota public school students every three years and includes populations from three sources: 1) regular public school, charter schools and tribal schools (grades 5, 8, 9 and 11 only), 2) alternative schools and alternative learning centers, and 3) juvenile correctional facilities. Findings indicated that American Indian students have both the highest rates of experiencing victimization in the form of threats or physical violence (Campbell & Smalling, 2013). More than half of all American Indian students in the study experienced physical violence or being threatened at school and nearly a quarter experienced both (Campbell & Smalling, 2013). Campbell & Smalling (2013) suggested that these students experiencing bullying might lead to students not feeling safe in school, problems with academics and potentially dropping out but suggested further research.

There are studies that suggest that unfair application of rules and policies create an unsafe school climate for American Indian students. According to Clarren (2017), American Indian students make up 1% of the student population they represent "3% of all referrals to the police and 2% of all arrests" (p. 5) and 3% of juvenile status offenders arrests (Mmari, Blum, & Teufel-Shone, 2010). American Indian students are systemically disadvantaged compared to white students through racially biased enforcement of school discipline policies and procedures (Clarren, 2017). He cautioned between perceptions and reality when looking at the data. For example, from this study he could not tell if in fact, rules were unevenly applied to American Indian students.

The Quijada Cerecer (2013) study provided insight into the complexity of building relationships with American Indian youth in schools and how these relationships affect their persistence and departure rates. The study revealed that American Indian

students drop out of high school due to a contentious school climate, which includes "hostile school policies and leadership practices" (Quijada Cerecer, 2013, p. 591) that negatively affect the identities of its American Indian students. It is important for state officials, school administrators, teachers, school social workers and parents to understand why this is happening when addressing the achievement gap since approximately 90% of American Indian students attend public school (NCNASL, 2008). Few studies exam the role of school social worker in improving school climate for American Indian students.

Other School Factors

Coladarci's research (1983) examined the causes for American Indian students dropping out of a Montana high school and categorized them into two themes: teacher-student relationships and parental support. Coladarci (1983) gave these examples of teacher-student relationships: teachers do not care for them, teachers do not help with homework, and disagreement with teachers. Lastly, he identified the lack of parent involvement and problems at home as reasons for students leaving school (Coladarci, 1983).

Reyner (1992) expanded on the body of research and identified seven reasons for why American Indian students drop out. The reasons are: large schools, student boredom, uncaring teachers and untrained teachers, passive teaching methods, inappropriate testing and student retention (e.g. students repeating the same grade) as factors that influence whether American Indian students leave school before they graduate (Reyner, 1992). He went on to explain that the use of standardized tests to measure student success exacerbates American Indian students repeating the same grade and who may eventually decide to drop out of school (Reyner, 1992).

Dehyle's research (1992) gave detailed accounts of why Navajo and Ute leave school. The decision to leave school is often a complex one for American Indian students. One of the themes that Dehyle (1992) uncovered in her research was student-teacher relationships, explaining that students left school because students felt that their teachers did not care for them and this was demonstrated by teachers not helping them with their homework as well as their perception of "culture indifference" by the teacher (p.5). Other reasons why students left school was because of the classes were hard and they had difficulty with reading (Dehyle, 1992). At the same time, classes were too easy with the boredom that comes with remedial classes, doing the same exercise repeatedly, and uninteresting subjects (Dehyle, 1992). Students were not encouraged to enroll in college bound classes but vocational courses. They also had difficulty with work, pregnancy and lack of parent support (Dehyle, 1992). However, there are differences in how teachers saw parental support as to what parents actually did, which was often based on culturally differences (Dehyle, 1992). Students did describe their parents as wanting them to stay in school but cultural values such as non-interference and individual autonomy may leave a parent feeling like they have little say in their child's education. (Dehyle, 1992).

Chavers (2000) study mentioned that staffing non-Indian teachers was a major underlying problem to school success for American Indian students, specifically Indian schools. The teachers are often just out of college, they do not stay long and are not highly qualified (Chavers, 2000). Also, teachers on reservations do not think that their American Indian students will graduate which runs counter to what American Indian parents believe that not only will they graduate but will continue on to college.

According to Brandt (1992), the study analyzed the Navajo student dropout in Navajo area schools. The author created a table listing reasons why students dropped out. The top ten reasons were bored with school, problems with other students, retained in grade due to absenteeism, pregnancy/marriage, problems with teachers, legal problems, substance abuse, to help family, disciplinary problems and academic failure (Brandt, 1992). Her study also included the perceptions of school personnel, which had significantly different results. It included: lack of interest in school, curriculum does not meet student needs, behavioral problems, family moving, lack of parental support, substance abuse, poverty, pregnancy, academic performance and lack of teacher support (Brandt, 1992). Her findings suggest that schools underestimate the importance of family and put blame on the student for not graduating.

Faircloth & Tippeconnic (2010) examined the graduation/dropout rates among American Indian students using data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The study acknowledged prior research of students' feelings of being "pushed out," peer pressure, discipline problems, difficulty with classes, responsibilities at home as well as pregnancy, marriage and poverty (Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010, p. 28). The literature is full of information on reasons why American Indian students struggle in school and schools are left with the task of deciding how to address these complex issues.

Current Status of American Indian Education

According to the State of Native Youth Report (SNYR) (2017), American Indian education is in crisis. American Indian youth do poorly in school due to the socioeconomic and health disparities they experience, which lead to poor school performance. The SNYR collects reports, survey data, research, program highlights, and

the stories from American Indian youth to inform us of their needs. This information will give us insight and a direction on how to shape opportunities for American Indian youth. The SNYR (2017) recommended that schools should support the students' "physical, emotional and social needs in a cultural sensitive manner" (p. 30). Despite efforts to improve academic performance, the education outcomes for American Indian students continue to lag behind other students. The graduation rate is the lowest of any racial/ethnic demographic group. According to NCES (2017), for 2015 the graduation rate for American Indian students was at 82% compared to 95% for whites. In the same year, the status dropout rate for American Indian students was at 11% compared to 4% for whites (NCES, 2017). American Indians lag behind whites in all subjects and are "amongst students who achieve the lowest grades" (Torres, 2017, p. 331). Torres (2017) added they experience higher dropout rates and behavior problems such as high absenteeism, frequent suspension or expulsion, and attrition from school, compared to white students. Nationwide, American Indian students are disproportionately disciplined in school and "represent 2% of out-of-school suspensions and 3% of expulsions, even though they only represent less than 1% of the student population" (State of Native Youth Report, 2017, p. 27). According to Clarren (2017), American Indian students are systemically disadvantaged compared to white students through racially biased enforcement of school discipline policies and procedures and encounter higher police referrals and arrests in school. School violence also takes a toll on American Indian students. In the 2015 Arizona Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey, American Indian students in that state are more than twice as likely to report absence from school due to feeling unsafe (State of Native Youth Report, 2017).

Other research indicates that American Indian students do not perform well on standardized tests (Reyner, 1992) and are over representative in special education at 12% compared to 9% of students from other ethnic/racial groups (Ingalls, Hammond, Dupoux, & Baeza, 2006; Pewewardy & Fitzpatrick, 2009). Pewewardy & Fitzpatrick (2009) suggested this might be because teachers view American Indian students as delinquent students, which lead to "premature referrals, evaluations and placement into special education programs" (p. 92). Additional research indicates that American Indian children are placed in special education because of "cultural and linguistic differences" which school professionals consider deficient characteristics (Dykeman, et al., 1995, p. 152).

Minnesota Students

In Minnesota, the graduation rate for American Indian students in 2015 was at 53% compared to the rest of the student population at 82% (Minnesota Department Education, n.d.). In the same year, the status dropout rate was 20% for American Indian students and 6% for the general student population (Minnesota Department Education, n.d.). In 2015-16, Minnesota American Indian students were chronically absent at higher rates (38%) than white students at 14% which typically happens in high poverty areas (Kaul, 2017). The 2010 Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) illustrates that the number of American Indian students moving on to the next grade decreases significantly from sixth to ninth grade and by the time they reach the 12th grade, only half of the students are still in school (Campbell & Smalling, 2013). These alarming statistics indicate that Native youth face serious challenges in high school. It is important for state officials, school administrators, teachers, school social workers and parents to understand why this is

happening when addressing the achievement gap since approximately 90% of American Indian students attend public school (NCNASL, 2008).

Leech Lake Indian Reservation/Cass County

This study took place at School District A located in Cass County on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation (Reservation). The Reservation is located within four counties: Cass, Beltrami, Itasca and Hubbard. According to the Reservation's website, it owns 864,158 acres, which is less than 5% of its land holdings, and the rest of the land is owned by county, state, and federal governments. The National Chippewa Forest owns 75% of the land. The Reservation itself has about 9,500 members and because of the relocations polices during the 1950s most tribal members left and moved to urban areas across the state. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2017), the unemployment rate for Cass County is at 6.3% compared to 4.8% for the State of Minnesota, and the percentage of families living below the poverty level in Cass County is at 12.2% compared to 6.9% for the State of Minnesota. It is not atypical to see higher percentages of unemployment and families living below the poverty level on or near an Indian reservation. Tribal communities are rooted in poverty, trauma (including violence) and a lack of resources puts them more at risk to poor health and low educational achievement.

School District A

School District A has a large majority of American Indian students, schools with large American Indian populations are disproportionately affected by poverty, violence and substance abuse which negatively impact student readiness and their ability to learn (Day, 2014; Lucero & Bussey, 2015; Larson et al., 2017). In general, public schools typically do not have the appropriate resources to meet the unique educational and

culturally related academic needs of the students (Beaulieu, 2000). In 2017, there were 228 high school students enrolled in School District A and the demographics of the student population were: American Indians 90% (205); White 7% (15); Hispanic/Latino 1% (3) and Two or More Races 2% (5) (Minnesota Department of Education, n.d.). Approximately, 74.5% of American Indian students graduated from School District A (Minnesota Department Education, n.d.). Some of the characteristics of all the students attending this school were, 26.3% receive special education services, 2.6 % were homeless and 76.8% received free/reduced lunch (Minnesota Department Education, n.d.), compared to 37.7% of Minnesota students (Kaul, 2017). These characteristics may be helpful in understanding students' experiences.

The following data was gathered from the 2016 MSS administered by the Minnesota Departments of Education, Health, Human Services, and Public Safety. The MSS is conducted with Minnesota public school students every three years and includes populations from three sources: (a) regular public school, charter schools and tribal schools (grades 6, 9 and 12 only), (b) alternative schools and alternative learning centers and (c) juvenile correctional facilities. The data reported, however, is not broken down by race nor ethnicity categories; yet it is still helpful toward understanding protective and risk factors among high school students. According to the MSS (2016), students in Grade 11 and Grade 9 in School District A reported several potential indicators that would put them at-risk for dropping out of high school. They include four categories: teacher-student relationship; school attendance to include both in and out of school suspension; violence at home and at school; and mental health.

The first set of data examines teacher-student relationship. Eleventh graders did not agree or strongly disagreed with the following: adults at their school treated students fairly (40.5%); adults listened to the students (37.8%); school rules were applied fairly (35.1%); teachers cared about students (16.7%); and teachers are interested in them (40.5%). The data from the ninth graders was also reviewed and they did not agree or strongly disagreed with the following: adults at their school treated students fairly (24.6%); adults listened to the students (33.3%); school rules were applied fairly (29.8%); teachers cared about students (15.8%); and teachers are interested in them (33.3%). Analyzing the data, ninth graders have a more positive response to teacher-student relationships. It appears that as students get older their relationship with their teachers become more negative. Other studies show that the self-esteem of American Indian children decrease as years in school increase (Dykeman, Nelson, & Appleton, 1995). There needs to be further research as to why students feel teachers do not care about them as they get older. The literature describes the importance of teacher-student relationships in student success.

The second set of data analyzes school attendance. In the 11th grade, 37.8% of the students skipped school at least once; 18.9% of the students had in-school suspension and 5.4% had out-of-school suspension. Students in the 9th grade, 33.4% of the students skipped school at least once; 23.3% of the students had in-school suspension and 14.3% had out-of-school suspension. From the data, younger students are more prone to suspensions that the older students but skip school less. Students most affected by chronic absence are more likely to fall short of proficiency on tests and not graduate from high school (Kaul, 2017). In 2015-16, School District A had the highest rate of chronic

absence of any school district in the state. Nine hundred and twelve students (63%) missed 10 percent or more days of the school year (Kaul, 2017). However, the school added programs to address this problem and it has resulted in increased graduation rates (Kaul, 2017). School attendance is important for student's success.

The third set of data examined violence at home and at school. Students in the 11th grade felt harassed or bullied for the following reasons: their size or weight (29.7%) or physical appearance (27%); excluded by their friends (21.6%); and students spread mean rumors or lies about them (35.1%). Students in the 9th grade felt harassed or bullied for the following reasons: their size or weight (26.3%) or physical appearance (29.9%); excluded by their friends (26.3%); and students spread mean rumors or lies about them (26.4%). However, both 11th graders and 9th graders agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe at school 91.9% and 94.8%. The victimization can lead to students not feeling safe at school, so they may skip school or dropout and frequent victimization can have a significant impact on poor academic outcomes (Carson et al., 2017). Eleventh grade students who were subject to family abuse both physically (18.9%), verbally (18.9%) or witnessed domestic violence (8.1%). Ninth grade students who were subject to family abuse both physically (10.7%), verbally (10.7%) or witnessed domestic violence (14.3%). It appears from the data that the students that are reporting physical abuse are also reporting verbal abuse. Younger students are also experiencing more witnessing of domestic violence, which can be traumatic and lead to poor academic performance.

The final set of data analyzes mental health. Eleventh grade students experienced the following: long-term mental health, behavioral or emotional problems (21.6%); a

hard time paying attention at school, home or work (64.9%); a hard time listening to instructions at school, home or work (40.5%); little interest or pleasure in doing things (66.7%); and feeling down, depressed or hopeless (56.7%). Ninth grade students experienced the following: long-term mental health, behavioral or emotional problems (22.8%); a hard time paying attention at school, home or work (67.9%); a hard time listening to instructions at school, home or work (48.2%); little interest or pleasure in doing things (67.9%); and feeling down, depressed or hopeless (59%). For both the 9th and 11th grades, the results are similar. According to the literature, these experiences could result from trauma caused by child abuse and/or other traumatic events. Childhood abuse or other trauma causes developmental delays resulting in students not performing well in school. Thoughts of suicide and self-injury are other indicators of mental health problems. In the data for School District A, students in the 11th grade considered attempting suicide (43.2%) and actually attempted suicide (21.6%). Students in the 9th grade considered attempting suicide (35.7%) and actually attempted suicide (17.9%). It is interesting that the number of considerations and attempts increase with age. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among American Indian youth most likely because they are exposed to poverty and trauma and there is a lack of resources to help them.

Positive indicators are 72% of the eleventh grade students plan on going to a two-year or four-year college after they graduate. In the ninth grade, only 56.9% of the students planned on going to college. Parents want their children to do well in school, graduate and go onto college. Many of these factors are indicators for school success and failure and an in-depth study analyzing the experiences of American Indian students in school may reveal what school social workers can do to meet the needs of these students.

History of School Social Workers

The first school social workers began as visiting teachers hired by agencies and civic groups to educate individuals and act as liaisons between the school and the family beginning in 1906 (Stanley, 2011). These groups determined their role based on the needs of the community and the rights of different groups of children (e.g. children of immigrants, poor, the economically and socially disadvantaged, the delinquent and those with disabilities) (Constable, 2016). After the passage of compulsory attendance laws during the late 1800s and early 1900s, the school social worker focused on school mandates and the conditions that prevented children from learning (Stanley, 2011; Constable, 2016). Mandatory attendance laws increased class size and teacher turnover resulted in teachers not knowing their students and families, so school social workers became the link between school and home (Stanley, 2011). Any student identified as at-risk for failure was referred to the visiting teacher. In 1913, Rochester Board of Education was the first to hire visiting teachers to work in the schools (Stanley, 2011; Constable, 2016). Constable (2016) described the role of the visiting teacher as focused on informing the teachers about the child's life outside of school and secondly, informing the parents of the school's expectation of the child. During the 1940s and 1950s, the school social worker replaced the name, "visiting teacher" (Agresta, 2004, p. 151). There was a common understanding of the school social workers' tasks and depending on the needs of the school, it varied across states, school districts and even individual schools (Constable, 2016). The school shaped the role of the school social worker by its concerns for inclusiveness, individual differences, school mission and the idea that education is "relational" (Constable, 2016, p. 7). Constable (2016) echoed the rationale for school

social work practice, as described by Florence Poole in 1959 as "the right of every child to an education" (p. 10). Her perspective shifted the focus from the student who was having a difficult time adjusting to the school, to focus on both the student and school adapting to each other (Constable, 2016). This holistic perspective used by the visiting teacher allowed for a variety of issues to be undertaken. Poole stated, "We see one of our most significant social institutions establishing social work as an integral part of its service, essential to carrying out its purpose (Constable, 2016, p. 10). She saw the importance of having a social worker in the schools.

Traditionally, American Indian communities provided for the education and social welfare needs of their own children and families. When children lost their parents, they were placed within kinship networks, so no child was left without a family (Tamburro & Tamburro, 2014). American Indian communities did not develop institutions to separate their members from each other. However, over time they adapted and delivered services so as to meet the needs of a changing community. For example, community leaders would organize giveaways when they received government commodities so that everyone in the community received a fair share (Tamburro & Tamburro, 2014). During the 1930s, American Indian families began working with social workers employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs who provided a variety of services to reservations and urban Indian communities (Tamburro & Tamburro, 2014).

There was also a great need to have and train American Indian professionals to work with American Indian students in Minnesota public schools during the 1980s. In Minnesota, a training project for Indian School Liaison persons or Indian Social Work Aides was carried out due to the need to train community members as support personnel

in para-professional roles (Grossman, Hakala, & Kozlowski, 1985). Even though the community members lacked the educational credentials necessary for working with children in the schools, they still provided valuable information on American Indian life and traditional child-rearing practices (Grossman et al., 1985). The training was developed to provide them with information that would be useful in their jobs. The main job responsibilities of the Indian Social Work Aides were to:

> 1) Form a bridge between the non-Indian school and the Indian home and to communicate cultural and institutional concerns between them;
>
> 2) Advocate on behalf of Indian children and oversee due-process procedures in evaluation, assessment, diagnosis and treatment procedures;
>
> 3) Organize within the school program opportunities for Indian children to participate in Indian cultural events; and
>
> 4) Facilitate the interagency cooperation regarding Indian students with special needs. (Grossman et al., 1985, p. 11)

Grossman et al., (1985) study demonstrated that Indian Social Work Aides made a strong impact on the students and the community as a whole and that there was a great need for them based on the high number of caseloads and the number of contact hours spent with students. This study demonstrates how effective professionals can be when working with American Indian students, especially when cultural considerations are taken into account (Grossman et al., 1985). More studies need to be done on the effectiveness of school social workers in their work with American Indian students.

Role of School Social Workers

School social workers have a long-standing history in our education system. They focused on coordinating the efforts of schools, families, and communities toward helping students improve their academic achievement and social, emotional, and behavioral functions by using their unique perspective of viewing the person in his or her environment. According to the Minnesota School Social Workers Association (MSSWA), school social workers have the knowledge and skills to work with students and families in their own social environment. They not only focus on the struggling student, but also on how the student's environment (e.g., poverty, domestic violence, school climate, teacher-student relationships and interactions with peers) may influence student behavior.

School social workers positions differ depending on the needs of the student population being served and the unique needs of the school. Their role has evolved from enforcing mandatory school attendance to providing emotional support for children and families (Richard & Villarreal Sosa, 2014), addressing school violence, and meeting the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1975 (Agresta, 2004) and trauma (Goodkind, LaNoue, & Milford, 2010). However, aspects of their actual role may or may not meet the needs of American Indian students, and there may be factors that mitigate their effectiveness. In the past, social workers have not effectively served American Indians because they lack an understanding of American Indian culture, carry stereotypical images and biases about American Indians, and use inappropriate methods and techniques (Lewis & Keung Ho, 1975). Lewis & Keung Ho (1975) suggested social workers must show respect for the cultural background of American Indian clients and recognized the importance of including extended family in interventions.

Ecological Perspective/Person-in-Environment

School social workers are distinguished from other professions by using an ecological systems perspective when serving marginalized and oppressed populations (Richard & Villarreal Sosa, 2014). Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective recognizes that each person functions within a complex network of multiple-level systems (e.g. individual, family, school, and community) that influences their behavior as well as their capacity to avoid risk (Mmari, Blum, & Tenfel-Shone, 2010). The external environment has influence "on the functioning and progressive adaptation of individuals" (Powers, 2010, p. 446). For example, Mmari et al., (2010) study focused on factors that protect American Indian youth from engaging in harmful behavior and found the presence of parents was a protective factor as well as engaging youth in ceremonies and their tribal language. This study emphasized the influence of having parents around reduces violence and delinquency (Mmari et al., 2010). The ecological systems perspective consists of understanding the person-in-environment in multi-level systems (Miller, Fields, Adorno, & Smith-Osborne, 2017), and a school social worker must understand that each tribal community is unique. The framework considers the impact of social exchanges between systems: micro-level system comprises of the child's home and family, mezzo-level is the child's school and community, and the macro-level is larger social community (Miller et al., 2017). Powers (2010) wrote, "development occurs within the context of a complex system of relationships that comprise a child's environment and different system levels (e.g. micro, mezzo and macro) (p. 446). Using the ecological perspective**,** the school social worker must be able to relate to and work with all aspects of a student's life including school, home, community and the larger

social system (Crosby, 2015). An ecological perspective can provide an important framework for exploring holistic interventions by assisting students in the multiple systems in which they live their lives (Crosby, 2015) which also include cultural considerations as examples in the Mmari et al., (2010) study. School social workers need to understand that each tribal community is unique and that interventions need to be specific to the cultural context of the student and their families. Using this approach, school social workers are uniquely qualified to work with American Indian students.

Standards of Practice

A primary objective of school social workers' services is to maximize school success for all students with the expectation that children should achieve their fullest potential (Constable, 2016; Early & Vonk, 2001; Blair, 1993). This means school social workers must address students' personal, social and emotional needs in home, school and community and promote respect and dignity for all students. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) (n.d.) sets principles and standards for school social work services, and as a specialized field within the social work profession, they must have knowledge and understanding of the education system. The NASW (n.d.) principles are:

> 1) Education/School Reform, helping schools meet their federal, state and local mandates; 2) Social Justice, supporting equal education opportunity for all students in need and finding resources to address disparities; and 3) Multitier Interventions, providing school-wide intervention, direct services to struggling students and leading in prevention and intervention efforts.

These principles and standards reflect the values of the profession, the changing needs of the profession, the clients they serve and the schools. The eleven standards

developed define the scope of services with school social work profession and ensure the highest quality of services are provided. The NASW (n.d.) standards include:

1) Ethics and values - will use the NASW code of ethics as a guide in ethical decision-making;

2) Qualifications – follow state professional regulations and have specialized knowledge and understanding of the education system;

3) Assessment - will conduct assessments using the ecological perspective of individuals, families and organizations to better understand their needs in order to improved students' academic outcome;

4) Intervention - use evidence-informed practice with the goal of improving students' social emotional, behavioral and academic outcomes;

5) Decision making and practice evaluation solving – use data to inform their practice and evaluate their level of effectiveness and outcomes align with school goals;

6) Record keeping - maintain accurate records and data relevant to school social work outcomes;

7) Workload management - organize their work in an effective and efficient manner;

8) Professional development – pursue continuous education that will enhance skill and knowledge in order to provide better services;

9) Cultural competency – develop knowledge and understanding of culturally appropriate services in order to recognize barriers to academic success and support a positive school climate;

10) Interdisciplinary leadership and collaboration - provide leadership in supporting a positive school climate and inform other school personnel of the factors in the school, home and community that effect a students' education, and collaborate with school-based programs and community partners to promote students' wellbeing and academic success:

11) Advocacy – working with students and families to ensure all students have equal access to education and services; and addressing local, state and national governments about their needs.

These principles and standards help guide school social workers in their practice and are reflective of social work values. As a distinct specialty within the social work profession, school social work requires specialized knowledge and understanding of education systems.

Other organizations also describe the role of a school social worker. The School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) (n.d.) defines school social workers as:

> Trained mental health professionals with a degree in social work who provide services related to a person's social, emotional and life adjustment to school and/or society. School social workers are the link between the home, school and community in providing direct as well as indirect services to students, families and school personnel and support students' academic and social success. (p. 1)

In Minnesota, the MSSWA created a manual for school social workers to clarify their role in the schools. Information in this manual includes ten chapters outlining the role of school social workers, licensing requirements, professional development, legal mandates, student evaluation and assessment procedures, school services, special

education policies and procedures, children's mental health and professional resources provided by experts in the field. However, this manual lacks specific information on how to work with American Indian students.

In general school social workers tasks include: individual, group and family counseling, advocacy, consultation, community partnership, interdisciplinary team collaboration, needs assessment, and program and policy development (Constable, 2016, p. 15). Allen–Meares (2004) article mentioned tasks school social workers should perform given recent legislation and mandates to work with specific student populations (e.g., developmental delayed). This list includes:

> in-service training of teachers and consultation, developing home-school partnerships, conducting social development studies, promoting children's social competence, developing peer-based conflict resolution strategies, reducing social conflict in high school, working on behalf of child protection, helping develop individual family services plans and integrating disabled children in the school. (Allen-Meares, 2004, p. 561)

One study found that having a school social worker in the school would increase the number of students graduating from high school; however, the research did not address particular aspects of school social work practice (Alvarez, Bye, Bryant, & Mumm, 2013). Agresta (2004) surveyed 183 school social workers and found they spent most of their time doing individual counseling, group counseling, and administrator and teacher consultation. Their role is wide ranging and complex.

Oftentimes, the school social worker's role is not understood or valued (Garrett, 2006). School social workers are frequently unsure of their role in schools due to a lack

of a uniform definition at the local, state and national level (Richard & Villarreal Sosa, 2014). This leaves them vulnerable to unclear standards and expectations (Garrett, 2006) which may lead to job dissatisfaction and impact performance (Richard & Villarreal Sosa, 2014). These barriers may impact their effectiveness when working with American Indian students. How do school social workers provide services to American Indian students when their role is not well-defined?

School Social Work Services

There is a lack of research articles on social work services related to American Indian students. The following search terms were used along with Academic Search Premier (EBSCO) social work database to identify peer-reviewed articles. When the term "school interventions," was used the number of articles that appeared were 9,736. When the search was narrowed down to "Native American", only 47 articles appeared. Themes developed for the following subjects: obesity/health (13), HIV/AIDS (4), substance abuse (7), disabilities, (2), reducing delinquent behavior (1), elders in the school (1), incongruent curriculum (2), school violence (3), cognitive behavior interventions (3), interventions not specific to Native Americans (7) and unrelated (4). During a similar search using the terms "school intervention" and "American Indian," 48 articles appeared. These themes developed for the following subjects: obesity/health (19), HIV/AIDS (3), substance abuse (3), disabilities (2), reducing delinquent behavior (1), elders in the school (1), incongruent curriculum (1), school violence (3), suicide (1), cognitive behavior interventions (3), reading (1), LGBT (1), eating disorder (1), partnerships/community (2), interventions not specific to American Indian (6), and

unrelated (1). The overarching theme for these social work services in including cultural related practices specific to each tribal community.

From this inquiry, there is limited information on prevention or intervention programs and services for American Indian students. It may be useful to provide school social workers with a guide for working with American Indian students similar to the *Manual for Social Work Practice* published by Minnesota School Social Worker Association, which clarifies the role of school social work services in Minnesota.

The following section will outline specific school social work services for American Indian students that were found in the literature and place them in three categories: Individual and group, school wide, family and community.

Individual and Group Services.

Attendance.

Attendance is a major contributor for children doing well in school. Students who are chronically absent have lower scores on achievement tests, are less engaged in class, and are at a higher risk of dropping out than their peers (Blad, 2017). According to Blad (2017), the reason why American Indian students do not do well in school is long-standing habits, cultural issues and poverty. Blad (2017) conducted a study with American Indian students attending Oregon's Williamina district elementary schools. In 2015-16, 33% of American Indian students missed at least 10% of school days in Oregon; the state average was 19% (Blad, 2017, p. 6). As part of the district's intervention plan, they hired a school attendance coordinator to do the following tasks: visit students at home, work with parents to create a contingency plan, pick up and drop off students from school, connect students to community resources, hold support groups

for students who had been bullied, and reward students with exceptional attendance (Blad, 2017). The outcome of this intervention was a decrease in school absenteeism at the elementary level; it dropped from 43.2% to 36.5% among American Indian students (Blad, 2017, p. 6). School social workers are in a position to address school absenteeism and truancy by understanding the risk factors to include the environmental and interpersonal factors associated with students missing school (Teasley, 2004). According to Hendron & Kearney (2016) their study looked at whether school climate was directly related to chronic absenteeism and found absenteeism to be linked to other serious issues: "behavioral disorders, lower reading and mathematics test scores, lower academic performance and achievement, fewer literacy skills, grade retention, juvenile justice system involvement, and dropout" (p. 109). In their study, truancy was linked to differences in teaching and learning styles, inconsistent enforcement of truancy policies, poor interaction between parent and school personnel, unsupportive teachers and lack of understanding of diversity issues (Hendron & Kearney, 2016). Teasley (2004) recommended that school social workers should work with teachers to assess culture and linguistic differences, and the school social worker can find out information on the student's background in order to inform teachers so that they can design culturally relevant curriculum as it relates to a student's experience. School social workers are skilled in addressing truancy issues because of their ability to work with multilevel systems (e.g. school administration, teachers, students, families and other agencies). They are also knowledgeable about social service agencies and other support organizations and are able to connect students and their families to needed resources.

Trauma.

American Indian youth face higher rates of psychological symptoms than the overall population in the United States (Goodkind et al., 2010) and for American Indian youth over the age of 12, they experience 2.5 times the rate of violent victimization than for all other races and higher levels of traumatic events (Lucero & Bussey, 2015, p. 103). According to Goodkind et al., (2010), these disparities have developed within a context of oppression, poverty, cultural loss, high rates of victimization, exposure to violence, and other daily chronic stressors. In Goodkind et al., (2010) study, they choose Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma (CBIT) because it was specifically designed to treat children from ethnically diverse backgrounds and was implemented with American Indian children as substance abuse and suicide prevention intervention focused on improving coping and problem solving skills. In their study, social workers along with psychologists teamed up to implement CBIT to a group of twenty-four American Indian students who were experiencing significant levels of both violence exposure and PTSD symptoms (Goodkind et al., 2010). Their results indicate that CBIT intervention has positive effects on American Indian youth in sixth to eighth grades and they showed significant decreases in PTSD, anxiety and avoidant coping (Goodkind et al., 2010). The CBIT intervention was adapted to be culturally sensitive and altered to fit in with the local tribal community. For example, "incorporating cultural beliefs about the way trauma affects health, causes of trauma-related illnesses, and effective cultural practices for treating these problems" were included in the CBIT intervention (Goodkind et al., 2010, p. 862). School social workers are trained as mental health professionals with skills to provide students' social and emotional support as well as adjustment to school

and are effective in implementing trauma-informed practices to improve students' outcomes (Crosby, 2015).

In the past, poorly adapted mental health treatments lead to mistrust and a reluctance to seek treatment for some American Indians. For an intervention to be helpful, it must be based on an understanding of indigenous perspectives (Bigfoot & Schmidt, 2010). Bigfoot & Schmidt (2010) developed Honoring Children, Mending the Circle a cultural adaptation of trauma-focused CBIT that supports American Indian cultural views of wellbeing. This treatment included attending to and listening to the children; cultural beliefs about sexuality, gender roles, parenting practices, and family and social relationships; and included parents in the intervention (Bigfoot & Schmidt, 2010). School social workers are frontline personnel that can assist school and parents with early identification of student mental health issues and seek culturally appropriate treatment. Patchell, Robbins, Lowe, & Hoke (2015) supported the importance of having culturally tailored substance abuse interventions for adolescent American Indian youth and their study demonstrated a dramatic decrease in substance abuse.

In general, Forester et al., (2017) revealed that youth who have supportive relationships with adults outside the family are able to cope with adverse circumstances, which promotes academic achievement. Early & Vonk (2001) reviewed 21 studies from 1979 to 2000 and discovered that overall, school social work interventions were beneficial in helping youth with mental health or related health issues. Children obtained skills to solve problems and improved peer relationships and intrapersonal skills through interventions targeted at risk reduction and enhancing protective factors (Early & Vonk, 2001). While there are not many resources on effective interventions that school social

workers can draw from, it has been proven that social work services have a positive outcome on related mental health issues, which along with providing a supportive relationship, can be particularly beneficial to American Indian students.

Suicide Prevention.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2018) in 2015, American Indian suicide rates in the 27 states participating in the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) were 22.2 per 100,000, more than 3.5 times higher than those among racial/ethnic group with the lowest rates. American Indian youth have the highest rate of suicide among 15-24 years old in the United States compared to the rest of the population (Goodkind, LaNove, & Milford, 2010, p. 858), and suicide is the second leading cause of death (Hamilton & Rolf, 2010). The rate of suicide for this same group is "37.4 per 100,000 compared to 11.4 per 100,000 for all U.S. youth" (LaFromboise & Lewis, 2008, p. 343). It is the third leading cause of death for American Indians "ages 10-14 years old with the rate of suicide is 2.1 compared to .8 for all U.S. youth" (LaFromboise & Lewis, 2008, p. 343). These statistics show that American Indian youth exhibit a greater need for prevention and intervention services. According to Hamilton & Rolf (2010), some of the characteristics of this epidemic are:

1) Suicide occurs more often among males although more females are likely to try it;

2) Female attempts are a result of depression which is a consequence of racism and sexual abuse; and

3) Males use more lethal methods (e.g. guns, hangings) whereas, females try overdosing on drugs.

In addition, tribes with high levels of individualism and tribes going through social and economic struggles experience more suicides (Hamilton & Rolf, 2010).

Two studies covered a successful high school based preventative intervention named the Zuni Life Skills Development Program. This program used a skills training approach and taught students on how to communicate, problem-solve, work through depression, anger management and goal setting, giving students the opportunity to discuss issues affecting them such as depression, stress, sexuality and grieving (LaFromboise & Lewis, 2008; Hamilton & Rolf, 2010). The school-based program resulted in students experiencing reduced suicidal thoughts and behavior and less hopelessness as well as increased problem-solving skills and suicide intervention skills (LaFromboise & Lewis, 2008). The need for suicide prevention programs is critical for American Indian students due to the high number that contemplate suicide and school social workers can be the supportive adult for children who face adversity and provide a link between school, home and community and in needed areas where support is deteriorating.

School-wide Services.

Bully Prevention.

In the United States, about 30% of children experience some form of bullying, such as victims, bullies or bully/victims (Evans, Fraser & Cotter, 2014). Zyromski, Bryant, & Gerler (2009) reported that 22% of American Indian students reported being threatened or injured with a weapon at school. Examples of bullying are: teasing or name calling, being the subject of rumors, being pushed, shoved, tripped or spit on, threatened with harm, being excluded from peers, having property destroyed, and being forced to do

something they did not want to do (Robers, Zhang, Truman, & Snyder, 2010). The victims of bullying may suffer from poor outcomes such as, social and academic adjustment, depression and anxiety and bullies suffer from similar negative consequences such as, depression, anxiety, relationship difficulties and criminal behavior (Evans et al., 2014). School social workers play an important role in anti-bullying by addressing the emotional and mental needs of students in collaboration with teachers. Students are more likely to report bullying when they perceive staff as caring, fair and competent (Williford, 2015). Comprehensive school-wide intervention programs are most effective at reducing bullying. Evans et al., (2014) examined twenty-four bullying interventions and suggested, "The prevention approach that is targeted and culturally focused may be more effective than one developed for the general population" (p. 540) especially for American Indians.

One intervention that looks promising is expanding curricula offerings to include the historical and contemporary portrayal of American Indians (Johnston-Goodstar & VeLure Roholt, 2017). Both teachers and school social workers could review textbooks for negative content on American Indians, which would help in promoting a positive identity for American Indian youth (Johnston-Goodstar & VeLure Roholt, 2017). A similar idea is to conduct an environmental assessment examining content on the walls of hallways, classrooms and common areas to assess if posters, pictures and artwork are not offensive to American Indian students. School professionals must also be self-aware of their own microaggressions when they interact with American Indian students (Johnston-Goodstar & VeLure Roholt, 2017).

School social workers can play a central role in ameliorating school climate for American Indian students. Hendron & Kearney (2016) wrote that the key elements of school climate are quality of student and teacher relationships, interpersonal relationships, "student autonomy, order, safety and clear and consistent rules and goals, parent involvement, class organization and effective instructional methods" (p. 109). The literature demonstrates that school-wide anti-bullying interventions are most effective, and students were more likely to report when they thought that school staff were fair and competent when addressing bullying (Williford, 2015).

Research signifies school social workers often deliver school-wide interventions (e.g., bullying) to improve student behavior, especially for students at-risk (Anyon, Nicotera, & Veeh, 2016). However, these interventions may require the school social worker to collaborate with school personnel to address issues that prevent them from being adopted school-wide and coach and support school staff as they learn how to implement these new approaches (Anyon et al., 2016). School social workers need to act as advocates and allies for families from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who may feel that they do not have the "necessary invitation, background, social cultural resources to participate or advocate for their children's education" (Alamada-Lawson, Lawson, & Lawson, 2010, p. 173). This will create a safer and more welcoming place for American Indian students. Social workers have the skills and knowledge to take a leadership role in creating improved the school climate for students using the ecological perspective (Hopson & Lawson, 2010). The limitations of many of these studies is they do not specifically address American Indian students and bullying. School social

workers need to be aware of the number of American Indian students being bullied at their school and work with school, parents and tribal community to address the problem.

Substance Abuse Prevention.

Substance use and abuse are critical health issues with American Indian youth. Alcohol use begins early for American Indian youth and by the 12th grade, 80%-90% of American Indian youth are active drinkers (Patchell, 2015; Lowe, Liang, Henson, & Riggs, 2016). Characteristics of American Indian youth who are "most likely to use substances are those who have close ties to substance using peers, do not perform well in school, do not strongly identify with American Indian culture, and come from families where family members abuse substances" (Lowe et al., 2016, p. 998). In addition, stress produced by threats to the survival of their tribal community, erosion of the interdependence of the family, discrimination and poverty creates a context for risky health behaviors (Lowe et al., 2016). Lowe et al., (2016) examined the effects of a culturally-based school intervention for the prevention of substance abuse for American Indian youth named Cherokee Talking Circle. This intervention engaged students in talking circles lead by a counselor and cultural expert (Lowe et al., 2016). The results of this study verified that culturally appropriate prevention programs are more effective for the reduction of substance use and an increase in general wellbeing. This school-based program did not include a school social worker, but they are skilled in counseling and can be included.

A study completed by Komro, Livingston, Wagenaar, Kominsky, Pettigrew, & Garrett (2017) evaluated the effectiveness of two school interventions to prevent underage drinking for both American Indian (50%) and White (50%) students. The first

intervention was Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (CMCA), a community organizing intervention designed to reduce alcohol access, use and have consequences for underage youth (Komro et al., 2017). In the second intervention, CONNECT, the school social workers spent half of their time serving as CONNECT's coach, using motivating interviewing to encourage healthy behavior related to the consumption of alcohol, and the other time providing typical social work services, such as linking students and their families to relevant community agencies (Komro et al., 2017). Over time, both interventions were effective in reduction in current use, binge drinking, and alcohol related consequences for both American Indian and White students. The success of CONNECT was based on the cultural appropriateness of motivational interviewing skills because it is non-confrontational, collaborative, emphasizes respect and empowerment (Komro et al., 2017). Not all schools have a substance abuse prevention intervention program, which may be vital for schools that have a large American Indian population, considering the high number that end up drinking by the 12th grade. School social worker roles may need to advocate for this type of program, find funding and seek community support.

Students' Cultural Identity.

Positive perceptions of ethnic identity are associated with an increase in wellbeing. Smokowski, Evans, Cotter, & Webber (2013) study demonstrated the effects of ethnic identity on anxiety symptoms, depressive symptoms, and externalizing behavior in American Indians, White, African American, and Latino youth. They describe ethnic self-identification as a person's knowledge about his or her ethnic group (e.g., culture, traditions, customs, values, behaviors), and feelings regarding his or her own ethnic

group (Smokowski et al., 2013). Smokowski et al., (2013) contends, "cultural identity is a protective factor that bonds many American Indians together and forms the foundation for identity development" (p. 344). It is especially important for American Indian youth considering their high rates of depression and mental health disorders.

School social workers can help students increase resilience to overcome risk factors by building a positive identity. Brooks (2006) defined resilience as "achieving positive outcomes despite risk" (p. 69). Stumblingbear-Riddle & Romans (2012) defined resilience as a "dynamic process that enables the individual to respond or adapt under adverse situations" which in more recent research includes culture as a resource for resilience (p. 2). For American Indians, culture is an important strength (Weaver, 1999) and having a positive attitude toward one's identity enhanced their self-esteem, improved ability to cope with psychological distress, and avoid or lessen depression (Michaels, 2010). Stumblingbear-Riddle & Romans (2012) "found connections to American Indian culture appear to be protective factors that lead to resilient outcomes such as school success" (p. 3). School success was measured by student's attitudes, school involvement, grades and plans to graduate and attend college (Stumblingbear-Riddle & Romans, 2012). This study also found that social support from friends contributes to resiliency (Stumblingbear-Riddle & Romans, 2012), and school social workers can be an important resource by providing peer support groups.

Flugaur-Leavitt (2017) agreed, "that culture is a protective factor for American Indian youth" (p. 188) and recognized the cultural differences in the structure of the school system and in American Indian students. She cited the Wilder Report 2010, "reinforcement of culture and ethnic identity were identified as protective factors that

promoted health and wellbeing for American Indian students" (Flugaur-Leavitt, 2017, p. 188). The Wilder Report (2010) found that American Indian school-aged children who participated in a culturally-based year-round program in Minneapolis and showed "higher signs of culture connectedness, perceived more positive expectations from their peers, and indicated better emotional wellbeing than a comparison group of similar children" (Flugaur-Leavitt, 2017, p. 29). James, Chavez, Beauvais, Edwards, & Oetting (1995) study suggested, "stronger cultural identification with Indian heritage and culture which clearly should be more common among Indian youth, might promote poor academic performance and dropping out" (p. 185). Culturally specific services are necessary to the wellbeing of American Indians and validated clients' feelings, leading to increased self-esteem, cultural pride and identification (Weaver, 1999). While American Indian students face elevated risk of mental health disorders because of adverse environmental circumstances, school social workers can find ways to help American Indian students develop a strong cultural identity.

Student Motivation.

Students' motivation is central to academic achievement and persistence in school. Motivation has been defined by Long (2007) as a "temporal sequence that is started, sustained, directed and finally terminated" which examines why people think and behave as they do (p. 107). Research indicates that perceived school experiences about academic competence, school belonging, and parent involvement were positively related to achievement motivation (Ibanex, Kuperminc, Jurkovic, & Perilla (2004). The purpose of their study was to understand the perceptions of Latino youth in order to determine how schools can provide culturally tailored intervention that would promote academic

motivation (Ibanez et al., 2004). Ibanez et al., (2004) discovered that school belonging, and parent involvement lead to motivation. However, their study did not examine the association between perceived school experiences and motivation as it pertains to cultural traits or values, and changes to them (Ibanez et al., 2004). Power (2005) measured motivation and suggested that school personnel should create an "individualized intervention plan" for American Indian students when they begin to fall behind in school, however, warned against putting them in remedial activities (p. 341). School social workers can help with this plan.

School Connectedness.

School connectedness is a construct related to school climate which refers to a student feeling accepted, valued and included in school (Hendron & Kearney, 2016). School connectedness is students' general perceptions of their relationship to school and can lead to "enhanced perceptions of school connectedness relate to improved grades, higher academic performance, and graduation from high school." (Anderson et al., 2012, p. 186). It is another factor that influences student success at school and relates to all aspects of a school life including parent/guardian involvement. However, the history of boarding schools makes it difficult for American Indian families and their children to trust their school and teachers (Clarren, 2017). School belonging may be most critical for students who are likely to feel alienated or unaccepted in a place whose values and beliefs are different from their own (Ibanez et al., 2004). Schools that are more welcoming to parents and the community showed a more positive school climate (Hampton-Thompson & Galindo, 2017). Power (2005) agreed stating, "parental involvement is critical to assisting American Indian students in negotiating mainstream

culture of public schools" (p. 340). However, parents may need help in assisting their children's academic needs (Power, 2005). Hendron & Kearney (2016) analyzed school climate and its relationship to absenteeism and discovered factors related to a student not feeling connected to school was curriculum does not meet individual student needs, rigid punitive disciplinary methods, conflict between teacher and student, and disregard the cultural needs of a student and their family, which lead to greater rates of absenteeism. Hopson & Lawson (2011) study focused on creating a positive school climate in one school district and suggested, "interventions that facilitated active collaboration between school social workers and teachers in the classroom resulted in improved behavior, self-control, social appropriateness, and student responsibility for homework as well as fewer absences" (p. 108).

Kenney & Singh (2016) report on ACEs with American Indian children realized the following, "Having been treated or judged unfairly based on race/ethnicity was approximately seven times more common among American Indian children than White children (10% versus 1.4%). Lewis & Keung (1975) suggest it is the social workers' responsibility to acquire relevant knowledge about the American Indian culture so that they may provide effective treatment. Weaver (1999) expands on this idea by stating that the social workers should be knowledgeable about the clients they are serving to include history, culture and values and by recognizing their own biases and then they must be able to integrate this knowledge into their practice skills. Skills for culturally competent practice would include utilizing the problem-solving process and communication style (e.g. patience, value silence and listening) (Weaver, 1999). A joint effort by everyone involved is necessary to accomplish this goal (Lewis & Keung Ho, 1975). One way for

school social workers to be a bridge is to understand the culture of the students they are working with (Flugaur-Leavitt, 2017) and share that information with teachers and school personnel.

Family and Community Services.

Family Involvement.

In the literature, the importance of family has been identified as a protective factor for American Indian youth. Successful interventions with American Indian children can develop from building a strong alliance with their families (Dykeman et al., 1995). Family involvement can empower families and lead to improved attitudes toward school (Broussard, 2003). Student also benefit by experiencing reduced drop-out rates, increased attendance, and improved self-esteem, motivation and behavior (Broussard, 2003). However, family involvement in schools can be jeopardized by a teacher's lack of understanding cultural differences, since most teachers are from white, middle-class backgrounds (Broussard, 2003; Dykeman et al., 1995). Stereotypes held by school professionals alienate American Indians students and their families and should be replaced with more accurate and positive perspectives including the importance of extended family in the life of a student (Dykeman et al., 1995). School social workers can share their knowledge about racial and ethnic diversity to help build on the strengths of all families (Broussard, 2003). Through cultural understanding, school social workers can help eliminate negative assumptions about American Indian children not being prepared for school because of their own family situation (Dykeman et al., 1995). Dykeman et al., (1995) study analyzed the importance of school professionals understanding the cultural characteristics of American Indian families they were working

with and suggested allowing an America Indian student longer time to disclose personal information about family or school problems and soliciting input from the students and their family on who should be participating in family therapy interventions.

Bowen's (1999) study involved a social work intern providing families with educational materials and home activities, such as helping with homework, to improve the academic and behavioral goals for each student. School social workers can promote student school success by forming partnerships between the school and family by "directly facilitating school-family communications and ensuring that educational resources are shared with parents" (Bowen, 1999, p. 44). School social workers can promote student's success by taking a leadership role in developing strong school-family partnerships.

Community Partnerships.

Community partnerships, to include tribal communities are an important resource for American Indian students and their families. Many American Indian students arrive at school with unmet needs, which make it difficult to learn in school. Schools must find ways to address these personal barriers (e.g. aggression, antisocial attitudes, poor peer relations and family conflict) and oftentimes, must find organizations outside of school to partner with in order to "foster resilience and capacity building among high-risk youth" (Anderson-Butcher, Stetler & Midle, 2006, p. 156). School social workers can facilitate school-community partnerships by promoting coordination, serve as referrals to program, services and other resources, providing leadership in the formation of these partnerships and advocating on behalf of those in need (Anderson-Butcher, et al., 2006). In a study

completed by Anderson-Butcher et al., (2006) they outlined several specific courses of action:

1. Facilitating a needs assessment and leading in identifying and addressing gaps in service.
2. Encouraging stronger relationships between school staff and agency staff through more frequent communication.
3. Lead school-community partnerships through capacity building initiative.
4. Help operate school-based social services.
5. Develop teams that promote regular communication and coordination among those working inside and outside of school.
6. Create early problem identification processes and referrals. (p. 161-162)

School social workers can play a key role in utilizing current community resources allowing for more effective and efficient delivery of services. Community partnerships should also include working with local Indian tribes and Indian organizations.

One study examined the extent to which the Wichetowak Partnership influenced educational outcomes for Aboriginal students in a local Canadian school district. Many of the Aboriginal families in the study lived in poverty and parents typically felt unwelcomed in the schools and believed that teachers had low expectations for their children's academic achievement and that administration held paternalistic attitudes towards them (Tunison, 2013). To help address this, a partnership formed with seven First Nations tribes, one urban Aboriginal organization and one Canadian urban school district to form Wichetowak Partnership with the goal of improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal students (Tunison, 2013). A component of this partnership was the Aboriginal perceptive of a holistic approach. The Aboriginals in Canada believe that "the purpose of learning is to develop the skills, knowledge, values and wisdom needed to honor and protect the natural world and ensure the long-term sustainability of life" (Tunison, 2013, p. 569). For "Aboriginal peoples culture defines not only knowledge but

also the means by which that knowledge is acquired" such as oral teachings (Tunison, 2013, p. 570). One major outcome of this study was a more positive and supportive environment within the schools, school district and community-at-large which is necessary for student success. Although students' grades, test scores and attendance were not measured, this study demonstrated that American Indian students learn more and do better when home, school and community work together to support students' learning.

For interventions to be effective for American Indian students, they must include culturally-informed practices. Liddle & Burnette (2007) describe culturally-informed prevention efforts with American Indians as:

(a) efforts must be culturally specific by nation; (b) Indigenous cultures contain protective factors and ingredients for substance free youth; (c) cultural ways of knowledge must be viewed as equal to science prevention knowledge; (d) culturally specific risk and protective factors exist in each culture, and their identification and incorporation is necessary for successful prevention efforts; (e) ownership must exist for culturally specific prevention programs; and (f) there is a hunger for cultural knowledge. (p. 355)

Culturally-informed interventions have been found to increase retention by 40% in comparison to non-culturally-informed interventions (Liddell & Burnette, 2017). To understand American Indians students, a school social worker must not only focus on the student but also factors that may influence the behavior and then implement culturally-based interventions. The ecological perspective recognizes that each person functions within a complex network of individual, family, school and community and considers the individual's relationship to his or her surroundings (Mmari, et al., 2010). All of these

environments must be taken into consideration when working with youth, which for American Indian youth include how they see themselves as Indian people and how they interact with their own tribal community.

The literature describes school social workers role and emphasizes what they can do to improve the wellbeing of American Indian students so that they are better prepared to learn. Peer reviewed articles illustrate the need to provide culturally relevant prevention and interventions programs to American Indian youth through individual and group level services, school-wide programs, and family and community partnerships. However, the research is limited. My research project will contribute to social work practices, specific to American Indian students.

Summary

To quote Sally Jewel, former Secretary of Interior, "The future of Indian country rests on ensuring American Indian children receive a world-class education that honors their culture, languages, and identities as Indian people" (Native Youth Report, 2014, p. 38). The status of American Indian education is in crisis with school and personal issues keeping students from graduating. My own personal experience sheds light on some of these problems. Fortunately, my father stepped in and advocated on my behalf when it was necessary, and I have done the same for my own son. However, not all American Indian parents are able to advocate for their children and need school allies to be the bridge between home and school. In the past, social workers have not effectively served American Indians. Part of this failure occurred because social workers lacked the cultural understanding of American Indian children and their families. Another problem is that the role of the school social worker is often undefined, and unclear not only to

themselves, but to other professionals. However, school social workers have the skills and expertise to address the barriers that students face at school and at home. They can take a leadership role in helping schools meet their obligation to educate American Indian students and can ameliorate students' lives through social work interventions while building a positive collaborative relationship between home and school and communities.

After reviewing peer-viewed articles, there seems to be a lack in the literature on specific, effective school social work services and interventions for American Indian students. This preliminary study will describe the professional practices of three school social workers with American Indian students in a public school setting on an Indian reservation. Findings from this study will acquire new knowledge and expand on the existing literature on school social work and may suggest a need for a guide when working with American Indian students. This quote reflects the goal of this study, "Failure does not have to be the destiny for Native American students" (Clarren, 2017, p. 18). We all have a role in improving the lives of American Indian youth and this study will be a step in that direction.

Chapter Three

Methodology

American Indian students face many challenges that impact their wellbeing; therefore, there is a need to better understand school social workers' role in providing support to American Indian students. This study will describe the professional practices of school social workers with American Indian students in a public school setting on an Indian reservation. School social workers focus on the social and environmental contexts of students' lives and experiences in order to positively impact their wellbeing and improve their education outcomes. Professional practice for school social workers includes a wide range of services as outlined in the literature review as well as advocating for the rights of students and families within a school and community setting. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) directs social workers to practice advocacy when working with vulnerable populations. The focus of this study will be on finding out what school social workers are doing in the school to help American Indian students.

The research question for this study was: What are the professional practices of school social workers with American Indian students in a public school setting on an Indian reservation? Sub-questions for this study were:

1. What are school social workers doing to help American Indian students?
2. Are the experiences of school social workers consistent with accepted professional principles and standards?

Research Design

This study used a descriptive case study design to help me to understand what was happening in a given situation and the actions of the participants (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). Yin (2009) describes a case study approach has 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). I adopted an in-depth single case study to investigate how school social workers work with American Indian students in a public school setting on an American Indian reservation. The use of a single case study allowed me to focus on a single issue, one unit of analysis, within a bounded context (Quinn Patton, 2002). The intent of this study was to understand the attributes and nuances of how the role of school social workers functions in the lives of American Indian students. A case study design is used when a "how" or "why" question is being asked about a contemporary set of events in which the investigator has little or no control (Yin, 2009, p.13). The case study design provides a way to gather, organize and analyze data resulting in a more in-depth study (Quinn Patton, 2002). This design included multiple sources of evidence in data collection to provide detailed information. The sources of evidence were collected from a survey of student issues vital to their health and wellbeing (e.g. Minnesota Student Survey), interviews with school social workers and journaling. This strategy allowed me to understand the school context of school social workers in order to gain a better understanding of their everyday interactions with American Indian students and gain insight into the students and their experiences. This design provides multiple sources of data to answer the following broad guiding questions "What is going on? What problems

do the participants have? How are they trying to solve them?" (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013, p. 188).

According to Yin (2003) research design for a case study must also address four design issues: (a) construct validity, (b) internal validly, (c) external validity, and (d) reliability.

Construct validity is using multiple sources of evidence during data collection (Yin, 2003). This study design will satisfy this requirement by collecting data from three different sources: 1) a survey pertaining to student issues vital to their health and wellbeing; 2) interviews with school social work; and 3) journaling my observations after interview.

According to Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams & Blackman (2016), transferability is a type of external validity and refers to the degree to which the findings described in one study are applicable to another study. In other words, the findings could be applicable to other contexts.

Internal validity is seeking to establish a causal relationship, which will not be applicable here since this is a descriptive case study and no causality will be explored (Yin, 2003).

Finally, reliability of the design is demonstrated when the operations of a study can be repeated with the same results (Lin, 2003). The use of a case study protocol used in the data collection process included a specific way to gather, organize and analyze data. All of this has been documented to ensure reliability. In addition, a case study database has been established to code the data.

Theoretical Framework

The ecological systems theoretical framework is used to analysis this study because "it places individuals or students at the center of a series of nested and interactive contexts that work synergistically to support or detract from students' experiences in school" (Moritz, Rudasill, Snyder, Levinson, & Adelson, 2018, p. 36). This framework establishes a connection between home and school. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory describes the influence of external environment on the functioning of families as contexts of human development or person-in-environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, p. 723). This theory conveys the interrelatedness of these key environments (home and school) and their impact on the development of the child (Blandin, 1992). This is a useful framework for analyzing how school social workers interact with American Indian students because they are the link between school and home.

Participants and Setting

This study took place at School District A located on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation. There were three White school social workers interviewed for this research project. Their social work experience ranged from 24-28 years, including 4-11 years' experience at School District A.

In 2017, there were a total of 228 high school students enrolled in School District A. Ninety percent of the total student enrollment were American Indian (205 students), seven percent of the student enrollment was White (15 students), Latino students represented one percent (3 students), and 5 students identified as Two or More Races (Minnesota Department Education, n.d.). Of all the students, 26.3% receive special education services; 76.8% receive free/reduced lunch and 2.6% are homeless

(Minnesota Department Education, n.d.). The student population is predominantly American Indian and it is assumed that the various groups identified by race will generally be evenly distributed across school wide descriptive studies such as the 2017 US Census Bureau data. The school is located in Cass County, which has an unemployment rate off 6.3%, and the percentage of families living below the poverty level is 12.2%. It is not unusual to see higher percentages of unemployment and families living below the poverty level in counties on or near Indian reservations, which places them more at risk to poor health and low educational attainment.

Data Gathering and Analysis

Data Collection

Evidence was collected through a survey (e.g. MSS), interviews and journaling. The first source of collected data was from the Minnesota Student Survey for 2016, which is available online and shows data by school districts across the state. This data provided an excellent way to gain additional information about School District A students' school experiences within the school context from the students' point of view.

The second source of data was the interviews with three school social workers. I used purposive sampling in this study to identify school social workers employed at School District A to be interviewed. Purposive sampling was used in this study because it involves selecting participants that are best able to help me understand the problem and research question (Creswell, 2009). The superintendent for School District A provided the names of five school social workers and their contact information for this study; three agreed to be interviewed.

An interview protocol was used (Creswell, 2007) for asking questions and recording answers to five open-ended questions identified to capture or learn school social workers day-to-day experiences with American Indian students. The five questions identified were: 1) How would you describe a day at work? 2) How would you describe the daily challenges you face when working with students? 3) How would you describe interventions that you most frequently use with students? 4) How would you describe the support you receive from other school staff/professionals when working with American Indian students? and 5) How would you describe what a perfect day would look like at school? Additional questions were asked during the one-on-one interviews in order to clarify or expand on a given answer. The interview was semi-structured which appeared to be the best approach since I was interviewing the participant only once and it allowed me to decide how best to use the set-aside time (Savin-Baden & Howell Major). The semi-structured interviews lasted between 1 hour to 1 ½ hours and they were audiotape recorded and transcribed (Creswell, 2015). Interviews were conducted at a site chosen by the participant which included my office at Bemidji State University (BSU) or their school office. There was an incentive given (e.g. wild rice or BSU mug) to each school social worker either before or after the interviews were completed as compensation for participating in the study (Creswell, 2015). According to Creswell (2007) it is recommended to use a pilot test to refine the interview questions and procedures used. A pilot test of the proposed questions was conducted with a former graduate student who currently is a school social worker in a public school located in Virginia, Minnesota. What made her an ideal candidate is that she is American Indian

with a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree and has spent much of her career working in a school setting near an Indian reservation in northern Minnesota.

The third source of data was journaling after each interview reflections and observations (e.g. experiences, feelings, and hunches) that were recorded immediately following the interview (Creswell, 2015).

Ethics is a critical issue in qualitative research (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013) and involves causing no harm to participants and transparency of process (how the data will be collected, interpreted and disseminated) as well as the quality of the research. To ensure participants voices are heard, collected data was shared, analyzed and interpreted with the participants (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). During this process, the transcription and coded themes to each of the interviews were shared with interview participants who were asked to comment on how accurate the interpretation was of the interview.

The NASW (n.d.) also outlines research protocols for social workers, including consulting with Institutional Review Boards (IRB). In accordance with both social work protocol and ethical research standards, I submitted an application to conduct this study to the IRB before beginning this study. The protocol for this study was determined by the IRB to not be human subjects research, due to the focus of this study on the *practices* of school social workers (See Appendix I). I also gained permission to conduct this study from the Director of Education for the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and from School District A's superintendent. To ensure collaboration with the stakeholders, the purpose and methodology of the research project, how data would be collected, used and disseminated including the disclosure of any potential ethical issues were shared. School

social workers that were to be interviewed were provided a brief overview of the study, procedures, and foreseeable risks, and they were informed that they were free to withdraw at any time without being penalized (Royse, 1999). They were further informed that their identity would not be known and that their names would be replaced by a synonym in the final dissemination of information. Each interview participant signed a written consent before the interview would proceed (Royse, 1999).

Case Study Protocol

Research Phases

Phase 1: From February-May 2019, the study and interview protocol were developed. The superintendent of School District A was contacted and a letter of support was obtained for this study. She provided the names and contact information for five school social workers as potential candidates to be interviewed. The Leech Lake Reservation Director of Education was contacted and a letter of support was obtained for the study. Both letters of support are not included in the Appendix, toward keeping the identity of the school district private.

Phase 2: From May-August 2019, the methodology was presented to the dissertation committee and approval was granted to move ahead with the study. Following committee approval, the protocol for this case study was submitted to the University of Minnesota's Institutional Review Board which, as noted prior, was determined not to be human subjects' research. A pilot test of questions and the interview protocol was developed. Beginning in August, school social worker participants were contacted by phone and/or email to set up interviews.

Phase 3: From September -November 2019, interviews, journaling and the analysis of the survey were completed. The interviews were transcribed verbatim with the help of a social work student at Bemidji State University.

Phase 4: In December 2019, analysis of interview data was completed, and the conclusions and findings were sent to my advisor.

Analysis Process

The interview data was analyzed using an approach outlined by Creswell (2007):

1) Create and organize files for data;

2) Read through text, make margin notes, form initial codes, describe the case and its context;

3) Use categorical aggregation to establish themes or patterns;

4) Use direct interpretation (e.g. the actual words of the school social workers);

5) Develop naturalistic generalizations; and

6) Present in-depth picture of the case using narrative, tables, and figures (p. 156-157).

Creswell recommended this specific approach for case studies, which was followed for this study. In addition, steps recommended by Angrosino (2007), were followed to see more clearly what the data contained. This included beginning with describing what was gathered from the survey, transcriptions and journaling from a through reading and proceeding to classification that identifies obvious themes noting their frequency (Angrosino, 2007). A two-column form was created to enter interview responses and spaces to write notes and/or themes (Creswell, 2007). The first column had the transcription for each interview. Themes identified were entered in the second column.

The notes that identified key themes related to the five questions were then color coded (e.g. Question #1=yellow; Question #2=pink; Question #3=green; Question #4= blue; Question #5=orange). The journaling was then compared to the themes for any comparisons and/or discrepancies. Identified themes were also peer-reviewed by student social worker using the same technique to ensure reliability of the study. The data was then coded to generate subthemes that were placed in a table. Each table contained the results for each question and its subthemes (Creswell, 2007; Creswell, 2009). The last portion of the study was a broad overview of the themes in the case study and how it compares to information in the literature review (Creswell, 2007). This information was also shared with the Department Chair of Social Work at Bemidji State University for a peer debriefing (Creswell & Miller, 2000). We discussed themes, presentation of tables and results that could be considered "golden nuggets."

Limitations

This preliminary study describes what school social workers are doing to help American Indian students and understanding the limitations and possibilities of social work practice in any particular seeking is important. One limitation to this study is that it cannot be generalized to other public school settings serving American Indian students due to the small number of school social workers interviewed. Also, this study is unable to draw a conclusion to the extent, appropriateness or efficacy of school social work practice among American Indian students. Another limitation is it cannot determine whether school social worker practice mitigates the barriers of at-risk students or makes a difference on academic progress and performance of American Indian students. Finally, because of privacy and confidential concerns observations from school social workers

having counseling sessions with students or general student interactions were not included. The implications for further well-designed studies is necessary to address these limitations.

Summary

A descriptive case study design was used in order to describe the professional practices of three school social workers with American Indian students in a public school setting on an Indian reservation. The findings from this study yield important information on how these three school social workers approached their professional work with American Indians students including incorporating culturally responsive services. The study revealed that they adhered to some of the professional principles and standards outline by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), however, it is not evident if or how they practiced all of them. The findings may also be transferable to other school settings. In other words, if a school district has a large, diverse population based on race, ethnicity, gender identity and so on, this study may be applicable. The limitations for this study were outlined, suggesting additional research. This study acquired new knowledge and expanded on the existing literature on school social work professional practice among American Indian students in order to gain a better understanding of school social work practice which may support the need for professional development and training.

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study is to describe the professional practices of school social workers in a public school setting on an Indian reservation with a predominate American Indian population (about 90%) in order to understand what school social workers do to meet the needs of American Indians students. This study identifies culturally specific practices by school social workers.

This chapter is organized according to data collected from the 2016 Minnesota Student Survey, interviews with three school social workers and my journaling. A discussion of the findings is found at the end of this chapter.

Results

The principal research question that forms the basis for this study is: What are the professional practices of school social workers with American Indian students in a public school setting on an Indian reservation? The reason I want to know the answer to this question is because of my own school experience that included racism and prejudice that was directed at me. I needed someone at school to be my advocate or ally. School social workers are trained and skilled to do just that, but do they in our current public school system? This study asks that question. The intent of this research question is to find answers to the following two sub questions:

1: What are school social workers doing to help American Indian students?

2: Are the experiences of school social workers consistent with accepted professional principles and standards?

In order to answer these questions, I looked at three different data sources. The first was a student survey administered by the state of Minnesota, the second was from interviews of three school social workers and the third was observations from my journaling.

Minnesota Student Survey

Data from the Minnesota Student Survey (2016) for students from School District A provides insight into students' health, wellbeing, and protective and risk factors. This data is helpful toward understanding the nature of social work services from which they may benefit. As experts of their own experiences when answering these types of questions, the authenticity of their responses was strengthened by the fact that the survey was anonymous. As documented in the literature review wellbeing is important for school success. Results from this survey indicated several potential risk factors for students attending this school that may lead them to not doing well and eventually dropping out of high school. The four categories that were identified from the survey that were relevant to students' success in school were teacher-student relationships; school attendance and suspension; violence at home and at school; and mental health.

The MSS data that reported results from students in the ninth and eleventh grade were significant in terms of indicating the extent to which they had positive relationships with their teachers. Between 25-33% of the ninth graders felt that teachers did not treat them fairly, listen to them or were interested in them. The numbers were higher for eleventh graders with, between 35-40% of eleventh graders reporting similar feelings. The results indicate that as students get older their relationship with their teachers becomes more negative. The implications for school social workers, is how to keep and

build on students' early positive experiences with teachers. What can they do to make students feel accepted and valued at school?

School attendance is known to be a problem in School District A. According to the MSS data, 33% of ninth graders skipped school at least once and 38% had school suspension whereas 38% of eleventh graders skipped school at least once and 24% had school suspension. The data indicates that younger students are more prone to suspension than the older students but skip school less frequently. Due to the importance of school attendance in student success, it would be important for school social workers to understand the reasons why younger students are getting school suspensions and older students are missing school. Is it easier for older students to miss school than younger students? If a quarter or more of a school's students are being suspended what are they being suspended for? What are the policies around suspension? These issues can be addressed by a school social worker.

The MSS data from School District A indicate that about 26-30%, of ninth graders felt harassed or bullied at school compared to 22-35% of eleventh graders. Interestingly, between 92-95% of ninth and eleventh graders felt safe at school. However, there appears to be a disconnect between students feeling safe at school and being harassed or bullied. Understanding what makes students feel safe, understanding the bullying problem at school and considering the percentage of children experiencing violence at home (11% for ninth graders and 19% for eleventh graders) school social workers need to study the extent of violence at school and at home to determine how it impacts school performance. School social workers can also create and implement school-wide anti-bullying programs.

Finally, data regarding mental health issues were reviewed. According to the MSS data for School District A, ninth and eleventh graders experience a hard time paying attention (68% & 65% respectively) and listening to instructions (49% & 41%), as well as feelings of depression or hopelessness (59% & 57%) and little interest in doing things (68% & 67%). Sadly, these numbers are extremely alarming. It can also be a warning for hurting oneself and potentially suicide, indeed 36% of ninth graders and 43% of eleventh graders think about killing themselves. Youth exposed to poverty and victimization are more likely to experience anxiety, depression, conduct disorder, post-traumatic stress, thoughts of suicide and perform poorly at school (Larson et al., 2017). Does this imply that more school social workers are needed at this school and/or they need to be trained in mental health? More detailed information will need to be gathered to find out how mental health concerns are being addressed at this school.

After reviewing all the risk factors for American Indian youth in the MSS data related to teacher-student relationship; school attendance and suspension; violence at home and at school; and mental health there was something positive pulled from the survey data. Surprisingly, 72% of eleventh graders plan on going to college. This is an increase from 57% of ninth graders planning on continuing their education after graduation. Though the reasons for this are not apparent, with so many students anticipating going to college, what can school social worker to keep this momentum going? Is this an indicator of resiliency? The superintendent of the school district suggested that a purpose of this study should also consider resiliency factors among students. Resiliency is another protective factor that may be linked to the number of

students graduating from this school and continuing onto college. Perhaps, there are other indicators of student resilience in the MSS that future studies could provide.

School Social Work Interviews

The results of the interviews of school social workers at School District A form the second set of data. In order to find out what school social workers were doing in school that may align with or not align with professional practices, three school social workers were asked five questions in hopes of capturing school social workers day-to-day experiences with American Indian students. The five open-ended questions identified were: 1) How would you describe a day at work? 2) How would you describe the daily challenges you face when working with students? 3) How would you describe interventions that you most frequently use with students? 4) How would you describe the support you receive from other school staff/professionals when working with American Indian students? and 5) How would you describe what a perfect day would look like at school?

Question 1 asked school social workers to describe a day at work. The subthemes that emerged were that days are always changing and relationship building.

Table 1 illustrates the two subthemes and school social workers' comments.

Table 1 Results for Question #1: How would you describe a day at work?

Subtheme 1A: Days are Always Changing
I can have that schedule but there might be a day where anything doesn't go as planned.
A day at work is never ending.
And so it is always, its ever changing.
There are structured days…where I sit by myself…or sit with students or staff.
Try to have a set schedule for students.
It's both ever changing and it's consistent and structured.

I know what I have planned for the morning, but that is every changing depending on the needs of the kids.
Every day is so different.
I do a number of education classes.
It's a lot of different lessons.
…assess on this…

Subtheme 1B: Relationship Building

Build those relationships that are bigger than the classroom.
Getting a feel for where they (student) are at.
Building on continuously, personal relationship.
Addressing "issues" students have with school.

The first question was asked to gain a better understanding of the context of their environment and to answer the question what they are doing in school to help American Indian students. Their answers suggested that even in a structured environment where they try to plan their day so that students have consistency, their days are never the same and currently in a state of fluctuation. The responses to the questions suggest that some of the uncertainty was caused from emergency trips to the hospital for suicide attempts, students in crisis and the urgent need for students to see them. The role of school social worker is to be responsive to the needs of the students and the school. Responses to the questions reinforce the idea that the role of school social workers is wide-ranging and complex. So, what can schools do to provide a supportive environment where school social workers are successful in meeting student needs?

School social workers also explained that they spend much of their day building relationships, which they consider not only a technique but also an intervention. They emphasized that they are continuously working on building relationships throughout the day, like breathing air. It is that important.

Question 2 asked school social workers to described daily challenges they faced when working with students. The subthemes that emerged were struggles with co-workers and administration, attitudes, resistant parents/students, too many students, attendance and crisis.

Table 2 illustrates the six subthemes and school social workers' comments.

Table 2 Results for Question #2: How would you describe challenges you face when working with students?

Subtheme 2A: Struggle with Co-workers and Administration
Sometimes the biggest struggles I have working is working with co-workers.
The issues I have encountered have been either cohorts or systems.
Administrators and staff do not try to grasp the concepts that are unique to social work.
The school itself has a huge disconnect with the community and the school.
Subtheme 2B: Attitude
I am not responsible if a kid doesn't come to school.
While I am here, try and teach this subject.
The staff is very defensive.
Subtheme 2C: Resistant Parents
The daily challenges are getting past the resistant of why I am calling.
It can be a challenge (working with parents). Some. It depends on the family.
Subtheme 2D: Too Many Students
And maybe I'd be more successful with it if there weren't so many students. There are a lot of kids here.
Subtheme 2E: Attendance
Attendance is a huge issue
Daily challenges are real, there is attendance too.
Subtheme 2F: Crisis

If I have a student, or students that are in crisis, everything that I have planned stops and we meet the needs of the kids.
Making sure that we as, myself, as a school social worker, are in communication with assistant principal, principal, teachers; always, always being in communication to make sure that you know if there's a students that one of them may be working with that may need our support that we make ourselves available at some point either immediately or at some point during the day.
Sometimes when it gets very busy, it almost feels like a triage. In other words, we always look to mee the most immediate needs and assess that and then continue throughout our day.

When answering this question, they responded by describing how they struggle with their co-workers. Some of the struggles had to do with teachers not understanding the perspective of a school social worker, their attitude as well as the disconnect between school and Indian community. However, during other parts of the interview they did mention that they felt supported by school staff. The big difference appears to be that at an institutional level it was challenging but on a one-to-one relationship, school staff were thought of as helpful.

Another subtheme that emerged was the difficulty in trying to connect with the students' parents. School social workers said parents were suspicious when they call to talk to them. Remarks were made about how challenging it can be working with some parents. However, there were also examples of how parents would call them to get help for their child.

Other challenges identified were too many students, attendance and crisis. The school social workers commented that perhaps they would be more successful if they worked with fewer students. They also discussed how school attendance was an issue and attributed some of it to personal problems at home. They said much of their time is spent focusing on students in crisis and how everything stopped to meet their needs.

With so many daily challenges going on at school, how do they have the time and support to address them? Further study is needed to gather more information on what causes these issues and how school personnel tackle them.

Question 3 asked school social workers to describe their interventions or strategies. Six subthemes emerged from their answers: bridging the gap, developing relationships, pre-teaching staff/students, referrals, cultural responsiveness and student centered.

Table 3 illustrates the six subthemes and school social workers' comments.

Table 3 Results for Question #3: How would you describe interventions that you most frequently use with students?

Subtheme 3A: Bridging the Gap
A lot of stuff that I do is trying to bridge the gap for parents and students about what is the education system.
Getting that students to become more involved in what their educational stuff is.
I think that bridging the gap is huge.
Have the student see a bigger picture…because parents call the school.
I might look at incentive kind of things to keep them in school.
Getting them involved with the school.
Finding out what their interests are and then going with that. Connecting them.
Subtheme 3B: Developing Relationships
But I do try to have a time where students have set hour or half hour is usually what it tends to be.
Now my days extend going to IHS…being there as a support.
Going to 4th of July activities and Miss Cass Lake.
Going to Pow-wow.
There's a day that I will sit in the commons with all the students. Always want to be connected.
Walking between classes…little interventions.
Address students, "What is it that you need? What is it that you want? How might I help?
Address the whole person.
Rapport building.

Interventions is truly relationship building.
Explore a bigger picture.
My intention is talk to the student first.
It's trying to understand where kids are coming from…just trying to listen and see…what works best…listening to the kids and allowing the student to have more voice in regards to their schooling.
Allowing them different choices and time-out.
I meet with all the kids and go over, you know, who do you live with, who are your brothers and sisters, but go over the positives like what do you enjoy doing?
Goal set.
Playing a game of horse.
I have snacks for the kids for other things (not just to take home).

Subtheme 3C: Pre-teaching staff and students.

Pre-teaching with the students.
My pre-teaching is to let them know please that this is a set time that works best for you and that together I will do my best to be available, please know that there are going to be times that crisis do come up or something pulls me away, and that that is not a reflection about me not wanting to meet with you.
Pre-teaching to students when to meet with them.
Working with the teacher on just different learning styles of the student and how can we help them.

Subtheme 3D: Referrals

Referral to Leech Lake Truancy prevention or county.
Connecting them to resources.
Referral to Leech Lake Behavioral Health.
Suicide assessment and prevention.
Wrap around services for suicide assessment and prevention.

Subtheme 3E: Cultural Responsiveness

If a student really feels like they want a smudge, or they want to lay tobacco, we can get tobacco and go lay tobacco.
Classroom teachers do circles in their classroom, but they do what they call "community circles." So we are very much practicing using circles in our Elementary buildings.
Yeah, that looks like it's really culturally sensitive to have the Ojibwe words and that having their meaning.
We have started doing restorative chats and restorative practices work and we've gotten a lot of support from our principals and superintendent.

Subtheme 3F: Student-Centered

Always, always as a school social worker, always focus on student first and their needs. It's very student centered.
Sometimes when it gets very busy, it almost feels like a triage. In other words, we always look to meet the most immediate needs and assess that and then continue throughout the day.
We do lunch bunches with our kids, with our students.
Sometimes we may play a game of Jenga or we may just talk, and I'll ask them about their day, about what their plans are, how their classes are going, but it's really student driven.
We sit in on IEP, Individual Learning Plans, we're an integral part of the team for that. Advocating for our kids.
I primarily work with skills with students and the reason that that is important part of my work we look at disciplinary data, behavioral data, that could come from our wellness meetings that could come from any number of …we have positive behavioral interventions supports, PBIS meetings which show the data for the behavior for our students, and then we also take information very seriously from our classroom teachers. We are working on skills that students really need to make those changes.
So, in terms of targeted interventions, we are always looking for best practices, research based.
We did breathing lessons.
The other thing I should say is, because of my years of living in Alaska, I am very aware and really work hard every day to be what I call "culturally sensitive to our student needs."
I'm on the 5th & 6th side, between the 5th & 6th grade, we can do more groups work.
As much as we love doing, we the social workers, counselor, and teachers love doing check-ins with the kids, and we do that every day when they come in. We greet them, and ask, "how are you doing?" and we sit down and we visit with them.
To triage to keep our kids safe and healthy.
It's school predictable, and that's why when we started this conversation, I talked about structures we put in place, the consistencies, the expectations. Our kids really, really like that a lot.
Coming in with strengths-based.
We are part of the protocol that we go over to IHS until the family comes over there because we act in place of the parent until they get there.

School social workers spend much of their time bridging the gap between school and students, and getting students involved in what they are most interested in doing. As mention earlier they spend much of their day building relationships as a part of their technique. During the interviews with school social workers, they also discussed pre-teaching to staff and students as an intervention. An example of pre-teaching students

was letting students know they have a set time to meet and if they can't meet it is not a reflection on the student.

Not only did they pre-teach students, but teachers as well. The NASW directs social workers to advocate on behalf of vulnerable and marginalized groups and ensure that they receive services that are culturally responsive. One way school social worker can accomplish this is by educating others about culturally differences. One example given during the interviews was working with the teacher on different learning styles of the students.

Other strategies identified focused on connecting students to Leech Lake tribal resources, being culturally responsive, and student centered. As an American Indian social worker and educator, the importance of school social workers being culturally responsive is significant. All three of these subthemes indicate that the school social workers are addressing the needs of students from a cultural perspective. Examples given during the interview were referring students to tribal resources and smudging or laying tobacco without it being a problem or putting them out. Not only did they understand the significance of this cultural practice but also participated in or facilitated it.

Question 4 asked school social workers to describe the support they received from other school staff and professionals. After reviewing the comments it appeared there were various amounts of support they received from their colleagues.

Table 4 shows the subtheme and the school social workers' comments.

Table 4 Results for Question #4: How would you describe the support you receive from other school staff/professionals when working with American Indian students?

Subtheme 4A: Amount of Support

Biggest struggle I have is working with co-workers.
There isn't necessarily trust at least initially (with students). I am working on team building with teachers all the time.
Our support staff all work together. It is very helpful.
I have the respect of our Indian education staff. I go to them with questions all the time, work with them with students.
Talking with staff about my limited knowledge (with American Indian culture).
Receive referrals from other staff.
Our support staff are willing to work together on any student to support team so our CD person, myself, our behavioral health staff from Leech Lake at the high school that just works so well.
We work together and support each other where we need.
There is a lack of insight of our staff what are their personal values and biases.
I am impressed with the school and the amount of support services that are available.
We have a system in place that kids that need to see us, either their classroom teacher will call us and say, "so and so really feels like they need to have some time to talk to you" and many times the teacher may not even realize what the issue is or they will email us and say, "do you have time this morning or next hour?" or whatever."
All have been exposed, trained and implemented at all of those mindfulness practices.
I have a great deal of support.
I feel like I have a lot of support and the reason I say that is that I believe that teachers really have come to value and believe that unless some of those foundational social-emotional issues are dealt with and you know work with students, the academics is going to suffer.
To triage to keep students safe and healthy.
We come back to the school and we debrief with our team on that.
Being there, I like to say we are always that way, and that not every staff is on board with it, but we are hopefully getting there. Not quite all there (students can see somebody) when I speak with the teachers, they'll let me know or I'll say, "Hey we're working on this" or "student is having a hard time in math."
So, we're small enough where we can really communicate on things and that's always…that part is always really good.
Social workers are getting together once a month now which is, hadn't happened in the past. Well especially with culture you know in regards to Mike has just been great here and Jenna, there is a lot of stuff I don't know and I need that support and how to help, and so you know be able to ask these questions and say, "Hey, I don't know."

According to their responses, the amount of support they received is overall positive, with a few exceptions. They spoke positively about the support they received from their co-workers. It appeared from their responses to the question that everyone is

committed to supporting students' needs and working together to solve student issues. This supportive environment as an indicator of a positive school climate can impact students in a positive manner suggesting why so many students feel safe at school.

Question 5 asked school social workers to describe a perfect day at work. This question was asked in order to determine if other themes would emerge about their social work practice. Their comments indicated that their expectation for students was that they were ready to learn and that they were having fun at school.

Table 5 illustrates these two subthemes and school social workers' comments.

Table 5 Results for Question #5: How would you describe what a perfect day would look like at school?

Subtheme 5A: Ready to Learn
Every student came to school, the entire day.
No worries from outside issues and be able to sit in a classroom attentive.
Maybe productive.
Every student came, every student learned, was attentive, throughout the day.
A perfect day is just to be able to mee the students that are in need that day.
When our kids could be in that place they feel like they are ready to come in and ready for the learning.
Kids would be ready to come in for breakfast, have their breakfast and then be able to transition to their classroom and just be ready of the learning.
They will transition, and the weather will be like it is today and they will be able to go outside and play, and we have a beautiful environment for them to pay outside, and…that would be a perfect day for me. Kids would just be happy to be at school, happy to be with their peers, and we as, or myself as a social worker, wouldn't be reactionary it would be more preventative type work with kids instead of reacting to issues, we would be able to even have time to go into the classroom and do brief teaching lessons on What does respect look like? What does responsibility look like? All of those pro-social things versus having to react and to triage to keep our kids safe and healthy.
I was just thinking one of the kids the other day, just been so worried about him, and got him into counseling, and I just ended up with him and went down to phy ed and got both of them, we ended up playing a game of horse, but I saw him you know…we were just shooting hoops and doing that together and he was smiling. And when you see that, and especially when you are worried about a kid, you know you are just and you see all of a

sudden, you're thinking, "oh maybe they are starting to feel a little bit better," that's a good day.

Subtheme 5B: Enjoying Themselves

I do care whether they learn, but that smile was more important than how they did in math.
But that is a good day, is when you are worried when you see the kids smiling and enjoying themselves and being kids again because sometimes, they've had too much responsibility and been through a lot.

The answers to this last question, demonstrate the holistic view that school social workers use when practicing social work. This perspective speaks to the very nature of social work practice which is to see the whole person that is necessary when working cross culturally. This also points out that students having fun as an aspect of wellbeing may be overlooked in the school system. This could be an area for potential future research.

Journaling

The third set of data collected was from journaling about my observations and reflections from the interviews. The information I gathered from the journaling did not uncover conflicting themes, however, it provided a fuller understanding of the answers to the interview questions.

Table 6 illustrates these three subthemes and observations from interviews.

Table 6 Results from Journaling Observations

Subtheme 6A: Enjoy their work

All three school social worker's expressed excitement during the interviews about how much they all enjoyed working at the school with American Indian students. One school social worker commented, "I just felt like a calling to Cass Lake where I was meant to

go. I'm really, really blessed to be there." And another school social worker commented, "but it is so true, I absolutely love my job."

Subtheme 6B: Commitment to social work practice

All three social workers demonstrated that they utilized a social work lens in their practice. They gave examples of utilizing the student-centered and holistic approaches when working with American Indian students and their families. One school social worker discussed using best practices and research-based interventions in her practice. Another school social worker stated that she had to explain her role to others in the school and tried to "dispel some of the preconceived beliefs that school social workers only work with special education."

Subtheme 6C: Commitment to working with American Indian students

All three school social workers were genuine and authentic during the interview. They expressed enthusiasm when they spoke about their daily activities and interactions with students as well as concerns about the challenges they encountered daily. The three school social workers expressed a commitment to working with American Indian students. This was demonstrated by their extensive discussion on the importance of being culturally responsive and by giving several examples. For example, during one interview, a school social worker got up from the conference table and walked over to her desk to retrieve culturally relevant curriculum specific to American Indian youth.

The three themes were: a) how much they enjoyed their work, b) commitment to social work practice and c) commitment to working with American Indian students. The school social workers referenced the student-centered approach when they explained the IEP (Individual Education Plan) to students and their parents. They did so in a way that parents and students would understand the IEP meeting them at their level of understanding. They did not refer to it as "dumbing it down," which is what some of the teachers called it. The bigger picture uncovered that this is not only an example of a student-centered approach but also identified negative attitudes of some of the teachers. How challenging would it be for school social workers to work in a school where

attitudes were not respectful of cultural differences and how this effects school climate and of course student wellbeing and school performance?

My observations and reflections left a lasting impression of how dedicated this group of social workers were to their students. They felt a huge need to connect with their students. As indicated in the interviews, they gave several examples of that dedication such as attending after school sports events and having school meals with the students. They discussed being genuine and authentic with the students. While members of the surrounding community told them how difficult it must be to work with American Indian students, it was interesting to learn how they defended their jobs and their students. I felt the students were lucky to have such dedicated school social workers.

Since they were all White school social workers, their commitment on how they were culturally responsive was heart-warming. As an American Indian student, I experienced much racism and prejudice at my school, it was nice to find school personnel who would be advocates for students like myself. My observations confirmed that they practice being culturally responsive. For example, one school social worker also showed me school curriculum specific to American Indian youth. I also observed how much each of the social workers enjoyed their job and working with American Indian students. This was shown by their enthusiasm during the interview as well as positive comments on how much they like working at the school and with their students.

Summary

I recently viewed a video that referred to social workers as "Superheroes." This title definitely fits the role of what these school social workers are doing at the School District A. School social workers are skilled and knowledgeable not only about the

education system but also the field of social work. This study confirms that school social workers at the school do have a wide range of responsibilities and skills that are aligned with the school social work professional standards and practices.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Conclusion

School social workers' role is essential to schools for connecting with students and their families, especially students who face oppression and marginalization. Their role is grounded in core values and ethics that require them to advocated for and understand the history and policies that affect certain groups, such as American Indians. This study is important to me personally because I understand the challenges American Indian students encounter in school through my experience as a young American Indian student in the same school district and as the parent of a child experiencing similar issues in school as well. I am also an educator and licensed social worker who understands the value of education and the potential of school social work to enhance the education experience and outcomes of American Indian students. Due to my interest, I wanted to learn more about what school social workers were doing in schools to help American Indian students as a start to a larger exploration of the role of school social work professionals with American Indian students. This understanding would potentially develop a knowledge base related to school social work and its potential to improve the education experience and outcomes for American Indian students that are consistent with accepted professional principles and standards. This study represents a beginning exploration with three school social workers at a school with a large American Indian population located on the Indian reservation where I grew up.

Discussion

The findings from this study yield important information on how these three social workers approached their professional work with American Indians. They adhered

to some of the professional principles and standards outline by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), however, it is not evident if or how they practiced all of them. After reviewing the data gathered from the student survey, the three interviews and the journaling my overall reaction is that school social workers that I interviewed have an abundance of tasks they must perform with students that face multiple challenges. They must meet the professional standards and guidelines of The National Association of Social Workers, The School Social Work Association of America and Minnesota School Social Workers Association which include being called upon to be trained as mental health providers, knowledgeable about services that relate to a students' social and emotional growth to include cultural responsive services and addressing each of the different environmental needs of the student. It is easy to see how they may be overwhelmed by these responsibilities which could lead to burn-out and/or leaving their jobs.

In addition, the school social workers are responsible for providing services to a high percentage of students at-risk for a number of personal issues including overall physical health, mental health, trauma, substance abuse and lack of school connectedness which impact their wellbeing and their ability to learn and perform well at school. Poverty and violence aggravated these circumstances.

Working with students in crisis was a concern for these three school social workers. They expressed concern about the lack of consistency in their jobs because of these crises. They gave examples of how days were always changing, even the well-planned ones. According to the MSS data, students at School District A experienced having a hard time paying attention and listening to instructions as well as having

feelings of depression or hopelessness. However, despite their concerns school social workers gave examples of how they provided services for these students and the support they received from school staff and other professionals when working with students. Follow up studies could provide insight on school social workers' need for additional support or professional development to meet the demands of their students.

This study revealed and emphasized the importance of relationship building. The three interviewees gave multiple examples of how they did this throughout their day. Although the literature does not describe relationship building as a specific intervention, it is a social skill that school social workers need in order to develop rapport, trust and respect with students and their families. According to the MSS data for School District A, ninth graders have indicated a more positive relationship with their teachers than older students. Understanding this school social workers can help teachers and older students connect with each other. This study not only suggests the importance of building a strong relationship, but also how school social workers can help others build these relationships.

According to the literature review, culture is a protective factor for American Indian youth. Culturally specific services are necessary for the wellbeing of American Indian students and school social workers should be knowledgeable about the American Indian history, culture and way of life. The school social workers interviews indicated that they were being culturally responsive to the needs of American Indian students and gave examples of culturally specific services and techniques that they use with students.

Overall, the school social workers realized the significance of the wellbeing of children and how it plays a role in student success in school. Their responses reflected on students' readiness to learn and having fun at school. As an aspect of wellbeing, both

readiness to learn and having fun could be explored further in future research. This may also demonstrate the need and importance of having school social workers employed at all schools. The ability for school social workers to take into consideration the "whole" child as well as the environment that child grows up in adds value to the education experience and environment for American Indian student.

As a result of the study, I was able to give voice to school social work professionals that serve American Indian students and learn about their daily routines as to whether these practices met the professional principles and standards of a licensed school social worker as well as engaging in micro, mezzo and macro practice. My findings suggest that the three school social workers at School District A engage in social work at the micro, mezzo and macro levels of practice.

Examples of micro level practice include engaging in relationship building with students by having "lunch bunches" in which students met in the school social worker's office for lunch and discuss whatever they have on their mind. There is no agenda. Another example of relationship building is playing games with students and asking them questions about their day. Skills work is an example of an intervention that school social workers use with individuals and groups.

School social workers also gave examples of mezzo level practice. These included working with school administrators, staff and other school professionals on Individual Learning Plans and student re-entry which is bringing students back to school. They also formed a "Wellness Meeting" which was a professional learning community with other counselors at the school.

At the macro level of practice school social workers provide outreach to their community partnerships which include Indian Health Services (IHS) and Leech Lake Behavioral Health. Another partnership is with Leech Lake Tribal College, IHS, the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, law enforcement, and EMTs. All of the partners are using the Mental Health Screeners Columbia Rating Scale for suicide assessment and prevention so the process is the same for students and their families which is helpful to families in accessing services.

The findings from this study yield important information on how these three social workers approached their professional work with American Indians. They adhered to some of the professional principles and standards outline by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), however, it is not evident if or how they practiced all of them. The NASW outlined eleven standards of social work practice and this study identified examples from six of those categories:

1) Qualifications - all three of the social workers indicated that they graduated with a degree in social work from an accredited program and were dual licensed by both the Board of Social Work and the Minnesota Department of Education.

2) Intervention – school social workers indicated that they use evidence-informed practice.

3) Workload management – school social workers indicated that they have consistent, structured days that change depending on the needs of the students.

4) Cultural competency – school social workers gave examples of cultural competence practice to include culturally relevant curriculum, collaborating with

American Indian liaisons to better meet the students' needs, conducting restorative practice work, and laying tobacco or smudging with students.

5) Interdisciplinary leadership and collaborations – school social workers collaborated with American Indian liaisons to better meet students' needs and formed a "Wellness Meeting" which was a professional learning community with other counselors at the school.

6) Advocacy – school social workers demonstrated this by communicating with principal, assistant principle, and teachers to ensure students' needs are being met.

Implications for Further Research

This study took place on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation which is the home of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and cannot be generalized to other public school settings educating American Indian students. However, insights gained through this study may be transferable to other rural public school settings with a predominance of American Indian students, while recognizing the unique characteristics and context of different tribal communities.

The demographic diversity of school and community settings for American Indian students is extensive and varies across many different criteria including linguistically and culturally. Public schools with a predominate or in the case of the School District A a near 90% American Indian student population from a particular reservation Indian community are significantly different than a racially and culturally diverse student population in an urban school district where the American Indian student population maybe relatively large but a small percentage of the total student population. School social work practice in these various settings may present different issues and challenges.

How school social work professionals approach their practice in similar or widely varied settings is not well documented in the literature and represents a logical extension of this study. Thus, there is clearly a need for further study.

It is also noted at School District A that the range of possible school social work practices involves an array of interventions that address issues affecting students. Multi-layered interventions involving the student, the student and their family, and the community may occur at the same time and different school social workers may select different practices in similar school settings. Since the case study indicated that the three school social workers interviewed at School District A operated within their own sense of knowledge, skills, professional responsibility and experience the study was unable to determine how school social workers determine the approach or intervention they use. Additional studies might determine the extent to which the effort of school social workers becomes practiced and routine. However, it was found that these social school workers do practice using the person-in-environment perspective where the "whole" child is considered when applying an intervention. Home and school are intertwined and interdependent and school social workers had shown how they facilitated this complex relationship.

American Indian students in the state of Minnesota and nationally continue to struggle with academic progress and performance issues in schools. The overall picture is consistent with data related to the academic progress and performance of American Indian students from School District A where the study was conducted. The study indicates that the school social workers' perceive at this particular school district that they may be making a difference with the students they work with daily. This sense of

the efficacy of their school social work practice however contradicts the data related to American Indian student academic progress, achievement and wellbeing for students from School District A. Perhaps this suggests the complexity and multi-factorial context of student health, wellbeing and performance and the need for additional support and/or professional development and training for school social workers.

The study was not designed to explore questions related to the extent, appropriateness or efficacy of school social work practice among American Indian students at School District A. It also was not designed to consider whether school social work practice mitigates the barriers of at-risk students or makes a difference on academic progress and performance of American Indian students. Future well-designed studies that explore questions related to the efficacy of school social work practice would provide significant information related to the school social work practice with American Indian students.

The school dropout rates for American Indian students are very high and begins early accelerating through high school. The school social workers interviewed are always working with students that have not yet dropped out of school. Understanding the relationship of school social work practice to student progress and education goals would seem an important area of study including a longitudinal view of school social work practice over time with American Indian students.

Studies of American Indian students related to their experiences in school, attitudes toward education and relationship to their personal goals as well as the reasons for dropping out of school would inform school social workers of their role in schools and the education of American Indian students. Such student focused studies for a school

district or the state of Minnesota are very challenging but not impossible to accomplish with a well-designed study. Interviews with school social workers did suggest they used evidence-based research in their practice so future studies would be useful for them.

Implications for Practice

The results of the study indicated a pattern of a planned day-to-day routine at school with numerous unpredictable "crisis" situations with individual students as well as a teamwork approach whereas other professionals stepped in to assist. There was also a strong feeling that there was not enough time in any individual day to respond to the all the needs of American Indian students and that follow-up with students if necessary is often overwhelmed by workload issues. Such an orientation to work suggests that school social practice may have become accustomed to such a pattern given the high needs of students and small number of school social workers available. A closer look at that pattern seems to be an important area of inquiry. It would seem that responses to student crisis situations are immediate given their nature to be of high importance and planned activities may have less value given the need to address emergency situations. Given current student needs and existing staff there appears to be a need to reconsider how to enhance the role of school social workers in schools with large American Indian student populations. Other approaches to consider in social work practice given these circumstances would be referral to other professionals available in the community and arranged for by the school districts, the inclusion of a case management approach by school social workers, crisis interventions and/or a school social work supervisor with teams at the school district.

The study is not an evaluative description of observable professional work practices and interactions with students, parents, teachers and other supportive professionals. The study results represent responses to an interview, and no assumptions can be made about what the school social workers actually did through their day or how other school social workers may respond in other settings. Also, the range and variety of social work professional practices and standards is extensive as well. Any number of professional practices could potentially meet the professional standards and practices of school social workers. Understanding the limitations and possibilities of school social work practice in any particular setting is suggested. An area for additional study is the need for an informal consultation group for input, feedback and direction with school social workers related to meeting multiple school goals for American Indian students should be considered.

Conclusion

The findings from this study yield important information on how these three social workers approached their professional work with American Indians, including the incorporation of culturally responsive practices. They adhered to some of the professional principles and standards outline by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), however, it is not evident if or how they practiced all of them. The study was considered a preliminary study to a larger exploration of school social work practice among American Indian students. The implications for further research and practice outlined here are all important to that exploration. The foundation of education policy toward American Indians is related to meeting their special and unique culturally-related academic needs so that they may accomplish the same education goals as all other

students. The role of well-trained school social workers with a knowledge of education policies along with professional skills and training whose core value guides their practice are an underutilized professional resource for the education of American Indians.

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Appendices

Appendix I

IRB Approval Letter or Email

study 00006895 is not human research

Jeffery Perkey <perke001@umn.edu> Tue, Jul 23, 2019 at 11:23 AM
To: Evie Campbell <ecampbel@d.umn.edu>

Yes, we have determined that IRB review is not required: you can move ahead with no further IRB obligations.

Jeffery
[Quoted text hidden]
--
Jeffery Perkey
IRB Analyst | Human Research Protection Program
research.umn.edu/units/hrpp | **research.umn.edu/units/irb**
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Appendix II

Interview Consent Form

Interview Questionnaires

Interview Consent Form

Hello,

You are being invited to participate in a research study about how school social workers interact with American Indian students. This study is being conducted by myself, Evie Campbell. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Education at the University of Minnesota Duluth. I also am an assistant professor in the Department of Social Work at Bemidji State University. I started in the Fall of 2018.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a school social worker whom works directly with American Indian students.

By participating in the interview, you are voluntarily agreeing to be interviewed. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason. The interview will take about approximately 1-1 ½ hours to complete. There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study. There are no costs to you for participating in the study. The information you provide will be used for my study about school social workers experience in order to better understand what they do to meet the needs of American Indian students in the school.

The following are questions I will be asking: 1) How would you describe a day at work? 2) How would you describe the daily challenges you face when working with students? 3) How would you describe interventions that you most frequently use with students? 4) How would you describe the support you receive from other school staff/professionals when working with American Indian students? and; 5) How would you describe what a perfect day would look like at school? Additional questions will be asked during the one-on-one interviews in order to clarify or expand on a given answer.

For the purposes of this study, no one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study. Should the data be published, no individual information will be disclosed.

If you have any questions about the nature of the study, please contact Professor Dr. David Beaulieu, Department of Education, University of Minnesota Duluth at beaulieu@d.umn.edu.

The University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board has reviewed my request to conduct this project. Thank you for your participation, if possible I would like to set up interviews at your earliest convenience, at the time and location you find most suitable. I look forward to hearing from you.

I consent to the interview.

Signature Date

Interview Questions

1) How would you describe a day at work?

2) How would you describe the daily challenges you face when working with students?

3) How would you describe interventions that you most frequently use with students?

4) How would you describe the support you receive from other school staff/professionals when working with American Indian students? and;

5) How would you describe what a perfect day would look like at school?

Additional questions will be asked during the one-on-one interviews in order to clarify or expand on a given answer.