



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

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Vacant

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Youth**Vacant**

BIOGRAPHIES

Yancey Beston is an elected trustee on the Frazer School Board and is also the Vice-Chair of the Montana School Board Association's Indian School Boards Caucus.

Norma Bixby is an enrolled member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. She is presently the Director of the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Education Department. She has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education with an endorsement in Early Childhood from Eastern Montana College, Billings, Montana. She received a master's degree in Elementary Administration from New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico. Norma has been a 4th grade teacher, Title IV Director, curriculum specialist, and an Elementary Principal. She served four terms at the Montana State Legislature and represented House District 41 in Southeastern Montana. Norma served two terms on the Montana Committee on US Civil Rights. She has served on numerous state committees on education and other organizations throughout her 41 years of employment with the Northern Cheyenne Tribe.

Ms. Bixby is a longtime member of MACIE, representing variously the Northern Cheyenne Tribe and the Montana Indian Education Association. She has previously served as chairperson.

Levi Black Eagle is an enrolled member of the Crow Tribe. He currently serves on the Executive Branch of the Crow Nation Tribal Council as the Executive Secretary. Levi graduated from Lodge Grass High School and attended college for engineering at the Montana State University. Recently, Mr. Black Eagle has taught computer education at the Crow Agency School for six years. He is married with three beautiful children and enjoys mountain trail running, photography, and traveling with family.

Marcy Cobell is a proud member of the Blackfeet Tribe and was born and raised on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. She attended school at Browning Public Schools. Ms. Cobell is the daughter of Judy Cobell and the late Eugene Cobell. She is the great, great, great granddaughter of Mountain Chief, a prominent Chief of the Blackfeet Tribe.

Most of her professional career has been within public schools in Montana, predominantly those on the reservations, working directly with American Indian students. She is the superintendent of Heart Butte K-12 Schools and has also served as the Superintendent and

Junior High/High School Principal at Lame Deer Public Schools and the Director of Indian Education for Great Falls Public Schools. Other roles include serving on the Montana Advisory Committee of Indian Education as a board member and the Montana Indian Education Association as the current President. She also served on Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force, the United Way, North Central Montana Human Trafficking Task Force, Murdered & Missing Indigenous People Task Force, Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Task Force), Rocky Mountain Turn-Around Leaders, and Circle of Schools in Southeastern Montana.

Marcy is an alumni of both Montana State University Bozeman and University of Montana Missoula, having earned degrees in Education, Curriculum and Instruction, and Educational Leadership.

Dugan Coburn is the current Director of Indian Education in the Great Falls Public School District. He has been a Pre-College Advisor for Great Falls College, MSU for two years and has previously worked in the TRIO Talent Search Program in the Great Falls school system for 10 years. He has a Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology from the Oregon Institute of Technology.

Mr. Coburn is a member of the Blackfeet Nation (Amskapi Pikuni) of Northern Montana, with roots also in the Klamath and Pitt River tribes of Oregon. He grew up in Klamath, Oregon, Browning, MT and Salem, Oregon. He is a Blackfeet Pipe carrier and received a headdress in a transfer ceremony in 2017. His Indian name is Healing Person, Saaam Matapi. He is an historical reenactor, including Indian legends and dance and has been a reenactor with the Lewis and Clark Honor Guard for over 20 years. He has worked as an Interpretive Ranger at the Lewis and Clark Interpretative Center in Great Falls. As Executive Director of the Missouri River Dance Company he has produced and performed in multiple original productions, including Native productions of legends, and cross-cultural productions with Native dance and drumming with classical ballet and music.

Dugan has experience in cultural research and has had the opportunity to work with members of the Pikuni Crazy Dog Society and Blackfeet spiritual leaders to learn about traditional Native design including work with eagle feathers, leather, furs, claws, buffalo horn and rawhide. Dugan has worked in the Great Falls Public School Summer Native Culture Camps teaching student's construction of moccasins, rattles, and drums. He has taken a beadwork class and hopes to have the opportunity to learn about the techniques of beading in an in-depth way.

Michelle Crazy is currently the Program Director of the North Central Montana Upward Bound program. She has an Associate degree in Early Childhood Education, a Bachelor of Science in Education, and a Master of Science in Education. She has worked 16 years in education, starting as a teacher's assistant in Head Start and ranging from early childhood education to an adjunct college instructor. Ms. Crazy is an enrolled member of the Aaniiih tribe of Fort Belknap. She values her culture as she values education, they define her and have helped her become the person she is today.

Currently, Jordann Forster (Bright Trail Woman) runs a dropout prevention program at Great Falls Public Schools for American Indian students. The program, "inter-TRIBAL-Immersion," incorporates cultural content in all core subject areas for high school students. Jordann received Indian Teacher of the Year Award in 2017 from the Montana Indian Education

Association for her efforts in this program. She also provides American Indian Studies courses and instructional coaching to all students and teachers (respectively) in the Great Falls district.

Throughout her career, Forster has shared her work with educators and administrators in Washington, Oregon, Wyoming, and Nevada. In 2018 Forster was selected to be featured on the “Making Montana Proud” poster series, which highlights successful American Indian individuals for their achievements. Iris Kill Eagle is a member of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana and serves on the tribal council. She has worked for the postal service for 35 years and is currently Postmaster at Malta. Ms. Kill Eagle has served on her local school board in Dodson for 18 years, 12 of those as chairperson. As a school board member, she serves on the State Indian School Board Caucus (ISBC) as Chairperson. She has worked through ISBC to bring awareness of generational and historic trauma as well as cultural education to Montana’s school board members and educational Leaders. Iris represents the Little Shell Tribe on the Missing Murdered Indigenous Peoples Task Force.

Hilary Gourneau a member of the Fort Peck Assiniboiné and Sioux Tribes, grew up with an appreciation for her Native culture and traditions. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education with a minor in Native American studies from Montana State University-Billings. She taught elementary and junior high at Poplar Schools for five years. Ms. Gourneau currently holds a valid Montana K-8 Teaching License.

In June 2020, she graduated from Portland State University with a Master’s in Counselor Education with a focus in School Counseling and a certificate in Trauma-Informed Services. During the three-year program Ms. Gourneau participated in various organizations including the Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Academic Society and the Professional Honor Society. She joined a leadership program designed specifically for Native Americans called Oregon LEAD. The goals were to help Natives build their leadership skills and put them into practice.

Hilary is currently giving back to her tribe by serving as Fort Peck Assiniboiné and Sioux Tribes’ Director of Head Start. Hilary believes in order for success to be possible within schools, Native students and their families need to feel connected, respected, supported, and reflected at all levels.

Melissa Hammett is a Native American Student Services Specialist and Teacher at Missoula County Public Schools.

Rena Lambert serves as the education director for the Fort Peck Tribes.

Angela McLean currently serves as the Director of American Indian/Minority Achievement and K-12 Partnerships at the office of the Commissioner of Higher Education.

Edward Parisian has many years in educational leadership. He is currently the superintendent at Box Elder Public Schools. He has been head of educational programs at the Bureau of Indian Education.

Calli Rusche-Nicholson is the Director of Indian Education at Billings Public Schools. She has also worked for Billings since 2006, as an elementary literacy coach and teacher at the kindergarten, fourth, and fifth grade levels. Ms. Rusche-Nicholson has also worked as an Instructional Leader for the Office of Public Instruction under the School Improvement Grant. Throughout her career Calli has worked to advocate and promote Indian Education

for All implementation and infusion. Her work earned her the Teresa Veltkamp Advocacy Award.

Calli is a member of the Fort Peck Assiniboine Tribe. She is married with two children. Her husband and children are members of the Fort Belknap Gros Ventre. When not working, she loves spending time riding horses, attending powwows, and running.

Cory L. Sangrey-Billy, currently the President of Stone Child College, has also been a program coordinator and Dean of Academics. She works to provide quality higher education programs to the Rocky Boy's Community while incorporating the Chippewa Cree Language, Culture, and History. Her main goal while leading Stone Child College is to make a positive difference in her community by helping to shape educational opportunities at the college while ensuring they are quality programs that prepare students to succeed. Ms. Sangrey-Billy holds a bachelor's degree in computer information systems from Montana State University – Northern, a master's degree in information systems from the University of Great Falls and has completed work toward her Ph.D. in Management at Walden University.

She has experience in partnering and working with local, state, and federal agencies with cooperative and grant funded projects. She also helps in partnering with other tribal colleges and universities to bring opportunities to the students at Stone Child College.

Cory is happily married and has two children. She is an enrolled member of the Chippewa Cree Tribe.

John Well-Off-Man (Chippewa-Cree) is a Class 7 license holder, Cree language teacher at Havre Public Schools, and former adjunct faculty at the Institute of American Indian Arts (2016-2021). He has received his Master's of Arts, Integrated Arts and Education from the University of Montana Missoula in 2007. He is also a printmaking workshop instructor and exhibiting artist.