

Indian Leadership Education and Development (I LEAD)

Abstract

American Indian administrators in Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, and North Dakota are not representative of the numbers of Native Americans in these states. There are 104 schools in Montana alone that have populations of 25% or more American Indian students. To place at least one American Indian administrator in each of these schools, 82 American Indian administrators would need to be recruited, trained and placed in schools serving American Indian students. These statistics are similar in the surrounding Northern Plains states. In meeting **Absolute Priority 2: Pre-Service Administrator Training**, the primary goal of this project is to recruit, educate, certify, install and induct 25 American Indian educators into school leadership positions with the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to facilitate school improvement and student achievement in schools on or near the Indian reservations in four states: Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota and North Dakota. All completers of the project will complete a graduate level M.Ed. in educational leadership from MSU.

In meeting **Competitive Preference Priority 3** (see Appendix A), a consortium agreement between Montana State University (MSU) and Little Big Horn Tribal College (LBHC) ensures local access to graduate education tailored to meet the contextualized needs of rural and isolated schools with high proportions of American Indian students. This focus on providing an authentic context for leadership instruction will significantly assist in improving reservation schools while educating their next generation of leaders.

In the recruiting phase, MSU and LBHC will collaborate and use their networks to publicize the program. During the instructional phase, the instructional teams - state level Indian Education experts, tribal members and local school officials and faculty members at LBHC and

MSU - will collaborate to link instruction with authentic school improvement activities. The instructional phase will include a cohort-building orientation, both distance learning and face-to-face course meetings, cultural leadership workshops hosted in part by LBHC, and field experiences in public schools serving American Indian students. The cultural leadership and field experience activities are synchronized to course content, establishing a clear connection between theory and practice. Mentors - American Indian experienced school leaders educated at the post-masters level - will maintain contact with each participant on a semi-monthly basis throughout the program. In sum, I LEAD will provide a rigorous program integrating the Professional Educational Standards of Leadership (PESL) standards-based instruction with authentic activities focused on improving public schools; utilize high quality delivery methods that integrate the experiences of university scholars, tribal elders, tribal college faculty, and relevant school leadership practitioners; and establish networks of support that serve participants from their recruitment into the project, to mastery of their role as a school principal.

In the placement phase, the network of mentors, instructors and advisory board members will assist successful placement of candidates by providing leads to administrative openings and by promoting the candidates to the appropriate selection officials. Superintendents of several LEAs have committed to considering and potentially hiring project completers, satisfying **Competitive Preference Priority 1** (see Appendix B). During an induction year, these networks will support participants to facilitate success in their administrative positions.

Evaluation data will be collected using a combination of research-based, nationally normed quantitative instruments; research-based, locally normed quantitative instruments; and qualitative data collected using proven protocols. The semi-annual qualitative and quantitative evaluation reports will be presented to a project advisory board.