



MONTANA ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INDIAN EDUCATION  
ADVISORY TO THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AND  
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

MACIE POSITION STATEMENT  
On Native American Language Protections

As each tribal nation within Montana is working to protect and revitalize its own unique Indigenous language, it is our goal to proactively inform and educate those school district Boards of Trustees, administrators, teachers, and staff who serve Native American students, families, and communities within the state about the legal language protections that exist for the Native American languages.

At the intersection between Indian Law and School law, many educators and school leaders find themselves uninformed and unprepared, whether this be in regard to the exercise of tribal sovereignty, culture, history, spirituality, regalia, and graduations or other related issues. We see it best to address these issues in a preventative manner in order to mitigate any and all unwanted and unnecessary situations from happening, and from continuing to happen, in order to better prepare educators and school leaders.

Educators would be well served to be informed on the issues of Federal and State Legal protections as to not cause unnecessary problems for school districts or themselves professionally by attempting to restrict Native American languages by incorrectly continuing the unspoken practices of language restrictions which stem from historical assimilative efforts toward Native American students.

We, the members of the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE), recommend and advise that the Office of Public Instruction and Board of Public Education address this lack of awareness by informing and preparing educators in the area of the legal protections of Native American languages as well as the other issues previously mentioned that are present in the intersection of school law and Indian law by:

- providing professional development for trustees, superintendents, principals, and staff;
- addressing these specific issues in teacher and principal preparation programs;
- providing support around developing school-based policy and procedures and that;
- this emphasis is reflected in a review and possible revision to current licensure requirements as well as accreditation.

Attached you will find a legal summary explaining the legal protections of Native American languages.

Thank You

MACIE

Approved April 7, 2021