DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 343 763 RC 018 622

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TITLE Improving Parental Participation in Elementary and Secondary Education for American Indian and Alaska Native Students.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, DC. Indian Nations At Risk Task Force.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 75p.; In: Indian Nations At Risk Task Force Commissioned Papers. See RC 018 612.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Alaska Natives; *American Indian Education; American Indians; *Change Strategies; Demonstration Programs; Educational Legislation; Elementary Secondary Education; Literature Reviews; *Parent Participation; *Parent School Relationship; *Parent Student Relationship

ABSTRACT

Home and family are important predictors of student attitude and achievement. However, the coercive assimilation policies of the past have left a legacy of barriers between schools and Native parents. Parent participation in schools goes beyond a supportive role and includes activities influencing decision making. Key issues for Native parents include attitudes of teachers and other staff, school building conditions and learning environment, alienation of students and parents from school, misunderstanding by the school of extended family dynamics, and the sparsity and cultural isolation of urban American Indians. Additional community and family factors inhibiting parental involvement include dysfunctional families, poverty, illiteracy, and drug and alcohol abuse. According to research, parent participation in any form improves parent attitudes and behavior, as well as student achievement, attendance, motivation, self-esteem, and behavior. A literature review describes Native cultural influences on student learning, traditional values, child rearing practices, learning styles, and self-esteem issues. Effective activity-oriented model programs are discussed that improve personal relationships between parents and students or teachers. Federal legislation is described that encourages local school districts to consult with Native parent groups. Strategies are outlined, in which schools begin to change their images to centers of advocacy for parents and children, and state and federal agencies encourage the participation of Native parents. This paper contains 100 references. (SV)

Improving Parental Participation in Elementary and Secondary Education for American Indian and Alaska Native Students

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Introduction

The notion that home and family are important predictors of student attitude and achievement is well documented in research and emphasized repeatedly by hundreds of Native people testifying nationwide at the Indian Nations at Risk (INAR) hearings. Surfacing as one of the most universal themes, improving the participation of Native parents provides one of the greatest opportunities for success in Native educational endeavors; requiring strong administrative commitment, limited financial resources, significant staff training, and a variety of options to ensure that participation is meaningful. This paper will: summarize *historical barriers* for Native parents, explore *key issues*, highlight *significant research*, describe *successful models*, and recommend *strategies* for improving Native parental support and Native parental involvement.

Transformational Leadership

A prerequisite to Native parental participation is transformational leadership. Historically education has been a process through which one was supposed to be changed or perhaps enhanced. Education needs to become a process through which one feels empowered. Native children cannot become empowered unless educational leadership understands the implications of what empowerment really means.

Empowerment means equipping one's self to be responsible and self-regulating while exercising positive regard for others. There is no way one can empower others. Empowerment is a personal matter.

Native education desperately needs transformational leadership, leaders who are empowering and changing themselves. Instead of attempting the impossible -- trying to change others -- high performing leaders change the way they interact with others. They recognize that people have the capacity and competence to grow and to function from an internal self responsible locus of control.

In schools and Native communities transformational leaders provide growth-producing climates of openness, acceptance, and participatory power-sharing. The transformational leader provides a context in which people tap their own power and move toward self-transcending behavior.

Distinguishing Between Parental Involvement and Parental Support

There is a distinction between the terms *parental involvement* and *parental support*. *Parental support* includes such activities as sending children to school, attending parent-teacher conferences, encouraging the completion of homework, doing math games, or reading to children. *Parental involvement* not only supports the educational process of each individual child, but includes additional activities which impact school systems, such as: serving on Johnson O'-Malley Committees, Indian Education Act Committees, or tribal culture committees; participating in parent teacher organizations; or serving on local school boards or state, regional or Native education organizations or associations. Participation of Native parents is critical at all levels, but *parental support* is within the capabilities of all parents, and according to research, has the greatest impact on the achievement, behavior, and attitudes of students.

A Native parent at the National Indian Education Conference, Parental Involvement Issue session summarized the following:

- I would like to distinguish between parent involvement and parent support. Parent involvement requires parents to be involved as committee members, policy makers, Title V advisors, and even tutors. On the other hand, parent support programs such as Family Math and Family Science build upon what parents can do for a child. Because our parents haven't come through the system with the kind of skills that they need in terms of parenting, we

haven't been very good at giving them concrete things they can do with their children. When you actually get parents and children together having fun around a content area like Family Math or Family Science, you start breaking down some of the barriers and fears that parents grew up with. They want to be there for their children but nobody has even shown them how to in very concrete, enjoyable, supportive kinds of ways. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 1)

- Parents who participate in our schools, who come to parent-teacher conferences, who come to basketball games and music concerts, who support all of the extracurricular activities that their children participate in, generally do not have children who are at risk. The parents of at-risk children are those we do not see in the schools. They are usually involved in so many other things and issues of their own that they do not have time to come to school. Other life issues make it hard for them to support education... When parents are not available, we need to work with whoever is key in that child's life, whether it is the grandmother or grandfather, the sister or brother, aunt or uncle. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Drop Out Prevention, 1990, p.15)

The New Jersey Department of Education publication entitled *Effective Practices for Successful Bilingual Parent Involvement Programs: An Administrator's Handbook*, identifies the various roles parents can play in the education of their children.

Parental *support* encompasses the roles of parents as learners, parents as teachers, parents as counselors, and for some, parents as resources. Parental involvement includes parents as resources, parents as decision makers, and parents as agents of change.

- *Parents as Learners*: This role focuses on increasing a parent's own educational experiences to improve the home environment for the child in areas related to success in school. In the case of parents of limited English proficient children, learning may involve orientation to the language of school, the school system, child development information, and other kinds of support for school.
- *Parents as Teachers*: This role focuses on the fact that parents are the child's first teachers. Special training and education are given to parents so that they become a means of working with the child at home to foster good study habits and reinforce learning.
- *Parents as Counselors*: In this role parents provide emotional support to their children in setting goals and in understanding the goals of the American school system.
- *Parents as Resources*: This role uses parents as a resource with special talents and skills in the actual classroom situation. It increases communication between the parents and the school, and demonstrates a school's responsiveness to the local needs of the community.
- *Parents as Decision Makers*: In this role parents participate in the whole educational process from the needs assessment and program planning to the evaluation of the entire program.
- *Parents as Agents of Social Change*: Parents work with agencies outside the school to help them attain the goal of home-school partnership.

Once these distinctions of parental roles are clarified, it is easier to discuss the kind of participation which is essential and realistic for most Native parents, versus participation which is desirable but, perhaps in some cases, unrealistic for many Native parents. Due to the concerted, intentional omission of Native parents historically, much needs to be done to rebuild both Native *parental support*, and Native *parental involvement*. With Johnson O'Malley and Indian Education Act programs, Native parental *involvement* has become a means through which schools can redefine the role of education given in the uniqueness of Native communities. These programs have significantly increased the quantity and quality of Native parental *involvement*. Native parental *support*, however, has not received nearly as much attention. The *support* aspects of Native parental participation in schools needs to be boosted tremendously. All schools need both parental *support* and *involvement*, but little has been done to date about *support*.

Historical Barriers to Native Parents

I am a parent of six children and have dealt with the public school system for twenty four

years. I have taught my children to respect all people, like I was taught by my grand mother. But I have learned that the school system does not understand American Indian children or their culture. I believe the school system needs to have respect for American Indian children. When I sent my children to school they were feeling good about themselves, their culture, and their heritage, but they came home feeling inferior about themselves and full of questions about our value system. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p.10)

The sentiments expressed so eloquently by a veteran Native parent during the issues forum at the National Indian Education Association Conference in San Diego summarizes hundreds of others' deep concern that schools in America are failing American Indian/Alaska Native children, families, and communities. Inclusion of Native parents in the educational process has the potential of transforming a system which historically imposed values and expectations on communities rather than supporting, reinforcing, or empowering them. True parental participation is the most critical element necessary in order to radically reverse the downward trend in achievement and improve the dismal Native student dropout statistics.

- Parents are not to be blamed. You need to look at the parents' parents and the parents before them to find out what the influences have been and how they have impacted students today. In my education and in educating these American Indian students, I had to take a very hard journey back to the boarding school conflict that was placed upon us by the United States of America. Indian students today have no understanding of this and both they and non-Indian teachers are like sponges once they learn about what might be the root of many of the problems they encounter today. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Ojibway, 1990, p. 16)
- The first reality I wish to address is that of educational expectations. While most of us today recognize the harmful and sometimes devastating effects that the boarding school experience had on previous generations of Indian people, we seldom consider the educational legacy bestowed on future generations by this one single action. The purpose of the boarding school was, after all, cultural genocide, and there are few Indian families who managed to escape its reaches. The boarding school was for many Indian people the first encounter with formal institutionalized education, and the relationship that was established was oppositional. Indian parents, forced to relinquish their children without recourse, hoped for two things: that their children would be returned to them and that in the process of being "civilized," their children would not be destroyed. The oppositional relationship established between Indian people and institutionalized education has been reinforced through subsequent generations of educational failure in public schools. Educators speak in flowery terms of quality educational outcomes, and yet many Indian parents of today are not unlike those of previous generations — expecting only that in the process of education, their children will not be destroyed. As a distinct group, Indian people have learned to expect little from education and, unfortunately, their expectations have been fulfilled. The first reality we must then confront in the education of Indian children is that there is a tremendous difference between the rhetoric of education and what many Indian people have learned to realistically expect from public schools. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Salinas, 1990, p. 24)

One tragedy in the history of Indian education is that originally education was used by the federal government as a weapon to estrange Indian children from their culture, their parents, their people. Education was an intentional act of intellectual genocide as it was originally introduced into Indian country. This is no longer the intent of education planners dealing with Indian education. But the scars of this shameful legacy remain. They remain in the estrangement of many Indian parents from the school environment. They remain in the persistent tendency of too many federal education officials to try to go around the grassroots Indian people in planning education—to decide for them what should be done with their children. The Navajo Nation is committed to overcoming this tragic legacy. We are committed to building with our Navajo people educational programs and structures that educate our children to the highest levels of competence by building upon all that is strong and good in our Navajo people. (INAR Southwest Hearing, Haskie, 1990, p.45)

- Indians do not necessarily want to become part of the melting pot. Historically, Indians have been used as the kindling to

heat the melting pot, and they do not necessarily want to be assimilated into the dominant society and be forced to adopt its values. Our community needs assessments have told us repeatedly over the years that Indian parents strongly want to retain their Indian language, culture, and values within their educational programs. Unfortunately for Indians in the schools today, it is like looking in a mirror and not being able to see your own reflection. The shockingly high dropout rates are a testament to this feeling of alienation that Indians feel in a non-Indian setting. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Beaulieu, 1990, p. 29).

Parents' interest in school, attitudes about education, amount of time spent reading to their children, and positive expectations about learning are the kinds of things that influence their own children's school achievement. Many times, attitudes of parents are rooted in their own experiences with school. If parents have had negative experiences themselves, they may consciously or even unconsciously transmit their negative feelings to their children. *These attitudes are not likely to change without intervention.* Clearly American Indian/Alaska Native education abounds with justification for parental fear, caution, and open hostility towards schools and educators. As one Indian Nation at Risk (INAR) testifier explained, "The BIA has had a record of taking our Indian children away from their communities and sending them to schools 100 miles away. That was a deliberate effort on the government's part to assimilate and indoctrinate these children. We need to turn this around and let the family and parents assume more responsibility." (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 1)

It has been well documented that the separation of Native children from their families was the accepted strategy used to assimilate the Native. When children were removed from their families, whole generations lost access to Native parenting models, culture, language, and traditional values. Not only were bonds between children and their fathers and mothers broken, but those with others who had parenting responsibilities as well. In more traditional Native communities, the extended family shared responsibilities for discipline, nurturing, guidance, and skill building. "As early as 1744, an Indian elder described tribal members who returned to tribal life from schools of the white man as being unfit for tribal life, not able to speak the tribal language well, unfit to be counselors, and hence were unable to make a worthwhile contribution to the tribe." (Christensen, Demmert, 1978, p. 139). Early on, these ties were intentionally severed by missionaries and by government policy. For example, the treaty negotiated in 1867 with the Comanches and Kiowas clearly described this intent:

> Article 7. In order to insure the civilization of the tribes entering into this treaty, the necessity of education is admitted . . . and they therefore pledge to compel their children, male and female, between the ages of 6 and 16 years, to attend school; and it is hereby made the duty of the agent for said Indians to see that this stipulation is strictly complied with; and the United States agrees that for every 30 children between said ages, who can be induced or compelled to attend school, a house shall be provided, and a teacher competent to teach the elementary branches of an English education shall be furnished . . .the provisions of this article to continue for not less than 20 years. (Hagan, p. 99).

It is understood that the culture of a people is reflected in and passed on through their educational system. Serious attention to methods and content of education ensures that the values and the lifestyle of a culture are passed on to children. Separated from that system, other values and lifestyles begin to dominate the child. "A major conflict between cultures occurred when the federal government attempted to bring American Indians into the mainstream of society following the 1871 conclusion of the treaty-signing period. The boarding school was the primary institution encouraging acculturation of American Indian/Alaska Native youth due to the schools' adherence to a regime that reflected the military fortifications in which schools were housed. Different conceptions of time and history were taught in boarding schools, and Indian students were confronted with a school culture and curriculum vastly different from their own tribal reality. Students were asked to study history as a progressive development of societies as expressed by the European thought processes rather than a cyclical experience of nature as taught by their elders." (Bill, 1987, p. 37)

Our Voices, Our Visions: American Indians Speak Out for Educational Excellence succinctly describes the coercive assimilation policy aimed at destroying Indian culture.

> Architects of assimilation targeted Indian children for radical resocialization as a means of destroying tribal life. Traditionally, parents, clan members, and religious leaders taught children tribal values, religious precepts, political ideology, and other skills to live a well-balanced life. Under white

> authority, Indian children frequently suffered a torrent of abuse. Government officials sent children to distant boarding schools where they were punished for speaking their own language, taught to believe that their Indian ways were evil, and inculcated with values antithetical to tribal life. In the 1950s, when the federal government sought to cancel its trust obligation to Indian tribes, federal budget cuts shifted emphasis from boarding schools to local public schools. Although most Indian students thereafter lived at home and attended local schools, the aim of state administered education remained essentially the same: assimilation. (AISES, 1990, p.1)

Numerous investigators have documented the imposition of education upon Native people, one in 1928, commonly called the *Meriam Report*, and the other most notable, in 1969, entitled *Indian Education: A National Tragedy, A National Challenge*.

> The major findings of the Meriam Report were that (1) Indians were excluded from management of their own affairs, and (2) Indians were receiving a poor quality of services (especially health and education) from public officials who were supposed to be serving their needs. These two findings remain just as valid today as they were more than 60 years ago.

The report was highly critical of boarding schools, both because of their inadequate facilities and the manner in which they were operated. It condemned the practices of taking children from their homes and placing them in off-reservation boarding schools. It stressed repeatedly the need for a relevant instructional curriculum adapted to the individual needs and background of the students. It chided the schools for failing to consider or adapt to the language of the child. It asked why Indians could not participate in deciding the direction of their schools. And it suggested that public schools, with their traditional curriculums, were not the answer either.

"The most fundamental need in Indian education," according to the report, "is a change in point of view."

The Indian family and social structure must be strengthened, not destroyed. The qualifications of teachers in Indian schools must be high, not poor to average. The Federal school system must be a model of excellence. (Kennedy, 1969, p. 83)

> At the heart of the matter, educationally at least, is the relationship between the Indian community and the public school and the general powerlessness the Indian feels in regard to the education of his children. A recent report by the Carnegie Foundation described the relationship between white people, especially the white power structure, and Indians as 'one of the most crucial problems in the education of Indian children.' The report continued: 'This relationship frequently demeans Indians, destroys their self-respect and self-confidence, develops or encourages apathy and a sense of alienation from the educational process, and deprives them of an opportunity to develop the ability and experience to control their own affairs through participation in effective local government.' (Kennedy, 1969, p. 24)

The conclusions of these studies echoed that the attempts by the federal government to educate Native people has dramatically eroded both the life style and economic position of tribes and individuals. Historically, American Indian/Alaska Native people, through the intrusion process of education, have *learned* to fear schools and educators, while at the same time understanding the necessity of their existence. In the summary of historical findings the report entitled *Indian Education: A National Tragedy, A National Challenge*, described the policy of coercive assimilation, national attitudes, and the failure of education.

The coercive assimilation policy had disastrous effects on the education of Indian children. It has resulted in schools which fail to recognize the importance and validity of the Indian community. The community and child retaliate by treating the school as an alien institution.

"As public opinion became more tolerant of cultural pluralism during the 1960s, Congress authorized funds for Indian education and cultural retention programs. Numerous tribes and communities took advantage of the opportunity by contracting with Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools, establishing local school boards, and setting up alternative schools." (AISES, 1990, p. 1) Federal budget cuts during the late 1970s and 1980s, however, eliminated or weakened many of these self-determination initiatives in education.

The process of rebuilding communities, nurturing and educating or re-educating Native parents will require tremendous time, energy, and commitment on the part of schools and tribal communities. Given the potential for success and the substantive impact that Native parental participation could have on the educational outcomes of Native students, inclusion of Native parents is critical. Therefore, the re-education process must begin, must be supportive, accepting, and participatory, and must allow Native parents opportunities to learn and build skills necessary for themselves; skills which, in turn, they can pass on to their children.

> Education cannot be treated as an institution separate from communities. It is part of us, just as the sun, moon, stars, rain, snow, and wind affect us as we walk on Mother Earth.

The recommendations address key elements for holistic integration. This will lead to cooperation from tribal leaders and elders, improve self-image and analytical skills among Indian children, and ensure that accurate cultural portrayals are integrated in the teaching of academic competencies and subject areas. Ultimately, the recommendations are offered in the interest of self-respect and partnership—self-respect for educators and Indians alike—so that a partnership of cultural equality can be fostered. (AISES, 1990 p.8)

Key Issues For American Indian/Alaska Native Parents

This section will highlight contemporary attitudes of American Indian/Alaska Native people shared during the regional hearings and issue forums sponsored by the Indian Nations At Risk (INAR) Task Force. Comments have been organized around two general headings: those over which educational *institutions* have control or influence, and those which describe dynamics operating in Native communities.

School Focused Issues

A large number of concerns expressed during the INAR hearings described and criticized the attitudes, practices and environments of schooling institutions. Testimony in general did not always distinguish between Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, public schools, tribally controlled, or contract schools. These contemporary opinions continue to reinforce historical documentation which maintains that schools appear to be cold, inhospitable institutions, unwilling to actively reach out to communities, acknowledge differences in culture and values, and promote educational excellence validated and supported by Native people.

Staff Attitudes

Native people continue to have concerns about the attitudes and behavior of educational staff who seem uninformed about Native cultures and unwilling to change behavior. Native teachers are too few in number.

> Most tribal youth are attending public schools that are Euro-American dominated and controlled. In a recent article entitled *American Indian Nation Demographics for 1990*, John Tippeconic reports that 82 percent of Native Americans attend public schools and the enrollment in BIA schools is decreasing. Therefore, more and more students are taught by non-Indian teachers. At a time when there is an increase in the cultural diversity of students, there is a decrease in the cultural diversity of teachers. According to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, only .6 percent of the public school teachers are of Native American ancestry. (INAR Plains Hearings, Bradley, 1990, p. 11)

The vast majority of teachers must learn about traditional Native culture. Though much has been done in recent history to re-educate teachers and principals, many still remain abysmally ignorant about how best to acknowledge cultural differences and how best to reinforce those cultural differences in the classroom. When Native students experience problems, schools tend to blame parents and community.

Native parents, however, expect schools to be responsible for correcting problems on their own and view educators as the professionals. Robbed of the opportunity to influence education, generations of Native parents have never learned how to be an advocate for their children. Many Native parents will say they want their children to be educated, yet do not understand which behaviors, on their part, reinforce that opinion. As a result, schools perceive Native parents as unsupportive. "There is lack of parent involvement. Almost all of our parents want their children to get an education, but they do not know what education is. They do not have Readers Digest, National Geographic, or even a dictionary in their house." (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Academic Performance, 1990, p. 15)

Interaction with Native parents tends to focus on the negative, initiated most often when there is a problem with a student. "Often we think in negative terms about parents coming to school and being involved. When parents come to school, you wonder why they are there. Are they there because a child is in trouble? Are they there because they are upset and angry with the school or the teacher?" (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 4)

- We, as parents, don't feel welcome in public schools. In fact, when I go to schools, it's always because my child was not listening or some small reason, and I'm sure there are bigger problems faced by other parents. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 4)
- We can all pretend that there is a wonderful partnership between schools and parents, but there is not. When you come

in with a problem, you can bet that the institutional response is that your child has been a problem. Then they start focusing in on your child because this is how many institutions protect themselves. If you are educated and know how the system works, you can respond to that. If you are not, the school shuts the door and pegs you and your child as troublemakers. I think it's asking a lot to expect parents, who aren't comfortable in this foreign setting anyway, to go in there and assert themselves and demand change. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 4)

- I regret to say that the public school system has been abusive to my children physically and emotionally. I've tried to work with the school system, and I've talked to many other Indian parents who have tried to work with them. Most of the time when they ask you to work with them, it is regarding a discipline problem. Sometimes a death in the family occurs, and my children have to be out two or three days, and they are punished for supporting their family and its values. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 4)

Native people repeatedly express concern about staff attitudes, behavior and lack of knowledge. Because of these perceptions on the part of Native parents, they are reluctant to approach the school.

- We need to encourage non-Indian teachers to work with Indian parents so the children can see that the Indian parents and the non-Indian teachers have the same ideas about education. This is important so children will have confidence in their teachers and teachers can recognize that these children are just as important as other children in the school. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Partnerships of Schools, Tribes, Communities, Parents and Businesses, 1990, p. 5)
- I am a parent and was involved in Head Start because of the parent involvement component written into that program. However, when our son when into kindergarten, our involvement tailed off. I don't know if that was because we were intimidated by the teachers, if we were somehow discouraged from participating, or if we were made not to feel welcome. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, p. 2)

Ignorance certainly influences staff, but Natives also report blatant racism as a contributing inhibitor for student success and Native parental participation. "I come from a tribe that has two public schools within a seven-mile radius on each side. Why do we need a tribal school when we are so close to public schools? It is because we suffer a lot of racism in the State of Washington." (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 9)

- Our kids going into ninth grade at the high school are facing institutionalized racism and cultural insensitivity. This is especially true in areas where there is competition between the non-Indican and the Indian communities for a treaty resource, such as in the Pacific Northwest where the tribes are fishing tribes. Some of the teachers are commercial fishermen themselves, and thus there is a lot of antagonism because they are competing during the summer months for money. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 9)
- Students face blatant racism in their classes. In one district in Northwest Washington, high school students were required to take a class in Pacific Northwest history. Because teachers could use supplementary materials that did not have to be reviewed by a curriculum board, some teachers were using materials that were extremely racist and sexist. One teacher showed a movie and clapped every time an Indian got killed.

This school imposed an attendance policy that was extremely punitive. If a student missed ten days of school within a semester, he or she had to petition for academic credit for that semester, regardless of academic standing. 'The school doesn't consider whether you might be sick, attending ceremonials, or helping your family fish. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 9)

- Three years ago I had traditional people and parents come to a meeting. They began to discuss some of their problems and I couldn't believe what I heard. Indian children were not allowed to hang their coats with the white students, they were never chosen for classroom help, they were chosen last to do anything, and they were never chosen to be student of the month.

One of the biggest problems is the prejudice of teachers. They only acknowledge Indians on Thanksgiving or when it is time for filling out funding papers. All Indian students are geared toward vocational education, they are never counseled for college-bound courses. I had a problem with my son and asked the school to change his courses. I was told all Indians go to voc-tech. (INAR Plains Hearing, Kootswtewa, 1990, p. 83)

Reluctance to change on the part of some school personnel is a major issue in too many Native communities.

- Lower Kuskowim School District in Bethel, Alaska has 23 schools serving 3,000 students, 19 of which provide instruction in the Native language up to grade three, when the transition to English begins. We have 270 teachers, 200 of whom are Anglos. We are looking for some kind of academic preparation by the teachers to fully understand the Native students and what we've been going through the past couple of years has been very troublesome. In teacher negotiations we asked that teachers become academically prepared with at least six credits of our Yipik language and culture before they become permanent.

There has been severe teacher resistance to doing this, while the board and parents feel it is absolutely essential. Teachers argue that they can become familiar with our language and culture just by being there. Our stand is that they need formal academic preparation in these areas. We have added incentives to the negotiations by (1) offering every teacher a $1,000 across the board raise, (2) offering a one percent increase over three years, and (3) offering to pay for all of the courses and materials. But the teachers said absolutely not, so it has been very difficult and I am not sure how you formulate a successful policy. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Native Language and Culture, 1990, p. 7)

Another aspect of school related issues, relative to teachers is the concern for high staff turnover rates in rural, isolated Native schools. "The turnover rate of non-Indian teachers on reservations creates a lack of continuity in staff development and systematic planning of high quality instructional delivery. Many non-Indian teachers have the empathy, understanding, caring, cultural awareness, and sensitivity that is necessary to teach Indian students; the important point was that they quite often do not stay in rural/reservation areas where they are sorely needed." (INAR Southwest Hearing, Swisher, 1990, p. 10)

School Environment

The physical location and condition of school buildings also influences perceptions of Native parents. Many times schools resemble compounds enclosed within fences. Still others are set apart from the community in inaccessible places. Off reservation schools are so remote that access for most Native parents is not only unlikely but impossible.

- This is particularly true of Indian students living in rural settings like the Navajo and Hope reservations. Extreme distance between high schools in the Navajo Nation necessitates boarding schools for these young people. Unfortunately, this form of isolation from home and community creates emotional hardships for Indian youth. The resultant problems most often cited by staff at these boarding facilities are disruptive behavior, lack of motivation and career goals, drug and alcohol abuse, and teen sex and pregnancy. (INAR Southwest Hearing, Sakiestewa, 1990, p. 5)
- In one area, students are traveling 60 miles to attend public schools when there is a boarding school nearby. Nothing could be done about this situation because public school policy overrides the desires of the tribes and parents have a choice of where to send their children.
- Our Indian students are isolated from the world at large and are subject to print and media poverty, as well as low income. Teachers commute from long distances--Phoenix, Tucson, Ajo, and Santa Rosa Boarding School-- and must commute 35-130 miles and have a lot of car problems. San Simon School has high retention of staff and teachers. The school needs a satellite dish and cable hookups for access to educational TV and university programs. (INAR Southwest Hearing, Mason, 1990, p.27-28)

Many schools are closed and unavailable during evenings and on weekends. Grounds and structures too often are not maintained, giving schools a run down appearance. Tribally controlled schools often are relegated to the most dilapidated buildings. This implies that education occurring in these types of facilities is not as good as that which occurs in "the real" school building.

If Native parents make it through the school door, they rarely see evidence of culture in the halls or on classroom bulletin boards. Simple validation of the community in which the school sits is severely limited. For example: In a school on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation during March, every classroom had shamrocks and little green leprechauns except for one. That classroom alone had displayed a Native in regalia reaching out to a cavalry officer with a caption designating March as a time when Cheyenne people ceded land to United States government.

The exclusion and intimidation of parents may occur because of subtle things.

- I went to visit Chemawa with my mother because my grandmother had gone there. We walked into that place and the secretarial area was built up at least a foot, maybe two feet, off the floor from the reception area so that when the secretary came up and talked to us, she looked down over this counter. And my mother, this adult person whom I always thought of as being forward, could not talk. That, I think, is a trained, learned response. When schools are all designed that way, how do you expect Indian people to come in, take control and develop policies and curriculum? There are horrible breakdowns in communities that need to be regenerated. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 4)
- The parents just got tired of putting up with the racism and bigotry in the public schools and decided to start their own school. One of the schools, Circle of Life at White Earth, was funded and started with a Title IV grant. The other schools joined in the contracting route and got on a two-year funding cycle. All of the schools have very poor physical facilities.

Chief Bug-o-nay-ge-shig is probably the best school around. They have a brand new building and they keep adding as they grow. Nay-Ah-Shing started out in a trailer house and eventually moved over into the tribal headquarters offices. Fond du Lac is in a building that was originally designed as a Head Start facility for little kids. So it has little bitty sinks and little bitty desks. The building was really inadequate even for Head Start because it is so small.

We have an Ojibwe school that is wood frame construction. It is not very good in terms of fire safety or having water. Circle of Life is in a building that was at one time turned over to the state to serve as a public school. A clause in the contract stated that when the state returned it to the tribe it would be in the same condition as when it was originally turned over to them. The state has never lived up to that contract, if it isn't up to standard. We are now in the process of trying to remodel those buildings, but the money we have received is not adequate to bring them up to standard. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Tanner, 1990, p.57)

Schools which do not integrate Native culture into the core curriculum, give the message that education has little to do with the everyday life of Native people. Rather than ignoring Native cultures, schools should be celebrating them. It's difficult for parents to be part of something which appears to be so alien.

- In order for Western education to be a part of the value system of Indian communities, Indians have to see the worth of education. After several hundred years of having education imposed upon them, it's never really been a part of the value system. It's been a long, hard, struggle, but I think that a lot of parents are beginning to realize that there is value in education. However, there are still people who are punished for speaking their Native language and who experienced Christianity coming in and saying that their culture was the devil's work. It has to take a whole re-education of Indian people to make them committed to this kind of education. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Partnerships of Schools, Tribes, Communities, Parents and Businesses, 1990, p. 5)
- It would be very nice to think that the teaching of culture could occur at home, but that's not always the case. A lot of our traditional language and culture is being lost right now and it can't be taught in the home. That is why we reinforce it at school. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 9)

One Chickasaw educator from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, summarized eloquently that schools should be *Indianized*.

> So my belief is that we need to *Indianize* Indian Education. We need to Indianize the philosophy, the texts, the approach, the methods, the content, etc...We also need a different yardstick and we need to raise the standard for Indian education. Indian education maintains a continuity with tradition. Our traditions define and preserve us. It is important to understand that this continuity with tradition is neither a rejection of

the artifacts of other cultures nor an attempt to *turn back the clock*.

Indian education demands relationships of personal respect. Respect between different age groups, between humans and the rest of nature, and respect for different cultures and beliefs is an essential value of Indian people. This emphasis on respectful relationships recognizes that the quality of individual life depends on the quality of group life. Similarly, a respectful relationship with nature means that we are not the conquerors but nature's equal. In education the respect between students and teachers is a personal relationship that recognizes the knowledge and worth of each. (INAR Northwest Hearing, Hampton, 1990, p. 34-35)

Declining Native Parent Participation

Schools tend to involve parents less and less as children progress through the grades. Interestingly enough, achievement and attendance tend to drop as students progress through the grades. As research suggests, parental support has powerful affects at the early childhood level, yet it should be sustained throughout the schooling years. Since Native students begin dropping out at the junior high school levels, involvement and support of Native parents should increase, not decrease.

The departmentalization of junior high and high schools further isolates and alienates not only Native students, but their parents as well. Rather than having to communicate with one teacher, Native parents must interact with half a dozen teachers in many different classroom settings.

In many Native communities, urban and reservation alike, parental involvement starts during Head Start but deteriorates by the end of middle school. The middle school years are extremely crucial times; times when Native parents really need to give support and assistance to the youth who are facing adolescence.

- At the same time it is important to prepare students and parents by telling them that they are going to find these kinds of people at the high school and they may be grouchy and give you a hard time. This way they will know what to expect when they get there. In our Indian education program we try to cushion and buffer this process as best we can, but we can't be everywhere at once. If students know what to expect, it may be easier for them to take and they will be willing to put up with a little of it to stay in school. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Drop Out Prevention, 1990, p. 8)
- It would help if there was a way to enable parents to go and visit their children in college. I know it would have helped me when I was struggling through my first year of school. When a relative shows up and sees that you're really trying, it makes you try harder. (INAR/NIEA, Issue Session on Postsecondary Education, 1990, p. 3)

Native Community Issues

The other side of the school-community partnership is the Native community. The Native community itself is a contradiction; offering tremendous strength and pride yet struggling with inordinate abuse, alcoholism, poverty and dysfunction.

- We are a distinct and proud people with a heritage which is as old as time and as new as tomorrow. Our culture and our unique view of this world and man's place in it have much to give to the larger society of the United States and to the world community. In this age of nuclear threat and environmental crises, the Navajo perspective on man and his world is being looked to in order to bring Man into harmony with his world once again. We want to be equal to this challenge. We want our children to be so strong in their educational attainment and so solid in their Navajo heritage that they can bring to the world some of the wisdom and insight that it will need in the 21st century. (INAR Southwest Hearing, Haskie, 1990, p. 6)
- When children are born into dysfunctional families--whether it be alcohol or drugs, a parent with mental illness, or the absence of a parent--this is the beginning of victimness. They are unconscious of becoming victims as they get caught up in compulsive behavior and replay their victim role. These people make negative choices that negatively affect self-esteem. In other words, self-esteem is damaged by the dysfunction students are brought up in. (INAR Plains Hearing, Young, 1990, p. 20)

Issues Which Apply to Most Native Schools

Many factors continue to inhibit Native parental participation with schools Dynamics over which large numbers of Native parents have minimal control include illiteracy, low socio-economic status, poor parental self-esteem, dysfunctional

family relationships and poor health conditions. These issues exist across communities whether on the reservation or in the cities.

Illiteracy

The lack of educational role models continues to plague Indian communities. Evidence that Native people can get a good education and still maintain a traditional lifestyle are needed. The ability to read directly impacts the ability of Native parents to chart their own course.

> I teach adult education at the Denver Indian School. We are all educators speaking here today, and we are all into pushing our children into education. I am educating people whose academic grade levels are zero through three or eight. One of the reasons they want to learn is so they can teach and work with their children. They want to be able to read to their children. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Academic Performance, 1990, p.15)

- Family illiteracy keeps Indian youth from mastering basic literacy skills. Therefore, the Adult Basic Education and GED preparation classes offered at Seattle Indian Center are critical to achieving literacy for the Native American community as a whole. When the children acknowledge that education is important to their parents, it then becomes more important to them (INAR Northwest Hearing, Egawa p.48)

Economic Conditions

- Sixty-six percent (66%) of our Indian families in St. Paul live in poverty. By the free lunch program guidelines, we are talking about a family of four living on $452 a month, a family of six living on $675 every two weeks. I know that this high incidence of poverty is not news to you. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Gagnon, 1990, p.59)
- The economic situation of approximately 69% of the enrolled members is well below the poverty level, as the 69% are unemployed. Therefore, the Colville Indian children of this area are entering schools with a low esteem of their families, as well as of their communities which have little extra curricular activities available for school-aged children. Our goal is to educate and keep the children in school, providing technical assistance in any way possible through the school system. (INAR Northwest Hearing, Aripa, 1990, p.50)

Lack of Parental Self Esteem

Certainly, parent's perceptions of their own personal worth and influence will in some way impact their children. Many Native parents are strongly grounded in Native culture and feel good about themselves. Yet far too many others have severe self-esteem problems, resulting in behaviors of alcoholism and abuse.

- The Nespelem Elementary School District has 99% of enrolled Indian children being served in grades K-6. The children in the elementary school system do not progress academically as expected in a non-Indian situation. The majority of parents did not have an opportunity to integrate socially, therefore, children have developed the attitude that to integrate with other races is demeaning to their heritage as the aboriginal habitants. There are occasions when students can excel if motivated to the point where their self-esteem regarding their Native American Heritage has been developed by parents, school teachers, as well as the community leaders. (INAR Northwest Hearing, Aripa, 1990, p.50)

Dysfunctional Families/Drugs and Alcohol

- We do a disservice to our people when we always stress the families that are dysfunctional and abuse alcohol. We need to also give credit to those families who do raise their children well and are providing support for their education and personal growth. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Health, Wellness, and Substance Abuse Prevention, 1990, p.1)
- Our tribal council passed a resolution stating that our tribe would be alcohol and drug free within the next year or two. Consequently, there has been a lot of study on the addictive and dysfunctional communities and families. We discovered that even if you don't drink now, you may have inherited dysfunctional behaviors, and this is one of the reasons that we as adults can't help our children. I think that federal agencies have to better coordinate the programs and the resources that we have to educate our tribal leaders and parent committees because then this information will filter down to the communities.
- With the recent emphasis on the identification and treatment of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and Fetal Alcoholic Af-

fects (FAE), we are expecting a significant increase in the number of special education students served due to these conditions. We have discovered that we are beginning to serve FAS students who have one or both FAS parents. Fourteen and nine tenths percent (14.9%) of our students have been identified as needing special education. With ongoing efforts to identify and treat FAS and FAE children, we anticipate that this number will increase significantly. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Thacker, 1990, p.3)

Parental Choice

Movement within urban areas from school to school is a real issue which can detrimentally affect student achievement and parental participation. Movement between schools may be due to parental choice, family dysfunctioning or poverty.

- However, it is actually not the parents making choices, but the students. Consequently, the mobility rate is high and these students are not achieving because they spend a lot of time transferring from one school to another. The students enter one public school and are not able to identify with the curriculum so they go to another school. This goes on throughout the year. (INAR/NIEA, Issue Session on Partnerships of Schools, Tribes, Communities, Parents and Businesses, 1990, p.6)
- My area of concern is in the realm of parental rights, and according to the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), code 25 CFR states that parents have the right to send their students to whatever school they deem appropriate to meet the needs of the child. We are a tribal boarding school--and I must underscore *tribal* in that we feel we are not in the realm that we were 30 to 40 years ago as far as boarding schools go. As day schools go, we are among the top in Indian education and many parents would like to send their children to Marty School, but they are denied this option because we are not "an approved BIA facility." This determination by BIA officials is contrary to CFR and should no longer be practiced or allowed. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Wright, 1990, p.30)
- Educators across the nation seem to be using parental choice as a front or a reason to allow students to go to schools of their choice, but many times those students will go to no less than two schools in a year. We have three BIA schools within a radius of 50 miles that are surrounded by a public school system and we have kids leaving our school within the first three months to go elsewhere. However, they end up coming back to our school because it is close to their home and their community. We end up receiving those kids back in late March or April, and we don't know if we should promote them.

I agree that parents should have a choice of where to send their children, but the problem is that the students are the ones making those decisions. We need to form a partnership with parents so they trust the schools and don't leave the choice up to their children. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 1)

- Parents have a role to play in dropout prevention, especially as advocates for their child's education. Sometimes parents have to make a choice between living in an urban setting where you may lose touch with your language and culture. These are hard choices, but to me it is important that parents maintain their sense of direction. When you do have your culture and your language, it is a big plus and something you can resort back to. But my two children are going to a prep school, by my choice, so they will be prepared for a better life. As parents we do have a choice of preventing our children from dropping out by saying, "Hey, this is the direction I want you to take." Most children are looking for direction from their Elders, from family, teachers, counselors, and other adults. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Drop Out Prevention, 1990, p. 15)
- In support of a statement made by Lauro Cavazos at the Alaska NIEA meeting last year, I believe that Indian parents should have a choice of education. If they feel that their children could be provided a higher quality education in another district, they should be free to send them there. Again, specifying the State of New York, we have the unique situation where the state provides funds to schools that have a large Indian population on a per student basis, which is used by the schools to cover school expenses, including transportation. Although improved from 20 years ago, Indian input on the spending of these funds is limited, and Indian parents would prefer to have a direct voucher system whereby

they could enroll their children in the district of their choice. (INAR Eastern Hearing, Stock, 1990, p.6)

Extended Family

Unlike the other issues addressed in this section, issues related to the nature of Native extended families is not a deficit. It is a dynamic which is often not acknowledged, or is misunderstood by educational staff. Extended family relationships have significant implications for parenting in Native communities. Extended family members may be very effective supporters of education for Native children. When biological parents are not available, grandparents and aunts or uncle should be utilized.

- The traditional extended family provides Ojibwe communities with a balanced division of tasks and workers for generations. This natural support system provided roles for individuals of all ages. Elders were a particularly important part of the extended family and were revered for their experiences—in individual and family life, child rearing, history, music, and crafts—but especially because they were the link with the past and the bearers of tradition, culture, and spirituality. One of their key functions was the transmission of Ojibwe cultural heritage to the young... Today, a breakdown of the extended family unit and a de-emphasis on cultural traditions is very evident on the Lac Courte Oreilles Indian Reservation, and the role of the Elders has been diminished in the community. As a result, the community is weakened and traditional cultural beliefs, values and Ojibwe language are not being passed on to children and families as they were in the past. Many factors leading to instabilities operate in a complex way to exert pressure on families, but the following areas can be singled out as large contributors to the breakdown of cultural values systems and traditions on the Reservation. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Benton, 1990, p.63)

Issues of Reservation Schools

Reservation communities because of isolation and unique funding requirements for schools, face additional hurdles over which Native parents must negotiate.

- The South Dakota Department of Education ranks school districts in the state regarding the number of "needy" students. They rank Todd County School District as fifth (88.32%). The top four are districts serving a majority of American Indian students. We are a rural and isolated district. We transport 81.45% of our students, which ranks eighth in the state. We rank third in the state for the percentage of dropouts. Numbers one and two are also districts serving a majority of American Indian students. Our FY 90 expenditures per student, $4,098.24, ranked 55th of 191 public school districts in the state. Because of our taxable land, we are able to generate only $406.95 of our expenditure per student at the local level. In this regard, we rank last in the state. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Thacker, 1990, p.3)
- It is our strong belief, and one that is shared by the Governor of the State of South Dakota, that the education of an American Indian student is more costly than the education of the majority student. Governor Mickelson estimated that the cost is about 65 percent higher for the American Indian student. To name a few areas of need which cause our expenditure per child to increase: We need smaller classes, more instructional aides, support for the cafeteria fund to provide breakfast and lunch, support for the transportation fund, more varied materials, more supplemental programs, remedial programs, programs to help students lean and retain culture, programs which help with language deficiency problems found in isolated bilingual cultures, support for parents to purchase school supplies and clothes, support for parents to be able to participate in school functions, programs which provide personnel who help improve the communication between the home and the school, programs which provide incentive for students for improved attendance, behavior, and grades, and many other programs which are too numerous to mention. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Thacker, 1990, p.3)
- Many very young children serve as the primary care providers for their younger siblings while their parents are on a binge. Less than half of the families have transportation. Less than 30% of the households have a telephone. The average age on the Rosebud is approximately 26. Over 50% of the population is under 20. This portends an increase in school-age

population. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Thacker, 1990, p.3)

Impact Aid and School Funding Issues

- School districts that receive Impact Aid should have a board of Indian education commissioners comprised of parents, school district employees, and tribal representatives to address problems or improvements that need to be made. This board should have clout with the federal government to make recommendations for sanctions against school districts so that districts can't get Impact Aid unless they respond to the needs of our students. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 10)
- My recommendation... would be that the federal government stop providing any funds whatsoever for any kind of Indian education programs or aid to public schools unless and until there is a way to tie that aid to programs that are directly controlled by Native Americans themselves. The other approach has not worked and in fact has given people an excuse to point to all the efforts that have been made as a way of excusing the virtually worthless results they bring about. My recommendation suggests a radical approach, but I think that the public education system in our country is so entrenched and bureaucratized that good teachers, administrators and parents feel handcuffed when it comes to making change. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Wallace, 1990, p.10)

Issues of Urban Schools

Natives who live in urban communities undergo many hardships which make it difficult to maintain a stable home environment. American Indian/Alaska Natives who leave their rural reservation settings for the city are confronted with different problems and needs than those Natives who remain on the reservation. The move to the city puts a strain on families, especially families with traditional ways. " We're not trying to take away from the reservation people at all," the Urban Indian says. "But the needs are as great for Indians in the city as they are for Indians on the reservation —perhaps greater because they are away from friends and family in what amounts to a foreign world."

- While statistical data regarding Indian education is limited, what is clear is that public institutions in Chicago fail Indian students at a level greater than that of any other racial minority. Currently, Indian enrollment in Chicago Public Schools is 689; 510 are in elementary school, and 179 are in high school.

Based on statistics provided by the Chicago School Board 65.9 percent of these students will not graduate from high school. While the specific data in regard to achievement is sketchy, what appears to occur is a sharp decline after the fourth grade. By the eighth grade, most Indian students are about two years behind in their reading level.

For those students who do make it to high school, informal statistics indicate that they are three years below grade level in reading by the time they enter the tenth grade. The largest dropout rate appears to be after the tenth grade. Of special concern is that the dropout rate for American Indian students in Chicago Public Schools is increasing in contrast to all other minority groups who are experiencing slight improvements.

The Chicago Panel of Public School finance reports that a primary indicator for success in school is family income level. The 1980 U.S. Census indicated that Indians represented the poorest group in the city, with 40 percent at or below the poverty level. Low family income would indicate that these children attend schools in poor neighborhoods in schools already plagued with problems of drugs, gangs, and limited resources. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Eichhorn, 1990, p.44)

- The second reality, closely tied to the first, is that the future of Indian education in our area is intrinsically tied to the future of public education. While we are fortunate to have non-public alternative Indian schools in our cities, the funding needed to expand these alternatives is not available at the state or federal level, nor from the private sector.

The education of the majority of Indian children in our urban area will continue to be carried out at the mercy of the public schools. I say "mercy" because good things happen for Indian children in public schools. At the discretion of those in power. At times, our very activist Indian community is able to influence the outcome, but too often we are not. As urban Indian people we do not have sustained access t those who make educational decisions, so we do what we can when we can to advocate a more responsive educational system for our children.

The third reality we must face, and one which I think makes the Minneapolis situation different

from others, is that our young people are increasingly assuming the profile of other disadvantaged intercity youth. We have at least two organized Indian gangs in Minneapolis ranging in age from 12 to the late 20s. During the past summer, we have experienced increased inter-gang rivalry between Indian gangs and more sophisticated groups like the Bloods and Crips. Drive-by shootings, long common in other large urban centers, are beginning to routinely occur in Minneapolis and increasingly involve innocent Indian community victims.

Young people are afraid on their way to school and afraid once they get to school that they or someone close to them will be the next victim of the violence. Many of our young men routinely carry weapons in the community and into our schools. During the past year, there were reports of Indian children as young as third grade carrying guns to school.

While both the Minneapolis and St. Paul school systems are making what I believe to be legitimate attempts to become more responsive to Indian students, urban Indian people actually have less influence in broader educational policy decisions than at previous times. Due to the resettlement of large numbers of Southeast Asian refugees in Minnesota, we are now the smallest minority group in the metro area and possibly in the state. We are, based on racial identification, subsumed under policies designed to respond to the needs of other groups of color. And because we are urban Indians, decision makers are less willing to accept our arguments for distinct legal/political status. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Salinas, 1990, p.25)

American Indian/Alaska Natives in urban areas live in the middle of other cultures and environments that are foreign to them. They may face unemployment or minimum wage jobs and lack of help from welfare. They may feel lonely, frightened, and fear losing their cultural identity. They may be confronted with impersonal behavior, attitudes and values and a different type of poverty from that of the reservation. They may encounter a physical environment of concrete walls, and social organizations that turn a deaf ear.

- There are no programs available for urban Indians. The Indian Head Start money goes to reservations and it does not go the urban areas for Indian children. Furthermore, Indian children and families do not usually participate in urban programs run by the region. Either they don't know about the programs because the recruiting isn't right, or they don't stay in programs because they don't feel wanted. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Early Childhood Education, 1990, p. 8)
- Indian children who are unaffiliated with a tribe are being denied services. We need unaffiliated Indian early childhood education monies available because currently we are recognized as Indians on the state level, but because we are not affiliated with a tribe, we are not granted federal status. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Early Childhood Education, 1990, p. 8)

American Indian/Alaska Natives living in urban areas usually rely on other urban Indians for mutual aid, and develop a system of exchange goods, services, and emotional support. However, they may have limited means of communicating with other Indians in the urban area. Many may have limited means of having their needs and demands heard by social service agencies.

Urban Native families face the lack of workable,culturally sensitive services and they face rapid social change. There is a gap between the needs of urban Native families and available service. However, not all Native family systems experience these problems at equal levels.

When working with Native families, the worker often falls into the trap of working on ill-defined, symptomatic issues or needs. These issues or needs are often translated into objectives for educational projects. Then the service agency lays the *blame directly* on native parents for lack of discipline and guidance and *indirectly* on Native families by *blaming* Native students. In this scenario each side may blame the other. It is the tendency of the dominant society to blame those who suffer from a problem as causing the problem. They seldom, if ever, look at agency behavior.

One of the most devastating aspects of Native life in the urban area is the use of alcohol and drugs. Alcohol is the principle social and medical problem of the Native population. This, in turn, leads to other devastating problems such as low self esteem, domestic violence, unemployment and a multifaceted range of compounded social problems. These problems cause many Native families to become dysfunctional. For the 15 to 44 year old Native, the death rate is twelve times higher than for any other race.

Native life in the urban area is highly mobil. Trucks, vans, and cars are more than a means of transportation. They provide Natives access to Indian ceremonies and pow-wows, visits to other Native gatherings, and reservations.

Acculturation plays a large role in a family's sense of identity. The style of communication in the traditional Indian family is one of patience and

respect. The acculturation process motivates urban Native families toward belonging, wanting to be part of the whole in order to contribute. Native families may try to socialize their children to be able to survive in a majority culture by training them to deal with racism through anger. They may feel they have to fight to belong in order to overcome the social and economic obstacles placed before them.

The educational system of urban life provide one more institutional hurdle over which Native parents must learn to negotiate. Because of their isolation, insecurity and fear, many urban Native parents require exceptional support, reassurance and assistance. On the other end of the spectrum, however, are many urban Native success stories; individuals who have completed their formal education process and have learned a great deal about how to impact institutions. There are Natives from all social, economic, and educational levels who are Urban Natives by choice. Many natives migrate to the cities, stay and raise their families. They represent a *successful Native* in a modern world.

Many Urban Native youth feel the need to identify and assert their culture and maintain or reestablish weakened connections with tribes, tribal life and reservations because only through tribal enrollment is one technically validated as an Indian. This dichotomy, or other extreme, tends to fragment the possible community cohesiveness in urban areas, culturally bringing people together, yet keeping them apart.

Desegregation in Urban Schools

Desegregation has been viewed as harmful to Native education. It has hurt Native students by scattering and isolating them from their peers and making it costly and difficult to provide effective cultural programs and support services. *Brown vs. Board of Education* has been a benign weapon with a disastrous impact on Native American students.

- The specter of metro-wide desegregation is a frightening one for me. I hear horror stories from middle class Indian families who have children attending suburban school districts, and those of predominately white districts seem even less tolerant of a diverse student population than those schools in the inner city. American Indians are tribal people. Our social system, cultural values, and interdependence have been essential to our survival in the face of systematic attempts to exterminate us. Successful Indian education programs affirm this tribal membership, and use group approaches and a culturally relevant curriculum to help Indian students survive the gauntlet of the majority educational system.

Because of the tribal nature of Indian students, they need to be gathered together to survive in a non-Indian system. An Indian school would also help to counteract the discriminatory effects of desegregation toward Indians. After all, what is the value of espousing the values of diversity and integration if the result is that there are few Indians left to contribute to its diversity?

Choice is meaningless unless you allow access to those choices. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Beaulieau, 1990, p.30)

- Historically, to isolate and ostracize a member from their tribe in a hostile environment was to sentence that person to certain death. Currently, to isolate an Indian student in the hostile environment of the public school system without the support of the group or respect of their cultural differences is to sentence that student to certain failure in school and a future without hope.

No two minority groups share the same experience. Neither have all minorities been discriminated against in the same manner. A remedy to redress the injustices suffered by one minority group can be, unintentionally, a further form of discrimination when applied to "help" a different minority group. Such is the case with the public school's desegregation policy when applied to American Indians. In implementing such policies, each distinct group must be examined in light of its own unique set of circumstances, and not simplistically lumped together as "minorities." (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Beaulieau, 1990, p.29)

- Even in cities with strong Indian activist/advocate groups and responsive politicians and school administrators, Native people are a small enough minority that their needs are subsumed under policies designed to serve the needs of other groups of color. When the impact of these policies can be demonstrated to be negative, waivers and other alternatives must be allowed to reverse this impact.

American Indian/Alaska Natives are a tribal people and Native students learn best when there is a "critical mass" together in one site. Therefore, urban Native children should be brought together in schools of choice, such as magnet schools.

I am here today to call out on behalf of Indian parents who have children attending urban public

schools. From my experience, school desegregation, as it has been practiced in Minneapolis and other cities, has been harmful to Indian education, and I feel that we must allow Native American students the option of an "Indian choice" as an educational opportunity.

Over the past 10 years the Minneapolis School District has drastically reorganized to achieve racial balance. Phillips Junior High, a school in the heart of the Indian community with one of the largest Native populations in the state, was closed. Racially controlled enrollment was enforced, attendance boundaries were manipulated, magnet schools were started, and suddenly, Indian students found themselves scattered to all corners of the city and isolated from their peers and Indian support services. The adverse effects of desegregation were immediately and keenly felt by Indians. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Beaulieu, 1990, p.28)

- In advocating an Indian school choice for Native American children, we are not trying to undo all of the hard-fought gains that have been made in civil rights in the past. Indians have a unique status different from all other minorities in this country. Our unique legal and political status, as well as our special educational and cultural needs, have been acknowledged on federal and state levels. Statistics have made clear that the system has failed Indians, and we want the opportunity to utilize our unique status to allow Indians to be educated together.

The purported purpose of desegregation is to make financial and educational resources more equally available to all. However, the desegregation methods used in Minneapolis have actually diluted supportive services funded for Indians. For example, one Indian support program went from working in four schools with 85 students before the district reorganized to following the same students to fourteen different locations afterward. As a result, delivery of service to Indian students suffered, staff burnout and turnover increased, and Indian students were and continue to be isolated, alienated, and drop out at a much higher rate than non-Indian students. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Beaulieau, 1990, p.29)

Review of Research and Literature

The following section will present a synthesis of research primarily on parental *support* but will include to some extent information relevant to parental *involvement* as well. The studies cited are not necessarily specific to Native education but have implications which could impact American Indian/Alaska Native education. Following the citations of research with major finding, will be a section discussing relevant topics in the literature on parent participation.

Research

Using the publication *Parent Involvement: A Review of the Literature*, prepared by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory, one can see that parent-school partnerships can facilitate better education for children. Also included in this section is a summary of the success of Native parental involvement activities in Indian Education Act Programs.

Research on Parental Support

According to the research, parent participation in almost any meaningful form affects student behavior, achievement, attendance and attitudes about self and school in general. Achievement gains are most significant and long-lasting when parents are an integral part of the teaching-learning process in preschool programs. But parents who receive some direction from the school about specific ways to help their children can also be effective at the elementary and secondary levels. Gains in basic student skills are reported when parents directly teach their children and when they are involved in supporting and reinforcing school learning.

Changes in Parental Attitudes

All parents communicate important values about school and learning. These parental attitudes toward learning help shape children's attitudes. From some parents, children may learn that school is fun, reading is important, and learning is exciting. From others, children may learn that school is necessary, but they will probably fail (as their parents did), and that they should do their best but should not really expect to be successful or to be treated fairly by the system. Native education abounds with this latter message about schooling.

- Schaefer reports that Douglas, in a sample of 5,000 children in England, found that parent "interest and involvement with the child's education were far more important than the quality of the schools, even after statistically controlling for family socioeconomic status" (Schaefer, 1971, p. 19).
- Linney and Vernberg review Rankin's findings that children who are high

achievers are much more likely to have active, interested, and involved parents. Some of the parental behaviors associated with high-achieving students are: providing a wide variety of experiences for their children, showing an interest in school activities, helping children develop an interest in reading, and taking the initiative in contacting the school. (Linney, 1983, pp. 78-79)

- Dobson and Dobson report Gallup's findings that "70 percent of high-achieving first-graders were read to regularly in their early years, while only 49 percent of low-achieving first-graders were read to by their mothers" (Dobson, 1975, pp. 50-51). They further report findings by Ware and Garber that parental "press" for reading and the availability of materials in the home are predictive of school success, concluding that certain home-centered activities could improve school performance.
- Nafziger discusses research by Hansen that parents' reading to children, parents' own reading habits, and having books in the home all have a positive effect on the child's IQ, school achievement, and reading readiness. (Nafziger, 1982).
- Mize cites research by Hicks that students whose parents have positive attitudes about school have higher academic achievement, social adjustment, and emotional stability. The study concludes that if parents become involved in school activities, not only will their own attitudes improve, but their children's attitudes and achievement will likewise improve. (Mize, 1977, p. 76)

As these citations indicate, parents' attitudes, demonstrated by their behaviors, change student performance when parents participate with schools. As parents become more familiar with the school, they become more supportive:

- In surveys, parents who participate more in schools express higher levels of satisfaction with both the school and their own children's achievement. (Herman, 1983, pp. 11-17) (Stough, 1982)
- Parents who are trained as tutors have significantly more positive attitudes toward school after their involvement in the program, and differ from control group parents who are not trained as tutors. (McKinney, 1975)
- In Houston, the Computers Can Project made home computers available for loan to low-income families who participated in 12 hours of training in computer use. After involvement in this program, 96 percent of the parents rated the schools responsive to their children's needs, in contrast to 15 percent of parents prior to the computer program. (Lloyd, 1984, pp. 1-2).

Clearly, parental attitudes and behaviors are influenced by how they participate with schools. It is logical that these positive attitudes get communicated to their children. Studies of preschool programs report that long-term gains occur when parents are involved. Over time, not only are parents' behaviors and attitudes influenced in positive ways, but also these parent values and attitudes serve to shape a child's school performance.

Since there is another INAR paper focusing on Early Childhood Issues, this paper will not dwell on this area other than to stress that research suggests the greatest benefits for students can be seen when parents are supportive early in the educational process.

Parental Impact on Student Achievement

Student achievement is the most frequently reported benefit of parental support. Other factors correlated with achievement are also reported, including improved student attendance, increased motivation, higher self-concept, and a reduction in behavior problems.

Some programs have involved parents directly as home teachers or tutors. Other programs utilized parents in a support role (parents as counselors) rather than in a direct teaching role. Although parental support in almost any form seems to improve student achievement, the research indicates that *student achievement is greater with high levels of support and with support that is meaningful.*

Studies show that when parents of low-performing children are trained as tutors, their children make significant gains in both reading and mathematics. (Hoffmeister, 1977); (McKinney, 1975); (Shuck, 1983, pp. 524-528) This "parent as teacher" role is, however, most effective with young children. Through grade three, parents are able to master the content. Children at these ages still view their parents as teachers. Beyond grade three, parents are not as comfortable with direct teaching. Not only does the content get increasingly sophisticated, but children seem less willing to take instruction from their parents.

Some studies suggest that parents do not have to be involved directly in the teaching role. Achievement gains can occur without specific training for parents. Gains have been reported when parents function in support roles which encourage learning:

- In one study, a first grade teacher recorded a daily telephone message for parents. It was available for parents of the 21 students in the class 24 hours a day. They could call anytime. Monitoring the number of calls made to the phone recorded an average number of 20.5 calls per day. When spelling words were included on the phone message, every child (except those already scoring 100%) showed improved scores on the spelling test. The average number of spelling test errors dropped dramatically from 35 percent to six percent. (Bittle, 1975, pp. 87-95)
- Project STEP (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting) included parents representing all socio-economic levels from four elementary schools. Parents signed a contract, agreeing (1) to meet with their child at least twice a week to discuss the accomplishments of the past few days and to spend time sharing thoughts and ideas, and (2) to spend time each week with their child on a reading-related activity. Children in the STEP program gained 12 months in reading compared to the control group's one-month gain. (Mize, 1977)
- A similar program was conducted in two schools whose students were described by the authors as "culturally deprived." In this project, parents attended discussion groups that emphasized the importance of school in preparing to get a job in today's technological society and the importance of parents in setting an example. Parents were asked to read daily to their children, to listen to their children read, to provide a routine "quiet" time at home for reading and study, and to be sure that children had the proper school supplies. Over the program's five-month duration, children showed overall gains of 5.4 months in reading compared to 2.7 months in a comparison school. (Smith, 1963, pp. 314-318)

Achievement gains such as these are impressive. Apparently, when parents have access to information they need (like clear directions for helping with homework) and know what they can do to help (such as listen to their children read 15 minutes a day, or provide a quiet time for study), they dramatically affect their own student's performance. Parents want their children to do well in school, but often don't know what they can do to help.

Student achievement gains can also be made when parents encourage and reinforce learning in the role of parents as counselors mentioned earlier. Parents don't need to be involved in a clearly defined role for their participation to make a difference. In some studies, achievement gains occurred when parents were simply informed about their child's progress. Parental encouragement and reinforcement of a child's school accomplishments can significantly affect school performance. Obviously, parent support for education in almost any form — as teacher, supporter, or reinforcer of school activities — can affect student achievement. Most importantly, for parent participation to have a significant impact on achievement, it must be *meaningful*. For a program to become meaningful to parents, they must be able to see: (1) a direct benefit to their children, (2) a commitment from teachers and administrators that parents are important, and (3) clear evidence that what they, as parents, are doing makes a difference.

Parental Impact on Attendance

Attendance and achievement go hand in hand. Attacking attendance problems will lead to promoting higher achievement. According to research "time-on-task" is an important predictor of achievement. What better way to increase the amount of instructional time than to be sure students are present? High rates of absenteeism are related to school failure and increase the risk of dropping out. Understandably, a student who rarely experiences success in school may try to avoid school. Chronic absenteeism compounds the problem. It leads to more failure, and may eventually lead to the student quitting school permanently. Attendance and achievement can reinforce each other. Improved attendance promotes increased achievement, and success in school results in improved attendance.

Student attendance improves when parents are informed about student absences. Several studies address attendance problems directly. Schools have involved parents to correct this serious problem:

- The school principal made calls to parents of first and second grade children who had high rates of absenteeism. Not only did the children's school attendance improve, but parents more frequently contacted the

school to report absences. (Parker, 1977, pp. 84-88)

- Phone calls can be made just as effectively by the school secretary. (Sheats, 1979, pp. 310-312) Many schools utilize parent or community volunteers to make these routine calls.
- Daily notes home, in conjunction with a home-based reinforcement program, can be helpful in reducing absenteeism. Barth reports a study by Thorne in which an adolescent's truancy rate decreased from 65 percent (during the baseline) to 6.6 percent during the three months of the project. (Barth, 1979, pp. 436-458)
- In a rural middle school, eighth graders with low achievement and high absenteeism were targeted for a special program. On the day of an absence, parents were called (or written to if they had no phone). Attendance improved significantly. (Fiordaliso, 1977, pp. 188-192)

Parental support can affect school attendance, even when it is not a primary objective of a program. As parents become more involved, they may feel more responsible for getting their children to school, and they may take extra steps to that end. Similarly, as children become more academically successful, they become more motivated to attend school. Changes in both student and parent attitudes toward school and toward learning may produce a home environment where regular school attendance becomes an expected behavior. Several examples of improved attendance are reported in the literature:

- Student attendance has improved in Houston, Texas, since parents have been attending parent-teacher conferences with a focus on student achievement. (Cioffi, 1982)
- Cioffi describes Simmonds' report of Project FAME (Family Activities to Maintain Enrollment), which targeted students who were likely to drop out of school. Not only did student attendance and achievement test scores improve, but 79 percent of the parents reported that their children would probably continue school because of their involvement in FAME. (Cioffi, 1982)
- When teachers were trained in the Family Involvement Communication System (FICS) to improve communication skills in relating to parents and made subsequent home visits, students' average daily attendance rates and grade point averages improved significantly. (Shelton, 1973)
- In another study, counselors met individually with all parents the summer before their children entered junior high school. After three years these students were compared to the class who had entered the year before, for whom no individual parent meetings had been held except by request. Average daily attendance was different at the .001 level of significance, favoring the group whose parents were met individually. In addition, students' mean grade point average were higher, there were fewer school dropouts (two vs. eight), and the parents continued to be more involved. During their children's three years of junior high, the parents made significantly more contacts with school staff. Only 13 percent made no contacts at all, compared to 73 percent of a comparison group. Thirty-eight percent made between three and five contacts, compared to eight percent of the comparison parents. Parents not only made more contacts, they more frequently came to see the school counselor concerning grades and curriculum, in contrast to the comparison parents, who came more often to see the school principal because of discipline problems and failing grades. (Duncan, 1969)

Parent Impact on Improved Motivation

Parental support has a positive effect not only on parents' attitudes toward school, but also on students' attitudes toward learning. In the studies that have measured student attitudes toward learning and motivation to learn, most report a significant and positive change. Like attendance, this variable is related to student achievement. Children who begin to experience success in school view it more positively. Their success builds their motivation. Improved student attitudes toward school are reported in several studies:

- Fifty-three percent of Project FAME parents reported a positive attitude change in their children. (Cioffi, 1982)
- The Project PAL (Parents and Learning) program in Albuquerque, New Mexico, part of a Title I program that involved parents in learning activities with their children at home, produced an increase in positive attitudes toward school and learn-

ing. Children also improved their classroom performance and made excellent gains in speech and language development (Bush, 1981).

Parental Impact on Student Attitudes about Self and School

Parent support results in increased achievement, attendance, and motivation to learn. In addition, positive results in student self-esteem or self-concept can also occur. In dealing with children who have serious behavior problems, school personnel often attempt to help children feel better about themselves. When parents are also part of the intervention, positive gains have been made:

- In a study of fifth and sixth graders who had classroom behavior problems, one group was provided with direct counseling and a second (experimental) group received assistance indirectly: their parents were involved in counseling. The parent-counseled group scored more favorably on three separate measures of self-concept than did a control group who received no counseling. (Hayes, 1977, pp. 8-14)
- Dobson and Dobson report Wechsler's findings in another study of counseling, this time with mothers of under-achieving boys. Boys whose mothers participated showed improved self-acceptance as long as six months after the counseling program had been completed. (Dobson, 1975)
- In a review of studies, Cioffi reports on Project ACT (Accountability in Citizenship Training), in which teams of parents, students, and teachers worked together to reduce inappropriate student behavior. Peer parents made home visits. The fifth, sixth, and seventh graders who were involved in the program showed improved self-esteem and improved attendance at school. (Cioffi, 1982)

Improved self esteem is sometimes a secondary effect. As a result of improved achievement, significant gains in self-concept have occurred from parental support programs with low-achieving students:

- Mize reports a study by Brookover in which parents were taught to increase the academic expectations they held for their children. With the resulting change in parent expectations, students' self-perceptions improved, as did their school grades. (Mize, 1977)
- Likewise, in a study reported by Cioffi, third through sixth graders received tutoring from their parents in the school setting. Among the results were improved student self-concept and achievement gains. (Cioffi, 1982)

Parental Impact on Student Behavior

The final area in which parental support can play a role is student behavior. Following are studies which target student behavior improvement and others which report it as a secondary result.

Disruptive behavior can prohibit learning for all students in a classroom, because the teacher's time and attention become focused on disruptive behavior rather than on instruction. Good classroom management skills can reduce the amount of disruptive behavior, but enlisting parental support can produce significant results. Parents, more often than teachers, can control a student's most important reinforcers such as home-based privileges, free time outside of school, and rewards. These kinds of reinforcers, along with daily or weekly notes to parents, can significantly improve a student's behavior at school:

- A study by Blackmore, reported in Barth's review of home-based reinforcement programs, was conducted during summer school. Preadolescent took home daily school-behavior notes. Good reports were exchanged for privileges or money, depending on the agreement between the parents and students. Student behavior improved and continued into the regular school year. Children were on task 83 percent of the time, which equaled their peers and bettered their own baseline performance by 19 percent. (Barth, 1979, pp. 436-458)
- Daily checklists sent home to the parent were found to be effective in grades K-12 in increasing the number of accurately completed class assignments and in increasing the amount of time spent in appropriate social behaviors. Teachers report that the checklist was not only effective and easy to use, it actually decreased the amount of class time they spent on problem behaviors. (Edlund, 1969, pp. 121-127)

In some studies, improved behavior was not the objective of the program, but was one of the reported results.

- In the HOPE followup study, based on teacher reports, children who at preschool age were involved with their parents in home-based activities differed significantly when they were junior high aged from a matched control group in the following categories: disorganized classroom behavior, symptoms of depression, aggressive behavior, responsible behavior, and significant behavior problems (28 percent vs. 40 percent). (Gotts, 1980)
- A study by Schiff, which is reviewed by Mize, reports fewer school behavior problems, greater gains in reading, better school attendance, and better study habits for an experimental group, whose parents were trained to offer home lessons through parent teacher conferences, compared to control students whose parents had received standard report cards. (Mize, 1977)
- Cioffi's review of literature includes a study by Hornbuckle in which parents participated as tutors and as members of school advisory committees. Across 44 schools and 8,000 families, the number of suspensions was reduced as a result of improved communication. (Cioffi, 1982)
- Another result of Project ACT in Jacksonville, Florida, was a reduction in undesirable behavior and fewer referrals to the office for students in grades five through seven. (Cioffi, 1982)

Research on Parental Involvement

The importance of parents is further supported by research that examines parents in decision-making roles. When parents are involved as advisors or school board members, there is usually no measurable benefit to student achievement. Perhaps one explanation of this finding is that parents do not view participation on an advisory council as meaningful. These parents may not see a direct benefit to their own children. Furthermore, administrators may not be convinced that parents are important in this role. Parents themselves may fail to see that their efforts make a difference. Parent advisory committees most often function as committees on paper only. When they are established to meet federal mandates, as they frequently are, administrators may feel minimal commitment to making them effective. Participation on such a paper committee can become frustrating. It can in fact generate negative attitudes and promote feelings of powerlessness.

Advisory committees can be effective, even though many are not. Parent involvement can only impact student achievement when that involvement is meaningful to parents. For a school to have an effective parent involvement program, administrators, teachers, and parents must believe that parental involvement is important. They must be willing to work together. Responsibility for taking the first step falls on school *administrators and teachers*. Not only do they have information but, if they open the door to parents, parents will respond enthusiastically. Schools generally, and Native school specifically, need to provide opportunities for meaningful parent involvement. At all levels, teachers and administrators need training in how to relate effectively to parents and involve them in the education process.

Parents and educators know intuitively what research has demonstrated: parental support benefits children, parents, and schools. However, meaningful parent support and involvement with schools is not commonplace. It requires (a) commitment from administrators, (b) training for teachers, and (c) a variety of options for parents.

Committed school leadership that is truly empowering is critical to effective parent participation programs. Formal, written policies can directly increase levels of meaningful participation in schools. Parent-teacher conferences and school newsletters are more likely to be found in districts that require them than in districts that do not.

Parent participation may occur because of parent initiative, but this is rare. Parent-initiated involvement is more likely to occur in exceptionally well-educated communities, where mothers or civic clubs spearhead the effort. It may, however, occur in exceptionally poor schools where parents have been shut out and organize out of frustration. This is the exception, not the rule. Parents are interested, but generally they wait for direction and guidance from the educational professionals. Regardless of socio-economic level they will respond to an invitation, especially if it has a likely benefit for their children.

Commitment means more than lip service. Mandates may help, but they are not sufficient. School districts need to express commitment with time and money. Most teachers have not received adequate training in working with parents. (Chakin, 1984) (Gotts, 1985) (Moles, 1980) To be successful, teachers and administrators need to be involved in the planning, taking and evaluating

long-term in-service which encourages parent support and involvement programs for their schools.

In addition to school staff and teacher training, parents also need to develop skills and knowledge necessary to be good partners with the school. Basic communication, discipline and child rearing practices may not come naturally to many parents, especially when the culture of parents does not match that of the school. In all cases, training for parents should focus on something that is understandable, fun, and likely to be successful. Finally, parents should always have the option of choice in any school-initiated program. Appropriate opportunities for parents is important. (Gordon, 1978)

At the elementary and secondary school level parental involvement takes different forms. An important consideration is the age of the student. Gotts and Purnell suggest a model that distinguishes between effective school-family relationships at the elementary and secondary levels. (Gotts, 1985) The parent-child relationship itself, tends to become more distant as children begin to assert their independence and become more involved with their peer group. There are differences in the teacher-student relationship at the secondary level. Teachers may have at least five different classes, in contrast to the self-contained classroom in elementary schools. Teachers have a great deal more trouble establishing and maintaining close working relationships with so many families. Teachers tend to hold adolescents accountable for their own behavior. Teachers and students work things out without parents unless serious problems, such as failing grades, inappropriate behavior, or absenteeism occur.

Teachers and administrators can make parent involvement at the secondary level meaningful and realistic, however, if they understand that parents want to stay informed but may not require, or even want, the same level of personal involvement they had with their children in elementary school. Good communication is essential.

In conclusion, the research on school-family relations is consistent. Meaningful parental support yields gains in student achievement, and the related factors of attendance, motivation, self-concept, and school behavior. Reading to children, having books in the home, positive parent attitudes toward school, and high parental expectations for achievement relate positively to school achievement. These parental attitudes and behaviors are influenced in positive ways when parents become involved with schools. The greatest and longest lasting impact on children occurs when parents become actively involved in learning at the preschool level. However, studies in elementary and secondary schools also show significant changes in both parent and student attitudes toward school. At all levels, a commitment to parent support and involvement is a worthwhile investment for schools. Elements basic to a successful program include (1) a commitment from district and school administrators, (2) ongoing training for teachers and staff to improve communication with parents, and (3) a variety of options so that parents can select the activities most appropriate for themselves and their children. Parental participation must take into account changes in the parent-child, and peer group relationships as children progress through school.

Research on the Indian Education Act

The following excerpts were prepared by the Office of Indian Education in order to document the nature of Native parental involvement as a result of the Act. Portions of the text of that report are included here.

Many members of the Indian community view changes in parental attitudes and relations toward public schools and toward the formal schooling of their children as one of the most important areas of the Indian Education Act, Part A program impact. Traditionally, Native children were educated by their parents and community members, but with the loss of their independence came a decline in involvement in their children's education. From the time children began to attend Bureau of Indian Affairs operated schools in the latter part of the nineteenth century until recent years, Native parents had few structured opportunities to influence school decision-making. In 1972, with the passage of the Indian Education Act, public schools that qualified were given the opportunity to apply for funds to support "programs specifically designed to meet the special educational needs of Native children." Further provisions of this action required that these public school programs be developed:

- in open consultation with parents of Native children, teachers, and where applicable, secondary school students, including public hearings at which such persons have a full opportunity to understand the program, and
- with the participation and approval of a committee composed of and selected by parents of children participating in the program ..., teachers, and, where applicable, secondary school students of which at least half the members shall be parents.

The Indian Education Act also contains a provision which requires that the funded programs "will be operated and evaluated in consultation with, and the involvement of, parents of the children and representatives of the area to be served, including the committee' previously established. Finally, a subsequent amendment to the Act expands the definition of "parent" to include legal guardians or others who stand in loco parentis, including foster parents and grandparents with whom Native children may reside.

Role of the Parent Committee

The Indian Education Act, as amended, clearly defines the make-up and responsibility of Part A project parent committees. It requires the use of an advisory board consisting of parents, legal guardians, teachers, and secondary school students, with the stipulation that at least half of the group be parents of students to be served by the project. These requirements respond directly to many years of testimony and reports to Congress attesting to the alienation of Native parents from public schools and their lack of involvement in the schooling of their children.

The committee has authority which goes beyond that described for advisory groups in many other federal programs. The Part A project parent committee has a *legal* mandate which requires schools receiving funds under the auspices of the Indian Education Act to consult with its members and seek their approval of applications submitted for funds to which they are entitled by their levels of Native enrollment. Additionally, the committee's consultation, along with that of other community members, is required in connection with the operation and evaluation of the project. Policies and procedures which provide for this are required to be included in each local project application.

Each Part A project, then, must establish a parent committee. That committee by regulation must: (1) participate in the needs assessment, design, operation, and evaluation of the project; (2) review and approve in writing the project application; (3) advise the school district on policies and procedures regarding the hiring of project staff; and (4) make recommendations concerning applicants for project staff positions.

From a survey of Part A projects, the following information was obtained. The areas of greatest involvement for Native parents have been in deciding goals, budgets, project activities, and in communicating with other parents.

Chairpersons were asked to indicate which methods their parent committees had used to get Native parents and community members more involved with the Part A project. Results show that the methods most frequently used were messages sent home with parents (69%); local newspapers, radio, and TV messages (61%); public meetings (51%); home visits (19%); personal contacts with community groups and leaders (48%); project newsletters (38%); dinners, carnivals, and other attractions (37%); phone calls (21%); word-of-mouth (13%); and surveys and needs assessments involving parents (10%).

When asked how effective these approaches were in getting people involved, 31% of chairpersons indicated they were very effective; 55% said they were somewhat effective; and 15% said they were not effective. As a follow-up to these questions, chairpersons were asked to list how parents could be motivated to get more involved with the Part A project. The most frequent responses were that project staff should do more personal contacting of parents (33%); food should be provided at meetings and special events (17%); and parents should be educated in their responsibilities toward, and the needs of students (12%).

Almost all (96%) project directors reported that their project's Native parent committee was involved in monitoring and evaluating the Part A project. When asked to list the types of involvements, project directors said they consisted most frequently of receiving monthly or quarterly reports from the project, discussions at parent committee meetings, and visiting classes and observing activities. Thirty-eight percent of project directors said parent committees were very involved in monitoring and evaluation; 44% said committees were moderately involved; 14% said they were slightly involved; and 4% said they were not involved.

Frequently, parent committees assist the project by securing parent and community support. Over three-quarters (79%) of the project directors said that the parent committee had made a difference in getting members of the Indian community or tribe to support the project. Over half (57%) of these directors reported that the committee members particularly helped in disseminating information and making the community aware of the project, and 40% said the committee members helped by interacting informally with members of the community in order to get parents and others involved.

Finally, when asked if the parent committee needed more training to be more effective, 50% of project directors said that some members need training, and 30% said all members do. The most frequently mentioned types of needed training concerned rules and regulations, roles and functions

of the parent committee, parliamentary procedures, and goals and objectives of Part A.

Impac cf Parent Committees

Potentially, Native parent committees have impacts beyond their Part A project and its staff. Over two-fifths (45%) of the project directors reported that the parent committee had submitted recommendations to the school district administration or school board. In those project submitting recommendations, 58% of the project directors reported the recommendations were adopted as recommended, 30% reported they were adopted with modifications, 4% reported they were adopted for later review, and 8% reported that no actions had been taken on parent committee recommendations. The areas of most frequent recommendations were use of project personnel, approval of project proposals, project plans and objectives, and general school programs and policies toward Indians.

In addition, Native parent committees often benefit their own members. Parent committee chairpersons were asked the open-ended question; "What useful skills, knowledge and/or experience have you gained as a result of being a member of the Parent Committee?" Their responses included a number of different skills and areas of knowledge and experience. Most frequently (51%) mentioned was increased ability to function in the school and in the community. Another frequent (30%) response was an increase in organizational and program skills, including budgeting, proposal development, needs assessments, and communication skills. The third most frequent (28%) response was an increased ability to help children with school, through a better awareness of student needs and familiarity with education materials.

Besides collecting data on skills, knowledge, and experience gained by committee chairpersons, current committee members were asked whether or not, after leaving the parent committee, any former members had become engaged in each of the specific activities listed in Table 1. As the Table shows, many former committee members are reported to have gone on to become active in other aspects of their local school district or tribe. Although the information is second hand and it is possible that only a few active former members in a project could confound the results, these responses from active parents are judged to provide a reasonably accurate indication that parents have gone on from Part A committees to other involvements in their schools.

General Native Fa. ental Involvement

On a somewhat different plane, Part A projects were concerned about the general involvement of Native parents in local schools and the formal education of Native children. Thus, members of the parent committee were asked to indicate the extent to which Native parents in their school districts are involved in their children's education. The data show that 8% of the committee members said most parents are very involved; 55% indicated most parents are somewhat involved, and 37% indicated most parents are not very involved.

When asked, "In your opinion, what are the most important reasons why Indian parents do not become more involved in their children's education?," the most frequently cited reasons were that their children do not want them to participate (93%); that the school discourages participation (93%); and that parents have no time (84%); or have too many other activities (82%). Project staffs were asked a similar question concerning parent involvement. Their most frequent answers were: that parents believe education is the job of the school (46%); parents have other children at home to care for (42%); and parents do not know what kinds of things they can do for the school or project (40%).

All committee members were then asked if, over the past three years, they thought parents had become more involved in their children's education as a result of the Indian education project. The parents were specifically asked about five areas and given an opportunity to list other areas as well. The results indicate that parents have a greater interest in what the school is doing, and have been involved to a greater extent in attending school activities.

Teachers were also asked whether parents had become more involved in their children's education in the past three years. The data show that 60% of teachers indicated that Native parents had become more involved. Of these, 87% said there was more contact between parents and students regarding student progress and behavior, 71% said there were more parent-teacher meetings; 55% said there were more Indian parents at PTA meetings and school functions; and 26% said there were more Indians elected to school board committees.

Relative to the way project staffs contacted Indian parents, 72% of staff members said they did this through messages sent home with students. Other ways staff members contacted parents were through the parent committee (56% of staff) and by telephone calls to parents (55%). *The most effective ways to contact parents, according to staffs, were by personal visits to homes (41%) and by telephone*

calls (35%). With respect to keeping parents informed, 32% of project staff said the project had been very successful; 56% said moderately successful; and only 13% said slightly successful or not successful at all.

Native parents' general satisfaction with projects was influenced most strongly by their perception of the extent to which their children's cultural needs were being met. The next most important causal factor in determining parents' general satisfaction was how much the project communicated with parents. The extent to which cultural needs were perceived to be met was the strongest factor influencing Native parents' perception of the extent to which the project was helping Native students to improve their academic performance.

The most important reasons given by parent committee members for Native parents not becoming more involved in the project or in school were that their children do not want them to participate, the school discourages participation, and parents have no time or have too many other activities. However, as a result of the project, committee members report that parents have taken a greater interest in the school and have become involved to a greater extent in attending school activities. Data from teachers and principals support these findings.

Parent committee members also indicated they themselves had benefitted from committee participation, most frequently indicating that they had developed more ability to function in the school and community (51%), specific skill acquisition (30%), and increased ability to help their children in school (75%). Some also indicated former committee members had gone on to other involvements with the school but the actual number was unclear.

With regard to overall Native parent participation, the results were more mixed, with 37% of the parent committee members indicating parents were not very involved and 34% of the staff indicating the project was only slightly successful in involving parents as a whole. However, the committee generally indicated that the project had stimulated some or a lot more involvement by Native parents: in their interest (85%), attendance at function (78%), communication with teachers (73%), their relationship with school (74%), and helping their children with school work (73%). Principals (73%), staff (65%), and teachers (60%) generally agreed with this.

In summary, Native parent committee involvement appears quite high and, while considerably less, Native parental involvement was also substantial. The Native parents and school personnel were able to cite impacts on individuals and their schools. Further, it appears that satisfaction with the project is strongly influenced by specific project activities in the area of communication. (Development Associates Inc., 1983, pp. 279-298)

Literature Review

The following section will present information in the literature which more directly describes cultural influences specific to American Indian/Alaska Native students, parents and communities. Cultural influences on Native student learning, traditional values, child rearing practices and learning styles, self-esteem issues and child development information will be discussed.

Culture plays an important role in the socialization and personality development of Native youngsters. What has not been accepted is that the values, attitudes, and behaviors of Native culture have been influenced by the dominant society, as well as, by the student's immediate cultural community and family.

The high rate of dysfunctional families in the Native population is in part due to the high rate of alcohol and substance abuse, low self-esteem and limited education. The combination of these obstacles may be further aggravated by financial problems, depression and loneliness, low self-worth and negative stereotypes.

> Indian children walk away from earliest childhood and their dysfunctional families with many wrong beliefs about themselves. The core belief is "I'm not okay". The deepest level is that of *shame.* If a child believes he/she is *flawed and defective* as a human being they cannot *stay inside* themselves but must go *outside* themselves. Co-dependency leads children to make wrong choices because they develop the core belief that happiness lies outside themselves — in another person, alcohol, or other drugs. Family members suffer the consequences of one member's alcoholism. One of the many emotional problems affecting children of alcoholics is *low self esteem.* The most notable problems encountered by Native adolescents are problems with separation, embarrassment and stigma, depression and guilt. (Developing IEA Projects for Student Self Esteem, N. Dakota, p. 29)

With the recognition that children of alcoholics suffer the consequences of parental alcoholism, education of school personnel, parent committees, and parents should be emphasized to improve and increase intervention, diagnosis and treatment of Native students in an attempt to build *self esteem.* Schools continue to report that Native student populations manifest low self esteem, poor atten-

dance, drug/alcohol problems, limited education goals, influence of peer group, poor decision making skills, lack of responsibility, and poor social relations.

Home, Culture and Community Influence

Alfred Adler suggested we are who we are because we observe things around us, make choices, and reach conclusions about what constitutes effective ways to get along in the world. Adler believed a child has an *inner and outer environment*. The child's inner environment is hereditary intellectual capacity. There are three factors in the child's outer environment.

- The first is the family atmosphere. This is the family's cultural setting. The attitudes and values of the parents, their character traits, the general quality of their marital relationship, as well as the influences of their parents and relatives, all have an impact upon the family atmosphere.
- The second is the family constellation (birth order), or the characteristic relationship of each family member to the other. Each family member has his or her own distinct pattern. In the interaction of responses and influences with each other, the role a family member plays will have an effect upon the whole family and the personality of each member.
- The third factor in the child's outer environment is the practices used in child rearing and discipline. Each child interprets experiences with the inner and outer environment. Each child draws unique conclusions about effective approaches toward social living, and develops attitudes toward life in general, which constitute a pattern of life. (Dreikurs, Grunwald and Pepper, 1982, p. 57)

The basic influences as presented by Adler seem to offer learning contexts which account for the phenomenon of ethnic development presented by Longstreet who says, "Ethnic development is 'behavior learned...as a result of direct contact with people...and immediate environment." (Longstreet, 1978, p. 63) Such learning contributes to behavior patterns associated with an ethnic learning style. The behavior patterns include such things as the areas of learning a student is disposed to feel are relevant and preferred modes of learning (i.e. visual).

In the cognitive development of children, the lifestyle and culture of the home is the important factor, *not* the social class or race of the family. As seen in the research, when parents place a high value on education, prepare their children to come to school emotionally and physically ready to learn, and promote intellectual development, then school achievement will increase.

Samuels states that the types of family behaviors related to intellectual development are:

- Parental pressure for achievement in the form of intellectual and academic expectations for the child, career goals for the child, control over the child's types of friends, and the rewards and sanctions given to the child for school performance.
- Parental pressure for language development in the form of providing good language models, enlarging the child's vocabulary, and emphasizing correctness of usage.
- Parental provisions for learning in the home and beyond by providing a place for the child to read and do homework, providing books and magazines, taking the child to museums and libraries, and establishing a model of the parent who reads and respects scholarship. (Samuels, 1986, p. 10)

These values need to be fostered in the home and supported in the community. Messages to Native students from home and community need to be very clear. *Students should come to school eager and ready to learn.*

By way of contrast, if the children of Euro-American families have trouble mastering the basic skills, their parents often tutor them. Many Native children do not receive this kind of support, since Native parents may be unable to provide the home tutoring necessary to help their child. This point is further supported by Samuels.

> Research suggests that when the culture of the home and community are not supportive of the efforts of the school, when students fail to appreciate the value of hard work and education, when high moral standards are missing, and when parents do not help their children at home, conditions are ripe for failure.
>
> (Samuels, 1986, p. 13)

Traditional Values, Child Rearing Practices, and Native Learning Style

Traditional Native child rearing practices have been labeled by some as "permissive" in comparison to Euro-American standards. This

misunderstanding usually occurs because Native child rearing is more self-exploratory rather than restrictive. Many Native children are trained to be self-directed and self-reliant, having the freedom to make many of their own choices and decisions.

Many American Indian/Alaskan Natives believe a child should be a child for as long as possible.

> Indians engage in non-verbal nurturing like holding, beaming, smiling, demonstrating, listening and just being nearby for children. Many Indian families feel guilty about spanking, embarrassed about kissing, uncomfortable about excessive praise, and other public demonstrations designed to draw undue attention to a child because modesty, humility and gentility are prized attributes, strived for and achieved in a peaceful environment. However, most Indians also give greater responsibility to their children at an early age. For example, Navajo children can herd sheep alone as early as six years old. (Multine, 1990, p. 1)

An outgrowth of the self-exploratory method of child-rearing is that many children come to regard individual freedom or absolute non-interference as normal. This does not mean that the child or any individual has the right to do anything they want to do. Elders or teachers give good advice and the individual can make a decision about what is best. Respect for individual freedom, dignity and autonomy are Native values. Native children are taught not to interfere in the affairs of others. Resentment may occur when Native children are forced to conform without having an opportunity for input into the decision making process.

American Indian/Alaska Native children are included and participate in all types of family and community affairs. Young children go with their parents to bingo, community meetings, church, pow-wows, hunting, fishing, or even to their places of employment. This provides the Native child with a holistic education where life is integrated and consistent from one sphere to another. It gives the child valuable opportunities to become acquainted with a multitude of tasks in the adult world.

"The values of generosity and sharing are a foundation for many other values, and are inherent in Native child rearing practices. Native peoples share food and shelter, and praise and shame." (Bryde, 1971, p. 52) In the old days, if one had meat, everyone shared. So it is today. If a child in school needs supplies or materials, the Native child may take what is needed without thought of repayment, and certainly without the idea of stealing. This behavior may be misunderstood by the school system.

When a Native person does something great, like when Billy Mills won a gold medal, most Indian people feel good and share in the greatness. Conversely, when a Native does something disgraceful, many others feel sadness and shame.

Cooperation, group harmony and the extended family are necessary for the survival of the family and the tribal group. From a Native perspective, being a member of a group requires that no one individual be singled out or placed in a position higher or lower than others. However, individuals should be encouraged to improve on and compete against self. Many Natives work hard not to put others in a position of losing face. In a classroom situation this might mean not answering a question after another student has had trouble responding. Emphasis is placed on the group and on maintaining harmony within the group.

The extended family also plays a part in cooperation and group harmony. The large network of extended family members provide support and a strong sense of security. Within this milieu there is a feeling of belonging, of cooperation, of group harmony that still mystifies some educators. Many educators do not understand the sometimes devastating difference between cooperation and competition from a Native point of view.

Placidity, patience and the ability to remain silent are considered good qualities by American Indian/Alaskan Natives. These virtues are apparent in the delicate, time consuming works of art, such as beadwork, quillwork, sand painting, weaving, pottery and scrimshaw. Educators may press Native students, or parents, for rapid responses or decisions. They may become impatient with slowness, and incorrectly label Natives as shy, slow or backward. Silence is considered a useful trait since it allows one to listen and learn by observing. However, in the classroom, where higher rates of verbal activity are the norm, the use of too much silence may present problems for the Native student.

These cultural influences have a powerful effect on the Native child's performance in school. Educators need to be careful not to assume a "cultural deficit" approach to viewing Native student's self esteem. Research is only beginning to investigate the relationship between cultural variations, outside influences and dysfunctional behavior in the classroom.

> Much of the formal training that takes place in Indian families is non-verbal in nature. The children learn the customs and skills of their society by sharing directly in the activities of others. In such situations, verbal

> instruction is neither offered nor required because the close proximity to the observable action makes instruction giving quite redundant. There is a growing body of research to suggest that distinctly different child rearing practices — one stressing observational learning and another emphasizing learning through verbalization — has fostered the development of very different styles of learning between Indian and Euro-American children. Many Euro-American children, by virtue of their upbringing and their linguistic exposure, are oriented toward using language as a vehicle for learning. Indian children have developed a learning style characterized by observation and imitation. (Pepper/Henry, 1986, p. 57)

It would appear then, that many Native children, by virtue of their predisposition to a visual style of learning, may be handicapped in their ability to succeed in school because schools and teaching methods tend to cater to the auditory learner. Educators must be careful not to stereotype Native learners. All students have skills in other learning styles. Use of a variety of learning styles needs to be encouraged to avoid locking Native students into a certain mold. Educators must remain flexible in their approach. There is no "absolute" Native learning style. A wide variety of individual differences have been identified which can be viewed as tendencies or learning style inclinations.

Parental Influence on Self Esteem

Self esteem is about feeling good, worthwhile, and effective. Because self esteem is a feeling, it will be expressed in the way a youngster behaves. Self esteem can be understood by observing *what* and *how* individuals do things. Self esteem is hard to identify because it is experienced continuously and constantly and changes from day to day, from situation to situation — even from minute to minute. Self esteem is part of every other feeling. It is involved in one's every emotional response.

> The job that parents face is seldom spoken of in the context of the world in which they must do that job. Parents are expected to provide a safe nurturing environment, to help their child develop the internal strengths of trust, self control, and self esteem, to teach social skills and how the world works and to help their child develop good judgement. They act as role models, pass on spiritual strength and faith in self. (Cross, 1986, p. 13)

Everybody knows that parents are "models" for their children. Parents' feelings and attitudes are expressed in subtle non-verbal ways. American Indian/Alaska Native children are acute observers of these subtle expressions that convey parental attitudes. Children pick up from their parents the cues on how to act or behave. Children are influenced by their parents' emotional reactions even though the parents may not verbally express them. When parents have low self-esteem, patterns of behavior emerge which affect their children. Such patterns produce stress and result in self-esteem problems in children.

In attempting to help build self-esteem in children, it is good to remember that it will take a while for it to happen—maybe months. Children will need to learn how to handle different kinds of relationships. They will need to develop trust and to know what the limits are.

Children look to others in life to confirm or deny that they are important or significant. In order to have high self-esteem, Bean says that children must experience the *conditions* or the positive feelings that result when parents affirm the child's sense of:

- *Connectiveness*—a sense of relationships—by letting children know that they *belongs and are accepted.*
- *Uniqueness*—a feeling of being special—by letting children know that what they did or said was *special.*
- *Power*—a sense of accomplishment—by letting the children realize they are *competent* and can be *successful.*
- *Models*—a sense of knowing—by letting the child know that *their goals and standards are appropriate and important.* (Bean, 1978, p. 8)

Every family has a "family atmosphere", that results from the feelings, beliefs, attitudes, rules, values, strengths, ways of communicating, and functional patterns that characterize the Native family. The family patterns provide for periods of self-reliance balanced with mutual interdependence.

Connectiveness

Attachment or *connectiveness* is a basic need of children. A child will not develop spiritually, emotionally, or cognitively without some kind of bonding or attachment. Lacking connectiveness, the child may have short term memory deficits, may not learn to read, and may be termed "learning disabled". Some Native children may hang around, get under foot, but when adults try to deal with them directly, will squirm, become silent, and appear uncomfortable and embarrassed.

Some Native children don't necessarily pay attention to a task; they are usually paying attention to others, or thinking about them. They watch other children relating and they become anxious when related to. They are doing what they need to do for themselves, not what they are supposed to do. A loss such as divorce, death or disappearance of a parent or loved one, or moving to a new location is severe to a Native child. They are trying to deal with a low sense of *connectiveness*.

Parents can do a great deal to increase a child's sense of *connectiveness*:

- The Native parent needs to support positive relations among the family, help the child to feel that he/she is *a part of something* — an important member of the family — with shared feelings, warmth, and good communication.
- Help the child to feel connected to the past or a heritage — to know one's identity as a Native person, to know the history of one's culture — to know that one belongs to parents and family and will be cared for and protected. A child needs to know that he/she is important and wanted and respected by family and others.

Parents may be surprised by the dramatic changes in a child if the suggestions above are consistently followed.

Uniqueness

Emotionally the children may have no sense of "who they are," may be unable to express and handle emotions, and may have some parts of life blocked out or missing. Children with *uniqueness* problems may show off a lot. Some children will retreat when singled out or called upon in school, but will show off when others are the center of interest or when others are engaged in some creative activity. Native children may become easily embarrassed and apologetic if it is pointed out to them that they are doing or saying something that is different from others.

Native children may have a narrow range of emotional expression when they are intermixed with other ethnic groups. They may rarely express spontaneous joy or elation, and similarly may not show sadness and depression. They may appear to be un-self-conscious, not reflecting on or evaluating their own behavior or feelings.

For a child to have a firm sense of *uniqueness*, he/she needs to have experiences that confirm their specialness or individuality. This does not mean that the child becomes spoiled, uncontrollable or has temper tantrums. Parents can have a positive influence on a child's sense of *uniqueness* by:

- Encouraging the child to express ideas that may be different from their own and allowing the child to express him/herself creatively.
- Communicating acceptance to the child.
- Pointing out how something the child did or said is different or special and also by letting the child know he/she is special.
- Helping children to find acceptable ways of expressing themselves and their special interests in creative ways.
- Using lots of encouragement in a private quiet manner — whispering in the child's ear — reviewing their accomplishments for the day at bedtime. Building a sense of *uniqueness* requires considerable flexibility and patience from parents but the efforts are worth it.

Power

Having a sense of *power* means that a child feels he/she has some kind of influence over what happens in life. Children with a low sense of *power* are quite often stubborn and bossy and refuse to take responsibility for themselves or take responsibility for others.

Some Native children have a low sense of *power*. One can observe actions which are quite predictable and patterned. The child responds similarly to many events and has little flexibility. Spoiled or *power* children avoid taking responsibility, and manipulate parents and others to take responsibility for them. By avoiding responsibility, power children invariably put others in a position where others have to take responsibility for them. They not only *make* parents get them things, but force their parents to make decisions for them.

Some Native children may act *helpless and give up easily* in the face of mild frustration. Many children do not know how to handle pressure or frustration well at all. Many Native children have not learned to solve problems on their own. If spoiled children begin to experience the consequences of what they do, not being protected by overly nurturing parents, their sense of *personal power* will begin to grow.

Setting limits and rules adequately, providing the opportunity for Native children to take responsibility, and requiring them to share in duties in the home and school are critical factors in helping children develop their sense of *power*. Building children's sense of *power* is an important step in raising their self-esteem. Many of the issues having to do with *power* deal with the way conflict

is handled. When conflicts are settled by having "winners" and "losers" we all lose. Kindness, fairness, consistency, and concern are more likely to result in parents and children respecting each other. When parents admit mistakes, apologize and change, it increases children's faith in parents, and makes for better relationships.

There are a number of things a parent can do that serve to increase the sense of *power* in children — without giving the kind of power that they are unable to handle. Parents can:

- Encourage children to take on more challenging tasks and responsibilities.
- Provide alternatives when planning activities — making choices.
- Let children know that they are responsible for what they feel and to not *blame* others.
- Teach their child how to influence people in a positive way.
- Help children be aware of how they make decisions.
- Teach children a better way to solve problems.
- Plan activities so the child can experience success.
- Show children that they can do something well and let them do it.
- Involve family members in significant decisions that affect them.
- Be sure the resources the family have are distributed to family members in a fair and equitable way.

Parents need to be very clear, about what areas they need to maintain control, and what decisions they are willing to let the children make. Children need to learn many skills, have the opportunity to make choices and be encouraged to take responsibility.

Models

Model issues have to do with personal values, [illegible]'s, and ideals and the ability to clarify one's own standards to live up to them. A child needs to know people who are worthy models for own behavior.

Because modeling is unconscious, children learn more from example than being told. This is especially important when teaching values, religious attitudes, and interpersonal behavior. Native children watch, making what sense they can out of the observation, rather than fully understanding and accepting verbal messages about complex issues from others. "Do what I say, don't do what I do" often does not work. When parents espouse values and beliefs that a child associates with strong positive feelings, these values and beliefs are usually accepted by the child. If Native parents' values are not congruent with their behavior and they do not fulfill children's needs, negative feelings will be associated with many experiences.

A child needs to make sense out of what is going on in his/her life. Some Native children may have excessive change, unpredictability, conflict, emotionality, and inconsistency which keep them confused. When patterns of living keep changing, a child's anxiety rises because accurate predictions cannot be made nor can goals be reached.

Chronic confusion is a major symptom of some Native children with *Models* problems. They have difficulties carrying out even the simplest instructions and appear disinterested in most tasks very quickly, even those in which they have stated some interest. Keeping them on task and on target is often akin to trying to hold mercury in your hand. This characteristic is the result of a deeper problem that Native children may have, which is a general absence of a goal orientation.

When Native children have a low sense of *Models* they tend to be quite disorganized, sloppy, and messy. Their spaces, desks, and rooms become disaster areas. When they are required to straighten them, they frequently take a very long time to do so, and still may not have them organized in any logical manner. These children may have a hard time making decisions because they lack an organizing principle or sense of direction.

The whole area of *ethics and morals* is a problem for some Native children with a low sense of *Models*. Many tend to be unsure about what it is they believe; their decisions about true-false, right-wrong, and good-bad tend to be contradictory and inconsistent. They may voice high moral beliefs, but their behavior doesn't correspond. They may be confused about the way to handle a situation.

Children with *Models* problems tend to shy away from experiences for several reasons. First, is that their experience is probably limited. Secondly, new experiences are only chosen if they make sense in terms of some goals they may have. Problems with goals often diminish the children's enthusiasm for new experiences.

Children with this type of problem are a little bit "off" in relating to other people. They make others uneasy, because their manner of relating seems strained or awkward. This will show up as laughing a bit more than is appropriate, being more or less enthusiastic than a situation calls for,

being too "lovey", etc. They are either too much or too little of something, and other people, including their peers, sense it. Reinforcing and encouraging the times when they do well in relating, is an important way to help them make sense out of what they do. Help them review what happened when something goes wrong in their relationships with others.

A child needs to have a *sense of order*. By living with a relative in an ordered environment, in which neatness, time commitments, and clear communication is practiced, a Native child develops skills in organization, planning and effective problem solving. Disorder in a Native child's environment makes it hard to learn good organizing tactics. This has serious consequences for school performance.

Once children have adopted models, it is very hard to change them. Both parents and teachers know how much time and energy are needed to change a child's behavior, and even more is required to alter feelings or attitudes. Even if a pattern of behavior results in pain or criticism, children tend to carry out the model that they have -- until they get a new one that they are convinced, by their own experience, works better for them.

Improving a child's sense of *Models* requires a good deal of patience. The fact that children with *Model* problems have difficulty organizing themselves, learning and setting goals, means parents should be ready to work on this condition, anticipating that they might not see immediate results from their efforts. Parents can help improve their child's sense of *Models* by:

- Being a good model for their children.
- Teaching their children to have orderly habits.
- Teaching their children how to organize themselves.
- Having children participate in keeping things organized through household chores and tasks.
- Helping their children set reasonable and achievable goals.
- Helping their children understand what they believe.
- Helping their children to understand the consequences of their behavior.
- Helping their children broaden their range of experience.
- Letting their children know what you as parents expect.
- Setting appropriate standards for behavior and school performance.

When a youngster has low self-esteem, the parent will observe weakness in all *conditions* of self-esteem. When the youngster is missing one of the four *conditions*, he/she feels uncomfortable and out of sorts. When a child is missing more than one *condition*, the intensity or severity of behavior increases.

Feelings control the behavior NOT the belief.

The following Medicine Wheel Charts will help explain self esteem.

The Medicine Wheel-Intact-High Self Esteem depicts the "good" things in life when one believes in self and has high self esteem.

The Medicine Wheel-Broken-Low Self Esteem shows the probable negative thinking and behavior when one has low self esteem.

(Figure 2 and Figure 3)

Home — School Communication

Communication between the school and parents is an essential element in parent participation. Native parents can be meaningfully involved in a number of ways: through joint decision making, in improved school/community relations, as allies in problem solving, and most importantly, as part of a comprehensive service delivery system to students.

Many times the lines of communication between the school and parent are not clear, and Native parents may be confused about where to go for help or assistance. The larger the school, the less likely a Native parent is able to identify resources. Lines of communication may be only one way—from school to home — with the schools not hearing the Native parent's voice. Schools should provide a clearly defined procedure for parent communication, requests, information, visits and participation.

With an effective home-school communications system, it is possible to have all parents observe their child in the classroom. By having monthly parent group meetings, the teacher can suggest that Native parents visit the classroom by scheduling a particular week for a certain family. By scheduling a specific week rather than a specific day, the Native parent will in all likelihood visit the classroom sometime during that week.

Parents could be given an observation checklist which they could fill out on their own. By having such a checklist, the Native parent would become a participant in the classroom rather than feeling like an outsider. The Native parent can then begin to appreciate and to experience the daily workings of a classroom. The teacher could also make an

appointment with the Native family to make a home visit in the evening on the same day or the day after the observation. (Alan-Haig-Brown, 1983).

The first contact the parents have with the school is at the time they enroll their children in school. All staff in the building should make the parents feel comfortable in the school. It should be remembered that the parent often comes to school with as many apprehensions as the child. A Native person may feel strange and disoriented when coming into a school, and the first impressions the parent has of the school sets the tone for parent-school relations. Having established good communication on a one-to-one basis makes other formal school-parent communicative situations easier.

There are many ways in which schools can engage in ongoing positive communication with parents.

Effective Practices in Indian Education: An Administrator's Monograph , lists specific ways to involve and communicate with parents:

- A variety of formal and informal methods should be used to inform the community. In terms of general program and information and school news, use the existing communication network. Attend parent committee meetings, tribal education meetings and publish releases in the tribal newsletter. Rely upon the mass media which reaches members of the tribal community.
- Encourage teachers and other school staff to present their programs and describe their services at tribal education, Chapter 1, Indian Education Act and Johnson-O'-Malley committee meetings. Conduct school meetings at times which do not conflict with other community activities, or hold them jointly with the meetings above.
- When communicating specific classroom and student information, encourage parent-teacher communication at school, in the home and in the community. School is *almost* as much of an intimidating place for parents as parent's homes are for teachers. The use of a community liaison or other community representative may help in establishing rapport between the parent and teacher.
- Non-judgmental, positive regard is required when working with parents. Native parents *are* concerned about their child's education. If there is a problem, cooperatively negotiate a plan of action for which parents and the school share responsibility. Parents *do* want to know what's going on, particularly when it affects their children. Information must be provided in plain English. Avoid conferences with parents that focus only upon the shortcomings of the child. There should be a balance between strengths and areas needing improvements. Be honest and open. If problems do exist, deal with them directly.
- When meeting with parents on an informal basis, keep the meeting relaxed. Show them concern, and respect the child and family and view them as individuals.
- Reinforce desirable behavior. Recognition should be given to parents, students and teachers who become involved and communicate effectively. A brief note to a parent thanking them for their help is a small investment. Furthermore, when conducting meetings, conferences, or open-house, provide activities and information of real interest to parents. Budgets and needs assessment surveys aren't very exciting to listen to, whereas student presentations and teacher demonstrations of materials are.
- Establish student, faculty and teacher councils as necessary to assure communication among the various school and community groups, and provide a systematic avenue for the discussion of school programs, practices and procedures by all interested people in these groups. Avoid creating new groups which may duplicate existing groups.
- Keep parents, student and faculty informed of the factors which affect decisions, thereby gaining increased understanding and support in all areas of the school program. Parents don't like surprises.
- Use information flyers and newsletters. A quality newsletter may well be the most effective way of reaching parents and grandparents and informing them of the school's activities and expectations. (The function of the newsletter is to inform, announce, teach, interest, and communicate.)
- Schedule regular meetings of parents such as Parent-Teacher Association meetings, School Advisory Committee meetings, or

general parent-community meetings. Provide interpreters, if necessary. Offer a meal or snack when possible.

- Schedule parent-child-teacher conferences at least twice a year. Consider the use of home-visits as part of the conferencing process.
- Provide preschool or Head Start programs and emphasize cognitive development as opposed to a play-oriented program. Such a program would have a strong component of parent participation in the classroom.
- Actively seek to involve parents in classrooms to assist individual students. In some locales, parent volunteers may be recruited; in other situations, pay may be more appropriate to local custom.
- Make extensive use of parents as resource persons in the classroom.
- Train parents to reinforce school learning of youngsters at home. Include general parent-child learning activity suggestions in school and tribal newsletters.
- Offer parent education classes to assist parents in understanding the growth and development of their youngsters as well as the psychological aspects of growing up and relationships.
- Solicit parents and tribal councils for input for procedures such as the student handbook, disciplinary procedures on attendance, tardiness, suspension and expulsion.
- The sharing of ideas to guide the school districts' operation is critical. Communication between the district and the community must be reciprocal, sincere and positive. Too often communication is one-way: administrators may "talk at" the community and do not do a very good job of listening. Attend parent and community meetings to assess opinions. Seek out the advice of elders for their guidance. Conduct informal meetings to share plans and ideas. Spend time just "hanging out" in the Indian community. Attend sporting events and other activities which Indian parents attend. Encourage parent contributions to school newsletters and provide school news to the community tribal newsletter. Hold community meetings, pow wows or other special events periodically on Saturdays for parents, teacher, students and other community members to meet on "neutral ground."
- Sincerity reflects another form of openness. Don't seek guidance unless you are willing to act upon the suggestions provided. A sincere interest in community opinion will require an administrator to moderate his/her place. Educators need to be patient. Silence at meetings may mean approval or disapproval. Learn to "read" the nonverbal cues of community members. Educators also need to be aware of social protocol which may exist, dictating who may speak in a given order. Educators tend to speak in ways which may be viewed as elitist. It is not just what one knows, but rather whether one shows *respect* and is *respected* in turn by the community. Respect requires integrity. Indian people expect promises to be kept. Following through on commitments is very important. (Pepper, 1985, pp. 69-71, 77-78)

Child Development and Parent Education

Rearing children is a major challenge. A positive relationship with their Native parents gives children the best possible start in this world.

> Indian mothers were taught the importance of child development very early. Parents traditionally taught that the child is always learning, changing, and growing and that they must be helped along their path. Growth and development were recognized through different ceremonies. One way child development was recognized was in the freedom that children were given. Today's theories tell us that children need a chance to practice new skills in order to master them. Traditional culture was uniquely suited to encourage this because children were allowed to experience many things and participate in their own way. They could explore the world and test their skills. Many modern theories exist about child development, but none really contradict what our culture has known for centuries. What can be learned from the old ways grows from the awareness of how children grow and develop. (Cross, 1986, pp. 161-162)

The traditional view of being "child centered" is one that is used in early childhood education at the present time. A child centered program is based upon an attitude of respect for and a delight in children. Children are free to accept as much responsibility for their behavior as is appropriate for their developmental level.

> The first years of a child's learning experience must be connected to that with which he/she is familiar in order to build a foundation for successful school experience. (INAR Alaska Hearing, Sakeagak, 1990, p. 11)

Alfred Adler recognized that children need much more than academic subjects; they need an environment that promotes learning, about life and ways of living. He perceived human beings as capable of making decisions that control the direction of their lives. Adler believed that a child's style of life was determined by age five. (Reynolds, 1990, pp. 14-15)

- Young children profit from being talked with, read to, and led by the hand to explore their world. There is no reason why these activities cannot take place in the context of home and school in their Native language and English.
- Young children need to hear the important events of their families and tribes. They need to experience the origins of their own traditions before Halloween, St. Patricks Day, etc.
- Native American/Alaskan Natives share a long history of oral tradition in legends, which historically was the means of preserving information. Oral storytelling by elders, parents, teachers, and other resources is a way of sharing values and traditions for young children.
- Young children have a natural curiosity that can be nurtured through their senses using physical surroundings through the use of plants, rocks, vegetation, etc.
- Every culture has music, art, and a uniqueness that children can be introduced to and taught to appreciate.
- Even very young children can come to appreciate, respect, and take pride in their own culture, which will later help them to understand others who may be different.
- In multicultural settings, young children can also be helped to expand their cultural understandings.

Successful programs encourage parents to become involved in the school. One such exemplary program is the Wounded Knee School in Manderson, South Dakota. At their elementary school the attendance rate of 1989 was 97.9 percent. Charlotte Black Elk, a school board member, claims that, "We have done this by including parents as a key part of the programs. Each parent is required to spend a certain amount of time in their child's classroom." (INAR High Plains Hearing, Black Elk, 1990, p. 6). She goes on to explain that such a high rate of parental participation is possible because of the compactness and smallness of the community which allows them to "draw on the talents within the community and do innovative programs."

One of the underlying tenets of American Indian/Alaska Natives is a tie with the family. A Native American community must consider that the formative years of each child are crucial and that early childhood learning must be a priority. The attitudes, values, beliefs, and the way children think and accept people and accept their way of life are learned very early in life.

Successful Models

The following section will highlight several strategies or models for effective parental support. The models mentioned could be explored further for implications for future adaptations elsewhere in Native communities. Most of the models focus on the parental *support* ideas but the federal and state programs described offer strategies for improving parental *involvement*.

Models Which Build More Effective Parental Support

Models which build more effective parental support, focus on improving the one on one relationship of Native parents or extended family members with the Native student and the classroom teacher. The models chosen here, not only give advice to Native parents about how best to interact with their child, but *show* parents more productive, supportive behaviors which could significantly improve educational outcomes for their children. There may be many other models which also focus on parental behaviors. The ones chosen, however, include some critical variables which seem to be particularly effective with American Indian/Alaska Native parents.

Positive Indian Parenting

The *Positive Indian Parenting* curriculum is designed to provide a brief, practical culturally-specific training program for Native parents. The first goal of the curriculum is to help Native parents explore the values and attitudes expressed in traditional Native child-rearing practices and then to apply those values to modern skills in parenting. Since there is no one tradition among Native people for child rearing, several examples from numerous tribes are used as examples.

Traditional is defined as "the old ways" — ways that existed prior to white influence. Because the concept of traditional varies among people, positive Native parenting refers to the ways as old ways or historical way. It is up to reach individual using the material to tailor them to fit their own community. There are some universal values, attitudes, or customs that may be expressed differently in local communities, which give the trainer a basis to build on. These universals include the *oral tradition, story telling,* the *spiritual nature of child rearing* and the *role of extended family.* It is the assertion of this curriculum that valuable lessons are to be learned from the old ways and that Native parents can find strength in cultural traditions.

A second goal of the *Positive Indian Parenting* curriculum is to help parents develop positive and satisfying attitudes, values, and skills that have their own roots in our cultural heritage. Promoting the growth and well-being of the Native child through positive parenting, which is culturally inspired, is the underlying message to parents.

This curriculum is intended for parent trainers and provides information on how to train, training issues, organizing training and suggested content and structure for parent sessions. In addition, material for parents is available. The curriculum is designed so that even someone with little previous experience could implement the program. However, a basic workshop for leaders can be very helpful.

The section, entitled "Part Two: Parenting Curriculum," is arranged in a format that might be used as a lesson plan. There are eight topic areas. Background reading is suggested to help the trainer prepare. Each topic area is designed to be the subject of a two- to three-hour session.

New Parents as Teachers

Another successful model worth mentioning has been featured in *What Works, Schools That Work Educating Disadvantaged Children.* The *New Parents As Teachers Project* in Missouri shows results in working with parents of young children which could have implications for parents of older children as well. Though this model has not been used with Native parents specifically, it has possibilities, given the indications of results produced. The three key components of (1) monthly visits to the home by parent educators trained in child development; (2) monthly discussion groups with other parents; and (3) a parent resource center, housed in a school, offering learning materials for families and facilities for child care, have yielded significant results worth replicating in schools for Native children.

The program began in 1981 and is available through every school district in Missouri. The program facilitates voluntary participation by parents, numbering 34,000 in 1987, representing families of all income levels and types. However, no specifics were give about success with Native parents. The results indicated the following:

- In 1985 an independent evaluation was conducted to assess the program's effects on participating children and their parents compared with a matched control group of nonparticipating families. The evaluation's findings show:
- NPAT children demonstrated greater intellectual and language development.
- NPAT children demonstrated significantly more aspects of positive social development, including the ability to cope and to get along with adults.
- NPAT Parents were more knowledgeable about child-rearing practices and child development, including the use of constructive discipline.
- NPAT parents were more likely to rate their school districts as very responsive to their children's needs; the figure for NPAT parents was 55 percent, compared with 29 percent for control group parents.

Family Math

The Oregon Indian Education Association (OIEA), through a grant from the National Science Foundation in the fall of 1986, began to offer training in *Family Math* throughout Native communities in Oregon. A Program, designed to encourage students (primarily minorities and females) to go on in advanced mathematics, gives parents and children opportunities to participate in activities which reinforce and supplement the school mathematics curriculum.

The OIEA trained Native educators from over twenty communities throughout Oregon, at least twelve of which offered classes for parents locally. In addition, Native educators in Alaska, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Montana and Florida have participated in training as a result of the National Science Foundation grant. Classes run from four to six weeks, with once-a-week classes that last an hour or two, usually in the evening. The activities consist of:

- The development of problem-solving skills. Students and parents learn to look for patterns, draw pictures and diagrams, work backwards, guess at the answer and then

check, and apply a host of other strategies when solving problems.

- An emphasis on working together. Talking about the activities not only opens the door for Native parents to help their children (and for Native children to help their parents) but adds a new dimension to the learning.
- An active "hands-on" approach, using inexpensive materials. Employing concrete objects such as blocks, beans, pennies, and toothpicks, Native children learned to understand the meaning of numbers and spatial concepts.
- An exposure to all of the topics of mathematics. These include geometry, measurement, probability, statistics, estimation, logical thinking, and the use of a calculator as well as numbers and arithmetic. In this model, Native children are not shortchanged by spending time only on arithmetic drill and practice.
- An emphasis on the importance of mathematics to future learning and work.

The Oregon Grand Ronde tribal community has been offering Family Math classes for over three years. The program boasts at least 32 parents a session, once a month. The tribe itself sponsors the activities and contributes a meal as well. It has become a very popular community event.

Family Science

Like Family Math, *Family Science* offers parents and their children an opportunity to participate in activities together. The primary purpose of the program is to give parents ideas about how to help children develop better science skills which will enable them to think critically and creatively using simple household items to conduct experiments and explore scientific concepts.

Some Native communities in Oregon and Minnesota are currently field testing Family Science activities which will be compiled into a book being funded by the Chevron Corporation, to be completed by the fall of 1991.

Preparing for the Drug Free Years

- *Preparing for the Drug Free Years* is probably one of the best parent support programs in terms of dealing with parental prevention strategies. This program not only deals with how parents can anticipate the problems that their children are going to have around drugs and alcohol, but also focuses on what they can do within the family structure to build support, create the needed bonding, and encourage the specific skills it takes to say no to drugs and alcohol.

Based on research conducted by the University of Washington, School of Social Work, the *Preparing for the Drug Free Years Program* offers parents and students opportunities to learn how to prevent involvement leading to abuse of drugs and alcohol. The program highlights research based risk factors and provides parents with family structures and parenting skills which can effectively address each risk factor. Using a series of videos, parent manuals, and activities with the whole family, parents begin to define expectations for their children, and learn how to most effectively convey those. The risk factors addressed include the following:

- family/community history of alcohol/drug abuse
- family management problems
- early anti-social behavior
- parental drug use and positive attitude toward use
- academic failure
- little commitment to school
- alienation, rebelliousness, lack of social bonding
- antisocial behavior in early adolescence
- friends who use drugs
- favorable attitude toward drug use
- early first use of drugs/alcohol

All of the models identified are activity oriented, require that Native parents demonstrate new skills mastered, are fun and finally are adaptable to Native cultural specifics. For example many of the *Family Math* activities can support the notion that traditional American Indian/Alaska Native cultures reinforce many mathematical concepts.

Models Which Encourage Native Parental Involvement.

Following is a brief description of the variety of federal legislation which encourages local school districts to consult with Native parent groups. Most require committees to help formulate policy and practice at the local level. Many of these committees, however, in practice, feel insignificant impact in terms of institutional change.

The public schools are compensated with special federal funding to support the task of

educating Native students. Public school districts are responsible to the state and federal governments for their performance in educating Native Students, but not to tribal governments. Election of Native individuals to school boards is very rare outside of reservations. In most public school districts, perfunctory parent committees required by meagerly funded federal projects constitutes the total involvement of Native people in the administration of education of Native children. Legislative requirements for tribal and parental involvement are largely ignored by school districts, and state and federal agencies. (INAR, Charleston, 1991, p.13.)

Prepared by Teresa L. McCarty, Ph.D. at the Arizona Department of Education, Indian Education Unit, June 1986, the following legislation provides mandated structures which if utilized have tremendous potential for Native parental involvement.

Johnson-O'Malley Act of April 16, 1934

Johnson-O'Malley (JOM) supplies supplemental funds to public school districts for eligible Native students. The Johnson-O'Malley Act was amended in 1975 when Congress passed the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act allowing tribes and Native organizations to contract directly for funds, and providing for Native parent input (advisory committees) in public school education programs. The kinds of services provided by JOM should be decided at the local level; these services might include tutoring in basic skills, cultural activities, providing teacher aides and paraprofessional counselors, and/or parental costs.

Bilingual Education Act of January 2, 1968

Though not designed specifically for American Indians or Alaska Natives, this legislation currently supports nearly 100 American Native bilingual programs. The legislation provides funds for instruction to limited English proficient (LEP) students; this instruction should help students become proficient in English and meet grade promotion requirements in all their subjects. As amended in 1984, the Bilingual Education Act supports these programs:

- transitional bilingual education programs use the native language to the extent necessary to help students master English and meet grade promotion standards, and can incorporate students' cultural heritage in instruction; these programs are called transitional because the native language is used as a vehicle to help students stay at grade level in all subject areas while they master English. Once students make the transition to English, the native language is dropped from the curriculum;
- special alternative programs are designed for situations in which it is administratively unfeasible to implement a transitional program (because of a large number of language groups to be served, or because of the absence of qualified bilingual staff); this approach provides structured English instruction and uses "special alternative" techniques to meet LEP students' needs; generally these are English-as-a-second-language (ESL) programs; they are <u>not</u> bilingual programs;
- programs of academic excellence demonstrate a model or exemplary approach that can be replicated elsewhere;
- family literacy programs work with parents and their children to promote English literacy;
- developmental bilingual programs provide structured English instruction and instruction in a second language in all courses of study; such services can be provided to both limited English proficient students and to fluent English proficient (FEP) students, but FEP students cannot constitute more than 50 percent of the students served; because both LEP and FEP students benefit from instruction, developmental programs are similar to <u>enrichment</u> programs; and
- special populations programs serve preschool and gifted students with language-related needs.

Indian Education Act of June 23, 1972

This legislation assists local education agencies (LEASs) in implementing programs to meet the special needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students. Subpart 1 monies supply supplemental funds for tutoring, aides, and enrichment activities. Subpart 2 funds provide for planning, pilot, and demonstration projects in bilingual-bicultural curriculum development and instruction, and teacher training. Subpart 3 provides for adult education and training.

The Indian Education Act created a federal Office of Indian Education and a National Advisory Council on Indian Education to review, recom-

mend, and disseminate information on American Indian and Alaska Native education.

Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (Public Law 93.638)

This legislation is for the benefit of Natives alone and is intended "to promote maximum Native participation in the government and education of the Indian people." The Act allows federal funds to be channeled directly to tribes and Native organization for the operation of education programs and for Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and health, Indian Public Health Service (IPHS) programs and services. It amends JOM to provide greater Native control in public school programs and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide construction assistance to public schools enrolling Native students. One of the most significant pieces of legislation affecting Native people, this law paved the way for the establishment of community-controlled or "contract" schools.

Tribally Controlled Community College Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-471)

This Act provides grants for the operation and improvement of tribally controlled community colleges.

Title XI of the Education Amendments Act of 1978 (Public Law 95.561)

This legislation provides for the development of standards for the basic education of Native children attending BIA schools or BIA contract schools. It also created: (a) national criteria for dormitory living (b) a priority system for school construction; (c) a funding formula based on per capita student counts; (d) direct and uniform standards for funding contract schools; and (e) a policy of active recruitment of Native educators.

Impact Aid (Public Law 81-874)

Impact Aid provides funds for public school districts on or near "federally impacted" areas (like Indian reservations), where no property taxes can be assessed to finance school construction and operations. These laws, passed in the 1950s, facilitated the development of public school systems on Indian reservations.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of the Augustus F. Hawkins/Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1981 was enacted as part of Public Law 100-297—April 28, 1988. The purpose of Chapter 1 is to continue to provide financial assistance to state and local educational agencies to meet the special educational needs of "educationally deprived" children, on the basis of entitlements.

The programs authorized by Chapter 1 provide financial assistance to:

- Local educational agencies for programs designed to meet the special educational needs of educationally deprived children and children in local institutions for neglected or delinquent children;
- State agencies to support programs designed to meet the special educational needs of children with disabilities;
- State agencies for programs designed to meet the special educational needs of children in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, or in adult correctional institutions;
- Local educational agencies for programs designed to meet the special educational needs and provide supportive services to children of migratory agricultural workers or migratory fishermen; and
- Local educational agencies (through the Secretary of the Interior) to meet the special educational needs of Indian children.

Chapter 1 Parent Involvement Programs

Recent legislation requires major parent involvement projects. The focus is always on the "child." The parent and child are actively involved in home-learning activities. Staff and parent education is provided at regional and state conferences.

Specific strategies include the following:

- Improving school-to-home communications.
- Assisting families to support positive relationships through parenting and child-rearing.
- Improving the recruitment, training, and involvement of parents and volunteers.
- Involving parents in learning activities at home.
- Inviting and cross-training staff and parents of all children.
- Improving team participation and leadership of parents.

Warm Springs Memorandum of Understanding

The following document has significant implications for many districts attempting to clarify roles of parents, tribes, school districts, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and others.

> I want to share with you a couple of documents our tribes have produced with the local schools district of Jefferson County, Oregon. One is an Intergovernmental Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the tribes, the BIA and the Jefferson County School District regarding education of Indian students.

We recently reviewed our MOU with the Oregon State Department of Education (ODE) and an addendum was added to draw them in as a fourth party to the document. The purpose of this review and addendum was to enlist the ODE in helping us evaluate and assess our programs that are using this document as a guide to improving education. We bring these documents to the Task Force because we are always happy to share what has worked for us.

The purpose of our MOU is to define and establish a system of policies and procedures to ensure effective inter-governmental consultation, planning and delivery of service for tribal students. Inherent in the acceptance of this document is a solemn pledge to adhere to the agreements herein contained. The expected outcome of these agreements will be the advancement of tribal student performance to a level comparable with all students in the district.

The goal of this document is to promote clear understanding of the roles, interests and expectations of each agency for the education of tribal students. This goal is to be attained by joint consultation and planning in the areas of (1) equal educational opportunity, (2) instructional services and curriculum, (3) support services, (4) equipment, buildings and transportation, and (5) governance and administration. Progress is being measured by the consistency of objectives and results of each agency's long range and management plans, which are evaluated annually.

Although this document is a statement of mutual policy and interest, it is not intended to have the legally binding effect of a contract, but the signing parties also fully expect and agree that each entity shall voluntarily follow both the letter and the intent of this Joint Statement as far as reasonably possible, and to the extent consistent with applicable state, tribal and federal constitutions, laws, treaties and rules. It is not intended to either enlarge or diminish the legal obligations of the parties as they existed prior to the execution of this Joint Statement, but it is intended to set forth in a concise and coherent way in a single document, the goals, policies and obligations of the parties. (Northwest, Sahme, p.28)

As noted in the research section, parental participation is more likely to occur when policies exist and students are in place which clarify roles and expectations for both school and parents. The Warm Springs MOU does this.

Blandin Foundation

Another model which surfaced during the INAR hearings provides suggestions for how foundations could support the advancement of Native educational excellence. Incentives for Native parental support and involvement are described.

The Blandin Foundation was created by Charles Blandin in 1941, who said at the time that he was creating it "to promote the well-being of mankind as the Board of Trustees may from time to time determine." It is a private foundation and its mission is to improve the viability of rural communities in partnership with many individuals, groups, and organizations.

In 1987 the Board of Trustees wanted to make a commitment to Native education, but since there were not Native people on the Board or at the Foundation, they formed a task force group. The purpose of the group was to help the Foundation better understand the problems faced by Natives in Minnesota and to recommend the role that the Foundation should play in providing a strategic educational solution. The task force included 44 of Minnesota's Native educators and leaders. Their recommendations helped to define the program areas the Blandin Foundation will support to advance Native education in our state.

In July 1988 the Foundation made a commitment of $1 million for a two-year Native education program. The task force recommendations included:

1. Programs focused on Native parents to encourage them to take an active role in their children's education and programs that increase their parenting skills.
2. Programs targeted at retaining Native students in education and assisting students who have dropped out of school to resume their education.
3. Programs designed to provide direct services to Native students including special prep programs and programs for gifted and talented students with special emphasis on science and math.

4. Programs designed to advance the cause of Native self-determination including programs designed to teach Native language, culture, and values; and programs designed to assist Indian tribes in the formation of codes.
5. Programs designed to impact public policy related to the advancement of Native educators, including programs focused on policy makers.
6. Programs designed to educate the public on tribal sovereignty and to increase the involvement of Natives in public policy making.

At this time the policy's age focus is from about three years of age to high school graduation. It is hoped that the program will also cover the interim period between high school and college.

Nonprofit institutions and organizations are eligible for funding. Grant requests of up to $25,000 for one year and $50,000 for two years are considered.

Preference is given to programs under Native control, cooperative or joint projects between tribal agencies, school districts and state of federal education agencies, and projects involving incorporated Native parent committees. This is very important. Several requests have been turned down because they did not have Native ownership.

Some of the task force continue to act as advisors to the Foundation. Blandin is currently working with 20 grantees. The Foundation has funded 27 projects, and there are five projects being considered. The Foundation hired two evaluators and a Native education consultant. The Foundation considers itself a partner to the programs it funds and offers assistance and support.

The programs funded have been varied and tend to be in two categories: (1) Reservation schools that already have support systems in place and are bringing in more creative programs to work with their students; (2) Students off-reservation in schools that are bringing more tutoring programs, support programs, and so forth, so that students will stay in school.

One example program is in the Onamia School District. It shows how a whole community can work together. It is a curriculum development program, that has a firm commitment from the school. They will implement the curriculum as soon as it is developed. The superintendent and principal are working with them; they have a strong Native parent subcommittee and an advisory council of Elders who are working with them. It is really the whole community working together.

Another program is a Teen Parenting Program at Cass Lake. This program has already completed one grant and is working on another. The first one was for getting teenage parents back into school. Some had already dropped out and were brought back. They had parenting classes and made a video tape telling their life stories and how difficult it is to be a teen parent and go to school at the same time. The video was done in a traditional way. This year the same teen parents will act as mentors and tutors to the third and fifth grade students who are at risk. That will give both groups a reason to be in school. The younger students will have a mentor and the older students will be helping the younger ones.

The original plan of the Foundation was for a ten-year commitment. The Board of Trustees decided that they wanted to evaluate it after two years, and we are up for evaluation now in February 1991. We expect the evaluation to be very positive and the commitment to Indian education will continue. We are hoping that other private foundations will join us in making similar commitments. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Schmidt, 1990, p.67-68).

Minnesota Indian Social Work Aides

The need for Native parent advocates is fulfilled by the Minnesota Indian Social Work Aide program.

There still exists in Minnesota a need for trained Native personnel to work in public schools that have significant numbers of Native students. The program described in this paper represents a step toward fulfilling this need by training Native community members as Native social work aides. The 204 Native social work aides trained from 1980 to 1990 were drawn from Minnesota Ojibwe and Sioux communities across the state. The majority of Native social work aides are women, ranging in age from early 20s to the early 60s. Approximately one-third provide services in urban areas, while two-thirds serve rural areas, usually connected with reservations.

Native social work aides are considered "paraprofessionals" since many lack the academic credentials and training for working with school-age children and their families. These Native people bring with them very valuable life and child-rearing experiences specific to Native urban and reservation realities. They are funded by a combination of special education monies, Indian Education Act funds, Johnson O'Malley monies, and local education agency funds.

> A pilot program was started in Minnesota in 1974 to address the problem of American Indian children and youth with handicapping conditions. While this program was very successful in the 16 school districts it served, there was a dearth of data on the total extent of the need, the services being provided, or the extent of unmet need.

From the pilot program in 1974 and the needs assessment of 1978-79, the Indian Social Work Aide Program developed. This program recruits American Indian persons at the community level and provides them with special education training to impact the assessment, review, placement, and follow-up on American Indian children in special education programs or in need of special education programs. Most recently, in the 1989-90 school year, 75 persons were employed as Indian social work aides and received training in areas of special education. These persons have had a substantial impact in identifying, assessing, placing, reviewing, and serving American Indian children and families with special education needs. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Hakala, 1990, p. 48)

The Indian Education Section of the Minnesota Department of Education conducts training programs which consist of three two-day training sessions in three-four consecutive years. This design was chosen to facilitate continuity and a gradual and consistent increase of professional competence. After each year a certificate is given to Native people demonstrating competence in the offered material. This facilitates further training and integration in continuing education programs for those who desire such training. Seventy or more persons participate each year. Levels of training have been standardized; new persons enter at Level I and progress on an annual basis through Levels II and III. College credits may be earned. Since all handicapped Native children and youth are served (as well as parents, teachers, and service providers for those children), training includes all areas of special education.

The objectives of the Indian Social Work Aide Program are:

- To provide training to Indian social work aides in order to alleviate concerns regarding American Indian students in need of special education services.
- To provide trained persons to school districts and cooperating special education centers who will assist with proper assessment, facilitate parental involvement, contribute to appropriate programs, and provide resources to the child, the parents, the special education staff, and the school.

Benefits of the Indian Social Work Aide Program fall into four areas:

- benefits for the handicapped child;
- benefits for the families of those children;
- benefits to the school or school district; and
- benefits to the Indian social work aide as a paraprofessional teacher.

The benefits for the handicapped Indian child are in identifying and providing special education services when needed. The child is referred by either the parent(s), family, school, or the aide. The Native social work aide acts as an advocate, facilitator, and coordinator throughout the steps of referral, assessment, staffing, development of individual education plans (IEPs), placement, follow-up, and reporting. With the Native social work aide as advocate, the Native handicapped child is more likely to be identified, appropriately assessed and properly placed, and is more likely to have an educational plan that meets both educational and cultural needs. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Hakala, 1990, p.49)

Minnesota Indian Education Act

The following information, by David Beuillieu, Manager. Indian Education Section, Minnesota State department of Education, described a model for state leadership in improving the quality of Native education. Implications for the role states can play are significant.

> Among the states, Minnesota represents a model of cooperation with American Indian Tribes and the Federal Government in the provision of educational services for American Indians. The inter-government cooperation in Indian education in the state has been sustained and enabled through the development of a distinct and unique responsibility on the part of the state to enable American Indians to have access to educational opportunities. The state's program in Indian education currently includes a number of grant programs and services related to Indian education which provide state appropriations for Indian Postsecondary Scholarship Assistance, and school based programs designed to improve the educational environment in which Indian children find themselves and to improve the effectiveness of schools in the education American Indian learners. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Beaulieau, 1990, p. 49)

Programs designated to meet special needs and enable access to educational opportunities, Native consultation and representation and the leadership of the Minnesota State Board of Education

currently define Minnesota's efforts in Native education.

Special Needs and Access to Education Opportunity

The state program in Native education currently includes the American Indian Language and Culture Education Program. The program passed by the state legislature in 1976 was developed in recognition of the need for more adequate education for Native pupils, to provide positive reinforcement of the Native self-image, and to develop intercultural awareness among pupils, parents and staff. The program provides state revenue for projects broadly related to improving the nature and quality of education services to Native children enrolled in elementary and secondary schools. Projects may include instruction in Native language and culture, improving the nature and quality of teaching, the provision of personal and vocational counseling and the modification of curriculum instruction methods and administrative procedures to meet the needs of Native pupils. Interestingly consistent with the original Johnson O'Malley contract regarding the special needs of Native students, the preamble to the American Indian Language and Culture Act asserts that in order for American Indians to have an equal educational opportunity, Native students must have their language and culture represented in the schools curriculum.

The American Indian Post Secondary Preparation Program provides grants to school districts for Native students in grades 7-12 for projects which broadly seek to enable and facilitate the enrollment and successful attendance of Native students in Minnesota post-secondary educational remedial and tutorial service, incentives for improved attendance, career counseling, etc.

The Minnesota Indian Scholarship Program provides financial assistance to Natives who are residents of the state, who are accepted for enrollment in post-secondary institutions.

The State's Native education grant programs are implemented through a unique structure of Native representation and consultation. The Indian Post-Secondary Preparation Program and the Indian Scholarship program are implemented by the Minnesota State Board of Education with the assistance of the Minnesota Indian Scholarship Committee. The committee, which has existed since 1955, was uniquely established as a committee by statute in the 1985 legislature. The American Indian Language and Culture Program is similarly implemented by the State Board with the advice of the American Indian Language and Culture Task Force. Both groups, which are broadly representative of the Native populations in the state, are appointed by the State Board with the advice of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council. This council which is composed of elected tribal chairmen in the state is charged by state statute to, among other things, advise the legislature and state agencies in matters related to Native Affairs.

The Native education advisory groups recommend to the State Board criteria for the implementation of the state Native education grant programs and in the case of the school based grant program review and recommend proposals for funding to the State Board. The state school based grant programs further require Indian parent and community involvement in the development and implementation of the program.

Central to the structure of Native representation and consultation which is the focus of cooperation between Tribal governments and the state of Minnesota is the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council.

Under the direction of the Minnesota State Board of Education, the state has been involved in a significant sustained effort to determine the educational needs of its Native citizens and has initiated as one of the Board's goals a process to develop a comprehensive plan for the significant improvement in the public education of Natives.

The current effort on the part of the Minnesota State Board of Education to identify and focus on Native education as a priority issue and to develop a comprehensive plan for Native education proceeds from the adoption of an Indian Education Policy Statement by the Minnesota State Board on February 9, 1982. The State Board's Indian Education Policy statement "supports and encourages (1) programs and services to meet the unique education needs of Indian youth and adults; (2) the involvement of tribes communities, youth, and parents in the total education program; (3) incorporation of Native languages, literature and heritage into the general curricula; (4) the concept of equal educational opportunity; and (5) viable programs which will permit Native people to complete and excel in areas of their choice.

Strategic Plans for Increasing Native Parental Support and Involvement

Today, most schools embrace the concept of partnership, but few have translated their beliefs into plans or their plans into practice. Sometimes educators feel that it is simply impossible to jump the hurdles, remove the barriers, and solve the real problems that

> prevent them from viewing families as resources for promoting children's learning. This view is too pessimistic. Shared vision and concerted effort have led to a variety of successful programs to connect schools, families, and communities. There is no excuse for not taking the first sure steps down one of the many paths to partnership. (Epstein, 1991, p. 349)

Given all of the information about the school-parent partnership presented thus far, there is significant evidence to suggest that schools can turn the current lack of Native parental participation around. In doing so, schools could dramatically improve the educational experiences of Native youth. This final section will focus on recommendations for the future. Beginning at the local school district level. Strategies for improving both parental *involvement* and parental *support* will be discussed. Where possible, specific examples shared during the INAR hearings will be included. Included also will be recommendations pertinent to tribes. Secondly, strategies for states will be explored, including legislation possibilities as well as technical assistance. This paper will conclude with recommendations for federal intervention and support.

> Schooling does not proceed in a vacuum: there is a direct link between a child's ability to succeed in school and the web of other circumstances affecting the child's life out of school. Although there are many children who are being born "at risk" and who may be labeled "disadvantaged," it is time for us to acknowledge that we -- the adults -- are permitting *all* children to be at risk. If we do not respond promptly and systematically to the disruptive and pervasive social changes affecting their lives.
>
> (Shedlin, 1989, p. 3)

Certainly, the history of American Indian/Alaska Native education has a track record of not only discouraging Native parental participation, but intentionally destroying those nurturing bonds so vital to the success of student progress in school. Research is clear about how critically influential parental *support* and *involvement* is to the improvement of achievement, attitude and behaviors of students. "A number of national organizations are encouraging their members to understand and to develop partnerships. The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers have initiated new projects on the topic of family and community involvement. The National Association of State Boards of Education has published a thoughtful booklet, *Partners in Educational Improvement: Schools, Parents, and the Community*. The Education Commission of the States (ECS) held a conference and issued a report, *Drawing in the Family: What States Can Do*. ECS is continuing to pay attention to parent involvement through its All Children Can Learn program and many others." (Epstein, 1991, p.346)

Concerns and issues raised by Native people during the Indian Nations At Risk hearings support that what has been tried relative to Native parents is too little, under-funded, and largely unsuccessful. There are a number of individual school based efforts making a difference. These efforts represent significant examples of strategies, programs and practices which are encouraging. Many of these,however, need to be adapted for use by greater numbe[illegible] Native communities. This final section will describe some of these Native success stories. Recommendations for future consideration will be proposed.

The January, 1991, Phi Delta Kappan issue describes succinctly many accessible, reproducible parent participation suggestions. Specific findings of parent participation programs include the following:

- Programs at all levels reveal similarities between parents and educators where differences were once assumed. Parents and teachers are finding that they share common goals and need to share more information if they are to reach those goals.
- Programs must continue across the years of childhood and adolescence. Educators and policy makers, who may once have thought that family involvement was an issue only in the early years of schooling, now recognize the importance of school/family connections through the high school grades.
- Programs must include all families. The examples in this special section show that leaders at the national, state, district, and school levels are working to involve all families in the education of their children, including those considered by some schools to be hard to reach.
- Programs make teachers' jobs easier and make them more successful with students. In visits to several schools, Shepherd Zeldin found that "those teachers who allocated time for collaboration rarely expressed hesitation in working with poor parents, were motivated to go beyond policy directives, and concluded that working with parents improved the teachers' effectiveness.

- Program development is not quick. The examples reveal the long and the sensitive work that are required for real progress in partnerships: 15 years and counting in Indianapolis; seven years in McAllen, Texas; more than three years of activities in San Diego; three years for developing a state policy in California; and between two and three years to see small but real steps in the School Reaching Out demonstration sites, in the projects funded by grants in Illinois, and in the Baltimore School and Family Connections projects.
- Grants encourage unusually productive behaviors in teachers and administrators who might otherwise feel that they lack the time to initiate partnerships with families and communities. Benefits are evident with both small and large grants (as small as $200 or as large as $30,000) across all levels of schooling. The larger investments, however, are more likely to ensure principals' commitment and leadership — and school-wide change.
- Family/school coordinators (under whatever title) may be crucial to the success of school, district, and state programs to link schools, parents, and communities. Coordinators guide school staffs, provide in-service training for educators, offer services to parents, and perform other tasks that promote partnerships.
- Programs should literally make room for parents. "Parent rooms" or "clubs" in school buildings or "parent centers" in the community are important ways of making parents feel welcome. In these sites, parents share and discuss ideas, obtain information and resources (including borrowing print materials and video and audio tapes), learn from each other about family problems and solutions, and so on.
- Even with rooms for parents, practices need to emphasize reaching and involving families without requiring them to come frequently to the school. Along with structures to involve a few families as volunteers or in decision-making roles, many schools are finding that much can be done to help families work with their own children at home to help them do better in school. Once considered the most difficult type of involvement, this is becoming the most relevant kind of involvement for families, schools, and student learning.
- In the 1990s technology can help improve many types of involvement. This includes radio, television, video and audio tapes, computers, and other electronic connections between home and school, some of which offer the possibility of two-way communication.
- There are still vast gaps in our knowledge that can only be filled by rigorous research and evaluation of particular types of school/family connections in support of children's learning. We need both formal studies and clear documentation of existing practices. (Epstein, 1991, pp. 348-349)

Strategies for Local School Districts and Tribes

Beginning at the local level, there is a great deal that will significantly improve parent-school partnerships in Native communities. Strategies require that schools begin to change their image to one of a locus of advocacy for all children and families. As an advocate, schools can facilitate the empowerment of parents. Parental *support* and *involvement* can be accomplished through resource identification, outreach activities, Native parenting classes, school staff in-service, and in general, trust building.

Native Parental Involvement: Schools as the Locus of Advocacy

Arguments for schools as the locus of advocacy for all children offer a sound framework on which to build a better education for Native children. In his publication, *The School as Locus of Advocacy for All Children*, Allan Shedlin writes:

> Despite important innovations and experiments implemented around the country in recent decades, the prevailing conception of the school and its relationship to the child has not changed significantly. Even where responsive institutional reform has been attempted and new educational strategies have been implemented, change generally has taken place within the conventional school improvement paradigm. Such approaches are usually additive, focusing on the adoption of a particular innovation in the context of the school, as is.

Program reforms are thus expected to effect change within a static concept of the school and the social system in which it exists. By struggling to implement a concept of education developed for a different era, the American public school is failing to meet the basic goal for which it was conceived: the optimal intellectual development of all

children. The magnitude of this failure is underlined by the Children's Defense Fund assertion that "not only does each child's future hinge on education, but our nation's economic and social survival hinges on the collective education of all American children. (Shedlin, 1987, p. 4)

Concurring with this position, the latest National Advisory Council on Indian Education legislative report recommended: "Federal agencies should work cooperatively to address the socioeconomic impediments to educating Indian and Alaska Native people to their full potential, including addressing the health, housing, nutrition, substance abuse, family violence, and other problems which affect the whole child and the whole adult person in reaching his/her educational goals." (NACIE, 1989 p.89)

Shedlin continues that what has been lacking to date is a comprehensive framework for examining responsive changes in schools. The framework must articulate both a new concept of schooling and a plan of action for restructuring schools to implement that concept. He suggests any proposed reconceptualization of schooling must be based on sound principles of child development and educational theory, and at the same time, must advocate the needs and rights of ALL children. The action plan must represent a comprehensive approach, one that will lead to intensified national awareness of the severity of the problem, and, ultimately, to national implementation of the new concept.

School is the social agency with greatest potential for interaction with families. For the elementary school child, the school plays a key role in the developmental-transitional rites of passage from home to outside world.

> Schools as a locus of advocacy envisions the school, working together with families and the community. It is the appropriate and strategic agency to serve as ombudsman, broker and advocate on behalf of children. Advocacy in its broadest sense means acting to insure that the rights of all children are being protected and the needs of all children are being met. Advocacy means increasing the responsiveness and accountability of all social and political institutions on the local, state and national levels, in the interests of all children. (Shedlin, 1987, p.6)

For the school, Shedlin writes:

> An advocacy role means accepting responsibility for mobilizing available resources and generating new ones as needed; an advocacy role does not mean that the school itself must provide or perform the necessary services. As the locus of child advocacy the school in cooperation with other agencies will support families on all socio-economic levels in meeting the needs of their children. Where such resources are fragmented, incomplete, difficult to find, or non-existent, the school acting with the family will take the lead in mobilizing available resources, or demanding and generating new ones. What is needed to enact this concept are coalitions of individuals and groups, spearheaded by schools, working together as advocates on behalf of all children. (Shedlin, 1989, p. 7)

With advocacy defined and enacted on the community level, and with the school as the designated locus for child advocacy, a structure is in place for mobilizing health, social, legislative, judicial, governmental, business and industry resources directly and systematically.

Fundamental principles of the school advocacy concept must be apparent in both commitment and practice in a community and its schools. Communities and schools that adopt the school advocacy concept would be expected to express their commitments in these ways:

- Local and state governing structures accept the school system as the locus of advocacy for children.
- Child advocacy applies to all families in a community, regardless of their socioeconomic status.
- Pervasive commitment to the school advocacy concept is evident in planning and in allocation of resources.
- Complementary roles of families and schools in working together on behalf of children are acknowledged.
- Coalition building with community and outside resources on behalf of children is ongoing. (Community resources should include: health, recreation, social, cultural, political, judicial and recreational agencies, programs and services.)
- Change is viewed as a process, not as a single event.
- Changes in structure and functioning of school are viewed as proactive, intrinsic and systematic rather than as reactive or incremental additions.
- Respect for differences and diversity exists among all students, all school personnel, and all administrators.

Although varied patterns of implementation may be expected to unfold in different communities, the efforts will have in common these key conditions and actions:

- Total school commitment to the concept sparked by informed leadership on building, district and system-wide levels.
- Leadership accepts responsibility for providing needed services and programs or seeing to it that the services and programs are provided.
- Coalition building to include families, community organizations, professionals and other individuals.
- Ongoing community assessment of the particular needs of its children.
- A comprehensive plan for changes in schools to meet children's needs, including long-range goals as well as immediate objectives.
- Procedures for implementing immediate objectives without losing sight of the community's long-range goals for its children. (Shedlin, 1989, p. 9)

Too rarely is a child viewed as a complete being; most often a child is thought to be comprised as separate entities rather than a single whole. We need a new approach to education that says we, the state, federal, and tribal providers are serving the whole child and the whole family.

We must cross functional lines. The child and the family are most important. Different agencies cannot say they will communicate and collaborate, but then just meet together only to leave and work on separate programs. We must find an approach that will cross functional lines and deliver improved services. The concept is that the same child and the same family drives the system's approach. Through this concept we can see that health, education, and all social service programs must address the child and the family as one. This requires a change in our system and a change in the roles of the governmental entities.

Today, several educational models address this concern. One example is educational compacts between businesses, schools, and institutions of higher education. Head Start is another example that combines health, nutrition, parental involvement, and education. There is also a social system change model that's being demonstrated in three Arizona Indian communities including Pima, on the Navajo reservation; New Paspa, on the Pasua-Yaqui reservation; and Santa Rosa, on the Tahono O'odham reservation. This model brings schools, parents, and other community members together in a combined effort. We need a new framework such as these, although there is a serious reality about funding and needs for increased service.

We must consider the role changes and the personnel needs of the BIA, tribal, and public schools. They have begun to cooperate out of necessity. Their convergence of managing educational resources is aided through "lateral relations" by which each entity can address the same educational needs for the same family and the same child. (INAR Southwest Hearing, Stevens, 1990, p. 2)

If the notion of schools as the locus of advocacy is to prevail, each Native community must begin the assessment process by examining the actual needs of its children. This means analyzing available resources, as well as gathering data on factors such as the characteristics of families, the quality of home and community environments, the health profiles of children, the history of the educational progress of its youth and the economic status of its constituents.

Consistent with this notion, many Native people presented testimony which reinforces the success of such a holistic view of educational institutions.

- There are so many health related problems, whether you work on the reservation or in an urban setting, it is essential to draw on all of the available resources — parents, teachers, social service workers, clinic services, and tribal medicine people — to have a meaningful impact. It is especially important to have a networking system that includes those who know and understand the ways of indigenous people in the area you serve. Traditional medicine is a teaching mechanism and it needs to be available as a choice. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Health, Wellness, and Substance Abuse Prevention, 1990, p. 2).
- Window Rock High School in Arizona has selected and trained teachers to conduct small group peer counseling sessions on a weekly basis for students who want to discuss issues of personal importance. Staff training includes coverage of issues such as substance abuse prevention, working with children of alcoholics, and suicide prevention. Sessions take place during the regular school day so students are excused from class and teachers each use their prep period one day a week to facilitate. When things come up that are beyond the skill of the teacher-facilitator, they can make referrals to local social services. Wherever possible, family-based problems are addressed through social service based family-counseling. This has been so successful

that almost all teachers in the high school will have trained to conduct these counseling groups. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Health, Wellness, and Substance Abuse Prevention, 1990, p. 2)

- Head Start involves parents in the classroom and allows parents to make decisions. The program encompasses education, social services to support the family, and health, nutrition, and mental health. There needs to be much better coordination between Head Start, Health and Human Services regional offices, and the U.S. Department of Education. There also needs to be correlation between BIA early education programs and the state programs. In the reviews that I have done, I see Bureau, private, and state schools on the reservation not even talking to each other. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Early Childhood Education, 1990, p. 1)
- In Cinle, AZ, the school has introduced a Peer Helper Program where students are trained through a counselor to listen to other students and help them deal with their problems. The first year activities were offered within a club format, but this year they have been changed into classes. If problems are too serious, the peer helpers refer them to the school counselor. This approach has been very effective in preventing suicide and helping kids who have problems at home. The Peer Helper Program is also linked to the Community Action Through Children and Youth Program (CACY) where students are involved in community service projects of their own design.

Many students are involved in drugs and alcohol because they have nothing else to do in the small communities where they live, so community service projects meet this need with a positive alternative. Also the Student Council is involved in setting up Red Ribbon Week and Substance Abuse Week where the entire community is drawn in to participate in conferences and workshops. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Health, Wellness, and Substance Abuse Prevention, 1990, p. 6)

Others recommend restructuring the school day or the school facility to accommodate the needs of families, like child care among other things.

- I am an advocate for restructuring education. I feel that reforming a system that has never really worked for the majority of our children is of no value. I think we need to look at every single education issue. For instance, I think we should restructure the school day. Cognitive research tells us that 90 minutes is a natural time frame for getting involved in, experiencing, and coming to a conclusion regarding a new concept that has just been introduced. So the 50-minute hour is not enough and is not congruent with what we know about how people learn. Furthermore, since families have a lot of problems with adequate child care, I believe the school day should coincide with the parental work day. We should be able to take our children to school when we go to work and pick them up on the way home. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Academic Performance, 1990, p. 4)
- Evaluate the current role and standards of those who work in Indian education. There is a growing need for educators to interface with other disciplines like social worker, health, engineering, science, etc., to insure that educators are adequately prepared to meet the needs of their students. (INAR Northwest Hearing, Martin, 1990, p. 56)

Building Trust with Outreach to Native Parents

Ways in which schools have responded to Native parental needs which foster the development of trust include one on one contacts and a willingness to seek Native parental advice.

- Based on my experience working with Indian families from one of the Pueblo communities in New Mexico, I know that getting parents involved takes time — it is not something that will happen overnight. Once parents trust you, know you, and know what you think,it is easier for them to decide to attend parent meetings. I work directly with many of the parents in the Pueblo community. In the beginning there were parent meetings that sometimes no parents, or only one parent attended,but I kept going back. Once I was ale to establish trust and a good relationship, parental involvement increased. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 2)
- In developing relationships with parents, schools may initially have to deal with considerations that are different from their original goals. Schools need to listen to

what parents are thinking rather than only following their own agenda, because what concerns parents at a particular time might be different from what schools think should concern them. However, if schools first address what concerns parents, even if it seems irrelevant, then parents will be ready to move on to other items and that is when schools can make their own suggestions. (INAR/NACIE, Parental Involvement Session, p. 2)

- We need to involve parents by asking for their opinions and having them analyze what previously has and has not worked, and brainstorm solutions. In my work with parents as a community development counselor, this approach has helped me succeed. Instead of me telling to them, I try to elicit their input by asking, "What do you think: What has worked and what hasn't worked? Why hasn't it worked and what are some possible solutions?"

Once parents realize that they have solutions within themselves and within their communities, they don't need to go to outside sources as much as they might have in the beginning. Many times solutions are right there within the communities themselves and it just takes time for parents to realize that they have tried something that works. Once they realize that many things are possible, they start to feel good about themselves. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 3)

Home School Advocates

When reaching out to parents, verbal communication is usually more effective than written. Parents from other cultures often are not accustomed to receiving the barrage of notes and papers that schools tend to send. For communicating with parents from Native backgrounds, personal, verbal communications are usually more effective. When planning meetings, a phone call or personal contact is more effective. When notes are written, they should be sent *both* in English and the native language, keeping in mind the protocol of the particular cultural group.

The use of home liaison outreach workers provides many districts a direct link to Native parents who may otherwise be unwilling or unable to approach the school. The growing interest in parent involvement nationally has not been around long enough to have developed "conventional" wisdom but, if there were some, it would be that person-to-person communication is best. Well-planned parent/teacher conferences and home visits are usually successful in removing barriers and building healthy home/school relationships, especially if done with cultural sensitivity.

> The Chapter 1 program in Lima, Ohio, has as a main goal the establishment of a personal relationship with every parent. The face-to-face meeting goes directly to the heart of parents' role in helping their children do better in school. At an initial parent/teacher conference, parents are given a packet that will help them engage in learning activities with their children at home. Lima's conferences, regular phone calls, and home visits set a tone for mutual understanding that makes other kinds of communication (progress reports, report cards, activity calendars, or discussions about problems that arise during the year) more welcome and more successful. Many schools around the country are establishing parent centers that serve a variety of purposes: not only do they allow person-to-person contact between parents and teachers, but they also give parents materials and information to take home, and serve as places for parents to practice new skills and meet other parents. (Adler, 1991, p. 351)

Examples from Native communities are equally as successful as that from Lima, Ohio.

- When non-Indian school personnel are trying to deliver health services to teens and encounter cultural barriers, they are advised to seek assistance through Indian Health Service community health representatives who know the culture and language of the youth and family being served. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Health, Wellness, and Substance Abuse Prevention, 1990, p. 1)
- In Juneau, AK, the Native Parent Committee has developed support activities by raising money to fund special events as incentives for improved school performance. This is important because in small communities throughout Southeast Alaska there isn't much to do in the evenings or on weekends. The committee is also currently working on attendance and has learned that alcohol and drug abuse is a key contributor to high absenteeism. They have learned that parents are not that concerned about their students' attendance records, so they have implemented a home-school counseling strategy to enlist the parental help in getting their children to school on a regular basis. By identifying the problem at an early age, they feel they

can have a more successful impact than if the problems are left until middle school or high school. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Health, Wellness, and Substance Abuse Prevention, 1990, p. 6)

- The Indian student dropout prevention program in Phoenix Union High School District consists primarily of early intervention by Native American counselors who work with eighth graders. They help them identify their interests, abilities, and career aspirations, and visit their homes in the summer and sit down with both the student and parents to share information about the high school academic program, what the requirements are, what they can and can't expect, and work out a four year plan with the student. This way they have a general guideline for the next four years if they wish to use it.

At the same time, they gather a lot of information about the family and student which they can integrate into the record that is available when the student enters in the fall. This way the school knows whether or not students need financial assistance, free lunches, bus tokens, and all of the other little things that add up to big obstacles. One the students are on campus, our counselors continue to offer them support. Out of a total of 20,000 students, Indian students make up 3.6 percent. When we started the program five years ago, we were operating with close to an annual 25 percent dropout rate, and now we are down to 17.3, so it has been fairly effective. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Dropout Prevention, 1990, p. 7)

- Our tribe is near the Nevada border and we have tried several strategies to combat the dropout situation. Working with the tribal government and the local community government, we were able to place our own Native American member on the County Board of Education. Then we have taken Impact Aid monies that the school receives and hired an Indian liaison who works with parents, the school, and children who have truancy and attendance problems. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Dropout Prevention, 1990, p. 10)
- I am a certified drug counselor and currently a parenting specialist with the Chinle public schools (AZ) which is the largest public school system on the Navajo reservation. I set up an in-house referral system within the school and made a referral form for teachers to identify students who have behavioral problems, who might be undernourished, who are wearing the same clothes for three days, or who are suspect of being abused or neglected. From the teacher, the students go through the principal or nurse who does a lot of physical investigation, and then I provide individual counseling and make assessments on these students. As a parenting specialist, I then go out to the home to gather information. Sometimes I find parents are drunk, divorced, dysfunctional, or even deceased. I then call a case conference with the school social workers and we develop a treatment method. A lot of the cases in Chinle schools might create a similar parenting specialist position to deal with these parents. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 7)

Empowering Leadership

In addition to hiring home-school advocates, other individuals in the school system have initiated direct contact with Native parents with some success. This kind of outreach begins with administrative leadership which has an empowering effect on others.

- Instructors and administrators need to be enthusiastic about parental involvement. The White Mountain Apache had a principal who was chosen principal of the year throughout the United States, and this principal has really encouraged a lot of parents to become involved in school activities. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 6)
- As a principal, I want my teachers to get out into the homes and visit with the parents. You really don't know how to meet a child's needs unless you know where he or she is coming from. However, when I announced that I expected every teacher to at least make one home visit, they shied away from it. I think we need to do more for those kinds of things because parents think that they are not accepted by the schools.

The parents we have now are people who have gone through strict BIA boarding schools that did not allow the students to speak their own languages. These parents feel abused by the system and feel they have no choice but to send their own kids there. They think that their kids are experiencing the same things. These parents are intimidated by the system because of their own

experiences. To overcome the intimidation, we need to go into their homes and let them know that we accept their lifestyle, and therefore, we will surely accept their children. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 3)

- The more administrators, teachers, and parents go out into the community, the more parents will become involved. Our district is in central Phoenix where 90 percent of our people are below poverty level. We are starting to get more parents involved simply because we have some parents who go door-to-door to talk to other parents. Title V and Johnson O'Malley staff should contact the parents directly.

There are not many educated Indians or qualified staff, and they don't have much time available, but to really make a difference, we need to actually go into homes and talk with parents. We need to keep letting them know that the schools are going to support them and help them as much as possible. I see some of these parents start to come out and check on their children, or visit the school. If our educators have such expertise, and they are good speakers and dynamic people, they should visit the homes more often rather than staying in their offices. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 3)

- At the White River Unified School District (AZ), we have a parent/teacher counselor who goes out and visits with the people in the community. We have young girls who got pregnant before they were out of high school and find it very difficult to go back and walk the halls that they walked maybe a year or two ago. When they go back, they think that they made a mistake and realize that their parents made the same mistake. You have to talk to them. We also have very concerned teachers who during the summer time will go out on their own and visit the children that they will have the following year. Our parent advisory committee holds potlucks as another method to bring parents out. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parent Involvement, 1990, p. 7)
- The Mesa Public Schools (AZ), have gotten parents involved and feeling comfortable with principals and teachers through a Hemako Govk'cuth, or home-school festival. This is held at the beginning of each year to bring the school staff out into the community to meet people on their own turf. Within the last two years this has been successful in bringing our parents out to participate. It is organized like a carnival festival where schools and tribal youth programs set up booths, hand out information, and speak with parents and teachers on an informal basis. In addition to booths, the schools have worked with the students to provide some type of presentation, and a meal in the evening. The first year of the festival 150 parents attended. The next year parental attendance was up to 450. (INAR/NACIE, Parental Involvement Session, p. 5)

In addition to schools reaching out and staff going out into Naive communities, Native parents need to be brought into school buildings.

Schools need to be creative in exploring ways to draw parents in to begin a two way dialogue. Schools should become the hub of learning in Native communities. Some suggestions which have proved successful are mentioned below:

- At my school, in addition to requiring teachers to go out and meet the parents, I have brought the adult education that used to be held at our community center right into my school. The whole effort is to get more parents familiar with and involved in the school. We will focus on a specific type of training to develop our parent group as a working functional parent group, rather than just a general parent assembly. (INAR/NACIE, Parental Involvement Session, p. 3)
- Claremore, Oklahoma has organized a Running Club and gathers Indian students together two or three times a week for practice, and on Saturday mornings to participate in runs held throughout Oklahoma. This program was originally connected to the Community Center in Tulsa, but has become so successful that it is now an independently incorporated group. Participation is primarily for youth and children, but adults and parents are also encouraged to join. (INAR/NACIE, Health Issues Session, p. 2)
- The key thing is parental involvement. We have a lot of kids from dysfunctional families. In looking for ways to pull them into school, we decided that if a kid is ineligible for activities, we have a 90-minute study hall after school. Parents have to come in with their kids and sit with them through these study sessions. It is the little goofy things like that have helped

us. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Academic Performance, 1990, p. 15)

- When the Heart of the Earth Survival School in Minneapolis had a change in administration, parent involvement was very low. This was a special issue that parents and administrators felt needed to be addressed. They have since implemented changes and their parent involvement has doubled. The school now requires parents to come to the school for at least one of their special events.

We utilize traditional practices such as feasts where we have presentations by our drum and dance club. Parents sign in to show they are present, and our lunch room gets very crowded. This helps build the trust level because parents come to the school and feel comfortable and welcome. They are not just there because their child is in trouble or because there is a problem — they come on a good note.

Another thing we do in our school is to utilize traditional counseling or sweatlodges. We are located in the middle of the city, but have a sweatlodge that is only ten miles away from our school. We hold them on Friday nights, and the parents who are trying to overcome any kind of drug or alcohol problem are able to attend. They attend as a family with their children, and with their children's friends and families. They can go to a sweat and learn about their own culture and practices.

Other tactics we use to encourage parent involvement include a school-wide parent newsletter that the teachers can contribute to, and some of the teachers developed their own newsletters such as the first grade parent newsletter. There is a lot of parent-teacher interaction because of open houses and feasts, and the parents are welcome to see the classrooms and interact with the teachers.

Another thing that we do is provide transportation. If there is a problem with a student or if there is going to be a recognition of the student, we provide transportation to the parent. We have also developed a parent involvement coordinator whose number one job, goal, and objective is to retain and increase parental involvement. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 6)

The use of sports as an avenue for contact with parents has significant possibilities.

- In Montana, basketball is king in athletics. To improve our academic standings, we have incorporated a simple eligibility plan that if you don't pass a class, you don't participate. All of a sudden parents are coming up to me and saying, "Geez, my kid is opening books." They want to participate, and we have about 80 to 90 percent involved in some kind of activity. They want to play ball, they want to play in the band, they want to go to the speech contest, so they are opening their books. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Academic Performance, 1990, p. 15)
- Because parents like to get involved in a little recreation, we always have an activity during our parent advisory committee meetings. We usually put up a volleyball net before we start our meeting and then after we go through our agenda, we have an activity with parents. We, as parents, sometimes like to challenge our high school students and pretty soon we include our young students in our activity. Children also really like to challenge their parents. This has really become a big area of involvement.

Activities for our younger population, such as Head Start, are those where the real serious parent involvement takes place. We have a little youth basketball tournament which is a major fundraising activity for parents. A lot of parents get involved in sports events. During basketball games, our community fills the gyms. Even though it might not be in a classroom setting, parents are participating with their children. When the children see their parents participating in these activities, they feel motivated. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p.6)

Native Culture Awareness Classes for Staff

> For Bureau of Indian Affairs teachers and administrators and teachers and administrators in all school districts which receive Indian Education Act, Impact Aid, or Johnson-O'Malley funding, there should be established a mandatory in-service teacher training program, for which the teachers/administrators will receive continuing education credits, which will provide them with training on cultural differences from a positive perspective to facilitate a better understanding of the behaviors and learning styles of Indian and Alaska Native children and an appreciation of their backgrounds and the contributions of their people to educating Indian and Alaska Native student." (NACIE, 1989, p.85)

Without sensitivity and knowledge specific to the American Indian/Alaska Native community, school staff will continue to resist beginning and continuing outreach efforts. Considerable energy,

resources, and Native expertise must be devoted to staff development or re-education. Teachers and administrators who make mistakes in dealing with Native children or parents, do so out of ignorance more often than out of maliciousness. Once they become aware of some of the dynamics of culture, learning styles, and traditional child rearing practices, they are better equipped to respond and interact with Native parents more appropriately.

- In order to ensure understanding among educators regarding uniformity of approach to the education of American Indian students, it is essential that Indian communities develop and provide in-service training to teachers, administrators, and school personnel through community training of educators. (AISES, 1990, p. 8)
- We begin our remarks by bringing to your attention the strengths that exist in Indian communities and Indian families because one defect which we in NASBA have so often noted in programs aimed at Indian children is that the strength of the local Indian community is overlooked or ignored.

We also see too often experts consulted by federal education leaders speaking of Indian children only in the negative—stressing their "educational deficits," "environmental deficits," even alleging "cultural deprivation." Our children come from culturally rich environment. Often educators unfamiliar with Native American cultures and societies do not know how to respond to that richness. They make mistakes and the children suffer. (INAR Southwest Hearing, Begaye, 1990, p. 35)

- Tribal customs often interfere with school. Some youth want to take part in ceremonies and they stay up all night and are sleepy the next day. However, the teachers won't let the students make up the work, and sports coaches make the students sit out of games. We would like a little understanding or make teachers more culturally aware of why these things go on.

I suggest that teachers have a week for community-type orientation. All of the tribes in that school could develop a manual so the teachers can be aware of all the issues I have discussed. (INAR Plains, Kootswatew, 1990, p. 83)

- I teach a class on parent and community relations. It is the one required course for teachers going into elementary and early childhood education. I see that there is a lot of work required to sensitize teachers to cultural diversity and dealing with parents. Teachers need to know to reach out and build partnerships between parents, the community, and the school. They need to know how to deal with problems and contact families. They need to learn to balance between sharing school knowledge with families and understanding what families expect from school. (INAR Plains Hearing, Haulman, 1990, p.45)
- At the outset I want to make clear that what is NOT wrong is the children themselves. I do not want to hear more tales about what they lack, what is missing from their personal backgrounds, what is deficient in their families. The children are a gift to us all—to their families, to their Indian Nations, to the United States, and to the world. The question is not what is lacking in them. The question is what is lacking in US that we cannot nurture the richness of these children.

Another thing that is lacking, I would submit, is faith in these children and what they can achieve. We talk as if something was wrong with them. What is really wrong is that those educating them are failing to succeed in THEIR task. Studies of education environments have demonstrated that one of the environmental factors most highly associated with student achievement is the belief by the teacher that the child can learn. In looking at the situation of Indian children in schools, I would urge the Secretary of Education to consider what is missing in the approaches and the expectations of teachers, administrators, education planners. Do we perhaps expect too little? (INAR Southwest Hearing, Haskie, 1990, p. 45)

Parent — Teacher Conferences

Parent — teacher conferences serve a number of purposes. Knowing the home situation, the family's values, the family's view of discipline, whether the child has any responsibilities at home, and if so, whether the child carries them out voluntarily or has to be forced or coaxed, what the parents expect of their child, the position the child holds in the family, the child's relationship with siblings and friends, and other pertinent information, enables the teacher to plan long-term procedures for the individual child more successfully. Having the teacher and the parents talk together serves to unite the two areas of the child's life — home and school — and enables both to plan more effectively for the child than when the teacher and

parents do not know whether they differ in their methods.

The parent learns about the child's behavior at school, the teacher's evaluation and expectations of their child. They acquaint themselves with the various rules and regulations of the school, as well as those made by the teacher or by the other children in class. Finally, the parents have a chance to learn something about the general program of the class in which their child spends so many hours each day. Too many parents have no idea what their children do in school. The more the parents and teacher understand each other, the less the child will play school against home, and vice versa. (Dreikurs, Grunwald and Pepper, 1982, p. 304-306).

One of the most essential building blocks of home-school communication is the parent-teacher conference. Conferences can be successful when teachers and the school system create a climate that invites collaboration with parents. Creating this climate involves planning and effort. Conferences should be planned on a regular basis for all parents, not only for those children who are experiencing problems. Teachers need the help of parents to do the best possible job of educating every child and can help parents play an active educational role at home. (Oregon State Board of Education, 1990, p. 8).

It is important for teachers to approach parent conferences in a manner that is beneficial to both school personnel and Native parents. Both teacher and Native parents may be reluctant to participate. They may have negative attitudes based on previous experiences with conferences which achieved nothing and/or promoted feelings of blame or guilt. The following is an example of what one teacher did to help ease the conference situation.

Mrs. Moore, fourth grade teacher, realized that the various Native parents would be coming to parent-teacher conferences "cold". She prepared a booklet of information that described in simple terms the purposes of the conference; defined terms such as: grade level, up to the child's potential, overambition, underachiever, etc; developed a set of questions parents might want to ask Mrs. Moore; as well as outlined the expected outcome of the conference. Mrs. Moore mailed the booklet to the parents two weeks prior to the scheduled conference date.

The advance preparation assisted the Native parents in understanding the conference process and made them more comfortable. Mrs. Moore found that the parents participated fully and asked additional questions pertaining to the academics and specific items on the report card as a direct result of her efforts in preparing the booklet. Items discussed included: method of student progress; what the student had learned; what the student had not learned; areas in which the student needed additional help; how the student stands in relation to the rest of the class, and how the parent could help the child.

Sometimes a teacher invites the child to participate in the conference. Since the conference concerns the child, there is no reason why the child should not be present. Occasionally a teacher senses that a child is afraid to have her parents come to school. The teacher can assure the child that parents are not coming to accuse, but to plan what they can do to help. At this point the teacher may invite the child to participate in the conference. Actually, this helps the child to accept responsibility and accountability for his/her own learning and behavior. As a result of this kind of parent-child-teacher conference, the child comes away with a feeling of belonging. With this sense of belonging comes an increase in *social interest* — the ability and willingness for a person to function socially in terms of cooperation, responsibility, belonging, and concern for the welfare of others. (Pepper and Henry, 1986, p. 265).

In many instances, it has been difficult to get Native parents to attend parent-teacher conferences. One method used in Nebraska for rewarding parents for attending parent-teacher conferences was to offer a full tank of free automobile gas. All Native parents attending conferences with teachers were eligible for the gas. Parent participation for that event was improved from 15 to 85 percent. A barrel of fuel oil was offered in a Selawick, an Alaskan village to increase Native parent attendance to 100 percent. The reward winner was drawn like a raffle winner at a community wide dinner sponsored by the school and staff at the conclusion of parent-teacher conference day.

- The White Mountain Apache reservation has established a regular series of parent/teacher conferences. Every nine weeks the school is recessed half a day and conferences are held from 1:30 in the afternoon until 6:00 in the evening. All of the parents are welcome to come into their child's classroom to discuss their child's situation and go through the grading system. The parent has a chance to be involved with the school and to understand their child's placement. Furthermore, parents receive their child's report card at these conferences. Parent involvement be-

comes strong at those meetings, and pretty soon they start influencing different areas. Parents are also involved through the parent policy council, parent advisory committee, and parent/teacher visitation in which all the parents at all levels, kindergarten through high school, have a chance to experience their children's classrooms. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 6)

Native Parental Involvement in Policy Development

It is clear that when policies are written for Native parental involvement, there is a greater likelihood that there will be success. The San Diego County Schools (SDCS) provide a good model:

In early 1988 the SDCS established a task force to explore ways in which parent involvement could be strengthened in the district. Made up of thirty-three community and school representatives, the group became convinced that the best way to move forward was to persuade the board of education to adopt an official policy on parent involvement. The task force spent several months, sometimes in heated debate, framing a policy statement to present to the board. The policy, adopted in July 1988, is consistent with the California state policy in most areas and outlines a multifaceted definition of parent involvement. "The task force's decision to draft a policy has proved to be a wise one, giving shape and direction to district actions and to the work of individual schools. The implementation plan that flowed from the policy has focused on three major efforts: building the capabilities of staff members, creating partnerships, and providing follow-up and support services." (Chrispeels, 1991, p. 370). The board committed itself to:

- involve parents as partners in school governance, including shared decision making and advisory functions;
- establish effective two-way communication with all parents, respecting the diversity and differing needs of families;
- develop strategies and programmatic structures at schools to enable parents to participate actively in their children's education;
- provide support and coordination for school staff and parents to implement and sustain appropriate parent involvement from kindergarten through grade 12; and
- use schools to connect students and families with community resources that provide educational enrichment and support.

The memorandum described in the models section of this paper is an excellent example of Native community parental *involvement*, describing roles and responsibilities of various decision makers in Native communities. School goals, policies and procedures need to be understood by the Native community. Many Native testifiers attested to the need for community and Native parental involvement at the decision making policy level.

> At the local level, parental and community input is largely the result of federally-mandated participation in Title One, JOM, and Title Four programs. The federal government requires that Indian parent committees approve all Indian education programs before they will be funded by the federal government. A few local education agencies request input into decisions involving the education of Indian children. For the most part, however, parents and tribal communities have little impact upon and input into the decision-making process that involves the education of the Indian child, beyond the scope of special categorical Indian education programs. (Antel, ECS, (1990), p. 17)

- Parent involvement is needed as part of a basic restructuring of the schools. As a small school, I think we have much more community support than I see in other places, but I still feel that the parents as a whole don't feel as though it is their school. Regardless of the programs we design, the structure of the schools is still essentially based on an Anglo model that has been around for hundreds of years. As long as we have that model, parents are not going to consider schools as their own institutions. In the future we need parents, tribes, and the communities to take over schools. Parents should not just be on a board that makes a few decisions, but should assume responsibility for the schools. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Elementary Schools, 1990, p. 6)
- Too often schools bring parents in, ask them what they want, and they don't know what they want. It's not that parents don't want to be involved and it's not that they don't have ideas; I think it is the way we ask them for their ideas. I think that parents not only have to feel as though they are a part of the school, but they have to somehow run the school. Until that hap-

pens, we will always have a problem with parental involvement. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Elementary Schools, 1990, p. 6)

- We are not suggesting that there are no problems with the education being received by Indian children or that real problems do not exist in the lives of many Native American children as they seek to build lives that are satisfying, meaningful, and appropriate to two cultures. What we are suggesting is that along with these problems, many of which arise from the encounter of two cultures, are resources residing in the heart of the cultures of Indian people.

We urge education leaders addressing the "problems" of Indian children to also acknowledge the richness of this resource and to begin planning to utilize some of the richness existing in Native American families and communities to address the educational needs of Indian children. The best way to assure that the resource of local Indian communities will be incorporated into programs for the education of Indian children is to make a commitment to include Indian parents and grassroots Indian community leaders in planning educational change for our schools. (INAR Southwest Hearing, Begaye, 1990, p. 36)

- Most areas that must have parental involvement such as Title V and Impact Aid tend to put parents on parade. You bring parents in to look at your back-to-school night. You bring them in to look at your school activities. You get them to bake cakes for your class. But parents as collaborators and parents as decision makers are not roles that most schools allow. How many schools have a sign that says, "Welcome parents?" How many schools have chairs for them to sit in the office, or even sit in the classroom? No schools do because they want to send a message. Most of our schools in California have fences around them and gates to keep people out. That's the message that schools are sending.

(INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Elementary Schools, 1990, p. 7).

- We have a difficult time involving parents in the schools because there seems to be a reluctance on the part of the professional staff to allow any non-professional people to actively participate in decision making. When teachers are trained to believe that there are only four teaching styles and four learning styles, and you come in and tell them there are culturally-based learning styles, it goes against everything they believe. When the textbooks and curricular material reflect those teaching styles, we are designing a system for failure for parents. The tribe has the ability to socialize children, and we have educational systems that are deliberate, systematic, and sustained that have been operating for generations. We train people how to be Hoopas. We educate them to be Kiowas. We educate them to be Hopis. When we send our children to school, we do not want them to be socialized as general Americans. The laws and the structures of this land are designed so that schools are a social imposition for social control. We oppose that. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Elementary Schools, 1990, p. 7)

- Parents should have the ability to sit down and make a decision on what textbooks are going to be used in the school, what programs are going to be taught, and what the curriculum should look like. But approaching parents and giving them two days to choose a textbook is a strategy that is bound to fail because what you have not done is train the parents to know what should be included in the textbook. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Elementary Schools, 1990, p. 7).

Native Parent Input on School Discipline

When a school has a comfortable climate, people feel proud, connected and committed. They support, help, and care for each other. When the climate is right, there is a certain joy in coming to school. Climate is a term used to describe how people feel about their school. It is a combination of beliefs, values and attitudes shared by students, teachers, administrators, parents, bus drivers, office personnel, custodians, cafeteria workers, and others who play an important role in the life of the school. Part of the school climate has to do with the disciplinary procedures outlined by the school.

The administrator is responsible for all staff assigned to the school. In discharging this responsibility, the administrator should establish and maintain reasonable and acceptable standards of pupil behavior. The administrator should be aware of the needs of the students and accommodate these needs insofar as it is possible to do so.

Schools need to confer with Native community members concerning behaviors which may be a

cultural conflict between home and school, and clarify how to appropriately deal with such behavior.

Good systems for handling all school procedures should improve the chances that students will work hard, complete assignments, participate in classroom activities, learn more and, consequently, have fewer serious behavior problems. To minimize suspensions, expulsions, absenteeism and tardiness, an administrator should:

- Develop an understanding of the factors that affect social behavior in this particular Native community. Learn about the home environment of each child.
- Develop a knowledge of the value systems of Native and European-Americans and their influence on the individual and society.
- Identify areas where behavioral expectations may be contradictory between Native and European-Americans.
- Develop productive and satisfying relations with students based on respect, trust, cooperation, consideration and caring.
- Involve tribal government in setting disciplinary consequences and rewards, as well as attendance procedures.
- Keep law enforcement, social service and other non-educational agency personnel out of the classroom when contacting individual children.
- Use attendance counselors and home-school liaison coordinators. Have them work together with the tribal government and Native parents when problems arise.
- Keep lines of communication open with Native parents.
- Have conferences with the attendance officer, the home-school liaison coordinator, parents and members of the tribal government to help find alternative solutions. Cooperatively negotiate solutions, rather than laying blame.
- Use suspension and expulsion as a last resort. Find alternative methods to work out the students' problems *in school*.
- Provide activity buses for students who wish to participate and/or attend school activities.
- Develop skill in democratic action in large and small groups. Develop a system of shared responsibility with the students. Students should know the expectations and the limits.

Native parents must accept equal responsibility in helping to solve the discipline problems of their children. Parents, like teachers and school administrators, must work closely together with the school and community personnel to solve young peoples' problems. No one group can do the job alone. Native parents must become part of the team in developing and carrying out disciplinary action.

Discipline is handled differently from tribe to tribe and from traditional to non-traditional communities. If the Native community is involved in setting these standards, Native parents will support disciplinary actions.

Native Parental Involvement With Curriculum

Native parents should have the opportunity to determine the values from both the dominant culture and Native culture, which should be part of the curriculum. More specific information about a culturally appropriate curriculum appears elsewhere in the INAR commissioned papers. It is sufficient to emphasize here that without Native community cultural experts' involvement, curriculum will continue to invalidate the worth of Native contributions, values and lifestyles. In order to have the degree of influence necessary, Native parents need training in all aspects of curriculum development and improvement.

- If Indian parents are going to take part in the education system, they have to realize that they do have a role in influencing the school curriculum. They have the right to say what they want their children to be taught, and they have the ability to do so through politics, electing the school board, and electing committees. I feel that these programs that require parents participation have changed a whole generation of people who are now sophisticated and making those changes for their children. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Partnerships of Schools, Tribes, Communities, Parents and Businesses, 1990, p. 5)
- There needs to be a certain perspective when talking about training for Indian parents. If you want input on curriculum, you need to teach parents what curriculum means and how it is applied in the classroom. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 5)

Tribal Encouragement for Parents

It is not enough for tribes to talk about supporting educational efforts, rather they must take active roles in decision making, must commit personnel and financial resources whenever possible.

Strategies for successful parental participation are not complete without the insistence of tribal involvement. Involvement by definition influences policy or decision making at the local level. "Tribal people need to come to the aid of tribal children. Their education must be fashioned by us from start to finish. Our tribal governments must provide us with leadership to educate tribal citizens. That big, powerful, rich system called public schooling in these United States may be all right and just right for the immigrants and their children. It is not and has not been even close to all right for our children.

We tribal people must structure the education of our children. We must, because as citizens of dependent nations we must appeal to and demand through American laws and Congress the wherewithal to structure the educational system of our children with our tribal governments and with public funds." (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Christensen, 1990, p. 53)

Many testifiers nationwide reiterated the critical role which tribal governments must play in all levels of Native education:

- We need a federal policy that supports direct tribal regulatory authority over state public schools on reservations and in other Indian country. Indian control is the key to effective Indian education for Indian people, but recent efforts in the federal arena have centered on trying to develop that control through funding mechanisms, parent committees, and administrative processes.

The sovereignty of Indian tribes gives them authority over their members and their territory, and that sovereignty should include—at least concurrently with the state—authority to directly regulate state public schools that serve Indian children on reservations and in Indian country. This authority needs to be recognized by federal law because tribes will need to devise and adopt education laws that regulate the schools, as well as policies and programs provided for under those laws. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Partnerships of Schools, Tribes, Communities, Parents and Businesses, 1990, p. 4)

- Tribal governments, dialogue participants noted, have the power to become active partners with Indian parents and school districts in educational reform and community initiatives. In doing so, tribes must pass resolutions setting education as a priority. They must develop education codes for all local schools mandating the integration of basic curriculum with tribal values, language, intellectual concepts, and spirituality.

Tribal councils must assist students by establishing scholarship and summer-work projects. They should also encourage college students to return home after graduation. Dialogue participants also stated that tribal leaders should serve as positive role models for students by leading drug- and alcohol-free lives. They also pointed out that tribal councils must link tribal drug and alcohol abuse programs with local schools as a means of combating social problems. (AISES, 1990, p. 4)

- Rather, education of children from the different Indian Nations must be particularized to the educational and nation-building needs and aspirations of individual tribes and schools within the different Indian Nations and national groups. The need for a tribally particularized component to the education provided in our schools should be incorporated into the recommendations for educational improvement arising out of this hearing process. (INAR Southwest Hearing, Begaye, 1990, p. 37)
- Any reform of the educational system which serves Indian students needs to recognize that Indian communities are the most qualified group to identify Indian educational needs and what programs are most necessary to meet tribal educational objectives. Indian tribal leaders place a high priority on education for their people. Eighty-two percent of the respondents placed education as either the highest tribal objective or among the highest tribal objectives. The primary reasons they cite for educational failure are inadequate funding, poor facilities, no incentives to learning, poor home environments, substance abuse and lack of education support programs. (Wells, 1991, p. 8)
- The issue of government control just points out one factor that is so important. We are still struggling with transforming the kind of education we provide to our children in Zuni, but the opportunity is a much greater

> and the response time is so much quicker than they are able to do that. Just the fact that Zuni Indian people are in control of the destiny of their children's education has radically changed some major conditions almost overnight. This same thing is likely to happen in a metropolitan urban setting, but you have a rarity of Indian people there who have very similar concerns. It will take more dialogue, more relationship development, and refocusing of resources. But the empowerment of Indian people is the key factor that is going to make major differences. The major recommendation is that an urban Indian school be created that would allow Indian parents in the metropolitan area the opportunity to become responsible partners, so that they can become publicly accountable for the kind of education system that their children need. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Lewis, 1990, p. 56)

Tribes inundated with a variety of economic, health and human concerns, have not put time, personal, and financial resources into redefining education on tribal terms. Developing tribal education codes is occurring more and more with significant results. The efforts of the Navajo Nation provide an excellent example.

> Four and a half years ago, the Navajo Nation adopted a comprehensive set of eduction policies to establish in a general way the goals which the Navajo people set for the education of their children. These policies were developed with the total involvement of local and reservation-wide Navajo education organizations. Persons from all areas of educational involvement—school administrators, teachers, school board members, parents—were asked for their input and involvement. The Navajo Education Policies were endorsed overwhelmingly by community-based Navajo education organizations, such as the Navajo Area School Board Association, before they were finally presented to the Navajo Tribal Council and adopted as tribal law.

The Navajo Education Policies are not a comprehensive implementation program, nor were they intended to be. They did, however, set the parameters within which any comprehensive plan for the implementation of a Navajo Tribal Government can work cooperatively with the education providers serving our youth. They commit the tribe's education agency to a willingness to work with the local schools, school boards, and local communities to develop plans for the development of Navajo education. Through the education policies, the Navajo Nation has ratified in its laws the principle of local control of education. Parents also are recognized in the Education Policies as essential and active participants in the process of education improvement. Curriculum is intended to reflect the needs and aspirations of our local communities.

I stress the emphasis of the Navajo Education Policies on local control because I am convinced that involvement of our local parents and community members is an essential part of any effort to make our schools more effective. Effective schools research has identified participation of parents and the entire local community in developing, supporting, and implementing school objectives and activities as an essential characteristic of an effective school. Our own experience in the Navajo Nation supports these research conclusions. We too have found that active participation at the local level in the development and support of school programs is associated with successful school outcomes.

This statement expresses the hope and the expectation of the Navajo Nation for educational change in the years ahead. We ARE committed to change. We ARE committed to educational improvement. We ARE committed to building effective schools where our children experience academic success. But we ARE committed to undertaking this process as an integral part of the transformation of our Navajo Nation.

The Navajo Nation is standing on the threshold of the 21st century. All of us are looking toward that future time filled with hopes and dreams for all our people and for our nation. We do not just seek individual success and happiness for individual Navajo children, although we do, in our love for our children, work for and offer prayers toward their success and happiness. Beyond the individual outcomes, we seek to assure the continuity, growth, and development of the Navajo Nation and the cultural persistence of the Navajo people.

The Navajo Nation is committed to work for the improvement and regeneration of our schools. WE welcome the concern and interest of the Secretary of Eduction and invite him to work WITH the Navajo Nation and with the Navajo people in this effort. Unless we work in cooperation with each other and with respect for each other's gifts, even plans which look good on paper will be fatally flawed. They will lack legitimacy with the very people they affect. With this involvement, we can work together on the critical task of building our schools and our society. Our children, our future

leaders, can flourish in this atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. (INAR Southwest Hearing, Haskie, 1990, p. 45-46)

Conclusion

Native parental involvement at the local level can be significantly improved through conscientious efforts and strategies which include:

- Building trust with outreach to Native parents
- Transformational leadership
- Native culture awareness classes for staff
- Home-school advocates
- Parent-teacher conferences which are well planned and culturally respectful
- Native involvement in policy development, discipline and curriculum development and review
- Tribal encouragement for Native parents.

Native Parental Support: Building and Reinforcing Native Parents as Children's First Teachers

Since children learn daily from interacting with their parents, it would be helpful if Native parents could receive formal education which describes how they can best promote learning. "Parent involvement should be changed to parent commitment in making sure their children get up, go to school, and have a structured environment in which to study. Increased success is connected to family support." (Southwest, Toosie, p. 56) Native parents affect their children's growth and development by: (1) the way they communicate with their children; (2) the variety and meaning of the experiences they provide for their children; and (3) the way they guide their children in developing skills in relating to other people. A Native parent education component can focus on ways that this interaction can be positive and contribute to school success.

Native Parental Education and Parent Study Groups

"Although elders usually have more of life and wisdom to teach than to learn, that is not the case for younger adult members of a community. Since parents are a child's first teachers, they should have access to the training and support they need. During the work day, the "learning" of the individuals must be prepared to "teach" the youngsters and influence them. To promote early recognition of the importance of reading, writing, and math skills, the parent(s) or caregivers must show that they can perform in these areas. Even after the child begins preschool and after kindergarten and into elementary and secondary school, the importance of the skills of the parents or caregivers cannot be overestimated. Consequently, in order to reach the youngsters, one must begin in a community with the education needs of its adults." (NACIE, 1989, p. 80)

- Native parents have been forced to become involved with an increasing number of complex problems, such as academic underachievement, irresponsibility, apathy, destructive behavior, drug and alcohol abuse, child abuse, and unemployment. They have been forced to meet these problems with little preparation for the most challenging task in life — being an effective parent. "We need to fund parenting classes that include culturally specific parenting skills. In your packet today I have given you some materials on Native American parenting classes that are given in St. Paul. Early Childhood Family Education has worked well for us for the past couple of years. We find that parents really want to come in and learn how to be successful parents. They want to know how to discipline their children, how to feed them, all those kinds of things. In fact, the program is becoming so successful that it is getting too big for us to handle. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Gagnon, 1990, p. 59)
- Parents are confronted with a confusing array of advice through books, magazine articles, newspaper items, suggestions from neighbors and friends, and advice from teachers, counselors and social workers. No wonder Native parents are confused. Many suggestions are quite often contradictory. Raising children is a major challenge. Being a parent has long-lasting consequences for the development of each child with basic attitudes about self and others. "Parents must assume a pivotal role in education. Parents must instill pride and self-esteem with Indian children. They must pass on values and beliefs that give children an Indian orientation toward academic and professional life. Finally, parents are important language and cultural resources in Indian communities." (AISES, 1990, p. 4)

Many Native adults have had limited opportunity to continue learning and would appreciate the opportunity.

- There is currently in the United States great concern about parental involvement in the education of children. Many parents have been criticized for lack of involvement in their children's school programs. "It is very important for Indian and Alaska Native parents to feel comfortable in their children's school settings. This may involve many factors, sometimes including the parents' own educational needs being met so that they do not feel intimidated by the school system or any teacher of administrator. Sometimes this requires some understanding about the Indian community on the part of teacher and some outreach to the parents. Poorly educated parents who feel that they have nothing to share at a parent-teacher conference are not likely to attend any such conference, especially in an intimidating environment. In-service training for teachers and school administrators could assist in this area." (NACIE, 1989, p. 81)

Parent education and parent study groups are excellent ways of teaching parents how to handle some of the complex problems they face. Parent education classes usually have a trained teacher and a prescribed curriculum complete with reading and study materials as well as assignments on various topics.

The Northwest Indian Child Welfare developed a training manual for parents, *Positive Indian Parenting, Honoring our Children by Honoring our Traditions, a Model Indian Parent Training Manual,* which states: "Traditionally, Indian education has emphasized learning how to live, rather than learning how to make a living. Enhancing the strength of the group was considered more important than enhancing the individual's ability to be self-sustaining. Seldom was the responsibility for teaching others placed on any one individual or group. Rather, teachers were elders, family members, story tellers, and orators, who passed on to younger generations information in a variety of forms. Teachers were strict in the sense that the lessons to be learned meant survival and thus, by necessity, had to be learned well. The survival aspect gave relatives and elders a vested interest in teaching the young and made them committed teachers.

Teaching and learning were accomplished through the telling of stories and legends that were repeated time after time so that the spirit of the story's words became more important than the words themselves. The values, attitudes, and etiquette contained within these stories were reinforced in daily life experiences.

Other teaching methods included the use of examples and demonstrations. Most skills were learned by watching those who were accomplished at them; the individual observed the tasks over and over until he or she felt ready to participate in them. Encouragement was central of the instructional process. In many tribes, the first attempt at crafts, no matter how meager, was given to an elder who praised and encouraged the maker. Group recognition was another form of encouragement. the "first kill ceremony" was an example of how the community recognized a youth's prowess as a hunter. Often the game was given to an elder.

The teaching format was characterized by patience and the belief that learning took place in its own time. Thus, instruction respected the individual learner for who he or she was as a person, not for how much he or she knew or did not know about a particular subject. Individuals were seldom expected to have the "right answer"; questions were used primarily to stimulate thought and self-examination, rather than to test acquired knowledge. For example, before learning to hunt, children were often instructed to go out and observe the behavior of animals. They were then asked by the elder what they had learned and encouraged to think about what different animal behaviors meant to them as hunters. In the process of learning, it was important for the learner to examine the task in relation to himself or herself as it was to master the content. This understanding gave meaning and form to his or her knowledge, which could then be passed on to future generations.

Furthermore, the traditional learning situation was characterized by multi-sensory input. Learners saw demonstrations, heard stories, experienced "hands-on" participation, and were called on to observe and reflect on the meaning of the lesson. Verbal instruction was closely and concretely linked across time and space with actual experiences.

In sharp contract to the Indian's view of teaching/learning as a holistic, experience-based process with many teachers, the dominant society favors a linear process with a single teacher or authority emphasizing abstract, conceptual skills. "We believe that each approach has its own strengths to lend to our undertaking. The dominant society's focus enables us to create an appropriate instructional design. We can then draw on the old ways of teaching to facilitate learning." (Cross, 1986, p. 21-24)

A number of guiding principles should be kept in mind when working with Native parents. Those principles include:

- Native parent education functions with a commitment to take the best available from both the traditional child raising beliefs of Native culture and modern parenting skills.
- Native parent education and practice are based on a belief and pride in the strengths of Native culture and history.
- Native parents can most effectively learn from educators who are a part of and in tune with Native culture.
- Effective Native parent education is based on a belief in the value of sharing experience and expertise, both between educator and participants and among participants.
- In Native parenting, "experience" is the best teacher.
- An effective learning environment for Native parents requires that participants be viewed as worthy of respect as people, regardless of background.
- Native parent educators are not superior to participants simply by virtue of their role as trainers; learning is a mutual process.
- Participants in Native parent education bring their own unique strengths and weaknesses to the training and will learn at their own pace in their own style and should be accepted at their individual skill and performance level; mistakes are a natural and accepted part of the learning process.
- The story tellers, elders, and teachers of Native culture, past and present, provide an example to guide the growth process.
- Native parent education functions with a value and respect for different views and experiences.

Curriculum which could be covered in parent education classes can be as wide and varied as needed to fit the needs of parents:

- Child Development/Early Childhood Education
- Child Management
- Coping with Child Misbehavior
- Babies and Toddlers
- The Elementary School Years
- Teen-Age Years
- Building Self-Esteem
- Family Math
- Family Science
- Other topics of interest and/or need

Strengthening Native parental *support* requires that local school districts provide opportunities for parents to define their needs themselves and refine their skills as learners, teachers, counselors and educational advocates. Native parents should have the opportunity to determine the values from both the dominant culture and from their Native culture which they want. Many Native parents are doing an exceptional job like the one who offered examples of their *support*.

- I was wondering about parents and how much they should participate in school. I know that a lot of people believe schools should teach Native American culture, but I think that should begin at home. When students go to school, they should already have a very strong understanding of their culture and heritage. We used to take our kids to the supermarket and have them pick out the different foods that the Indians contributed to society. We also taught them the old legends and stories. Maybe our family is different because we have a functional family with parents and grandparents. They took an avid interest in the culture and read about the Indians in Mexico. This summer we went to the desert where there was a ball court and my kids determined that the Indians had calculated the parabolic reflex of this court. They had read in National Geographic about how the Indians did that so they could stand in two temples and whisper and hear each other's communication. Culture and heritage should come from the home so that when they go to school they have a better understanding of their own self. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 2)
- Parents who don't know a lot about the subject matter can provide a good place for their children to do homework, reserve time for it, and have an opportunity for their children to study at home. Parents can talk about school and schoolwork with their children on a regular basis, encourage them, motivate them, and shape their attitudes about school and learning.

In this process, parents will become closer to their children and have a better working relationship with them. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Parental Involvement, 1990, p. 1)

Types of options for parent training are discussed below:

- All children, including Native American children, tend to grow along similar developmental patterns. Therefore, it is necessary that people be aware of the developmental activities that children perform at different ages. When Head Start was first established, the teachers treated the students as if they were older and consequently didn't give them a lot of hands-on activities. Interaction should be different for two and three years olds than for five and six year olds. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Early Childhood Education, 1990, p. 3)
- Parents Anonymous programs can be helpful in providing education to young parents about how to be good parents, including nurturing skills, teaching children about values, behavior management, and the difference between punishment and discipline. This kind of program should be more widely available. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Health, Wellness, and Substance Abuse Prevention, 1990, p. 3)

Native Language and Culture Classes for Parents

Not only do school staff need culture and language classes, but many Native parents need these classes as well. Grounding in traditional awareness can do a great deal to strengthen individual self knowledge and community awareness.

- We need to redefine Indian education so that it does not mean Johnson O'Malley, Title IV, Title V, or remedial programs. We need Indian education to mean using the best of the old and new to educate our people whose histories, cultures, belief systems, and languages are different from the majority culture. Traditional education assisted children in finding meaning in life. Curriculum was tied to experience and is related to the affective side of learning through oral tradition and learning from the Elders. The physical side of life was fully developed with games and activities. Social development came through social activities that demonstrated the philosophy that we are born into a life of service. All learning was interrelated and connected with the spiritual side of life. (INAR Plains Hearing, Skinner, 1990, p. 78-89)
- Late intervention, treatment programs, and eventual self-esteem seminars attempt to heal a wound that never should have been inflicted. Why wait for the inevitable damage? Put the money and time and effort into programs of high quality from the very beginning. The Native American state of mind is nowhere else duplicated and must not be squandered. Only this singular state of mind holds out the realistic hope of optimistic solutions to predicaments of the non-Indian world, solutions that only another viewpoint, an Indian viewpoint, can create and implement. The minds of young Indians must not be neglected, their saving attitudes ignored, nor their education squandered. Effective education begins with preschool programs and continues through graduate school. No program, no matter how well funded or staffed, can succeed if it fails to incorporate and reflect the values of it's community. American Indians fail to see their own values reflected in the majority educational system and until they do, they will continue to drop out. They too, must be given reasons for success and must be treated as cherished and valued members of our culture. The state of Indian schools tells them one thing: Indians don't count. (INAR Southwest Hearing, Vigil, 1990, p. 39)

Parents and Children Together Classes

Parents should be provided with suggestions for learning activities that they can carry out in the home. At the same time, the skills reinforced by such activities and their importance for the children's learning should be discussed. Strategies which demonstrate for parents how to work *with* their children are proving to be not only motivational and fun, but extremely effective. Many of the successful models like *Family Math and Preparing for the Drug Free Years* consist of significant amounts of time working with parents and children together. Addressing the needs of the family as a unit was described by others.

- A lot of dropouts, perhaps 70 percent, come from families of dropouts, where their brothers and sisters and maybe even their

parents were also dropouts. One year in our GED program we graduated two mothers and their daughters, which was really outstanding for them. But we feel that there is promise in establishing family literacy programs, where the total family comes in together to work on reading and writing. They discover that learning is fun, and it is fun to go to the library. This works in a positive way on both the children's and the parent's self-esteem and their attitude toward schooling and education. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Dropout Prevention, 1990, p. 12)

- During the past year, considerable dialogue was established with Robeson Community College for the development of family literacy programs utilizing the Kenan Family Literacy Model as a complement to the preschool programs. The lack of sufficient Chapter 1 resources to provide for a full-time coordinator for family literacy hampered our ability to appropriately and adequately implement a preschool family literacy component. In recognition of this need, we have twice unsuccessfully applied for an Evenstart grant to enable us to implement such a program. We are, however, planning to utilize Title V funds this year to establish six Title V Parent-student learning centers utilizing computer-assisted instruction for parent-student engagement in learning. (INAR Eastern Hearing, Johnson, 1990, p. 19)
- Parental involvement must be encouraged. In one Southeastern Oklahoma community, the Legislature provided funds for the purchase of computers. Parents were then instructed on their operation and they were made available to be checked out for home use. This produced three positive results: (1) parents learned, (2) children learned, and (3) parents and children spent time working together toward a common goal. (INAR Plains Hearing, Haney, 1990, p. 5)

On the national level I would consider the possibility of establishing Indian learning centers--not like Haskell, tribal community colleges, or new-age boarding schools. I am talking about something different like the Aspen Institute or the Old Chautuaquas, located in beautiful settings where people will want to go. Attract students and professionals. Forget the standard age breakdowns of junior high, high school, and college. A teenage model is a "white model." Create an "adult" learning situation that will serve multiple generations. Bring in the Elders to talk about history and their childhood experiences and recognize them as professionals. Get these places accredited as junior colleges or colleges.

Until the learning environment feels like a family or a clan, the Indian student will not be engaged. Somehow we have to create a bunch of "weird families." American education isn't working well for anyone, and we can lead the way to a new model.

A multigenerational approach is natural and makes a lot of sense. I think there are possibilities in there that we haven't even tapped. Unfortunately, although we see it happening in various places across the country, it is all too rare. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, 1990, p. 18)

- We now are serving younger brothers and sisters of older students who have been in our programs and graduated. In some families we are working with kids at three different grade levels. We have parents who are really committed, and the whole family is involved in our organization. We believe that motivation and creativity are just as important as receiving additional money from the federal government. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Drop Out Prevention, 1990, p. 11)
- The Phoenix District has two programs for young women with babies, and in both cases we work with the Phoenix Indian Center by having them refer students to us that they know are out in the community and not attending school because of pregnancy. On the basis of referrals, we are able to register eligible students in these programs, where they are required to take a child development course, or they are matched up with their regular high school program, wherever they left off. We also offer counseling of the students in terms of what happens after the baby is born. It is our experience that being pregnant is less likely to keep a young mother out of school than what happens after the baby arrives. They usually think that "Grandma, Mom or Auntie are going to take care of the baby." well, Auntie takes care of the baby until the first opportunity for employment comes along, and then the mother is out of school again. So we help young mothers access social services for help with child care in the local community. We have had fair success with that approach.

(INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Drop Out Prevention, 1990, p. 11)

Such education for Native parents can take into account the unique cultural orientations of each community, exploring both traditional child rearing practices and more contemporary practices.

Family planning should be encouraged for Native American Families.

- Prenatal care and education are essential for young women expecting their first child.
- Traditional ways emphasize caring for your mind, taking care of your hygiene, and proper eating and exercise – all within the context of having respect for the gift the Creator is given us through this womanhood, the doorway into the spirit world. School and health systems must allow us to share this concept even though it does not fit any of their structured guidelines.

The possibilities for parental *support* are endless given the needs of the community and the creativity of both educators and Native parents. Funds should be earmarked for exemplary training models, topics and designs. These should be researched and disseminated when found to be effective. The curriculum for such projects should be developed and marketed for broader use.

Continuing Parental Support Throughout the Schooling Years

Research suggests that parental support has tremendous implications throughout the schooling process. Too often Native parents discontinue the level of support needed to sustain student efforts at the junior high and high school levels. These are critical years for all youth but even more so for Native students who begin dropping out in junior high school.

Parents need training in advocacy. They need to know how to help their children throughout their entire school career. They need to have a voice and a right to talk about what's needed for their children.

- In Santa Barbara County it seems easier for parents to be involved and supportive of their children when they are young. We encourage a networking support for parents, so they will not give up on supporting their children. (INAR/NACIE, Issue Session on Drop Out Prevention, 1990, p. 15)
- Many other district initiatives for parent involvement exist in addition to those described in this special section. An early leader was Houston with its sensible Fail-Safe program of innovative approaches to connecting schools with families, including strategies for organizing parent/teacher conferences in the secondary grades so that families could meet with many teachers on the same visit and programs to allow families to borrow school computers for home use to strengthen children's skills and adult literacy. More recently, the schools in Hamilton County, Ohio, and the local parent/teacher organization have coordinated efforts to build the capabilities of teachers, administrators, and parents to work and plan together at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. (Pipho, 1991, p. 347)

Parental support for Native into college was mentioned also.

- There are young adult members who would like to go back to school but they don't have the necessary funds, transportation, or child care. To be able to improve their intellectual status would give incentive for them to assist their children in attaining a higher education. Parents hold a significant role in the educational system. Their involvement in academic, social, and extracurricular activities helps their children prepare for higher education. They can assist their children in getting financial assistance and decide whether their child is ready for a junior college, vocational school, or university. (INAR Plains Hearing, Pratt, 1990, p. 35)

Conclusion

Apparently many American Indian/Alaska Native communities and schools in urban centers, on reservations, and in rural communities have attempted to draw Native parents into the educational process. Strategies which tend to yield success include:

- School and district wide commitment to the notion that schools should be the locus of advocacy for all children. This insures that Native parental *support* and *involvement* is a high priority. A commitment requires continually providing access to Native parents in the classroom and on committees and boards, thus enabling them to offer advise, as well as, set policy at the building and district level.
- Adoption of policies and procedures which clearly describe why and how the inclusion

of Native parents will occur, with recognition and appreciation for the traditional cultural orientation of parents.

- Regularly scheduled staff in-service which focuses on specifics about American Indian/Alaska Native cultural orientation, as well as strategies for successfully relating to Native parents.
- A variety of options for Native parents to receive additional education, including opportunities in the areas of child development.drug and alcohol prevention, literacy, parent-child support activities, and language and culture reinforcement.
- Documentation of a wide variety of creative outreach suggestions for staff.

Strategic Plans for States

In recent years a number of surveys, regional gatherings and documents have continued to emphasize that need for greater state responsiveness to American Indian/Alaska Native people. Some of the documents include:

The Education Commission of the States (ECS), *Overview of State Laws and Policies* (1980); the National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE) 16th Annual Report *Educating the American Indian/Alaska Native Family* (1989); the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, (AISES) *Our voices, Our Visions: American Indians Speak Out for Educational Excellence* (1990); and most recently St. Lawrence University, *Indian Education from the Tribal Perspective: A Survey of American Indian Tribal Leaders*. All of these reports describe the necessity for state responsibility in supporting and involving Native people in all aspects of the educational process:

- Many states and local school districts stress Indian parental and community input into the decision-making process for schools. In the State Department of Education in South Dakota, the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, for instance, has an Indian advisory board that includes people from the Indian community, parents and tribal leaders. This board meets with the state curriculum and instruction staff and advises them on specific Indian education concerns. Indian people also serve on the state textbook review committee, on the needs assessment development committee, and on the State Standards of Excellence for Indian Education Committee, thus providing input into decisions made by the Division of Curriculum and Instruction for the South Dakota Department of Education.

Oklahoma and South Dakota have state Indian advisory boards that work primarily with curriculum and instruction personnel to effect changes in Indian education throughout these states. The state of Minnesota has a state advisory task force on American Indian language and culture education. Minnesota Indian parents are also active in the formulation of policy and procedures relating to their 1977 legislated American Indian Language and Culture Education Act. (ECS, Antell, 1980, p. 17)

- State educational agencies (SEAs) with more than five Indian Education Act formula grantees should receive funding for a state Indian education office to assist in the monitoring of and technical assistance to formula grantees; to interact with other programs to assist in ensuring against supplanting state and other federal funds with Indian Education Act funds; to interface with state-administered programs, such as adult education and vocational education, to assure that Indians and Alaska Natives are included in the state plans; and to serve as educational resources to Indian and Alaska Native communities. (NACIE, 1989 p. 88)
- Before culturally based education can become a reality, federal and state legislators must set a harmonious tone for change by enacting supportive legislation. (AISES, 1990, p. 6)
- Education is without doubt the key to Indian self-determination and cultural survival. Without knowledgeable tribal members, Indian tribes will continue to be dependent upon others for expertise and advice in the several areas of tribal responsibility. It should be the policy of the federal government to enhance Indian control over educational programs designed to serve Indian people by promoting local tribal control and strongly encouraging state educational leadership to develop programs which improve the educational advantage of Indians and preserve their cultural identity. (Wells, 1991, p. 8)

States should be doing a great deal more to encourage the participation of Native parents. Some of the specific activities states could do include the following:

- Like Minnesota, states could mandate parent advisory committees for every district with a significant number of Native students. "A constant theme we heard was that Indian parents often do not have an opportunity to become involved in the public schools and in the education of their children. We therefore established Paren Advisory Committees modeled after what was required by the federal government. A year later we learned that school boards were not listening to the parents, so we empowered those advisory committees to develop resolutions of concurrence or non-concurrence, and that was passed in 1989 as an amendment to the original act." (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, DeCramer, 1990, p. 54)
- Offer incentive grants to local school districts to help promote exemplary outreach efforts to Native parents. The actual implementation should be left up to the Indian community as much as possible. If there is to be any state money involved, we can set some basic guidelines and still recognize the sovereignty of the people who are recipients of the funds. I am hesitant to tell the people of Minneapolis and St. Paul how to do it. I would rather listen to their proposals. We go into a stall when there is disagreement or when we don't have a big enough budget. But when we look at the lives of Indian youth, we find that when their parents get involved we see the graduation rate increase as well as the pride and self-esteem that come with empowerment, and it is so much better than what we have been doing. I think it is self-evident. (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, DeCramer, 1990, p. 57)
- Provide technical assistance to requesting communities which need help in either the parent *involvement* or parent *support* area.
- Develop and disseminate effective parent education materials. "The last thing I would like to talk about and very briefly—the Indian Parent Committee Manual—was cooperatively developed by the Minnesota State Department of Education, the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, the North Plains Evaluation and Resource Center, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The art work on the cover was developed in loose-leaf from so that it can be periodically updated. It is an excellent resource for working with parents and parent committees. If they have questions on any of the laws, on Special Education, or Head Start, whatever, there are chapters to address all of these subjects. This is available through our office." (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Hakala, 1990, p. 51)
- Monitor exemplary programs or support research efforts which capture successful strategies.
- Legislate statewide home-school advocate programs which include continual educational growth opportunities and career ladder options.
- Support the notion that schools should be the locus of advocacy for all children and families.

Several states are highlighted for their leadership in the growing parent participation movement in the Phi Delta Kappan, January (1991). Using the work of Joyce Epstein the state of Illinois has documented how important it is for state departments to foster meaningful parent participation programs in schools by providing both financial and technical assistance. (Epstein, 1987, p. 4-9)

Staff members with the Illinois program encouraged all schools applying for grants to take into account the five elements of Epstein's model of parent involvement:

- basic obligations of families, including health, safety, and a positive home environment;

- basic obligations of schools, including communication with parents regarding their child's programs and progress;

- parent involvement at school, including volunteer activities and support for sports, student performances, and other activities;

- parent involvement in learning activities at home, including supervising homework and helping children work on skills that will help them learn in the classroom; and

- parent involvement in governance, decision making, and advocacy, including participation in parent/teacher organizations and in various decision-making and advisory roles. (Epstein, 1987, p. 357)

- The Illinois experience with the awarding of sizeable, multi-year, competitive grants may prove helpful to other states. Through the use of grant-funded demonstration projects that design, implement, and evaluate combined approaches to school improvement and parent involvement, we have learned valuable lessons about altering the practices of the participating schools and those of other

schools that benefit from the experience at the demonstration sites.

First, we learned that multi-year grants are important. Most state grants are award for a single year, but it often takes longer than a year to see progress in improving urban schools and involving parents. With support that lasts longer, the schools are able to establish and stabilize their programs.

We also learned that it is important to consider multiple outcomes, not just scores on achievement tests. Improving scores on achievement tests takes longer than improving other measures of school success, such as attendance, discipline, report card grades, level of parent involvement, and so on.

The funded programs were highly successful. The grants energized the schools that received them and helped increase parent involvement over the course of the grant periods. Outside evaluators hired by the Illinois State Board of Education to determine whether the schools were meeting their stated goals confirmed that parent involvement affected student achievement and that many more parents had become involved with their children's education as a result of the schools' efforts. The evaluators interviewed people in 20 of the schools that received grants and collected quantitative and qualitative and that showed the 87% of the schools in the program accomplished more than 90% of their stated goals. this evidence that such low-cost strategies yield relatively high returns is very encouraging. (Chapman, 1991, p. 358)

Other state examples which are encouraging are documented in:

- Its Parents as Teachers program. Missouri's state department of education has been a leader in the development of programs to involve all families in the education of their children from birth to education of their children from birth to age 3. The state is poised to continue leading with Success Is Homemade, a new program that will extend family involvement from kindergarten through grad 12. From the outset, Missouri plans to evaluate school processes and the effects of new practices, making this promising program one to watch. (Epstein, 1991, p. 347)
- Other activities on the part of states that include Washington's requirements that competence in parent involvement be one of the "generic standards" for state certification of teachers and administrators. Were this activity to be undertaken in many states, more courses would be instituted at colleges and universities to prepare teachers and administrators to work more productively with parents as partners. (Epstein, 1991, p. 347)
- Zelma Solomon describes the development of California's policy on parent involvement. Her account is testimony to the long hours and hard work needed to move from a simple awareness of the importance of state-level policy to the framing of guidelines, the issuing of mandates, and the passage of state legislation requiring all districts and schools to act to develop their own policies and practices designed to involve families in their children's schooling.

California's policy is important because it recognizes the connections that link school curricula, family involvement, and student success. It is unique, as well, in that the state recognizes the importance of parent involvement at all grade levels and with all families and does not isolate those in categorical programs. Perhaps most important, California's policy is written to replace top-down dictates with "enabling" actions to help districts and schools understand, design, develop, and implement their own policies and programs. (Epstein, 1991, p. 346)

Believing that any school can be more successful if parents are productively involved in their children's education and any student can be more successful if schools link comprehensive parent involvement programs to curricula and to teaching and learning. The California state board adopted a policy on parental involvement which states:

Comprehensive programs of parent involvement require schools to involve parents at all grade levels and in a variety of roles. These programs should be designed to:

- help parents develop parenting skills and foster conditions at home that support learning;
- provide parents with the knowledge of techniques designed to assist children in learning at home;
- provide access to and coordination of community and support services for children and families;
- promote clear two-way communication between the school and the family as to the school programs and children's progress;
- involve parents, after appropriate training, in instructional and support roles at school; and

- support parents as decision makers and develop their leadership in governance, advisory, and advocacy roles.

In Conclusion, states should be exerting influence in the parent participation area. Yet while doing so, states must continue to honor the government to government relationships with tribes. Only in consultation with tribal and Native communities can long range success become a reality.

Strategic Plans for Federal Influence

"Local school and reservation-based efforts should be continued to encourage parental and community involvement in the education of American Indian children. The congressional mandate for parental involvement in Indian education programs must be maintained. Federal, state, and local education agencies must make a cohesive commitment to increasing this involvement to overcome all of the barriers that exist based on past history and current attitudes. Training for Indian parents and parent committee organizations should continue to focus on basic parental roles and responsibilities, coping with cultural bias and racism in schools, and strengthening home-school relations through positive communications and conflict resolution." (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Gipp, 1990, p. 13)

Certainly all of the recommendations offered in the previous section for states, could be replicated at the federal level. Specifically those recommendations include:

- Mandating parent advisory committees or policy boards at the local school district level.
- Enforcing the regulations to insure Native parental involvement. "In my thinking, there are enough laws to improve Indian education; the problem is to enforce the laws. When those employees, who are mandated to assist, help, and carry out the laws of the U.S. government, fail to carry out their assigned duties, then the administration needs to do something about it." (INAR Plains Hearing, McCormick, 1990, p. 22)

My concern is that regulations are not being followed. The school law register says that children will participate equally in the school; the involvement of parents is necessary; hearings on Impact Aid will be held; and, the school is responsible to discern the needs of the students. It is clear to me what the register lays down: parent committees decide how the spend the money. What is happening is that all funds are being put into a common fund and used as individual schools dictate. Impact Aid sometimes far exceed other funds. We need to uphold the school law register.

I've heard many comments today about elementary and secondary schools. With help from Indian parents and Indian personnel, I believe that some of these funds could be used for cultural classes, tutors, and counselors without relying on Title V funds. I don't know how long these will be in effect, but I imagine support will continue. We need to challenge school boards to take this information back and abide by school law. (INAR Plains Hearing, Burns, 1990, p. 38)

Strategies for ensuring that LEAS concentrate efforts to successfully meet the original intent of the Indian Education Act to utilize grant funds to develop the appropriate methods and activities to address the special educational and culturally-related academic needs of Indian and Alaska Native children and then integrate LEAs may become more effective at addressing Indian/Alaska Native student needs not as Indian education problems but as local eduction concerns that warrant unique and specialized approaches. (NACIE, 1989, p. 88)

Provisions of the Impact Aid law which require Indian policies and procedures to be in place in each school district and active consultation and involvement by Indian tribes and parents in the planning and development of programs for their children. There should be a resolution by the Congress indicating that the federal payments under the Impact Aid Program to districts counting students who reside on Indian lands are in lieu of and represent the tax payments of the Indian tribe, since the tribe made the payment many years ago with the ceding of lands. The school districts should never be able to think that Indians do not pay property taxes and that, consequently, LEAs do not have to be as responsive to them as they are to other taxpayers. (NACIE, 1989, p. 86)

- Offering incentive grants for exemplary outreach programs to Native communities. Target funds specifically for Native parental *support* projects.
- Providing technical assistance in both the parental *involvement* as well as parental *support* area. Federal legislation has been largely focused on Involvement (decision-making) responsibilities of school districts and Native parents. As research suggests, the parental *support* technical assistance will yield significant results. Much more needs to be done to rebuild effective Native parental *support*.

- Monitoring exemplary programs or supporting research which capture successful strategies and results in parent participation. "There is no one response to the many situations that limit the ability of Indian students to have a successful school experience form level to level or from one community to another. Clearly, few data exist, nor are enough Indians engaged in educational research that would provide some guidance to communities struggling to keep their children in school. Sharp declines in federal funding at all levels is a serious issue to be addressed. More serious is the lack of educational programs that are integrally linked to the Indian community and that work to maintain the linkage between student and community. Those institutions that will make a strong and positive impact are those which reinforce issues about and of importance to Indian tribes and communities." (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Eichhorn, 1990, p. 45)

"It seems logical that we, as Indian parents and Indian educators, are the best determiners of what successful or effective practices are and should be. Why not an Indian National Diffusion Network? Why not an Indian Program Effectiveness Panel? There are numerous qualified Indian educators to staff review panels and set-up qualifying review and selection processes. In the long run, that type of process could prove much more beneficial than the one that now exists." (INAR Plains Hearing, Brittan, 1990, p. 65)

Conclusion

Native Parental participation in the educational process, both as decision-makers (involvement) and as encouragers of individual students (support) has long been the critical ingredient missing in Native education. The research is clear; without parents student progress is severely limited.

Models exist which can be adapted widely in Native communities. There are many examples of intermittent success. The examples provide encouragement. They describe the need for transformational leadership from tribes and schools. Schools should be the locus of advocacy for all children and families. As such, schools should provide educational opportunities for both school staff, Native parents, and community members to continually grow and understand each others unique role in the advancement of Native student achievement.

And finally these models describe how commitment and creativity have overcome the dismal, social economic issues and conditions that confront all areas of Native education. "The Indian community must revise their own expectations of public education, looking to what their children deserve rather than accepting what schools have been willing to deliver. We have a right and responsibility for our children's future to expect that education be an enriching rather than demanding experience. We must stop thinking of success as reduced dropout rates and fewer suspensions and start thinking of success as high graduation rates and postsecondary enrollments. As a community, we have allowed schools to perform at their very minimum, and this must change." (INAR Great Lakes Hearing, Salinas, 1990, p. 26)

"The Indian child had a rich and colorful heritage, and I feel we have to instill in our children an insatiable desire to excel in the classroom as well as in life. The time has come for Indian people, as well as educators to exercise our strength--our children--for they are the heart of our people and they are our future." (INAR Plains Hearing, Soap, p. 26)

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Date Filmed
August 8, 1992