

**Study of the Native American and  
Alaska Native Children in School  
Program: FY 2011 and FY 2013 Cohorts**



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Alaska Native Children in  
School Program: FY 2011 and FY 2013  
Cohorts**

**June 2018**

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*Prepared for:*

U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development  
Policy and Program Studies Service

*Prepared by:*

Courtney Tanenbaum  
Susan Cole  
Stephanie Autumn  
Suzette Chavez  
Alexa Cinque  
Jayne Sowers

American Institutes for Research

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**U.S. Department of Education**

Betsy DeVos  
*Secretary*

**Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development**

Frank Brogan  
*Deputy Assistant Secretary Delegated Duties of Assistant Secretary*

**Policy and Program Studies Service**

Victoria Hammer  
*Acting Director*

June 2018

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**Content Contact:**

Andrew Abrams  
Phone: 202-401-1232  
[Andrew.abrams@ed.gov](mailto:Andrew.abrams@ed.gov)

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## Executive Summary

### Study Overview

The Native American and Alaska Native Children in School (NAM) discretionary grants program aims to reduce the persistent achievement gaps between Native American and Alaska Native (NA/AN) youth and their peers on measures of reading and English language arts (ELA) (NCES 2015) and on measures of college-readiness in reading (ACT 2017). One reason for these achievement gaps is the linguistic needs of many NA/AN students. NA/AN students present a diversity of language profiles that can generally be described as falling under two groups: (1) students whose first language is an NA/AN language and who are learning English as a second language (ESL), and (2) students whose parents or guardians and/or grandparents learned English as a second language but did not fully acquire standard English (Holbrook 2011). NAM funds activities designed to address the needs of NA/AN English learner (EL) students falling under either of these groups to help close reading and ELA achievement gaps and promote their overall academic achievement. These activities include instructional supports and resources for English language development (ELD) and instructional experiences intended to help preserve and revitalize NA/AN languages and cultures.

For NAM-funded projects, the integration of NA/AN languages and cultural instruction into the curriculum, including culturally responsive strategies, is intended to restore values and lifeways historically excluded from the formal education of NA/AN students, while also supporting their ELD. Prior decades of U.S. government policy to suppress NA/AN language use in schools had devastating results for NA/AN students and continuing negative effects on parent and community engagement (Deyhle and Swisher 1997; Mackety and Linder-VanBerschoot 2008; Reyhner 1992). Research suggests that embracing NA/AN languages and cultures in schools may help improve NA/AN students' engagement in learning (Brayboy and Castagno 2009), increase their sense of cultural pride and self-worth (Holm and Holm 1995), and improve their reading and metalinguistic skills (Bacon, Kidd, and Seaberg 1982; Hirata-Edds 2011). It also may create stronger connections between the school and parents, families, and the tribal communities by inviting their involvement and consultation in the learning environment (Brayboy and Castagno 2009; Siekmann et al. 2017).

The NAM program is authorized under Title III of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* of 2015, and is administered by the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). NAM awards five-year grants to multiple types of grantees. The FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees, which are the focus of this study, included tribal education authorities, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools, a tribal college, public school districts, individual schools (including charter schools), and an association of public school districts. The five-year awards for the FY 2011 and FY 2013 NAM-funded projects ranged from approximately \$1 million to \$1.5 million per award.

In addition to the required focus on English language proficiency (ELP), the NAM program identified priority areas for funded projects that included NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization, postsecondary preparation and success, parent and family engagement, early childhood development, data-based decision-making, and civic learning and engagement. The FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees were not required to address all of these priority areas in the design of their projects but were encouraged to employ an array of activities and strategies in support of them. These included ELD instruction, NA/AN languages and cultural instruction, teacher professional development, curriculum development, enhanced data use to guide decision making, and use of new technologies. This

implementation study sought to examine the primary focus areas of NAM grantees' projects with respect to accomplishing key goals and objectives; the full range of activities, including material resources and services, that grants funded to support NAM program priority areas; the types and roles of partners in supporting NAM-funded activities; how grantees measured progress and outcomes; and grantees' perceptions of the benefits, challenges, and lessons learned associated with planning and implementing grant-funded activities.

The study consisted of in-depth case studies of 19 grantee program sites, including eight FY 2011 grant program sites and 11 FY 2013 grant program sites (this 11 included two sites that each received a grant in both FY 2011 and FY 2013, and one that received two different grants in FY 2013).

## Key Findings

Key findings from this study include the following:

- Ninety-five percent of grantees identified improving students' ELP as a primary focus area of their grants, followed by revitalizing NA/AN languages and cultures (68 percent).
- Grantees most commonly used NAM funds for instructional personnel salaries (95 percent) and instructional materials or services (95 percent); grantees also used funds for professional development for teachers (68 percent), curriculum development (68 percent), and technology resources (63 percent).
- All of the grantees reported working with at least one partner particularly to gain professional or cultural expertise to support or provide funded activities; the most common type of partners across all grantees were tribes, followed by nontribal colleges and universities and community-based organizations.
- Grantees' most frequently reported data to monitor progress were state ELP assessment results (74 percent), state ELA assessment results (58 percent), and English benchmark and progress monitoring assessment results (53 percent). Grantees reported Native language proficiency data less commonly (32 percent).
- Grantees' most commonly reported benefits were gains in revitalization of NA/AN languages and cultures (74 percent) and increases in students' ELP (63 percent).
- Grantees' most frequently reported challenges were limited staff capacity (68 percent), low parent and family engagement (63 percent), and lack of adequate assessment data, including longitudinal data to assess progress (63 percent).

## Study Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to enable policymakers and educators to better understand how NAM grantees used their funds to support activities, including material resources and services to address the unique needs of NA/AN EL students. The data collected for this study provide insight into how the FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees designed and implemented their projects to meet local needs, including what goals and objectives they identified as the primary focus areas and the full range of activities funded with the grant. The findings from the study deepen understanding of grant implementation,

including grantees' reported benefits, challenges, and lessons learned. The study focused on five main study questions:

1. How do NAM grantees use NAM funding to support activities intended to increase NA/AN EL student academic achievement?
2. How do grantees work with partners to provide funded services?
3. How do grantees measure progress and outcomes of funded services?
4. What benefits do grantees perceive as resulting from the grant?
5. What challenges do grantees experience in implementing grant-funded activities?

## **Methodology and Study Limitations**

To answer these study questions, the study team conducted case studies of 19 grantee program sites that were located across 10 states (Alaska, Arizona, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Washington, and Wisconsin). Many of the program sites were on tribal reservations, and sites varied in level of urbanicity, with some located in city suburbs, and many located in notably remote settings, including six in Alaska. According to grant applications, the students being served by these NAM program sites represented at least 19 different tribal nations and spanned the education continuum. Some programs served students from multiple tribal communities whereas others primarily served students from one tribal community. Some grantees targeted young children; others, elementary, middle, or high school students; still others, postsecondary learners or a combination of age and grade bands.

Because sovereign tribal nations have legal jurisdiction over all activities, including research activities that occur within their territories (NCAI Policy Research Center and MSU Center for Native Health Partnerships 2012), the study team identified and followed all tribal research and Institutional Review Board (IRB) regulations when engaging in data collection activities with grant stakeholders who were members of NA/AN tribes. Conducting research that is culturally appropriate and responsive and that fully engaged research participants was important to ensure the quality of the data (e.g., Czaykowska-Higgins 2009; Moreno-Black and Homchampa 2008; Richmond, Peterson, and Betts 2008).

The case studies entailed the review of the FY 2011 and FY 2013 grant applications, semistructured telephone interviews with grant coordinators, and multiday site visits during which the study team conducted interviews and focus groups with staff involved in implementing NAM. The study team conducted analyses to examine the grant-funded activities and implementation experiences across all grantees. The study team also explored differences and similarities in implementation among two subgroups of grantees: FY 2011 grantees (eight sites) and FY 2013 grantees (11 sites); and "tribal and BIE grantees" (eight sites) and "public school system grantees" (11 sites). The subgroup of FY 2011 grantees included the program sites that had concluded grant activities at the time of data collection and were providing retrospective data on implementation. The FY 2013 subgroup included program sites that were still implementing grant-funded activities at the time of data collection. The tribal and BIE subgroup included program sites in which the grantee was a tribal education authority, tribal college, or BIE school. The public school system subgroup included program sites in which the grantee was a public school or a public charter school, public school district, or regional education association serving public school districts.

Readers should note some limits to the generalizability of the study to all grantees because the study sample did not fully reflect the total population of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grant awards. Three FY 2011 grantees did not participate in data collection because at the time of the study, their grants had ended, and the leadership and staff with deep knowledge of grant activities were not available to participate in data collection activities. Although the study team recognizes and honors the existence of the close to 600 different state and federally recognized tribes and more than 200 NA/AN languages across the United States, this report does not generally include references to specific tribes and languages when presenting examples of grant activities or describing grantees' experiences. This step was taken to respect and ensure the confidentiality of the study sites and interview respondents. Finally, because the study questions asked about implementation of the grants rather than program effects, the study team did not collect or report data on student achievement scores or other quantitative outcomes, nor did it make inferences about the impact of the program on such outcomes.

## Summary of Findings

The report organizes findings around the NAM grantees' priority areas for funding, to examine which areas were of primary focus for the grantees' local projects, the types of activities that were funded, the roles of grant partners, and perceived benefits and challenges. It is important to note, however, that grantees described their funded activities and services as interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

### ***Grantee Priorities and NAM-Funded Activities***

**Ninety-five percent of all grantees identified improving students' ELP as a primary focus area of their grants, followed by NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization (68 percent).**

All NAM programs must include a focus on ELD to support NA/AN ELs and their overall academic achievement. Grantees may also choose whether to address competitive or invitational priorities, especially, NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization. The 19 grantees in this study described their local projects as funding activities to support a number of the NAM program priority areas, but frequently emphasized that, among these areas, some were a greater focus for funding because of the specific needs of their students and the key goals they had for their projects. When asked whether any of their NAM project goals were more of a central focus than others, nearly all grantees identified improving NA/AN ELs' ELP as among their primary focus areas. In addition, close to two-thirds of grantees reported NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization and postsecondary preparation and success as key focus areas for their local projects. More than half reported that parent and family engagement was a primary focus. For the most part, tribal and BIE grantees and public school system grantees were similar in their primary focus areas; however, a smaller proportion of tribal and BIE grantees (25 percent) than public school system grantees (64 percent) indicated that early childhood development was a primary objective.

**Grantees most commonly used NAM funds for instructional personnel salaries (95 percent) and instructional materials or services (95 percent); grantees also used funds for professional development for teachers (68 percent), curriculum development (68 percent), and technology resources (63 percent).**

Grantees funded a broad array of activities under NAM for different but often interrelated purposes. Among the 18 grantees in both public and tribal and BIE school systems using NAM funds for

instructional personnel of any type, 61 percent (11) reported partially or fully supporting the positions of instructional personnel that worked directly with students to improve their ELP. The three main types of instructional personnel positions included classroom ELA or EL teachers, tutors who provided afterschool support or rotated among classrooms during the school day to provide small-group or one-on-one instruction, and school-based literacy specialists and coordinators.

Among the 18 grantees with NAM-funded instructional materials or services, 78 percent (14) reported that at least some of these resources were intended to support ELD instruction. The types of materials these grantees purchased ranged from supplemental materials, such as leveled readers, classroom libraries, and manipulatives for the classroom meant to enrich primary instruction, to core content curriculum programs and targeted reading intervention programs. Grant-funded services meant to support students' ELD included extended-day instruction, out-of-school programming, and place-based literacy learning experiences that were rooted in the unique history, environment, and culture of students' communities. Both tribal and BIE grantees and public school system grantees emphasized that they purchased these materials and provided these services with an eye toward creating culturally responsive English language learning experiences for students. For example, to help provide content instruction designed for the unique needs of NA/AN ELs, grantees described purchasing books that featured Native characters and settings or were written or illustrated by Native authors. They also described developing ELD lesson activities that centered on Native traditions, heritage, or dress to foster student engagement.

Among the 13 grantees using NAM funds to develop new curriculum or instructional materials, 62 percent (eight) reported developing these resources specifically for ELD instruction. Grantee sites varied in the processes they underwent to develop the curriculum and what content they selected, but at the root of grantees' development efforts was the goal to create culturally responsive materials to support content instruction for NA/AN ELs. They used the materials to increase students' proficiency in grammar, reading, writing, interpretation, and communication in English. In addition, 67 percent (eight) of the 12 grantees with NAM-funded technology indicated that the technology resources they bought were intended to support ELD programming at the school. These resources included blended learning literacy programs, reading intervention programs, and technology equipment to support literacy instruction like computers and tablets.

Thirteen of the 19 grantees reported funding professional development with NAM. Eighty-five percent (11) of these grantees indicated that at least some of the funded professional development focused on improving teachers' ELD instruction for NA/AN ELs. The professional development typically focused on developing teachers' knowledge of the fundamentals of English language and literacy, culturally responsive instructional strategies for teaching English literacy or data use to identify students' English language learning needs and target instruction accordingly (see Exhibit ES-1). While most of these 11 grantees described delivering professional development through professional learning communities (PLCs) and training workshops, nearly half of these 11 also used NAM funds to support the position of a school-based literacy coach to provide job-embedded support and mentorship to teachers.

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**Exhibit ES-1. One grantee's use of NAM funds to provide professional development to support teachers' instruction of NA/AN ELs**

One program site provided professional development on an instructional strategy called “Flocabulary” to develop their EL students’ English vocabulary and teach standards-based content. Students wrote and performed their own educational raps. A teacher identified as having skills with lyric-writing and integrating music into instruction led the training. One teacher who attended the training described the strategy: *“We were working with [my colleague’s] class on developing some sort of a small rap based around a content area.... [We] decided to choose an historical figure. The training showed us how we can get students from point A, just knowing a little bit about a person, to point B, where they're able to research, understand, and apply that understanding in a song form. When we performed that song, our kids had 10 to 12, maybe even 15 facts that they could name on the spot about Crazy Horse, because we had [rehearsed] so many times.”*

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Grantees varied in their approaches to incorporating Native languages and cultural instruction into their school activities and curriculum. Some grantees provided instruction as part of their bilingual or dual-language immersion programs; others had distinct Native languages and cultural courses for students to take, while others had NA/AN languages and cultural instructors that rotated into general education classrooms during the day to deliver lessons or provide instruction during afterschool programming.

Many grantees reported using NAM to fund the positions of personnel to provide NA/AN languages and cultural instruction, and for materials, resources, and services to enhance students’ NA/AN languages and cultural learning experiences. Among the 18 grantees using NAM funds for instructional personnel of any kind, 61 percent (11) were partially or fully supporting personnel responsible for delivering NA/AN languages and cultural instruction. In addition, 72 percent (13) of the 18 grantees purchasing materials or providing instructional services reported buying literature in the Native languages or resources to support NA/AN vocabulary development. Some of these resources included tools for teaching the Cherokee “Syllabary” or alphabet/symbols, ceremonial clothes and accessories to facilitate hands-on learning, and out-of-school language and cultural events or extended-day programming focused on NA/AN language development and cultural preservation and revitalization (see Exhibit ES-2). Some grantees reported using NAM funds to develop their own NA/AN languages and cultural curriculum or instructional materials because of the limited availability of commercial materials specific to their local heritage.

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**Exhibit ES-2. One grantee's approach to supporting NA/AN language and cultural revitalization through out-of-school experiences**

One grantee used NAM funds coupled with other funding sources to support a Native languages and cultural immersion camp designed and implemented with the support of tribal members in the community. According to the grant coordinator, these were three-day events scheduled during breaks in the academic year. The language immersion teachers who were fluent Native language speakers largely ran the camps, but elders in the tribal community were also involved. During the camps, the only spoken language was the Native language. The teachers, students, and elders shared their meals together, and traditional activities, such as fishing and Native games, made up a large portion of the days.

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Many grantees also used NAM funds for professional development, specifically to strengthen the practices of instructors teaching students the Native languages and cultures. Among the 13 grantees using NAM funds for any type of professional development, 77 percent (10) reported supporting



professional development for NA/AN language instructors. Because students typically came to school with limited knowledge and fluency in the Native language of their community, professional development often focused on methods for effectively teaching Native languages as a second language. Many teachers, including those who were members of the local tribal community, also described having an incomplete knowledge of the language and tribal heritage. To fill gaps in knowledge, many sites organized professional development intended to deepen instructors' foundational knowledge of the Native language, including their understanding of the structure of the language, oral and conversational fluency, and familiarity with cultural traditions and the tribal heritage. Most frequently, grantees relied on school-based Native language specialists and external consultants with expertise in linguistics on how to support Native language learning to provide the professional development. Half (five) of these grantees also reported that the tribal community and/or elders played a key role in helping deepen NA/AN language teachers' cultural knowledge and oral fluency.

Grantees also funded activities designed to promote students' preparation and likelihood of success in postsecondary pathways. Nearly two-thirds (12) of the grantees used at least some NAM funds to develop or enhance programs or strategies to improve the likelihood of students' success in postsecondary pathways. These activities included dropout prevention and credit recovery programs, visits to college campuses, and a college-based learning center for one grantee.

Most grantees reported that they used at least some of their grant funds to promote parent and family engagement, such as cultural events that facilitated parent and family learning alongside their children, home visits to build stronger connections between the school and the community, or hiring or inviting elders in the community into the school to provide NA/AN languages and cultural instruction. Nine grantees reported a focus on early childhood development, describing funded activities such as developing educational and early literacy resources for parents and families and home visits to support young children's school readiness.

### ***Grant Partners and Their Roles***

To build local capacity, NAM encouraged, but did not require, applicants to collaborate with partnering organizations to support or implement grant activities.

**All of the grantees reported working with at least one partner particularly to gain professional or cultural expertise to support or provide funded activities; the most common types of partner across all grantees were tribes, followed by nontribal colleges and universities and community-based organizations.**

Although all 19 grantees shared many of the same types of partners to support grant implementation, there were a few differences in how frequently certain types of partners were engaged based on grantee type. Public school system grantees more frequently reported developing partnerships with tribes to help ensure that grant activities reflected and honored tribal values and cultural knowledge. For example, all 11 of the public school system grantees reported partnering with tribes, whereas among the eight tribal and BIE grantees, a smaller number (two BIE schools and a tribal college) reported partnering with the local tribe to support grant implementation. Public school system grantees also more commonly worked with partners to support NA/AN languages and cultural instruction, out-of-school learning experiences, and parent and family events to help promote the preservation and revitalization of the languages and cultures.

On the other hand, tribal and BIE grantees more frequently reported partnering with the local public school district to seek professional knowledge, including professional development services and assistance with assessments. Half of the eight tribal and BIE grantees partnered with school districts compared with one of the 11 public school system grantees.

### ***Measures and Uses of Data***

**Grantees' most frequently reported data to monitor progress were state ELP assessment results (74 percent), state ELA assessment results (58 percent), and English benchmark and progress monitoring assessment results (53 percent). Grantees reported Native language proficiency data less commonly (32 percent).**

The NAM program required grantees to collect and report student ELP assessment data. The most common measure grantees reported using for their internal monitoring of grant progress was the state ELP assessment. Other common measures included state ELA assessments, and, state, district, or classroom English benchmark and progress monitoring assessments including those embedded in commercial reading programs. Just six grantees (32 percent of grantees) collected Native language oral proficiency assessment data. Most grantees indicated that they did not use such data at least partly because of the paucity of formal assessments for indigenous language learning. When available, Native language assessment data often complemented ELP assessment data to allow grantees to evaluate and inform cross-curriculum development and programming. Some grantees also reviewed student high school graduation rates, school attendance rates, and postsecondary enrollment rates to determine the extent to which the NAM-funded activities seemed to be helping them achieve their goals for the grant.

### ***Benefits, Challenges, and Lessons Learned***

**Grantees' most commonly reported benefits were gains in revitalization of NA/AN languages and cultures (74 percent) and students' ELP (63 percent).**

The majority of the grantees indicated that their NAM-funded activities had resulted in perceived changes in multiple areas. Grantees most commonly reported the revitalization of NA/AN languages and cultures as a benefit resulting from their NAM grants, and this was especially the case among tribal and BIE grantees. Respondents described seeing an increase in the presence and engagement of elders in the school, use of NA/AN language among school staff and students, and sense of pride among students in their Native identities and heritage. While nearly two-thirds of all grantees (12) also reported observing gains in students' ELP test results, a greater proportion of tribal and BIE grantees highlighted this outcome as a benefit than public school system grantees. Public school system grantees more commonly reported benefits such as improved teacher practice, capacity to meet the needs of NA/AN ELs, and acquisition of high-quality instructional materials.

**Grantees' most frequently reported challenges were limited staff capacity (68 percent), low parent and family engagement (63 percent), and lack of adequate assessment data, including longitudinal data to assess progress (63 percent).**

In addition to reporting on the benefits of the grant, all grantees described experiencing at least some grant implementation challenges. Across the range of reported challenges, three were most common. Sixty-eight percent of the grantees reported challenges related to the capacity of their staff to provide the instruction and learning experiences NA/AN ELs needed. Grantees also commonly indicated that

they experienced challenges in using assessment data as valid measures for monitoring progress, and in their efforts to gain the broad and consistent engagement of parents and families (63 percent each).

The majority of grantees reported learning important lessons in the process of trying to overcome these key challenges. One of the key lessons learned was finding alternate measures for monitoring and demonstrating student progress, such as classroom-based assessments and assessments embedded in bilingual or English literacy programs, in the absence of more traditional measures such as standardized student achievement test data (for example, when state tests changed during the grant years, making scores difficult to compare from year to year, or when formal Native language assessments were not available). Other lessons learned included the importance of obtaining stakeholder buy-in and parent, family, and tribal community involvement early in the planning and implementation of grant activities to improve engagement after the grant was awarded, and providing teachers with professional development focused on meeting the unique needs of NA/AN EL students.

NAM grants were awarded to FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees in the hope that at least some of the funded activities and services would be sustained through capacity-building and strengthening of the sites' infrastructure over the course of the grant period. Although grantees shared common concerns about sustaining the entirety of their grant-funded efforts past the funding period, many indicated a commitment to sustaining the activities and resources they perceived as most valuable. Among the FY 2011 grantees, many of whose grants had ended at the time of data collection, close to one-quarter reported they had sustained at least some of their program-funded services. The majority of the FY 2013 grantees reported specific plans to draw on other funding sources to maintain certain elements of their projects. Most commonly, grantees reported on the importance of sustaining services in the areas of ELD instruction, professional development for teachers, and NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the findings from this study indicate that the majority of FY 2011 and FY 2013 NAM grantees, including both tribal and BIE grantees and public school system grantees, focused their grant funds on resources — including personnel, materials, or services — intended to improve students' ELP and to support the revitalization of NA/AN languages and cultures. At the same time, the majority of the grantees reported that additional supports could help further their efforts. In particular, grantees indicated more supports for teacher professional development specifically tailored toward deepening teachers' understanding of how best to meet the unique instructional needs of NA/AN ELs were needed. Slightly less than half indicated that they could benefit from more information about the kinds of technical assistance supports available to them as grantees. Grantees located in remote settings also suggested that workshops or guidance specific to rural sites would be beneficial. Nevertheless, all grantees perceived that the grant provided specific benefits such as gains in revitalization of NA/AN languages and cultures within the school and broader community and increases in students' ELP. The experiences and lessons learned described by respondents in this study offer a potential pathway for improving the quality of the NAM program and expanding academic opportunities for NA/AN students.



## Chapter I. Introduction

The Native American and Alaska Native Children in School (NAM) discretionary grants program aims to reduce the persistent achievement gap between Native American and Alaska Native (NA/AN) youth and their peers on measures of reading and English language arts (ELA),<sup>1</sup> and on measures of college readiness in reading (ACT 2017). One reason for these achievement gaps is the linguistic needs of many NA/AN students. The NA/AN population of students is highly diverse with respect to languages and cultures and “bring with them unique experiences and linguistic backgrounds that impact both the way they engage with the world and the way that their academic language develops” (WIDA 2014, p. 1). NA/AN students present a diversity of language profiles that can generally be described as falling under two groups: (1) students whose first language is a NA/AN language and who are learning English as a second language, and (2) students whose parents or guardians and/or grandparents learned English as a second language but did not fully acquire standard English (Holbrook 2011). The majority of NA/AN English learners (ELs) fall under the second group. According to the U.S. Census, while in 2011 just over 5 percent of all NA/ANs ages 5–17 spoke one of the hundreds of Native North American languages at home, over 87 percent spoke English at home (Siebens and Julian 2011). For young children growing up in homes where a non-standard form of English is spoken, the complexities and diversity of their language backgrounds “can be misunderstood and mistakenly undervalued” (WIDA 2014, p. 5). Regardless of which environment they come from, NAM considers many of these students ELs. As defined by statute, they come from “an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact” on their levels of English language proficiency (ELP); and their difficulties “in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English are sufficient to deny them the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English” (*ESEA Section 8101(20)*).

To help close reading and ELA achievement gaps and support NA/AN EL students’ overall academic achievement, NAM funds a variety of entities to implement instructional supports and resources for the English language development (ELD) of NA/AN ELs, as well as instruction that promotes the preservation and revitalization of NA/AN languages and cultures.

The program is authorized under Title III<sup>2</sup> of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* of 1965, as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* of 2015 (*ESEA*). Although the cohorts of grantees included in this study were funded under the prior authorization of *ESEA*, the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* of 2001, the NAM program was not substantially changed from *NCLB* to *ESSA*. NAM is administered by the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). The *ESEA* requires ELs to receive ELD programming and services to ensure that they gain the English proficiency they need to meet challenging state academic-content and student academic-achievement standards in the core academic subjects (*ESEA Section 3115*). A variety of language instructional approaches and models are used to support ELs. Generally, they include ELD instruction through English as a second language (ESL) instruction, content instruction designed for ELs, or instruction using students’ NA/AN language(s), whether that language is the language spoken in the home or not.

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<sup>1</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Education Progress, 2015, <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/reading/>

<sup>2</sup> 20 U.S.C. 6822. Although this program is authorized under Title III, it is distinct from the Title III State Formula Grant Program (*ESEA Secs. 3111–3141*; 20 U.S.C. 6821–6871), administered by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE).

In the context of the NAM-funded sites in this study, the primary approaches used for ELD included content instruction tailored for ELs. Tailored instruction was necessary because sites were primarily serving ELs growing up in homes where standard English was not spoken or other environmental factors affected their ELD. NA/AN languages instruction was typically designed to develop students' proficiency in the NA/AN languages, help preserve and revitalize the languages and cultures of the tribes, and build students' sense of belonging and engagement in school. However, ELD and NA/AN languages and cultural instructional approaches were not always mutually exclusive; NA/AN languages were often used to support NA/AN ELs' reading and ELA skills and overall academic achievement. NA/AN languages instruction, whether provided distinct from or in coordination with ELD instruction, included the teaching of any language that was part of students' NA/AN heritage. Instruction included a focus on reading, writing, or oral proficiency. NA/AN cultural instruction was typically interwoven into NA/AN languages instruction, and the cultural and historical context of the local NA/AN tribal nation(s) were sometimes integrated into core subject, language, or other instruction to create culturally responsive learning experiences.

According to research, the history of NA/AN education in the United States is likely one of the reasons for the gaps in performance that exist. Prior decades of U.S. government policies to suppress NA/AN language use had devastating results for NA/AN students and continuing negative effects on parent and community engagement (Deyhle and Swisher 1997; Mackety and Linder-VanBerschot 2008; Reyhner 1992). Starting between 1881 and 1892 and continuing throughout the 20th century, NA/AN children were removed from their culture and placed in federal "Indian schools." These boarding schools suppressed the use of NA/AN languages and the practice of NA/AN religions. This education model not only dishonored tribal languages, culture, and heritage but also contrasted sharply with the traditional approaches to education and development practiced by each Native Nation. The perspectives and goals, including the desired outcomes of teaching and instruction that shaped the broader U.S. school system, challenged the meaningful involvement and engagement of Native young people and communities (Juneau 2001). Prior to the late 19th century, education in the NA/AN Nations was embedded in the philosophies, languages, cultures, values, and lifeways of each Native Nation, leading to the continuous transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next; from elders to the young, from men to boys, and from women to girls, helping to ensure the sustainability of Native peoples. It entailed comprehensive social, emotional, and educational pedagogies to foster the healthy development of their children into adulthood.

Although the residential boarding school system has been reformed and there have been stronger efforts across the nation's schools to promote diversity and inclusion in instructional programming, NA/AN youth still have very few opportunities to learn about themselves (Treuer 2012). A priority of the NAM program is to help restore the culture, involvement, and engagement of Native communities in their children's education, while also ensuring that NA/AN ELs gain the English proficiency skills they need for overall academic success. For NAM-funded projects, the integration of NA/AN languages and cultural instruction into the curriculum, including culturally responsive schooling, is intended to restore values and lifeways historically excluded from the formal education of NA/AN students.

## **NAM Program Description**

All NAM programs must include a focus on ELD to support NA/AN ELs and their overall academic achievement. Grantees may also choose whether to address competitive or invitational priorities, especially, NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization. For the FY 2011 and FY 2013 grant competitions, the NAM program placed priorities on projects that focused on one or more of the following: revitalizing

NA/AN languages and cultures, improving students' postsecondary preparation and success, promoting parent and family engagement, early childhood development, data-based decision making, and civic learning and engagement.<sup>3</sup> Although prospective grantees were not required to address all of these priority areas in the design of their projects, they were encouraged to employ an array of activities and strategies in support of them. These included language instruction, teacher professional development, curriculum development, enhanced data use to guide decision making, and use of new technologies. Their projects could focus their funded activities on supporting children and students at the preschool, elementary, secondary, or postsecondary levels or combinations of these levels.

NAM provides five-year grants to multiple types of grantees. The sample for this study included tribal education authorities, federally operated BIE schools, public school districts, individual public schools, an association of public school districts, and a tribal college. The five-year award for FY 2011 and FY 2013 NAM-funded projects ranged from approximately \$1 million to \$1.5 million. Under the provisions and regulations under which NAM grantees operate, an entity that receives a NAM grant generally cannot also receive, in the same years as the grant performance period, a subgrant under the Title III State Formula Grant program. NAM grantees that are eligible for other federal grants, however, can still receive such grants even if they have a NAM grant award.<sup>4</sup>

## Context of NA/AN Education

NA/AN students, as identified by school records, make up about 1 percent of students in elementary and secondary schools nationally (Ninneman, Deaton, and Francis-Begay 2017). The education of NA/AN students, including NA/AN EL education, takes place in a variety of contexts and types of schools. The most recent *National Indian Education Study* (Ninneman, Deaton, and Francis-Begay 2017) identifies three mutually exclusive categories of schools: (1) low-density public schools (where fewer than 25 percent of all students in the school are NA/AN), (2) high-density public schools (where 25 percent or more of all students in the school are NA/AN), and (3) BIE schools. More than half of NA/AN students attend low-density schools, with about one-third attending high-density schools, and less than 10 percent attending BIE schools (Ninneman, Deaton, and Francis-Begay 2017).

The experiences of students in these different school contexts may vary more or less significantly, based on the extent to which culturally responsive teaching and learning strategies are in place and the extent to which the broader community, including parents and families, are engaged (Ninneman, Deaton, and Francis-Begay 2017). For example, BIE schools' mission is to provide "high quality education opportunities from early childhood through life in accordance with a tribe's needs for cultural and economic well-being." Further, "the BIE is to manifest consideration of the whole person by taking into account the spiritual, mental, physical, and cultural aspects of the individual within his or her family and tribal or village context."<sup>5</sup> Although public schools do not share this same specific mission, by virtue of serving

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<sup>3</sup> The focus of this study is on grantees' reported "funding priorities" within the full range of available NAM program competitive and invitational priority options under which entities can apply for a grant. (See Appendix A for a full description of the terminology used throughout the report.) Also, it is important to note there are two priorities—data-based decision-making and civic learning and engagement-- that are not reported on separately from other priorities in the findings, as grantees typically subsumed activities relating to these areas under other priorities.

<sup>4</sup> An exception is a district that receives funds from BIE (e.g., Johnson-O'Malley funds), and has public schools that serve a predominantly, but not exclusively, NA/AN EL population. Such a district could potentially have all of their schools receive both a NAM grant and a Title III grant; in such a case, however, the district would be required to give up that portion of a Title III formula subgrant proportionate to the percentage of their total EL student population being served under the NAM grant.

<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Indian Education, "Mission," 2018, <https://bie.edu/index.htm>

significant numbers of NA/AN students, or based on efforts to improve the outcomes of certain subgroups of students including NA/AN students, they may integrate a focus on cultural relevance into the curriculum. According to the *National Indian Education Study* (Ninneman, Deaton, and Francis-Begay 2017), teachers in BIE schools reported integrating NA/AN topics into their reading and mathematics lessons more frequently compared with teachers in high-density schools and low-density schools; however, teachers in high-density schools more frequently reported doing so than teachers in low-density schools. Administrators in both BIE schools and high-density schools, moreover, more commonly reported that NA/AN community members visited the school than administrators of low-density schools. In terms of eighth-grade reading and mathematics outcomes, however, students in BIE schools underperformed NA/AN students in public schools, including those in both high-density and low-density schools (Ninneman, Deaton, and Francis-Begay 2017).

## Purpose of This Study

This study of the NAM Program is intended to serve multiple audiences. The study's findings reveal how grantees planned and implemented grant-funded activities and the partnerships they established to provide and gain support for grant-funded activities in key priority areas. Specifically, this study provides insights to support the (1) construction of new grant solicitation content and policies to enhance NAM-funded activities; (2) identification of additional Department supports, technical assistance, and resources for NAM grantees to enrich the grant planning, implementation, data collection, and sustainability activities; and (3) availability of information and lessons learned by past NAM grantees for future grantees on potentially promising strategies. These strategies have been employed to promote the overall academic success of NA/AN students who often enter school with both English language learning needs and limited knowledge and fluency in their NA/AN languages and cultural heritage. The study also explores grantees' capacity to sustain NAM-funded activities beyond the duration of the funding period. Because of the study's focus on understanding grant program implementation rather than outcomes, student and school performance data were not examined. In addition, the study was designed to examine how implementation was actually carried out from a programmatic rather than monitoring or compliance-based perspective.

## Study Design

For purposes of understanding the findings presented in this report, it is important to establish certain basic definitions of terms and concepts used in the discussion of the findings.

### Definitions

The NAM program priority areas and other important terms referenced in this report are listed below and defined by the program as follows:

- **English language proficiency** — mastery of the English used in classroom lessons, books, tests, and assignments across academic subject areas (i.e., *English literacy*), which is essential to student success in school.
- **Early childhood development** — programs or services for children 0–4 years of age.
- **Parent and family engagement** — parent and family involvement in students' education that is enhanced through NAM-funded activities and may include strategies such as outreach; regularly



scheduled conferences with teachers; events for students, families, and the broader community; volunteer opportunities for parents and family members to be involved in school activities; and workshops or classes for parent and family members.

- **NA/AN EL** — To determine whether an NA/AN student is an EL, the student must meet the criteria outlined in the definition of an EL in *Section 8101(20)* of the *ESEA*.<sup>6</sup> As used in this report, in addition to other requirements, Native American and Alaska Native students can be considered ELs if their first language is English (or if English is a second language), provided they come from an environment in which a language other than English has had a significant impact on their level of proficiency in the English used in classroom instruction (“academic English”).
- **Native language instruction** — instruction in any language that is part of students’ NA/AN heritage (may or may not be languages spoken in the students’ homes); instruction might occur during or after school or might be available to students through digital resources and might include a focus on reading, written, or oral proficiency. Language instruction might also entail **Native culture instruction**, or the integration of the cultural and historical context of the local NA/AN tribal nation(s) into subject, language, or other instruction.
- **Preparation for postsecondary success** — instruction or activities intended to increase the academic preparation of students such that they are sufficiently prepared for and enroll in college or other postsecondary education and training.

The NAM program supports projects that use grant funds to implement an array of strategies and activities, including resources and services, to support these priority areas. These include curriculum development, data use to support data-driven decision making, and professional development to enhance instruction (see Exhibit 1).

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<sup>6</sup> (20) ENGLISH LEARNER. — The term “English learner,” when used with respect to an individual, means an individual — (A) who is aged 3 through 21; (B) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school; (C)(i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English; (ii)(I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and (II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual’s level of English language proficiency; or (iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and (D) whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual — (i) the ability to meet the challenging State academic standards; (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society. Note the definition given in the text is a simpler paraphrase, as used in the rest of the report — while retaining the requirements embedded the statute.

**Exhibit 1. NAM program definitions of activities to support priority areas**

- *Curriculum development* — the creation of instructional plans and materials; in the context of the NAM program, especially for the purpose of incorporating academic English or Native cultures and languages into regular instruction.
- *Data use* — use of student and school data to make decisions; in the context of the NAM program, data use may enable individualized planning to support students' academic achievement or to revise a school's instructional programming overall.
- *Professional development* — formalized training for teachers, school leaders, and other educators with the goal of increasing their content or pedagogy knowledge and/or improving instructional practices; in the context of the NAM program, focused especially on improving academic English and/or Native language instruction or standards-based, culturally appropriate instructional strategies.

**Study Questions**

The study's research questions were designed to capture the wide variety of services offered by NAM grantees and their experiences in offering these services and are as follows:

- 1. How do NAM grantees use NAM funding to support activities intended to increase NA/AN EL student academic achievement?**
  - a. How do grantees provide services associated with NAM funding priorities, including ELP, parent and family engagement, and NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization?
  - b. What activities do grantees engage in to support services to students, including language instruction, professional development, curriculum development, data use, technology, and parent and family outreach?
  - c. How do grantees prioritize NAM-funded services in relation to other education programming (e.g., other curricula, other instructional priorities)?
- 2. How do grantees work with partners to provide funded services?**
  - a. What are the roles of tribal entities, public schools, local education districts, and state agencies in supporting NAM-funded services?
  - b. Which partners assist in meeting federal reporting requirements, and how do they do so?
- 3. How do grantees measure progress and outcomes of funded services?**
- 4. What benefits do grantees perceive as resulting from the grant?**
- 5. What challenges do grantees experience in implementing grant-funded activities?**
  - a. What challenges do grantees face?
  - b. What if any steps have grantees taken to overcome challenges? If so, what lessons have they learned?
  - c. To what extent does the Department, or do other external entities, provide support to overcome these challenges?

## **Sample**

Eligible applicants under NAM include entities that operate a variety of elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools primarily for NA/AN children, including

1. an Indian tribe;
2. a tribally sanctioned education authority;
3. a Native Hawaiian or Native American Pacific Islander native language educational organization;
4. an elementary school or secondary school that is operated or funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or a consortium of such schools;
5. an elementary school or secondary school operated under a contract with or grant from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, in consortium with another such school or a tribal or community organization; and
6. an elementary school or secondary school operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and an institution of higher education, in consortium with an elementary school or secondary school operated under a contract with or grant from the Bureau of Indian Affairs or a tribal or community organization.

Of these eligible applicant types, the FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees included a regional education association serving public school districts, independent public school districts, public schools, and public charter schools. They also included tribal education authorities, BIE schools, and a tribal college. The study team reached out to the full population of 22 FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees to participate in the study. These 22 grantees were drawn from a total of 25 individual grant awards. Three of these 25 grant awardees (all of them FY 2011 grants) were not able to participate in the study because of leadership changes, resulting in few to no staff with knowledge of grant activity. In the interest of accurate reporting, the study sample was, therefore, reduced to the 22 grantees that could provide information on grant-funded activities. Finally, because three grantees had been awarded both a FY 2011 and FY 2013 award, these grantees were further reduced to 19 distinct *sites* visited for this study. The final study sample include public school districts, tribal education authorities and a tribal college, BIE schools, and charter schools in 10 states (Alaska, Arizona, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Washington, and Wisconsin) (see Exhibit 2).

**Exhibit 2. Key features of FY 2011 and FY 2013 NAM-funded grants in study sample**

<b>Grants (n=22)*</b>	<b>NAM-funded project name</b>	<b>Grantee governance type</b>	<b>Tribe(s)</b>	<b>Number of students grantee planned to serve annually**</b>	<b>Target population</b>
<b>2011 Grants</b>					
Chief Leschi (WA)	Cradleboard to Career Project	BIE school	Puyallup	450	Elementary–secondary (4–12)
Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. — Education System Services (AK)	Parent Partners & Children in Community	Tribal education authority	Cook Inlet	150	Birth–secondary (Birth–grade 12)
Goldbelt Heritage Foundation (AK)	Lingit Tundatánee: Language, the Pathway to Multi-Literacy	Tribal education authority	Douglas Indian Association	244	Middle–secondary (6–8; also 9–10 in Years 4 and 5)
Kuspuk School District (AK)	Literacy for Two Worlds II	Public school district	Yup’ik and Athabascan	245	Elementary–secondary (PK–12)
Mescalero Apache Tribe (NM)	Mescalero Apache School Language Proficiency Project	BIE school	Mescalero Apache	Data not available	Elementary–secondary (K–12)
Missouri River Education Cooperative (ND)	Cultural and Interdisciplinary Resource Centers for Language Enhancement (CIRCLE) Project	Public Regional Educational Association (REA)	Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Nation, Standing Rock Sioux	652	Middle–secondary (6–12)
North Slope Borough School District (AK)	Preparing Students for Success	Public school district	Iñupiak Eskimo	65	Secondary (9–12)
Oglala Lakota School District (formerly Shannon County) (SD)	A Cross-Content, Culturally Congruent, Supplemental Balanced Literacy Program: Empowering Teachers and Empowering Students (ETES)	Public school district	Oglala Lakota (Sioux)	250–999	Elementary (PK–8)
Rocky Boy Schools (MT)	Rocky Boy School Native American Children in Schools Program	Public school district	Chippewa, Cree	122	Elementary–Secondary (1–8, 10, 12)

**Exhibit 2. Key features of FY 2011 and FY 2013 NAM-funded grants in study sample (Continued)**

<b>Grants (n=22)*</b>	<b>NAM-funded project name</b>	<b>Grantee governance type</b>	<b>Tribe(s)</b>	<b>Number of students grantee planned to serve annually**</b>	<b>Target population</b>
Turtle Mountain Community College (ND)	Zhaabwii Learning Center	Tribal college	Chippewa	65	Postsecondary (newly graduated seniors, students who are limited English proficient entering college, students who have previously dropped out of college)
<b>2013 Grants</b>					
Arlee High School (MT)	The Youth Education for Success (YES) Project	Public school district	Salish	17	Secondary (9–12)
Arlee Elementary School (MT)	The Arlee Partners in Learning Project	Public school district	Salish	170	Elementary (K–8)
Kashunamiut School District (AK)	The Three C's Project (Cup'ik, Communication and Collaboration)	Public school district	Cup'ik	306–420	Elementary–secondary (K–12)
Tribal Government of the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin (WI)	Lac Courte Oreilles Second Language Project	BIE school	Chippewa	80–100	Early childhood–secondary (age 3–grade 3, grades 6–12)
Painted Desert (AZ)	Service to All Relations (STAR) School	Public charter school	Navajo	Data not available	Elementary (PK–8)
Stilwell Public Schools (OK)	Close the Gap	Public school district	Cherokee	127	Elementary–secondary (PK–12)
Tenkiller Elementary School (OK)	Project Literacy EC	Public school	Cherokee	75	Elementary (PK–3)

**Exhibit 2. Key features of FY 2011 and FY 2013 NAM-funded grants in study sample (Continued)**

<b>Grants (n=22)*</b>	<b>NAM-funded project name</b>	<b>Grantee governance type</b>	<b>Tribe(s)</b>	<b>Number of students grantee planned to serve annually**</b>	<b>Target population</b>
Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska (NE)	Educare of Winnebago Early Language Learning Initiative (ELI)	Tribal education authority	Winnebago	190	Birth–elementary (ages 0–5)
Yakama Nation (WA)	Language and English Acquisition for Post-Secondary Success (LEAPSS) Project	Tribal education authority	Yakama	100	Secondary (8–12)
Yukon-Koyukuk School District (AK)	Expanding Our Horizons II	Public school district	Athabaskan	160	Elementary (PK–6)
Missouri River Education Cooperative (ND)	Primary CIRCLE	Public Regional Educational Association (REA)	Arikara Nation, Standing Rock Sioux	576	Elementary (K–5)
Chief Leschi (WA)	Cradleboard to Career Project	BIE school	Puyallup	250–450	Elementary and secondary (Preschool, K–3, and high school)

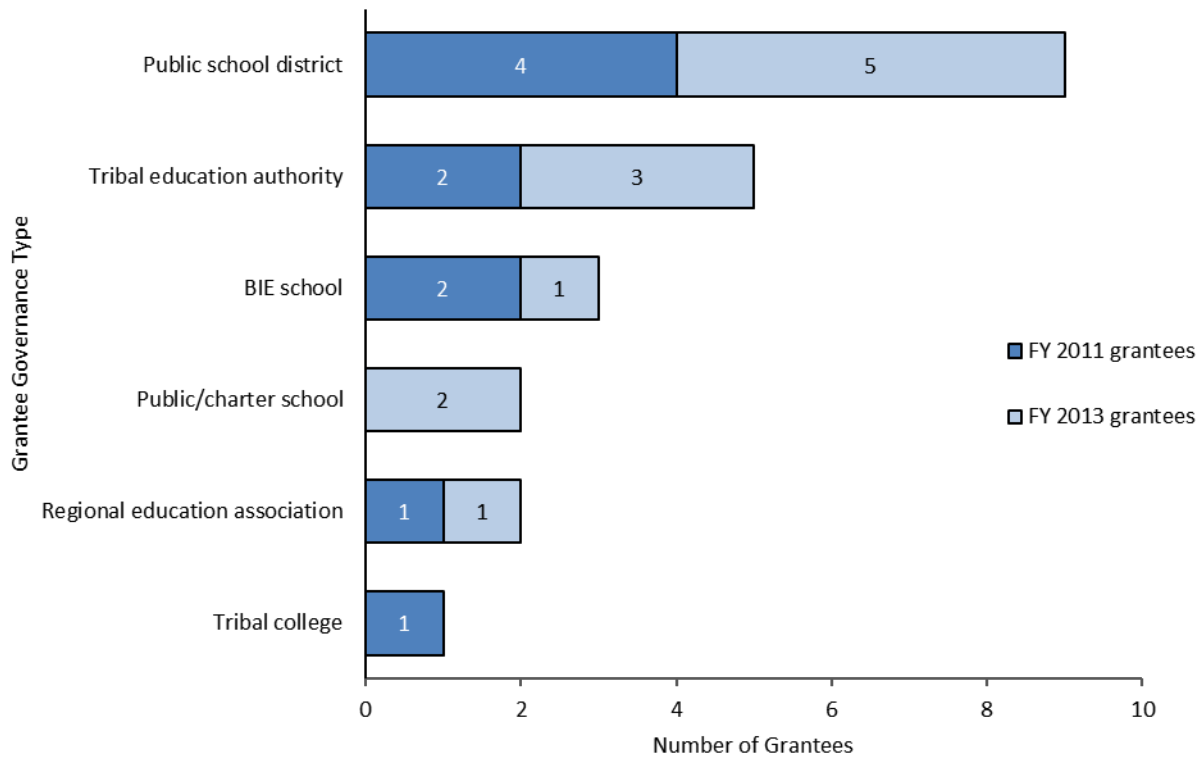
\*Although the number of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees included in the study is 22, the number of unique grantee sites reported on in the study is only 19 because two grantees (Missouri River and Chief Leschi) were awarded both a FY 2011 and FY 2013 grant, and one FY 2013 grantee (Arlee) was awarded two grants (one to serve the high school and one to serve the elementary school in the district) in FY 2013.

\*\*The number of students served annually are estimates and based on the information provided in the NAM FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantee applications at the time of award only (see applications/project narratives at [https://www.ncela.us/content/35\\_naancspgrantees](https://www.ncela.us/content/35_naancspgrantees) and <https://www.ncela.us/2013namgrantees>).

Notes: 25 total NAM grants were awarded in FY 2011 and FY 2013. The table presents information for only 22 of these 25 grants because data were not collected from three FY 2011 grantees (Grand View School [public school], Isleta Elementary School [BIE school], and College of Menominee Nation [tribal college]). At the time of the study, their grants had ended, and the leadership and staff with sufficient knowledge to reliably answer questions about grant activities were not available to participate in data collection activities.

The 22 grant awards in this study varied widely in governance type. The grantees included public school districts, traditional public schools and public charter schools, a regional education association, a tribal college, tribal education authorities, and BIE schools. The greatest number of grants were awarded to public school districts, with nine of the awards going to public school districts across both years (four in FY 2011 and five in FY 2013). Tribal education authorities and BIE schools were the next most frequently awarded grantee types, with two awards going to tribal education authorities and two to a BIE school in FY 2011- and three TEA and one BIE grants in FY 2013) (see Exhibit 3).

**Exhibit 3. Grantee governance type of FY 2011 and FY 2013 NAM grant awards on which study data were collected, by year of award**



**Exhibit reads:** Nine of the NAM grantees in the study were public school districts, including four FY 2011 grantees and five FY 2013 grantees.

Note: The *n* for the Total category is 22; the *n* for the FY 2011 grantees is 10, and the *n* for the FY 2013 grantees is 12.

Source: The grant applications of the 22 FY 2011 and FY 2013 NAM grant awardee sites participating in the study.

## Data and Methods

### Data Sources and Collection Activities

To answer the study questions, the study team conducted case studies of 19 grantee program sites. The case studies consisted of (1) a review of grantees’ NAM applications, (2) telephone interviews with grant coordinators, and (3) in-depth site visits conducted by a team of two researchers to each site to collect data from a wide range of grant project stakeholders through in-person interviews and focus groups. (The Office of Management and Budget [OMB]-approved interview and focus group protocols used for these data collection activities are included in Appendix B).

Overall, the 19 case study grantee sites reflected the diversity of environments in which NA/AN populations of students are served. Many of these sites were on tribal reservations or were located in notably remote settings, including six in Alaska. Some, however, were closer in proximity to urban centers, with the school sites located in city suburbs. The students being served by NAM programs represented at least 19 different tribal nations and spanned the education continuum. Some of the NAM-funded projects targeted young children; others, elementary, middle, or high school students; and others, postsecondary learners or a combination of age and grade bands.

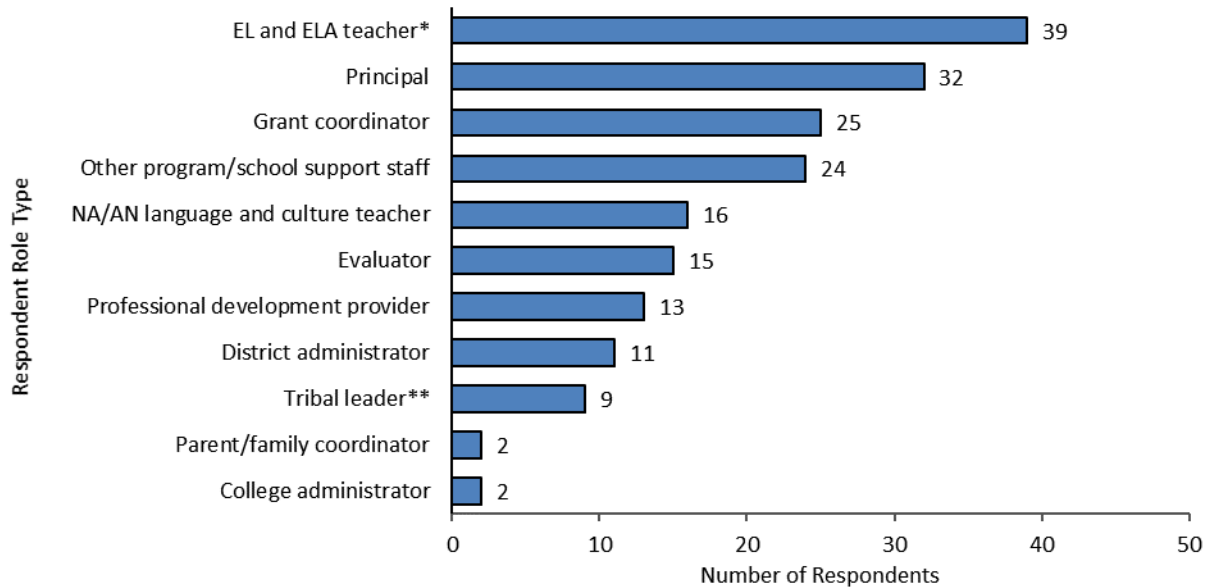
Because sovereign tribal nations have legal jurisdiction over all activities, including research activities that occur within their territories (NCAI Policy Research Center and MSU Center for Native Health Partnerships 2012), the study team identified and followed all tribal research and Institutional Review Board (IRB) regulations when engaging in data collection activities with grant stakeholders who are members of NA/AN tribes. Conducting research that is culturally appropriate and responsive and that fully engaged research participants was important to ensure the quality of data (e.g., Czaykowska-Higgins 2009; Moreno-Black and Homchampa 2008; Richmond, Peterson, and Betts 2008).

The study team took several steps to meet all tribal policies and regulations. The research offices for the tribes associated with each of the grantees were contacted to request information about tribal research and IRB requirements, and the study team shared information on the study with the research offices. The study team also shared information about the study with each of the grantees' coordinators. These communications were used to answer questions about the study, consult on data collection procedures, ensure that research definitions and assumptions were explicit and made sense for the given cultural context (e.g., Leonard and Haynes 2010; Piquemal 2001), and to introduce the site visit team members. All staff conducting site visits participated in a training on conducting culturally responsive research with stakeholders in NA/AN communities.

Prior to conducting the telephone interviews with grant coordinators and the on-site visits, the study team reviewed the grant applications of all FY 2011 and FY 2013 NAM grantees and documented the key features of their plan in a data-capture workbook (see Appendix C). The study team's prior knowledge of this grant information helped reduce the burden on grant coordinators and other stakeholders because the study team did not have to ask stakeholders to describe general and contextual information about their grants. The study team's prior knowledge further allowed the study team to prepare, in advance, specific follow-up questions about implementation of grant-funded services.

Telephone interviews and on-site data collection took place from December 2016 through May 2017. A total of 188 unique respondents playing different roles in grant implementation participated in the telephone interviews and on-site interviews and focus groups conducted across the 19 sites (see Exhibit 4). All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.



**Exhibit 4. Number of interview and focus group respondents, by role type**

**Exhibit reads:** Thirty-nine EL and ELA teachers participated in the interviews and focus groups conducted for the study between December 2016 and May 2017.

Notes: The number of grant coordinators interviewed is higher than the total *n* of grantee sites in our study (19) because, in some cases, former and current grant coordinators were interviewed to provide a full picture of grant activities over the life of the grant.

\*EL and ELA teachers include teachers who supported students' ELD and/or provided ELA instruction or reading intervention to NA/AN ELs.

\*\*Tribal leader includes tribal council members, tribal education directors, and tribal consultants with involvement in grant activities.

### *Analytic Procedures*

Data from site visit interviews and focus groups were analyzed in two stages. During the first stage, the study team transcribed and then organized the data by key study constructs. Next, the study team coded the transcribed data using NVivo 11 Plus, a qualitative data analysis software, and used the coded data to conduct analyses within and across sites using a codebook (see Appendix D). The codebook indicates alignment of each code to the study questions, a crosswalk to interview and focus group questions that were expected to yield the relevant information, and notes and examples to guide analysis. Codes for analyzing interview and focus group data were structured so that analysts could apply more than one code to the same interview passage as applicable.

Analyses were conducted to examine the grant-funded activities and grant implementation experiences across all 19 grantees and to examine differences and similarities in implementation between subgroups of grantees in two sets.

- The first set divided the 19 grantee sites into the FY 2011-only sites, (eight sites, or 42 percent of the sample), and the FY 2013 sites, which included two FY 2011 sites that were granted new awards in FY 2013 (11 sites or 58 percent of the sample).
- The second set divided the grantee sites into:
  - “tribal and BIE grantee sites” (eight grantee sites or 42 percent of the sample, including four tribal education authorities, three federally or tribally operated BIE schools, and a tribal college).

- “public school system grantee sites” (11 grantee sites or 58 percent of the sample, including eight public school districts, two public and charter schools, and one public regional education association).

A difference between any grantee subgroups is reported in cases where there was at least a 15 percentage point difference between the subgroups being compared.

Subgroup analyses by year were of interest because FY 2011 grantees had completed their awards at the time of data collection, allowing for a different perspective on sustainability of grant activities than the FY 2013 grantees, whose grants were still under way at the time of the study. The two grantee governance types, tribal and BIE grantees and public school system grantees, were of interest because of differences in authority, available non-grant funding sources, and autonomy under which these systems operate, which may affect grant implementation activities and the types of benefits and challenges grantees experience. Although the study team examined the data to explore commonalities and differences by types of grantees, it is important to note that many differences, other than grant award cohort and governance type (tribal and BIE or public school system), may have influenced any differences in activities and experiences of grantees. Finally, while the study team recognizes and honors the existence of the close to 600 different state and federally recognized tribes and more than 200 NA/AN languages across the United States, this report does not include references to specific tribes and languages when presenting examples of grant activities. This step was taken to respect and ensure the confidentiality of the study sites.

### ***Study Limitations***

Readers should note some limits to the interpretation and generalizability of the study because the study sample did not fully reflect the total population of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grant awards. Limitations for the case studies also stem from differences between anticipated versus actual roles of interview respondents, which affected some types of information they could actually provide on grant-funded services compared with the information researchers may have planned to obtain. In addition, data obtained through interviews are limited to the recall and perceptions of the individual respondents at the time of the interview. Thus, the full range of grant-funded activities and grantee experiences may not have been captured.

### **Organization of Report**

The remainder of this report is organized to address the study’s five primary study questions and subquestions. Chapter II presents findings on NAM grantees’ primary focus areas for their specific NAM projects, followed by a more in-depth discussion about the full range of activities, including resources and services, that grantees used their funds to support. Chapter III addresses the second study question, focused on partner types and roles; Chapter IV focuses on the measures and data used by grantees and evaluators, including the roles evaluators played with respect to supporting and informing grant program implementation and activities. Chapter V describes the benefits grantees experienced with respect to implementing their NAM grant programs and funded activities, and Chapter VI describes the reported challenges and lessons learned among grantees. Chapter VI also explores the extent to which grantees were able to, or anticipated being able to, sustain grant-funded activities. Chapter VII presents conclusions about grant implementation and implications of the findings.

## Chapter II. Grantee Priorities and NAM-Funded Activities

The NAM program identified specific priority areas in the FY 2011 and FY 2013 Notices Inviting Applications.<sup>7</sup> These areas were improving NA/AN EL students' ELP, NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization, postsecondary preparation and success, parent and family engagement, and early childhood development, data-based decision-making, and civic learning and engagement. The FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees were not required to address all of these priority areas in the design of their projects but were encouraged to employ an array of activities and strategies in support of them. These included ELD instruction, NA/AN languages and cultural instruction, teacher professional development, curriculum development, enhanced data use to guide decision making, and use of new technologies.

In this chapter, we first discuss the NAM program priority areas that grantees identified as they key foci of their full range of grant-funded activities. We then describe the types of activities grantees funded with their grants in support of ELD instruction, NA/AN languages instruction (to include NA/AN cultural instruction as well), parent and family engagement, postsecondary preparation and success, and early childhood development. Because curriculum development, professional development, and technology resources were activities that were funded primarily to support improving students' ELP or the revitalization of NA/AN languages and cultures specifically, these types of funded activities are discussed under each of these priority areas. Notably, although we report on each of these priority areas distinctly, grantees frequently described their priority areas and funded activities as complementary, and their funded activities did not operate in isolation of one another but, rather, as part of a coherent approach to addressing the needs of their NA/AN EL students.

### Grantee Priorities and Supporting Resources and Activities for NAM

To better understand variance in project design and implementation across NAM grantees, grantee stakeholders were asked first to identify what they considered as the primary focus areas for their grants (i.e., what goals and objectives did they most hope to accomplish through the grant), and then to report comprehensively on the full range of activities they funded with the grant.

All NAM grantees were implementing projects that aimed to increase student ELP achievement and identified at least two and up to five NAM program priority areas they planned to address and fund activities to support. Among their identified priority areas, many grantees reported that there was a subset of NAM program priority areas that they were supporting with grant funds that they perceived as

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<sup>7</sup> Federal Register, "Native American and Alaska Native Children in School Program; Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students; Overview Information; Native American and Alaska Native Children in School Program Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2011", <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2011/01/19/2011-1041/native-american-and-alaska-native-children-in-school-program-office-of-english-language-acquisition>. Federal Register, "Native American and Alaska Native Children in School Program; Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students; Overview Information; Native American and Alaska Native Children in School Program Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013", <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2012/12/06/2012-29424/applications-for-new-awards-native-american-and-alaska-native-children-in-school-program>.

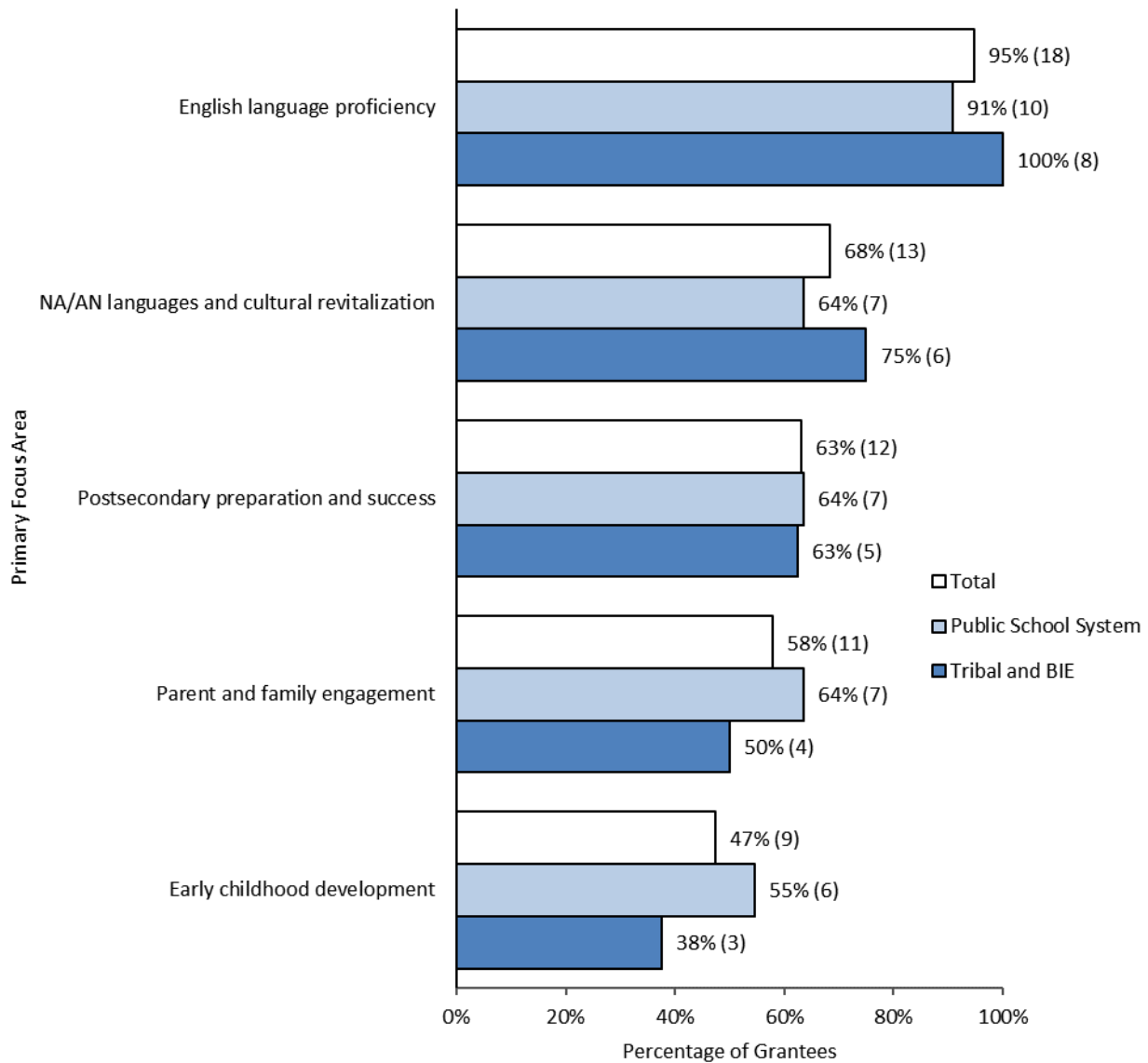
most critical to meeting their students' needs and achieving the primary goals and objectives for their funded projects.

**Ninety-five percent of grantees identified improving students' English proficiency as a primary focus area for their grants, followed by NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization (68 percent).**

More than half of the tribal and BIE grantees and public school system grantees reported also placing a primary focus on one or more of the following NAM program priority areas: postsecondary preparation and success (12) and parent and family engagement (11). Forty-seven percent (nine) identified early childhood development as a primary focus area.

Overall, tribal and BIE grantees and public school system grantees reported similar focus areas, although a larger proportion of public school system grantees than tribal and BIE grantees reported placing a primary focus on early childhood development (see Exhibit 5).

**Exhibit 5. Percentage of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees identifying different NAM program priority areas as among their primary focus areas, by grantee governance type**



**Exhibit reads:** Ninety-five percent of the FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees reported that improving students’ ELP was among their primary focus areas for their NAM grants.

Notes: Primary focus areas are those described by grantees as reflecting their main goals and objectives for their NAM grants. Many grantees reported more than one primary focus area; therefore, the total percentage of grantees in the exhibit does not add to 100 percent.

Source: Interviews with stakeholders at 19 NAM grantee sites, including eight tribal and BIE grantees and 11 public school system grantees.

Although one public school system grantee did not identify improving students’ ELP as one of the NAM program areas that they perceived as most critical to improving achievement specifically under the NAM grant, it is important to note that they were still using some NAM funds to support students’ ELD. The grant coordinator explained that developing students’ English language and literacy skills was an important part of their instructional program, but that they perceived the NAM-funded services for revitalizing NA/AN languages and cultures was of particular importance because the NAM program

provided a unique opportunity to direct funds to Native language programming at the schools that could be used to not only develop students' knowledge of their heritage language and culture, but to simultaneously reinforce their ELD lessons — a gap that would not otherwise be filled. This approach is in alignment with a priority of the NAM program to support the teaching, learning and studying of Native American languages while also increasing the ELP of students served to meet the same standards that all children are expected to meet.

Although the majority of the sites reported that NA/AN languages and cultural instruction was a primary focus for their funded projects, about one-third reported placing a stronger emphasis on required ELD activities and services they were funding with NAM. These grantees explained that there were critical gaps in their capacity to provide effective ELP services to meet their EL students' needs that NAM was filling. While they were still providing NA/AN language and cultural instruction, they indicated having more confidence in the infrastructure and supports they had in place for this purpose, thus allowing them to direct most of their NAM-funded programming to ensuring that students had the English language skills they needed to succeed academically in the classroom. As one teacher explained, when asked about the primary goals for the site's NAM grant,

*A definite need was our English language arts proficiency. Our reading and writing proficiency; our test scores, both statewide testing and districtwide diagnostic testing, [were] showing that we have a very low percentage of students that were proficient in both reading and writing.... English is pretty much the only language they speak, but it's more of a dialect...or nonacademic English, because of the transfer from the Native language years and years ago.*

Regardless of whether grantees saw the revitalization of NA/AN languages and cultures or improving students' ELP as a primary focus of their grant activities, all grantees consistently reported on the benefits of promoting NA/AN languages and cultures both to support English language learning and for its own sake. One tribal grantee, for example, talked about how the NA/AN languages and cultural instruction they were providing built on their existing efforts to preserve and sustain their language through education. Their long-term goal was to have a broader impact by helping set an academic standard for the Native language across their state. The coordinator for a grant awarded to a public school system grantee similarly remarked on why they had chosen to focus their grant on revitalizing NA/AN languages and cultures, stating,

*One of the things that I have been made aware of more and more...is the value of being biliterate, multicultural, multilingual, and the effort or the emphasis and the focus that has been placed recently on revitalizing and perhaps in some instances almost reviving languages that were native to the United States...we realize the importance of these cultures. The Native American culture and the language cannot be separated.*

Although ELD and NA/AN languages and cultural instruction were often supported using different types of materials and resources, grantees typically described their dual focus on improving students' ELP and NA/AN languages and cultural knowledge as interconnected and mutually reinforcing. The grant coordinator for one site described how heritage language instruction complemented literacy learning, stating, "therein lies a pretty good connection to what this grant entails.... In terms of OELA's goals for teaching literacy, there is a really nice tie to heritage language. Heritage language for us is very well versed in oral narratives so that's the natural connection with literacy for us." Many also saw language

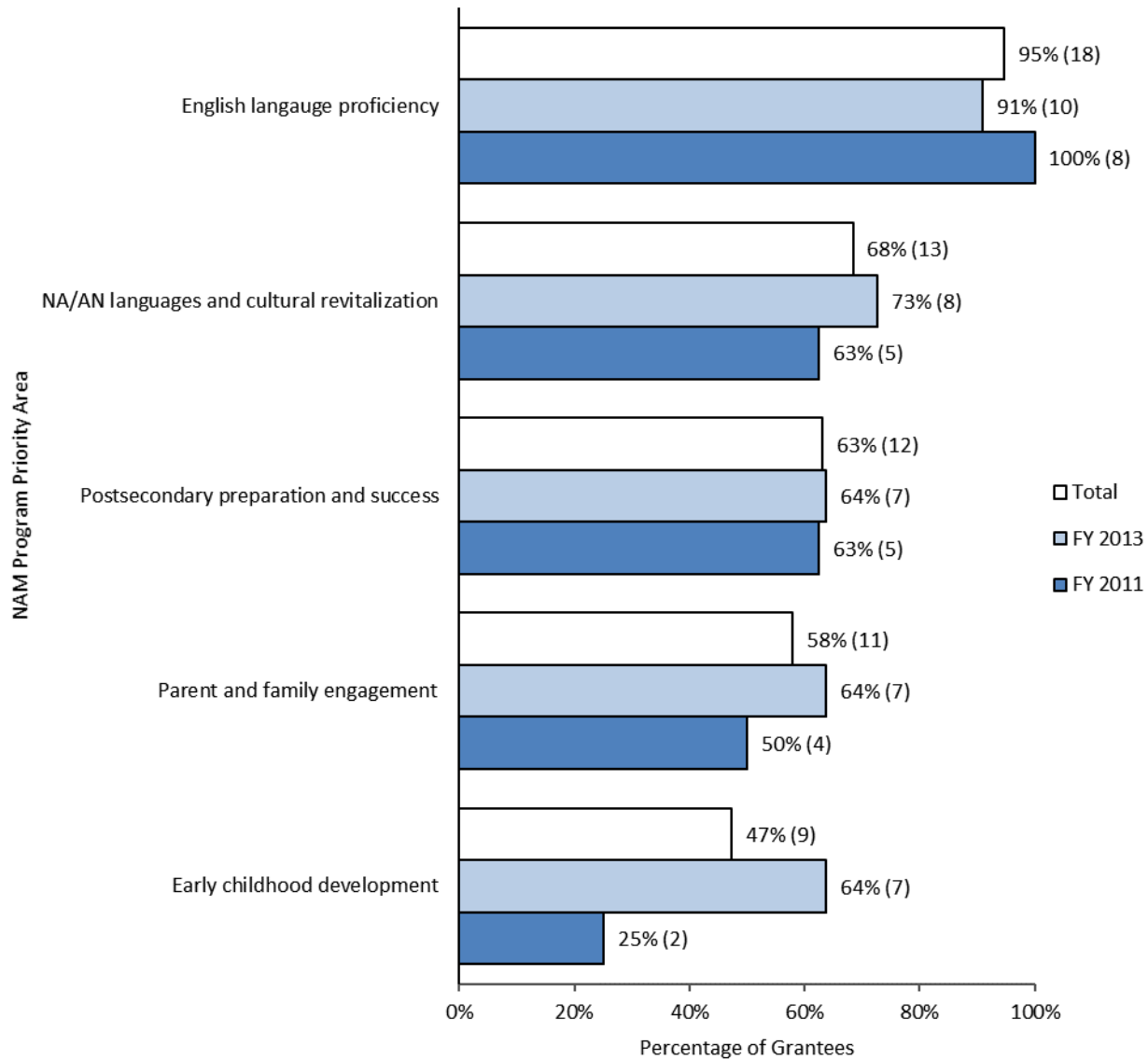
instruction, particularly NA/AN languages and cultural instruction, as a mechanism for bridging the historical divide between schools and the communities they served. As one grant coordinator stated,

*The problem here is that students are coming with reduced vocabulary, period. In any language. The link with our students in resolving this issue is to increase the use of vocabulary and increase the use of language totally. Our idea is that we do that in the [Native language] and it connects with the culture and community, and it connects with other generations, grandparents, and so forth. Then we do the intervention in English to increase their vocabulary.*

Similarly, a respondent from another site explained, “I think that’s the theory of action [for our NAM project]; that by claiming and developing a cultural identity, students will develop agency and experience more success through their K–12 years.”

Looking across the two grant award years (see Exhibit 6), ELP and NA/AN languages and cultural instruction were the most commonly reported primary focus areas for grantees. The 18 total grantees reporting a primary focus on ELP included eight (100 percent) of the FY 2011 grantees and 10 (91 percent) of the FY 2013 grantees. The 13 total grantees reporting a primary focus on NA/AN languages and cultural instruction included five (63 percent) of the FY 2011 grantees and eight (73 percent) of the FY 2013 grantees.

**Exhibit 6. Percentage of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees identifying different areas as among their primary focus areas for their NAM grants, by grant award year**



**Exhibit reads:** Ninety-five percent of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees reported that improving students’ academic ELP was among their primary focus areas for their NAM grants.

Notes: Primary focus areas are those described by grantees reflecting their main goals and objectives for their NAM grants relative to other NAM program priority areas they were using NAM funds to support. Many grantees reported more than one primary focus area; therefore, the total percentage of grantees in the exhibit does not add to 100 percent.

Source: Interviews with stakeholders at 19 NAM grantee sites, including eight FY 2011 grantees and 11 FY 2013 grantees.

Postsecondary preparation and success was noted as a primary area of focus by the majority of the FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees, including nearly equal proportions of grantees in both award years (63 percent of FY 2011 grantees and 64 percent of the FY 2013 grantees). Grantees with this focus area described a need to impress upon students their potential for success in college and to introduce them to the multiple pathways to a postsecondary degree. A teacher from one of the FY 2011 grantees stated, “Our motto is ‘People, Partnership, Potential,’ and we’re focusing on the potential part.” The grantee



site was addressing this focus area through field trips to college campuses and holding discussions with students about their postgraduation options and plans.

As another example of how projects emphasizing postsecondary preparation and success were using their grant funds, one site established a college-based learning center for students. The name of the center meant “survival” in the Native language and, according to grant leaders, was designed to provide tutoring and other academic support services to students and to be grounded in the value system of the local tribe. This respondent indicated that students’ sense of belonging and identity had been enhanced and that the center offered a safe space for them to ask for and get the support they needed to continue with their postsecondary pursuits.

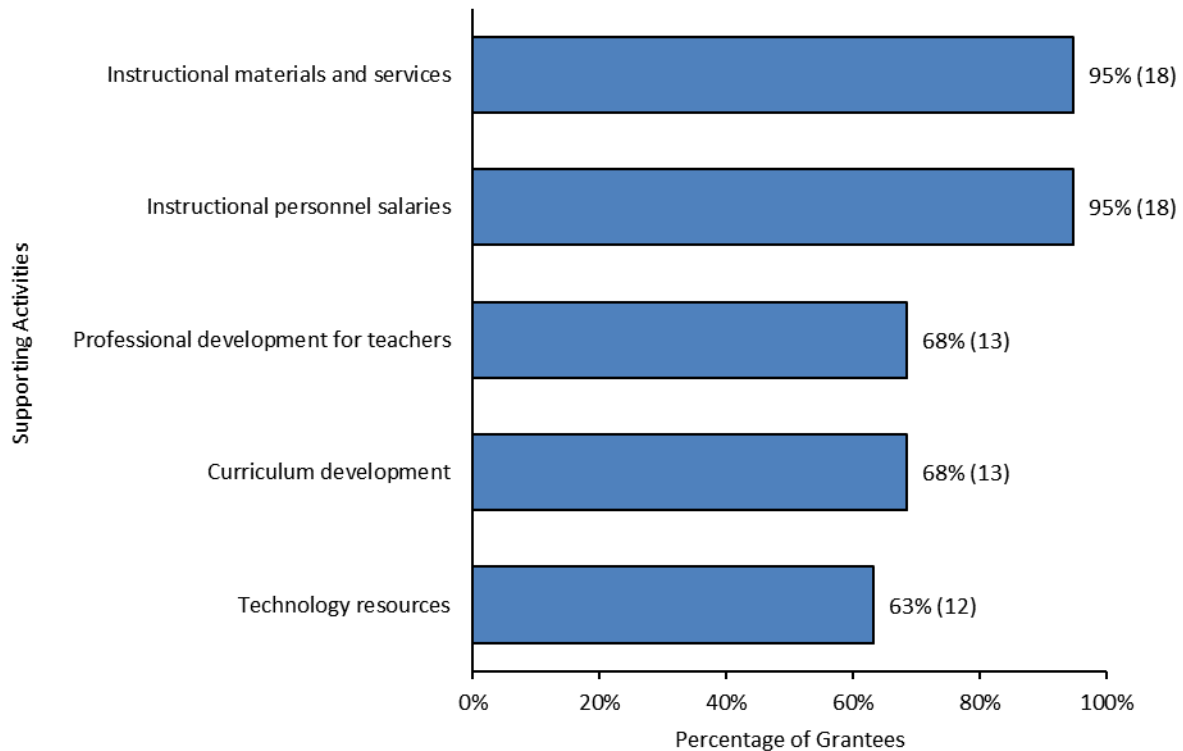
With respect to the parent and family engagement, half of the eight FY 2011 grantees (four) and about two-thirds (seven) of FY 2013 grantees noted it as a primary focus. A respondent from one of these grantees explained, “One of the biggest goals is just family involvement and getting families feeling like they’re advocates for their children, and empowering families that they do have a place in the school because of the historical trauma there has been.” Similarly, the grant coordinator for another site emphasized that parent and family engagement was central to supporting their other goals for NAM, including improving students’ language and literacy. To promote parent and family engagement, the site had established a parent advisory committee to more actively include parents in discussions and decisions about how to effectively engage their children in learning activities in school and at home.

The largest difference in primary areas of focus between the FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees was in early childhood development, with 64 percent (seven) of FY 2013 grantees citing this NAM program priority area as a key focus compared to 25 percent (two) of FY 2011 grantees. School readiness, particularly in terms of language and literacy, was central to these grantees’ NAM-funded activities. For these grantees, a focus on early childhood development also meant a focus on parent and family engagement because many of their strategies included efforts to engage parents and families in supporting their young children’s learning at home.

The next set of findings focuses on NAM-funded resources and activities across *all* grantees, not just those who funded activities in a primary focus area for their grants (Exhibits 5 and 6). In some cases, grantees funded activities outside of their primary focus areas for their grants, noting that these activities provided additional supports to help them achieve their primary goals.

**Grantees most commonly used NAM funds for instructional personnel salaries (95 percent and instructional materials or services (95 percent); grantees also used funds for professional development for teachers (68 percent), curriculum development (68 percent), and technology resources (63 percent).**

**Exhibit 7. Percentage of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees funding different resources and activities to support NAM program priority areas**



**Exhibit reads:** Ninety-five percent of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees reported using NAM funds for instructional materials and services.

Source: Interviews with stakeholders at 19 NAM grantee sites.

Grantees hired personnel, purchased instructional materials, developed new curriculum, enhanced their technology resources, and/or provided professional development specifically with the intent of improving students' ELP or for the purpose of revitalizing NA/AN languages and cultures. One of the most common among these types of funded resources was instructional personnel, including personnel who provided ELD instruction to improve students' ELP, and personnel who provided NA/AN languages and cultural instruction. Equally common was the purchase of instructional materials or provision of services, particularly those intended to engage students in more culturally relevant learning experiences to develop their English language and literacy skills.

Grantees typically indicated that the personnel and instructional materials or services they funded with the grant did not carry out their roles or operate in isolation, but were interconnected and mutually reinforcing resources to support both ELD instruction and NA/AN languages and cultural instruction.

The findings below present the specific types of resources and activities that grantees funded around two key NAM program priority areas to highlight the various types of ways in which NAM funds were used for each of these priorities. For organizational purposes, grantees' activities and resources to incorporate culturally responsive strategies into ELD instruction are discussed under activities to improve ELP. Activities and resources specifically intended to develop students' knowledge and proficiency in NA/AN languages and cultures are discussed under activities to promote the revitalization

of NA/AN languages and cultures. Although this report is organized as such, it is important to note that grantees described their NAM-funded activities as interdependent and interconnected.

## Resources and Activities to Improve English Language Proficiency

Grantees described using funds to supplement and enhance ELD instruction for NA/AN ELs. In some cases, ELD instruction was delivered during regular ELA instruction by the classroom teacher or in dual-language immersion or bilingual classrooms. In other cases, ESL teachers provided the instruction in ESL class settings. Grantees frequently described using NAM to support the salaries of teachers, purchase or develop instructional materials and technologies, and identify and incorporate more culturally responsive materials and learning experiences into their ELD programs.

**Among the 18 grantees using NAM funds for instructional personnel of any type, 61 percent reported partially or fully supporting the positions of instructional personnel who worked directly with students to improve their ELP.**

Grantees typically funded three main types of instructional personnel to provide ELD instruction. These included general education classroom teachers who taught ELA and specialists or tutors who provided targeted ELD instruction or reading and language intervention instruction to ELs. These NAM-funded personnel sometimes had their own classrooms, or rotated among classrooms to provide instruction. Others provided instruction to students as part of afterschool programming. ELD instruction was often provided using small-group or one-on-one instructional formats.

Grantees frequently described these teachers, tutors, and literacy specialists as integral to their district's or school's overall approach to improving student outcomes. One grantee coordinator explained how they used NAM funds to bring on board a specialist in teaching ELs to play a threefold role: to facilitate and manage a more robust assessment system for identifying and serving ELs; to help supplement the EL curriculum to include culturally relevant materials and learning experiences; and to implement a program focused on using educational technology games that parents, families, and their children could play together. According to the grant coordinator, this instructor also had a "cross-training" relationship with the cultural advisor for the site. The EL specialist trained the cultural advisor in the different testing materials for ELs and how to work with teachers on their lesson plans. The cultural advisor then shared this knowledge with parents and families during her regularly scheduled home visits. In turn, the cultural advisor taught the EL instructor the students' tribal heritage and history so that she could be more involved and integrate the cultural component into her lessons and work with students.

Other grantees described how NAM was funding personnel who could directly support their schools' language instructional model. For example, one grantee site was using a team of tutors to provide small-group instruction to early elementary students. These tutors included two full-time and two part-time retired teachers, whose positions were funded at least partially through NAM. These tutors played a central role in delivering a key component of their ELA instructional model that consisted of differentiated small-group literacy instruction on a daily basis (see Exhibit 8).

**Exhibit 8. Role of NAM-funded instructional personnel at one grantee site**

A NAM grant-funded elementary school program was using its funds to support an individualized instructional model that relied on multiple staff to meet the specific literacy needs of their NA/AN EL students. This data-driven approach grouped students by ability and literacy needs across grades during the 50-minute reading period every day. Students rotated to different classrooms or small-group reading areas for differentiated support. Classroom teachers and NAM-funded tutors led these groups; the teachers worked with the groups of students who had the greatest needs. Some of the tutors provided targeted supports to students who stayed for extended-day programming. According to the literacy coach at this site, the NAM grant afforded them the flexibility to use this model by funding the additional staff positions. The teachers felt that this model built student confidence because students with greater literacy needs were grouped across grade levels, and the groups met as part of the regular programming for all students.

Another grantee site used NAM funds to hire a Response to Intervention teacher to provide intensive language supports to NA/AN students demonstrating the greatest English language learning needs, and a technology integration specialist to support the school's blended learning approach to improving young students' ELP.

Similarly, another grantee site using a bilingual program used at least some funds to expand their team of bilingual teachers. Through its bilingual program, this grantee was using the Native language to increase students' ELP, while at the same time fostering students' learning of the Native language and culture. In this model, the bilingual teachers provided both ELD instruction and instruction in the Native language and culture. The grant coordinator emphasized that the school made a purposeful decision to ensure that their team of bilingual teachers included both Native and non-Native individuals so that students would see and experience both Native and non-Native teachers speaking fluently and providing instruction in both languages. The intent was to ensure that students saw role models who connected English seamlessly with their Native identities and vice versa. The grant coordinator perceived this approach to staffing and the bilingual instructional model as critical to creating a language program that connected English language acquisition and Native culture "in an honoring way."

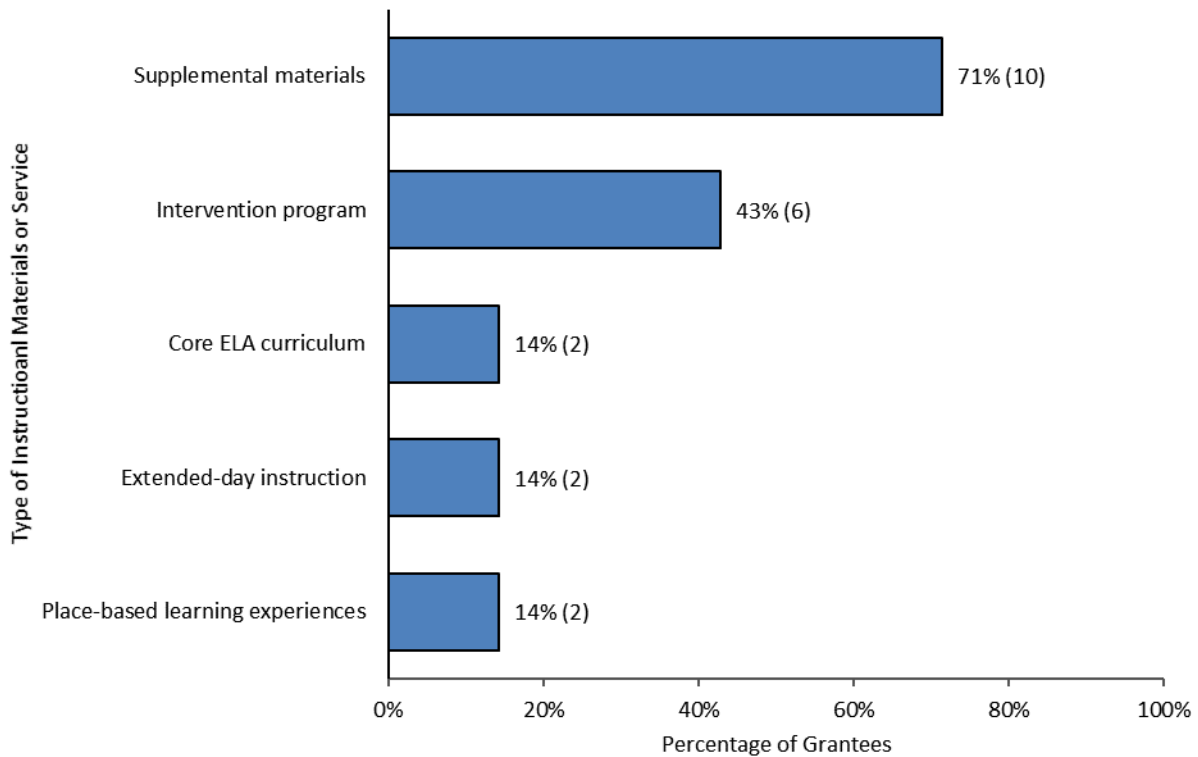
**Among the 18 grantees with NAM-funded instructional materials or services, 78 percent reported that at least some of these resources were intended for ELD instruction, including to create more culturally responsive learning experiences.**

Fourteen of the 18 grantees using NAM funds to purchase instructional materials or provide instructional services to students described doing so to support their ELD instruction for ELs. The types of materials grantees purchased included supplemental materials, such as leveled readers, classroom libraries, and manipulatives, to enrich primary instruction and allow for hands-on learning experiences. Some reported buying targeted reading intervention programs and new core curriculum programs to improve the quality of their ELA instruction. Grantees also described using NAM to provide services including extended-day instruction, such as afterschool programs, Saturday schools, and summer schools, or other types of activities, and place-based learning experiences<sup>8</sup> to make instructional content

<sup>8</sup> Place-based education promotes learning that is rooted in what is local, including the unique history, environment, culture, economy, literature, and art of a particular place. The learning is grounded in students' own "place," such as the immediate schoolyard, neighborhood, town, or community (Sobel 2004).

for ELs more accessible, engaging, and rooted in the cultural context of students' environments (see Exhibit 9).

**Exhibit 9. Percentages of those FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees who reported partially or fully funding instructional materials or services to support ELD instruction**



**Exhibit reads:** Seventy-one percent of the 14 FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees that used NAM to purchase materials or provide services for ELD instruction reported purchasing supplemental materials to enhance English language instruction.

Notes: Data represent 14 grantees that reported using NAM funds to fully or partially support instructional materials or services to support ELD instruction. Many grantees reported using funds for more than one type of instructional materials or services; therefore, the total percentage of grantees in the exhibit does not add to 100 percent.

Source: Interviews with stakeholders at 14 NAM grantee sites.

Grantees frequently indicated that one purpose for purchasing new instructional materials, or providing or enhancing instructional services such as extended-day instruction and place-based learning experiences, was to create more culturally responsive instructional environments for students and design content instruction to meet NA/AN ELs' learning needs. Their goal was to improve the relevancy of ELD instruction for NA/AN ELs and improve their engagement in lessons focused on English language and literacy skills. The literacy coach from one school site described purchasing supplemental materials based on their perceptions of students' preferred kinesthetic learning styles as follows:

*[We purchased] consumable items...handwriting paper, and materials for working with words, letter tiles, magnetic boards, whiteboards, some of those things that really help make it multisensory.... To help them understand phonics, and phonemic words, they really need to be able to manipulate items.*

The grant coordinator from another site talked about the classroom novels they purchased and categorized into independent reading levels using NAM funds to supplement their core ELA curriculum. The grant coordinator had observed students' engagement in reading increase as they were allowed to select books that were both at their level and of interest to them. Teachers were also using the leveled readers to facilitate project-based learning in the classroom and to capture weekly data on students' progress and growth in their independent reading levels. Another grantee used funds to purchase a computer-based reading intervention program with an embedded assessment component. Respondents from this site felt that the students and teachers were benefitting from this NAM-funded purchase. Students were able to access materials at their level and receive in-time targeted support. Teachers were able to more accurately track and target classroom instruction on the language and literacy skills students' most need.

Many of the grantees also described using NAM funds to improve the cultural relevance of their core ELA curriculum and ensure their school and classroom libraries better reflected the demographic of their student population. For example, one grantee was using NAM funds to replace the assigned literature in the district's adopted ELA curriculum with books that were more likely to connect with NA/AN students. These included literature and stories by Native American authors and featuring Native American settings and communities. The district had allowed this school the flexibility to make these replacements to support culturally responsive ELA instruction for NA/AN students, and NAM provided the necessary funds for them to do so.

Similarly, respondents from two other grantee sites indicated that they were using NAM funds to supplement their literacy collections and offerings to ensure that students and families had access to literature and books that featured Native American characters, settings, and communities. These sites had purchased books but also organized literacy learning activities to promote students' English language and literacy development in a culturally responsive way. For example, the school's cultural coordinator at one of these sites organized a literacy event featuring a life-sized whale that children could enter. The whale's inside featured stars and constellations and a Native storyteller led the students through traditional stories about the stars. The cultural coordinator had also organized book fairs and overseen the selection of books to ensure that they were culturally responsive and likely to be of interest to the students. The other site had used NAM funds to extend their efforts to make the school library a place not only for the children but also for parents, families, and the broader community. The books they purchased typically were written in English but included translations in the Native language for key vocabulary and often featured traditional Native stories.

Some grantees also used NAM funds to provide place-based learning experiences to engage students in ELD instruction. These activities were rooted in the unique history, environment, and culture of students' communities. For example, one grantee with a focus on early childhood development created an outdoor learning lab. The lab included a nature trail for students to explore and connect the literacy activities and vocabulary and language skills they were learning in the classroom with their immediate environment outside of the school and in their community. This type of experiential learning extended the learning beyond the classroom and school walls and allowed learning to occur in interaction with the land. Other grantees provided extended-day learning through field trips to introduce students to new learning settings. For example, one of these grantees located in a remote geographic area took students on field trips to larger towns and cities to provide real-life contexts where they could apply the literacy and language skills they were learning in the classroom.

Although most grantees turned to existing resources to improve and enhance their ELD curriculum and programming for NA/AN ELs, some decided to use a portion of their funds to create new materials.

**Among the 13 grantees using NAM funds to develop new curriculum or materials, 62 percent reported doing so to support ELD instruction.**

These grantees' main purpose for developing new curriculum or instructional materials was to create more culturally responsive learning environments for their NA/AN students. Respondents from these sites noted that, although there are many programs and materials to support ELs generally, the majority of these do not reflect the unique needs of NA/AN students, nor do the materials reflect the subject matter, communities, and settings that are familiar to their students.

To help provide content instruction designed for the unique needs of NA/AN ELs, one grantee site drew from a Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Northwest set of electronic books to build take-home reading kits for each grade level, elementary through secondary. The electronic books (eBooks)<sup>9</sup> (originally print publications) were leveled and featured Native authors and illustrators. The grantee downloaded the eBooks and printed them in spiral bound notebooks to share with students and families "as a way for students to be involved with their parents in reading culturally relevant materials." The respondent from this site went on to explain,

*We chose the [books] that we thought would be best for each grade, so there's 12 for each grade and varying degrees of difficulty. With the new [state] standards, informational text was so important and text-based questioning, so the elementary librarian and I worked to research and find all these informational texts from a variety of websites and we included the websites so if parents wanted to go on there, they could.*

The grantee also developed text-based questions for the stories in the kits and asked parents to help their children maintain a journal with responses to the questions after discussing the questions with their parents.

As another example, one grantee site developed curriculum for higher level achievers through an honors class both to support their ELD and to prepare them to earn college-level credit while enrolled in high school. An educator at this grantee site used a combined system of the tool Accelerated Reader<sup>10</sup> to support vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension, along with regularly scheduled creative writing assignments that had been developed with cultural relevance in mind.

Although most of these sites developed materials for teachers who were providing ELD instruction, some sites had developed materials for use in other subject areas. Two grantees, for example, had a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) focus at their schools and were leveraging their efforts under NAM to promote literacy and language learning for EL students in STEM-focused lessons. According to one respondent, the intent was to expand English language learning across the full curriculum and in every classroom while "[the students] are engaged in scientific-based kinds of hands-on curriculum pieces."

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<sup>9</sup> An eBook is an electronic version of a traditional print book that can be read by using a personal computer, hand-held device, or eBook reader, which can be a software application for use on a computer. eBook readers include built-in dictionaries and alterable font sizes and styles (<http://searchmobilecomputing.techtarget.com/definition/eBook>).

<sup>10</sup> Accelerated Reader monitors and assesses reading abilities of K–12 students. Students read nonfiction and fiction texts at their reading level and complete Common Core State Standards-aligned activities and quizzes, which are tracked in the teacher and administrator dashboard. EdSurge, "Accelerated Reader 360," 2017, (<https://www.edsurge.com/product-reviews/accelerated-reader>).

Overall, grantees took a variety of approaches to curriculum development toward improving students' ELP. Human resources were leveraged as much as existing toolkits to create unique and individualized programs across grantee sites.

**Among the 12 grantees reporting that they used NAM funds to enhance their technology resources, 67 percent reported purchasing technology resources specifically to support ELD instruction.**

These technology resources included blended learning literacy programs, reading intervention programs, and technology equipment such as computers and tablets. Many of the grantee respondents from these sites reported needing to update their technology infrastructure and to advance staff and student literacy in accessing and using digital materials. They also described how they used NAM funds to capitalize on the benefits of technology-enabled learning activities to increase student engagement. One grantee had purchased digital cameras and microphones for students to create their own digital content, based on what they learned on a field trip to enhance their literacy and technology skills at the same time:

*We got digital cameras and microphones so that the kids could create digital pieces, adding in all literacy aspects, so you've got the visual, but then they're also practicing their (writing and) speaking skills...when we got back from our trip, we had all the kids create iMovies with videos and pictures and audio clips.*

Similarly, a respondent from another grantee site described how the grant helped them get technology into the hands of students, citing the benefit as, "Just having our kids who maybe do not have as much computer access at home, our English learners, especially, just have a jump start on how to use a computer and keyboarding skills." This same site was using the technology to draw stronger connections between what students were learning in the classroom and their life experiences. The third graders, for example, had created a PowerPoint presentation on local wildlife that they then presented to their parents.

Three grantee sites specifically talked about how the computer-based literacy programs allowed them to be more nimble and fluid in supporting students' individualized needs and adjusting instruction accordingly. They also had observed that students were more motivated and engaged by these programs as they continued to strive and meet their reading goals. One site serving high school students had purchased a program that provided students with online news articles at their individualized reading levels. A respondent from this site described how the program was helping students with reading levels as low as second grade engage with relevant and timely issues that are affecting the world. Another site had purchased a blended learning computer program they were using to create flexible reading groups and make the literacy learning experience "a richer undertaking" for the students. This computer program was accessible to students and their parents and families at home, allowing older students to gain additional practice outside of school, and, particularly for the younger students, providing an opportunity for children and families to learn together.

Other sites also described how the technology they purchased was promoting learning while also facilitating greater parent and family involvement. One grantee site had created a fabrication laboratory or "Fab Lab" to allow for the creative exploration and creation of digital materials. The grant coordinator explained,

*We've attempted to be very innovative and we've kind of been in the forefront in merging technology and culture...we have a Fab Lab. We've had (educational) video game development classes for older youths. The purpose of this program was to increase*



*and promote family engagement by having educational games put into curriculum format, and that way the kids could play games with their parents in the school [while] being instructed by an English language teacher.*

**Among the 13 grantees funding any type and focus of professional development, the majority reported that at least some of the funded resources focused on improving teachers' ELD instructional practices.**

Eighty-five percent (11) of the 13 sites providing NAM-funded professional development reported providing training intended to develop teachers' knowledge of the fundamentals of English language and literacy, use of instructional strategies for teaching EL students, and data use. Teachers described attending writing workshops and trainings on topics such as vocabulary acquisition, phonics, and how to develop EL students' oral language. One grant coordinator described their NAM-funded professional development as follows:

*All the professional development that we provide through this program focuses on reading and language arts...to increase teacher capacity in three different areas: using data to monitor student progress in literacy, being able to provide effective language instruction, and using best teaching practices proven to get results with EL students.*

Five grantee sites used NAM funds to support the position of a school-based literacy coach. These coaches provided job-embedded support and mentorship to strengthen teachers' instructional practices and abilities to support NA/AN EL students. Coaches generally provided some level of support to all teachers who provided ELA or ELD instruction, particularly in cases where the school had adopted a new program or instructional approach. However, they prioritized their time with teachers who needed the most assistance, including new teachers or teachers new to teaching NA/AN ELs. An elementary teacher at one of these sites described how beneficial the coach's support had been to her practice:

*I didn't feel like I was ready when I graduated college, to teach reading, and over the years, she [literacy coach] was such an important part of my learning how to teach reading. She would come into the classroom and model for me what I needed to do, and then she would also come in and watch me and let me know some really good feedback. "You might try this...or I saw this," so it was beneficial to me as a teacher.*

On occasion, coaches reported working directly with select students, if their specific expertise was needed and a teacher was struggling to meet the student's needs on his or her own.

Beyond formal coaching, some of the grantees had brought in elders or other tribal members in the community to mentor and support teachers in incorporating culturally relevant instructional strategies into their ELD lessons. For example, an elder serving one grantee site worked with administrators and teachers at the beginning of the year to design learning experiences for specific academic units that could help students better see the relevance of what they are learning.

The NAM grant helped fill another type of professional development need for a grantee serving a rural tribal community. The geographic isolation of the district, long distances between schools, and small size of the individual schools made it difficult to provide teachers with access to the types of professional development opportunities typically afforded to other teachers. In some of the district's schools, there was just one elementary teacher per grade level or even per school. Opportunities for teachers to collaborate, share practices, plan lessons together, and gain feedback from each other's experiences were

limited and far between. Travel to large urban centers also was not a viable option because of limited resources. The support of NAM, however, afforded the grantee the opportunity to establish a video-based professional development platform. The new technology allowed the grantee to bring all early childhood and elementary school teachers together across the district for quarterly virtual professional learning communities (PLCs) that were designed so the teachers “could start to form relationships with other teachers from across the district and work through some common challenges with their colleagues,” according to the district staff member who facilitated the PLCs.

Grantees also used NAM funds to provide teachers with more formal trainings. These were sometimes provided by the local school district, but more frequently, by external providers with specialized expertise in teaching ELs or in the instructional programs or delivery models the site was using. One teacher from another grantee site talked about a training she received on “Picturing Writing,” an art-based instructional approach to early writing development, to support students’ English language learning. This teacher described the training as helpful “because a lot of our students love art, and they can talk to you about what they draw or what they have in their minds for days. When you ask them to write a sentence about a person without any imagery behind it, they get so stuck.” Similarly, another grantee site had provided training to teachers on an instructional strategy for building students’ English vocabulary called “Flocabulary.” The strategy engaged students in educational hip-hop designed to build core literacy skills and teach standards-based content (see Exhibit 10).

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**Exhibit 10. One grantee’s use of NAM funds to provide professional development to support teachers’ instruction of NA/AN ELs**

One program site provided professional development on an instructional strategy called “Flocabulary” to develop their EL students’ English vocabulary and teach standards-based content. Students wrote and performed their own educational raps. A teacher identified as having skills with lyric-writing and integrating music into instruction led the training. One teacher who attended the training described the strategy: *“We were working with [my colleague’s] class on developing some sort of a small rap based around a content area.... [We] decided to choose an historical figure. The training showed us how we can get students from point A, just knowing a little bit about a person, to point B, where they’re able to research, understand, and apply that understanding in a song form. When we performed that song, our kids had 10 to 12, maybe even 15 facts that they could name on the spot about Crazy Horse, because we had [rehearsed] so many times.”*

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In addition, some grantees used NAM-funded professional development as an opportunity to promote ELD across the curriculum. One site, for example, included all teachers in the trainings because students were expected to use and show language proficiency across the curriculum. The grant coordinator explained,

*When we do any type of instruction or professional development on academic language, we talk about all the subject areas of English language arts, math, science, and social studies...the [state ELP test] gives proficiency level scores [for] the language of science, the language of social studies, and the language of math.*

One grantee hired an external provider with expertise in teaching ELD to NA/AN EL students. Another contracted with an external provider to work with the site’s school-based literacy coaches specifically. The intent was to develop the coaches’ knowledge to build their long-term capacity to support the teachers in their schools.

Seven grantees reported that data use was a focus of at least some of the trainings they provided to teachers to help improve their ELD instructional practices. In particular, grant coordinators and professional development providers described using these trainings to enhance teachers' understanding of the purpose and value of assessment data and their facility to use data to inform and better target instruction. The professional development also was described as intending to create a stronger culture of data use and collaboration around data use in school sites.

One grantee was using its grant to support a more data-driven approach to addressing the needs of NA/AN EL students. The grant coordinator reported that a key objective for the NAM-funded project was to help teachers read and interpret assessment results and then use that information to be more targeted in their instruction. To help achieve this goal, the EL instructor had provided professional development to the teachers at participating schools on "how to read the results of the tests and reports that come out and how to develop language goals and what types of modifications and accommodations should be made to [students'] individual language plans." This included training on how to read and use both formative and summative data, such as classroom and progress monitoring assessments, as well as standardized tests like the state ELP assessment. According to the grant coordinator, the emphasis on data use had been well received at the schools and there had been an increase in schools requesting "just-in-time" professional development on data-driven instruction from grant leaders. The grant coordinator indicated that NAM grant funding afforded them the ability to respond to these requests and provide more training to schools and teachers as needed.

Under the NAM grant, another grantee was partially funding the position of a district technology and test coordinator who was supporting teachers in not just test administration but in how to interpret and drive instruction using assessment results. After each test administration, this technology and test coordinator would facilitate a professional development activity in collaboration with the principal and literacy coordinator that brought teachers together with their laptops and their assessment reports pulled up on the screens. The session was interactive, with everyone looking at their reports and discussing in a group what the data were telling them, where the gaps were for their students, and how to use that information to adjust and target instruction.

## **Resources and Activities to Promote NA/AN Languages and Cultural Revitalization**

**Among the 18 grantees using NAM funds for instructional personnel of any type, 61 percent reported partially or fully supporting the positions of instructional personnel that worked directly with students to provide NA/AN languages and cultural instruction.**

The majority of these grantees (11) used their grants to fund teachers who either taught NA/AN languages and cultures in their own classrooms, rotated among other teachers' classrooms to provide instruction, and/or provided instruction during afterschool or extended-day programs. Typically, these staff taught students during relatively short (20- to 45-minute) periods that were designated for NA/AN languages and cultural instruction.

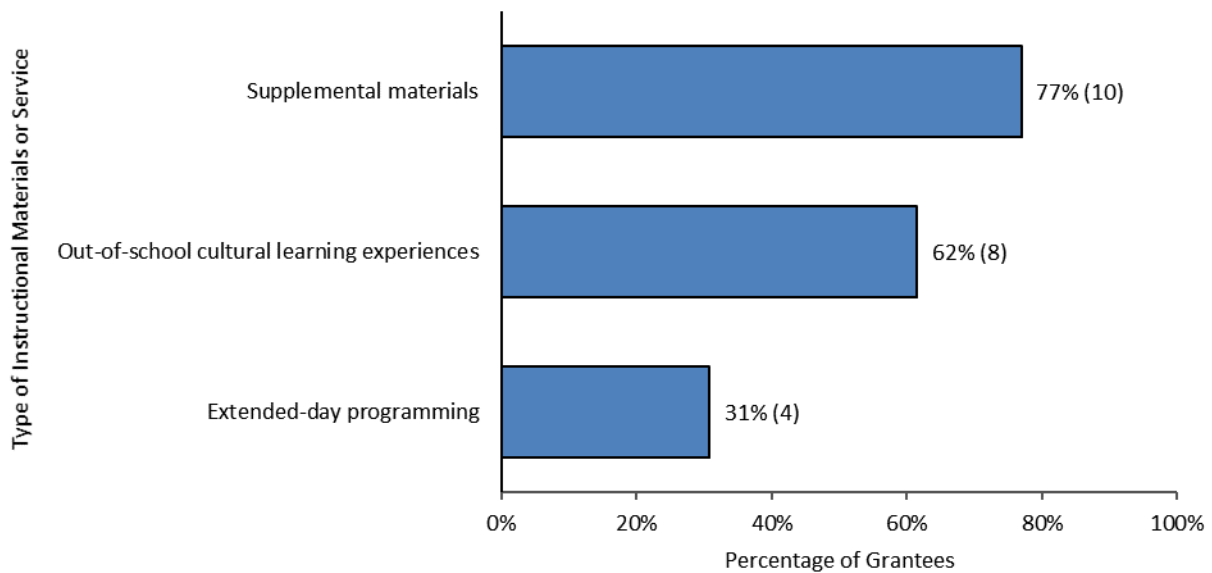
A few sites, with bilingual or dual-language immersion programs had instructional personnel who taught both English and the NA/AN languages and cultures. In these cases, NAM funds enhanced the sites' longer-term efforts to develop these types of language programs at their schools by expanding their capacity to support teachers qualified to teach both languages.

In addition to formal teaching staff, some of these 11 grantees used NAM funds to bring elders into the school to supplement classroom instruction, and a few had cultural liaisons to help organize and facilitate NA/AN languages and cultural learning experiences for students. For example, one site was using NAM funds to bring in Native performers, speakers, authors, and role models in the community for special events at the school that focused on building knowledge and appreciation of NA/AN languages and cultures.

**Among the 18 grantees with NAM-funded instructional materials or services, 72 percent reported that at least some of these resources were intended to promote the revitalization of NA/AN languages and cultures.**

These 13 grantees identified a need to fill gaps in or enrich their curricular offerings for NA/AN languages and cultural instruction. Some common types of purchases included literature in the Native languages or resources to support NA/AN vocabulary, including tools to support alphabet/symbol recognition (e.g., the Cherokee syllabary<sup>11</sup>), and ceremonial clothes and accessories, traditional objects used in tribal games, and textiles and materials used to make traditional arts and crafts to provide hands-on learning. Some of these 13 grantees also developed learning experiences to help revitalize and preserve NA/AN languages and cultural traditions through out-of-school events, cultural learning experiences, or extended-day programming with the support of NAM (see Exhibit 11).

**Exhibit 11. Percentages of those FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees who reported funding instructional materials or services to support NA/AN languages and cultural instruction and revitalization**



**Exhibit reads:** Seventy-seven percent of the 13 FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees using NAM funds for instructional materials or services to provide NA/AN languages and cultural instruction reported purchasing supplemental materials to enrich or fill gaps in NA/AN languages and cultural curricular offerings.

Notes: Many grantees reported funding more than one type of instructional materials or services; therefore, the total percentage of grantees in the exhibit does not add to 100 percent.

Source: Interviews with stakeholders at 13 NAM grantee sites.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.omniglot.com/writing/chokeee.htm>

Grantees emphasized the important link between teaching NA/AN languages and cultures, indicating one cannot be separated from the other. In other words, as illustrated in the examples that follow, NA/AN languages instruction was complemented or embedded in the simultaneous instruction or provision of services in the context of the local tribe's culture and heritage. According to grantees, this approach grounded the learning of NA/AN languages in the culture in beneficial ways, particularly given the differences in structure between many NA/AN languages and English. The out-of-school and extended-day programming, which typically engaged students with elders in cultural events, also helped promote oral language and conversational fluency.

Many of the teachers providing NA/AN languages and cultural instruction, particularly those working with younger students, described using NAM-funded supplemental materials and lesson activities that introduced the language through games, pictures, and tactile learning experiences. One teacher described her instructional method as follows:

*You model (the Native language) from the beginning, you introduce the vocabulary words with a picture, not something that's written in English. For example, if I were to say [Native language word], I wouldn't hold a sign that says "chair"; it'll be a picture [of a chair] instead. Then, because our language is descriptive and it's action-based, and verb-[based], we try to [also] show pictures that show [a related action, sitting] happening. "Chair" [on its own] just makes a [non-meaningful] item. In our language, it's given a purpose, it's something you sit on [so an additional kind of picture is required].*

Similarly, the instructor at another site serving young children explained,

*I teach the Cherokee syllabary, it's like the alphabet.... I do that in my classroom. We go over colors. We go over numbers. We go over everything that I can and then we do...Native songs.... I just love being around people and sharing my culture and sharing my heritage with the people. They want to know, too.*

For older students, similar approaches to teaching the vocabulary of the NA/AN languages were used using supplemental materials, but often included a focus on oral fluency as well. The instructors from one site described first teaching the vocabulary and then linking the vocabulary to a Native tradition. For one lesson, they based the activity in a traditional game of the tribe that is played in winter. The teachers provided lessons on why the game is played only in winter, where the game originated from, and why it is an important part of the tribal heritage. Students were then tasked with teaching each other how to play the game using the Native language.

A grant coordinator from another site explained how the site was using NAM funds to supplement the primary curriculum by integrating more Native ideas into the instruction and to build students' connections to their language and heritage. For example, this grant coordinator had developed a writing activity designed to develop students' pride and understanding of their heritage, develop their sense of belonging and self-esteem, and improve their engagement and connection with what they were learning in school.

Many of these 13 grantees also used NAM funds to provide out-of-school cultural learning activities, such as field trips, culture clubs and workshops, and language immersion camps where only the Native language was spoken. One grantee site held culture nights that involved pow wows, singing, dancing, and drumming. These occurred once a week after school as a way to revitalize students' interests and engagement in their heritage. A respondent from this site explained,

*The grant has given us the opportunity to have culture just up there right available to kids.... Because a lot of our students don't participate in traditional ways. They don't attend the longhouse. They haven't gone digging or berry picking before. Those are things we get to do at our school, which is pretty unheard of and wonderful.*

Similarly, another grantee organized eight cultural workshops per year for their high school freshmen and sophomores. These workshops focused on Native traditions, including storytelling, making corn husk dolls, working with clay, and basket weaving. Another grantee was using some NAM funds to offer language and culture activities during the summer, including visits to Native sites, the tribal college, and the tribal community center, where students could check out resources from the library.

Another grantee was using NAM funds to support a multiday camp where high school students were immersed in the traditional skills, language, and activities of the tribe. During the three-day camp, community elders, leaders, and people with traditional skills taught students how to cut and dry fish and how to survive in the woods (see Exhibit 12).

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**Exhibit 12. One grantee's approach to supporting NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization through out-of-school experiences**

One grantee used NAM funds coupled with other funding sources to support a Native language and culture immersion camp designed and implemented with the support of tribal members in the community. According to the grant coordinator, these were three-day events scheduled during breaks in the academic year. The language immersion teachers who were fluent Native language speakers largely ran the camps, but elders in the tribal community were also involved. During the camps, the only spoken language was the Native language. The teachers, students, and elders shared their meals together, and traditional activities, such as fishing and Native games, made up a large portion of the days.

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Some grantees also described using their afterschool, extended-day program time, to deliver small-group instruction in the local NA/AN language and culture using materials purchased with grant funds. At one elementary school site, the NA/AN language and culture instructor would rotate among small grade-level groups of students who stayed after school to provide the instructional services since there was limited time during the regular school day to fit in this type of instruction.

**Among the 13 grantees using NAM funds to develop new curriculum or materials, more than half reported doing so to support NA/AN languages and cultural instruction.**

These grantees consulted with a variety of stakeholders in the process, including formal partners, external language specialists, site-based personnel providing NA/AN languages and cultural instruction, professional development providers, and elders and tribal members, depending on the grantee.

One grantee site was developing a dual-language immersion curriculum to strengthen their efforts to preserve and revitalize the Native language and culture. Although ELD was a critical component of the instructional model, NAM was largely supporting the site's efforts to enhance the Native language and culture curriculum. The grant gave them the resources to bring on a language specialist who was fluent in the Native language and had a doctoral degree in linguistics. This linguistic specialist was facilitating the curriculum development process in collaboration with a formalized lexicon committee that consisted of elders, grant leaders, and school staff members. The committee discussed data on student

linguistic acquisition levels and consulted on the most appropriate and effective strategies for Native languages and cultural instruction.

The specialist also supported dual-language teachers' instruction in the classroom. He designed lesson activities and provided teachers with strategies and ideas "on how to elicit the target [Native language] structures" in class at each level of language acquisition. The specialist also helped ensure coherence in instruction across the Native language and English curricula. The staff at the site commended his knowledge in how to teach the Native language and link it to ELD. In carrying out his work with NA/AN languages and culture curriculum development, the grant coordinator reported on how the specialist was recording and transcribing tapes of community and tribal elders speaking the Native language. The elders and other tribal members also were involved in reviewing and providing input on the curriculum materials and lesson activities.

This same site was also planning to support an adult language-learning institute that would be run by the specialist with the support of NAM funds. The purpose would be to revitalize and help preserve Native language fluency among the broader community.

A tribal grantee reported on how the NAM grant led them to form a partnership with the local school district to support their existing efforts to develop a more robust Native language curriculum. For example, the grant-supported partnership resulted in the district placing a district-employed heritage language expert in the school. This expert was tasked with working with the school's curriculum development team that consisted of other grant partners, including a university faculty member and contracted Native language apprentices. A respondent from this site described how the specialist was helping the team transform the curriculum from being very picture- and noun-based to more action- and verb-based, which better reflected that structure of the Native language. In addition, the expert was helping them enhance the curriculum by bringing the culture and traditions of the tribe more into the language learning; for example, by interweaving storytelling about tribal traditions into the vocabulary lessons.

Two grantees were using NA/AN languages and cultural curricular materials that had previously been developed by tribal partners, but with the support of NAM, were providing their NA/AN instructional staff with time to develop supplemental materials to fill identified gaps in the curriculum. At one of these sites, the NA/AN language and culture instructor reported:

*The five volumes of the [Native] language that we made are very valuable materials that helped us in our phonemic awareness and our things like that that we need. It was great to have those books available to us to use. [Also], we taught our culture along with that, which is we tried to teach them about respect and things like that, and I think which is neat.*

Some sites directed some NAM funds to the development or enhancement of NA/AN language assessments. Because few indigenous language assessments exist, many sites described difficulties with being able to accurately track students' NA/AN language development. At one site, the teachers played a key role in improving the NA/AN language assessment. According to the grant coordinator, it was not possible to collect quantitative data that could be tracked over time using the existing assessment. The Native languages and cultural teachers were augmenting the assessment to facilitate more robust monitoring of students' Native learning and progress. The NA/AN languages and cultural instructors at three other sites also were in the process of developing or refining the locally developed assessments to support the sites' tracking of students' growth in NA/AN languages.



Among the 12 grantees reporting that they used NAM funds to enhance their technology resources, just over half reported purchasing technology resources specifically to support NA/AN languages and cultural instruction. These grantees described buying software applications (apps) and programs to create their own digital resources and materials to enrich NA/AN languages and cultural instruction. Some sites purchased equipment such as computers, laptops, or tablets.

One commonly reported purpose for these types of technology was to record, archive, and more widely share the knowledge of elders and tribal leaders. Grantees talked about the benefits of technology not only for instructing students but also for preserving NA/AN languages and cultures. For example, grantees used the technology to record elders telling stories, speaking the languages, and carrying out performances. One site described using digital devices to record and archive elders telling traditional coyote stories, and to video-record elders singing traditional songs. These recordings were available to incorporate into teachers' lessons on NA/AN languages, culture, and heritage. As another example, an elementary teacher of NA/AN languages and cultures from a different site used a website to show her students stomp dances and pow wows their community performed. Grantees frequently indicated that promoting and sharing the accomplishments of NA/AN people, as well as the traditional games, dances, and ceremonies of the Native communities, were impactful in developing students' pride in their heritage and traditions.

Another grantee was using funds to support getting the Native language onto an iPhone app. The site was working with fluent speakers and elders in the community to develop the app, which people, according to a grantee respondent, "will be able to use on their phones, on their iPads. It has games. It has lessons. It has historical pictures, and it can be used by all of us." Another respondent from this grant indicated the potential of the app: "We feel as though it's going to really bring a lot of the tribal members closer to the language because you know how people are [connected] on their phones." A different site was using software to create eBooks in the Native language. The books were being translated from English into the Native language, and they were intentionally selected to ensure that they were related to the tribe's values. The translated books were available on the tablets being used in the school classrooms. Students read the stories themselves or listened to them being orally read. The instructors from this site indicated that a next step would be to have the students themselves use the software to create their own eBook stories.

**Among the 13 grantees funding any type and focus of professional development, most reported that at least some of the funded resources were used to support NA/AN languages and cultural teachers' instruction, including to deepen their proficiency in the languages and knowledge of cultural traditions.**

Although the majority of NA/AN instructors at these 10 grantee sites were tribal members, some were not, and many, Native and non-Native, described having an incomplete knowledge of the languages and tribal heritages. In addition, because few states offer NA/AN language teacher certification, many of the NA/AN languages and cultural instructors had not received formal teacher education preparation or specific training in how to teach Indigenous languages to children and youth. Grant coordinators, some of whom reported struggling to identify and recruit teachers with the necessary language and educational skills to provide NA/AN languages and cultural instruction, indicated that professional development was one way they were addressing this challenge.

Because students typically came to school with limited knowledge and fluency in the NA/AN language of their community, professional development often focused on methods for effectively teaching NA/AN



languages as a second language. To address teachers' gaps in language and cultural knowledge, many sites also organized professional development intended to deepen instructors' foundational knowledge of the NA/AN language, including their understanding of the structure of the language, oral and conversational fluency, and familiarity with cultural traditions and the tribal heritage. The grantees delivered the professional development through a range of modes, including designated workshops on specific topics, PLCs, job-embedded coaching, and multiday institutes focused on teaching NA/AN languages as a second language.

Six grantees reported that professional development was provided, at least in part, by school-based Native specialists. For example, at one site the school-based director for the grant was also serving as a key source of professional development for the teachers, particularly with respect to enhancing their grammatical understanding of the Native language. The director explained, "I've enhanced their literacy skills.... I'm the one that comes in and says, 'Here's the structure of a verb.'" Five grantees reported that the tribal community and/or elders played a key role in providing support to the NA/AN language teachers, most often to help develop the teachers' knowledge of the culture and heritage of the tribe and to help develop teachers' oral language fluency or their knowledge of the structure of the Native language. As one grantee respondent explained,

*[We] have elders and others working one-on-one as mentors with the teachers, and these are particularly to help them with their fluency in [the Native language], which is a different skill set than how do you instruct people in [the Native language]. They felt that it was a stumbling block because a lot of teachers were still developing their [Native language] skills to the highest level.*

Similarly, another grantee was drawing on the knowledge of an elder in the community to support NA/AN language and cultural teachers' conversational fluency. Although the school had an established NA/AN languages and cultural program at the school — all high school students were required to take a Native language course for graduation, and electives in Native history and culture were offered — the language curriculum and teachers' own knowledge of the spoken language were perceived as areas for improvement. Prior to NAM, the site had been relying on a Native language dictionary to guide instruction. The dictionary provided a literal translation of the language, but the literal translation did not transfer well into fluent conversation. NAM allowed the site to bring in an elder to work directly with the NA/AN language teachers to develop their oral language fluency and, in turn, enhance the language learning experiences for students.

Five grantees used NAM funds to hire external consultants to provide professional development on NA/AN languages teaching methods; some were connected to a university or college, while others were working as independent consultants or out of an organization specializing in language acquisition. One grantee site used a team of trainers, one of whom provided professional development on a specific language acquisition method for teaching Native languages. As another example, another grantee was using grant funds to support at least one intensive day of training per year by a specialist housed at the local university. Her expertise was in the local Native language and linguistics. According to the grant coordinator,

*She has had a major impact on our language teachers.... [The language specialist] is very skillful in demonstrating how they can gently speak the language in immersion...[so] the kids will actually develop the conversational skills that we want them to develop. That's the key, is we needed her to get our teachers to get a different teaching style that actually builds on the strength of the [Native] language and not as another version of English.*

Two grantee sites sent their teachers to formal language acquisition training centers designed to improve teachers' capacity to teach and help students learn second languages. One of these training centers included focused training on methods for teaching less commonly taught languages. According to the grant coordinator, this center is one of the leading organizations in the country in how to teach dual-language education programs, which this tribal grantee was working to establish with grant funds. The other center was operated by a tribal nation and focused on both strengthening NA/AN languages and cultural knowledge as well as teaching methods specific to the Native language. Teachers could become certified teachers of the Native language by completing a course. Both of these centers offered intensive summer institutes with follow-up sessions throughout the school year.

Finally, technology was the focus of staff development at a few grantee sites, and in these cases, the grantees had a specific focus under their grants for enhancing NA/AN language learning through technology. The technology and test coordinator at one site was providing targeted support to NA/AN language instructors in how to access digital content to enrich the Native language program. Specifically, she was working with teachers to ensure that they knew how to use software programs, and had access to online streaming videos and other Internet-based resources that could be used to enhance their students' learning of NA/AN language and culture. More generally, NAM grantees that were using funds to support technology were typically providing some form of professional development or technical assistance to help teachers incorporate the technology resources into their NA/AN language lesson activities.

Grantees also provided services, resources, or extracurricular events beyond those in Exhibit 7 to promote the NAM program priority areas of parent and family engagement, postsecondary preparation and success, and early childhood development. Many of these activities incorporated and blended elements of ELD supports and of NA/AN languages and cultures. The next set of findings represent the percentages of all 19 grantee sites providing such additional services, resources, or events.

## **Activities to Promote Postsecondary Preparation and Success**

**Of all 19 grantees, 63 percent used at least some NAM funds for postsecondary preparation and success activities, including credit recovery prevention and intervention, visits to college campuses, and visits to a college-based learning center.**

Many of these grantees' NAM-funded programs offered targeted academic, social, and emotional support to students to keep them on track to graduate and acquire the necessary academic skills to succeed in postsecondary education. Credit recovery was one approach a few of these grantees took to support students at risk of dropping out or failing to meet college application requirements. For example, one grantee used its NAM funds to develop an alternative learning and credit recovery program. The program initially consisted of recruiting recent dropouts to complete coursework for credit and earn a diploma but was expanded over the course of the grant to serve students still in school but identified as at risk of dropping out. According to the grant coordinator for this site, the alternative learning center had demonstrated such success that the district decided to adopt the model and was using it districtwide. The grant coordinator attributed the expansion of this credit recovery model to the grant, stating, "A lot of things started in this grant-funded program that have expanded, not only expanded to what we envisioned originally, but expanded to encompass all schools in the district. All communities in the district."

As another example, one grantee site had purchased an entire dropout prevention curriculum using NAM funds. The curriculum supported their advisory program for students. Advising sessions were structured around strategies for developing a personal network of people that could support students in

their efforts to graduate from high school. Other strategies included establishing interim goals that ensure the student makes progress toward graduation and determining college and career aspirations. Another grantee was providing online credit recovery courses for students who were falling behind in specific courses. These courses were offered every day for 90 minutes and were overseen and facilitated by the technology coordinator for the site.

Some grantees reported focusing more broadly on improving their students' academic outcomes as a way to facilitate their matriculation into postsecondary education. For example, some worked to improve learning outcomes in ELP with the expectation that students would score higher on standardized tests, better positioning them to meet postsecondary application requirements and be better equipped to perform well in college-level entry courses like English and writing. In particular, the evaluator for one grantee indicated the grantee's approach to using Native language instruction as a strategy for increasing achievement in ELP, and subsequently, increasing college readiness and likelihood of successful transition into a postsecondary program.

In addition to improving academic outcomes to promote postsecondary success, grantees reported using NAM funds to support programming that exposes students to postsecondary opportunities. Some grantees reported that many of their sites' students lack experience and knowledge about postsecondary opportunities and require additional support in exploring their options in furthering their education. This was a priority for the grantee because so many of the NA/AN students being served would be first-generation college-going students and have not had the exposure and experience of seeing many people in the community and in their families pursuing postsecondary degrees or credentials. One principal described the "college-going mentality" that they had established and been able to enhance at their school with the support of the NAM grant.

Some of these grantees described creating partnerships with local colleges and universities on projects and visits to college campuses for students. One grant coordinator explained how the campus visits provided students with the exposure necessary to get them interested and comfortable with applying to college:

*Our students visiting the campuses, it gives them a little bit of insight and knowledge that college is not that far away, it's just a drive. I know a lot of our students, not wanting to leave family, they don't realize [college location] is just a two and a half-hour drive, three with traffic. So I think that exposing them to the college visits is really wonderful, it's really great. Helping them with all of their paperwork, I think that a lot of our students don't realize that applications take a lot and teaching them [how to fill out] that first one, [then] they just take it from there.*

This grantee also invited the local colleges to visit the school, and they set up informational tables in the cafeteria for students to visit and learn about the various postsecondary opportunities available to them.

In addition to connecting students to postsecondary educational opportunities, some grantees used NAM funds to bring in guest speakers and presenters to the school to introduce them to different careers. One site invited representatives from the various tribal services and departments to demonstrate to students how what they are learning in schools can translate into the job market. One of the elders involved in the program explained,

*We have a full gamut of tribal services and programs, fisheries, wildlife, forestry, land, real estate, economics, accounting, administration, health administration, etc. We have people that can bring that in, and many of them are tribal members, so that helps the*

*student begin to understand the relevance of what they're learning to the real world and to the employment world.*

In sum, grantees approached postsecondary preparation and success through various formats and activities, but with the central focus on building students' awareness of their potential for success in a variety of postsecondary pathways, while providing them with the academic supports and tools to achieve this potential.

## **Activities to Promote Early Childhood Development**

**Of all 19 grantees, 47 percent used NAM funds for early childhood development activities, including to engage parents and families in early literacy activities, provide professional development, and hire elders to provide NA/AN languages and cultural instruction.**

For those grantees that dedicated a portion of their grants to supporting young children's early English literacy, in some cases they focused on bilingualism, and, more broadly, the foundational skill sets needed for school readiness and long-term academic success. Many of the grantees' early childhood development activities were linked to efforts focused on engaging parents and families in their children's learning. For one grantee, this meant providing families with books they could keep in their homes, thereby increasing the presence and accessibility of reading materials for children and their parents and families alike. Rather than send a prechosen set of books home to families, the grantee decided to invite families into the school with their children to select their own books from a take-home library of literature. The intent was to give parents, families, and students agency and ownership over their reading materials to help ensure that families had books on hand that would motivate them to read together.

Another site focused on early childhood development hosted afterschool family activities, in which parents and families, alongside their children, worked on tablets to learn both English and Native language vocabulary together. According to the site's cultural liaison, parents learned how to engage with their children academically and were encouraged to incorporate practices at home that enhanced their children's learning. Similarly, another grantee coordinated regularly scheduled opportunities for parents and families to work with their children under the guidance of the early childhood teacher, who would model strategies for engaging young children in learning experiences.

Another grantee leveraged their staff members' ties to the community to recruit parents and families with young children to participate in the site's early childhood program. Staff conducted home visits to provide information about the program and show parents and families some of the practices and learning activities children would have access to through the program. According to program staff, their outreach efforts had generated positive results in terms of participation and students' readiness for kindergarten: "We actually had some young children who came into our program not knowing their colors or shapes or ABCs and then they excelled using the program, the games that were on there. We did see a big improvement." This grantee's program used technology to provide individualized learning through tablet applications tailored to a child's age and academic level. Other activities included building a culture of oral reading to improve literary levels.

Many of these grantees described using NAM funds to further develop current or existing early English literacy education programs. For example, one grantee launched a Native language initiative focused on children ages 0–5 that focused on developing children's awareness of the Native language and

cultural traditions. A coordinator who worked on this initiative described how the pedagogy manifested in the classroom:

*[Students] sit around the carpet like they do for their regular carpet, or circle time.... And they talk about different [Native language] words for family members. They talk about numbers, and colors and they talk about kitchen utensils and clothing for the kids to learn. And then they kind of try to converse with the kids in those languages, in those topics.*

Another grantee devoted grant funds to developing outdoor learning spaces. The grant coordinator described planting trees, building a Native longhouse, and creating an outdoor learning lab with a nature trail.

In addition to providing formal and informal learning experiences, some grantees incorporated language and literacy screenings and assessments to design interventions and monitor young children's school readiness. For example, building off a prior grant, one grantee used assessment data to place their early elementary students in learning groups with children demonstrating similar language and skill levels. Their instructional framework integrated guided reading, self-selected reading, writing, and working with words into the small-group instruction.

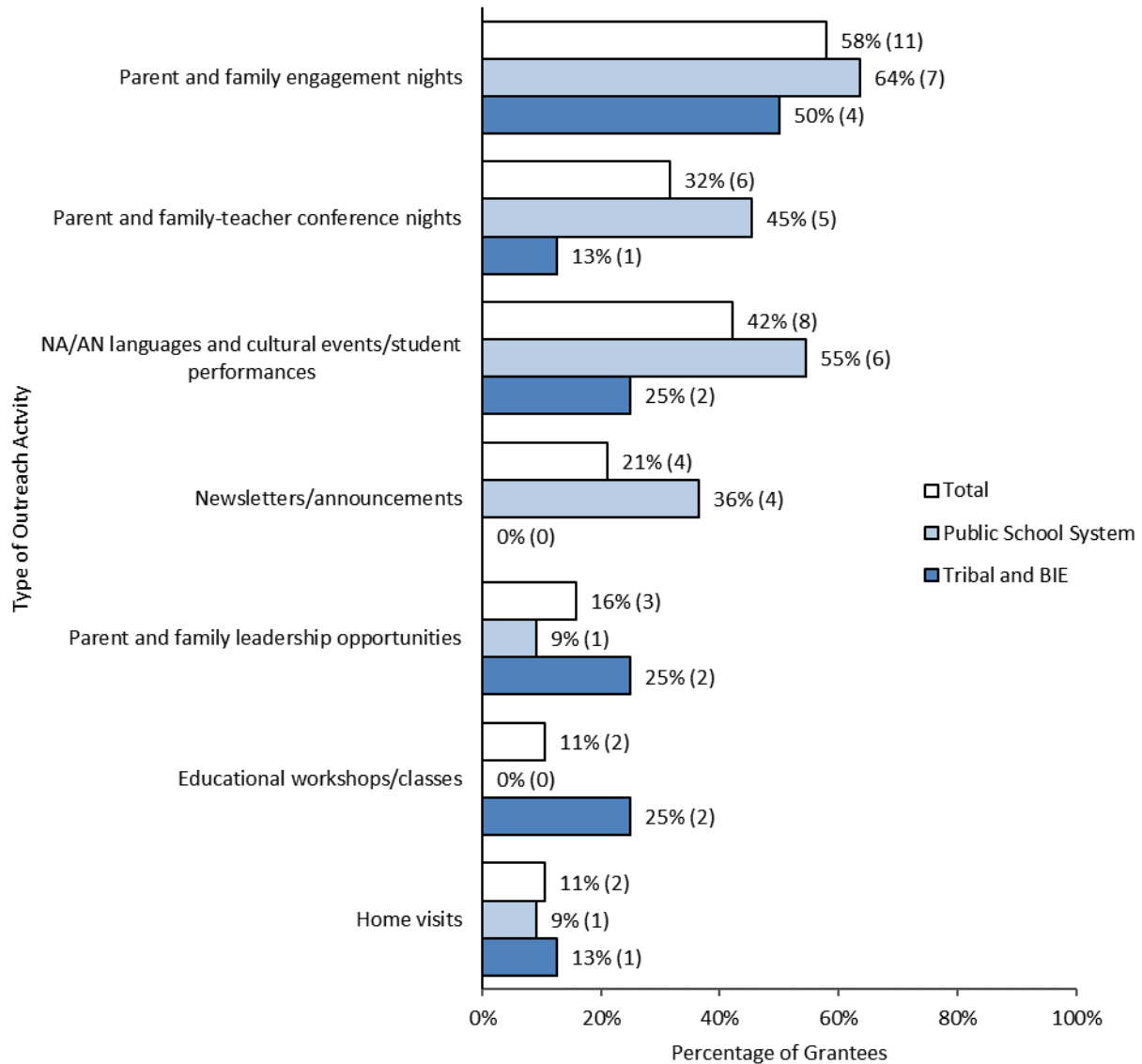
Some grantees also used NAM to provide professional development for early childhood educators. At one site, for example, a district official with expertise in early childhood education was brought in to develop teachers' understanding of early child behavior to support content instruction. Teachers learned classroom management strategies and how to leverage technology to enhance teaching and learning among young students. Another site was supporting elders from the community to rotate among classrooms, providing Native language and cultural instruction during designated times of the day.

## Activities to Engage Parents and Families

**All 19 grantees described using NAM funds to support new or enhance existing efforts to involve parents and families in their children's learning, including through parent and family engagement nights, student performances and traditional Native festivals, and resources for parents and families to support children's learning at home.**

In addition to engaging parents and families in early literacy activities, more than half (11) of the grantees described parent and family involvement as an important component of their NAM grant and broader strategies for school improvement. Overall, tribal and BIE grantees and public school system grantees did not appear to differ in the types of parent and family engagement resources and activities they mentioned supporting with NAM, although public school system grantees were more likely to mention parent and family-teacher conference nights, NA/AN languages and cultural events or student performances, and newsletters and announcements; while tribal and BIE grantees were more likely to mention parent and family leadership opportunities and educational workshops or classes (see Exhibit 13).

**Exhibit 13. Percentage of all FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees using NAM funds to implement outreach activities to engage parents and families, by grantee governance type**



**Exhibit reads:** Fifty-eight percent of all FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees reported using NAM funds to support parent and family engagement nights.

Notes: Many grantees reported funding more than one type of activity; therefore, the total percentage of grantees in the exhibit does not add to 100 percent.

Source: Interviews with stakeholders at 19 NAM grantee sites, including eight tribal and BIE grantees and 11 public school system grantees.

Most commonly, grantees described organizing parent and family engagement nights with at least some NAM funding. The focus and structure of the parent and family engagement nights varied by grantee, but in general, these engagement nights occurred at least once a month and consisted of supplemental mathematics and/or literacy activities, and workshops and trainings for parents on the learning that was occurring at school and how to support their children’s learning at home.

A few grantees also reported reaching out to families more directly by going into the community rather than just inviting parents and families into the school. Two grantees reported conducting home visits to complement the family engagement nights. The home visits provided similar resources and activities as those that were provided during the family engagement night events. The intent was to ensure that parents and families that were unable to attend events at the school still received the information they needed to support their children's learning at home and to feel connected to the school. The grant coordinator for one of these sites described the motivation behind offering home visits and their perceived impact:

*Our goal with the program was to meet the families where they were. It was convenient for us to be on-site with our game nights, but there were a lot of times where the home visits were much more convenient to student transportation and schedules and business of life getting in the way. That's actually where I think a lot of our best efforts took place, in the homes with the families, providing activities similar to our game nights but on an individual basis.*

Close to half (eight) of the grantees reported engaging parents and families through cultural activities. Cultural events included, for example, traditional meal sharing, tribal arts and crafts, student performances, tribal ceremonies, and storytelling. One grantee site organized formal events regularly. The grant coordinator explained, "We had cultural events every quarter that were coordinated by the case manager person, where we would do potluck lunches, we would do arts and crafts. We would make traditional box and drums."

Another strategy some grantees reported to engage parents and family members was offering educational opportunities and workshops on various topics. These educational opportunities were often related to their children's educational experiences; for example, workshops that focused on topics such as higher education financial aid or bullying. However, the educational opportunities for parents and family members also included furthering their own education and skills. One grantee site offered a technology class on Saturdays for parents, elders, and other community members. The instructor provided technical support ranging from how to turn on a computer, to how to operate a smartphone and tablet, to filling out online forms and applications.

Another site was using a portion of the grant funds to support a general equivalency diploma program for adults in the community. The program was designed for non-traditional students and operated two nights per week. According to the grant coordinator, the program was successfully graduating at least a few students each year.

The next section of the report addresses how grantees worked with partners to either directly provide services or lend support to the various types of services grantees were funding with NAM.





## Chapter III. Grant Partners and Their Roles

To build capacity, NAM grantee applicants were encouraged, although not required, to work with partnering organizations to support and implement grant activities. In particular, grantees were encouraged to establish sustained partnerships that reflect relationships that have adequate resources and supports to continue beyond the grant period. OELA does not have a formal definition of a partner, although the 2011 and 2013 grant applications included examples of possible partners, including community groups, tribal organizations, and tribal and non-tribal colleges and universities.

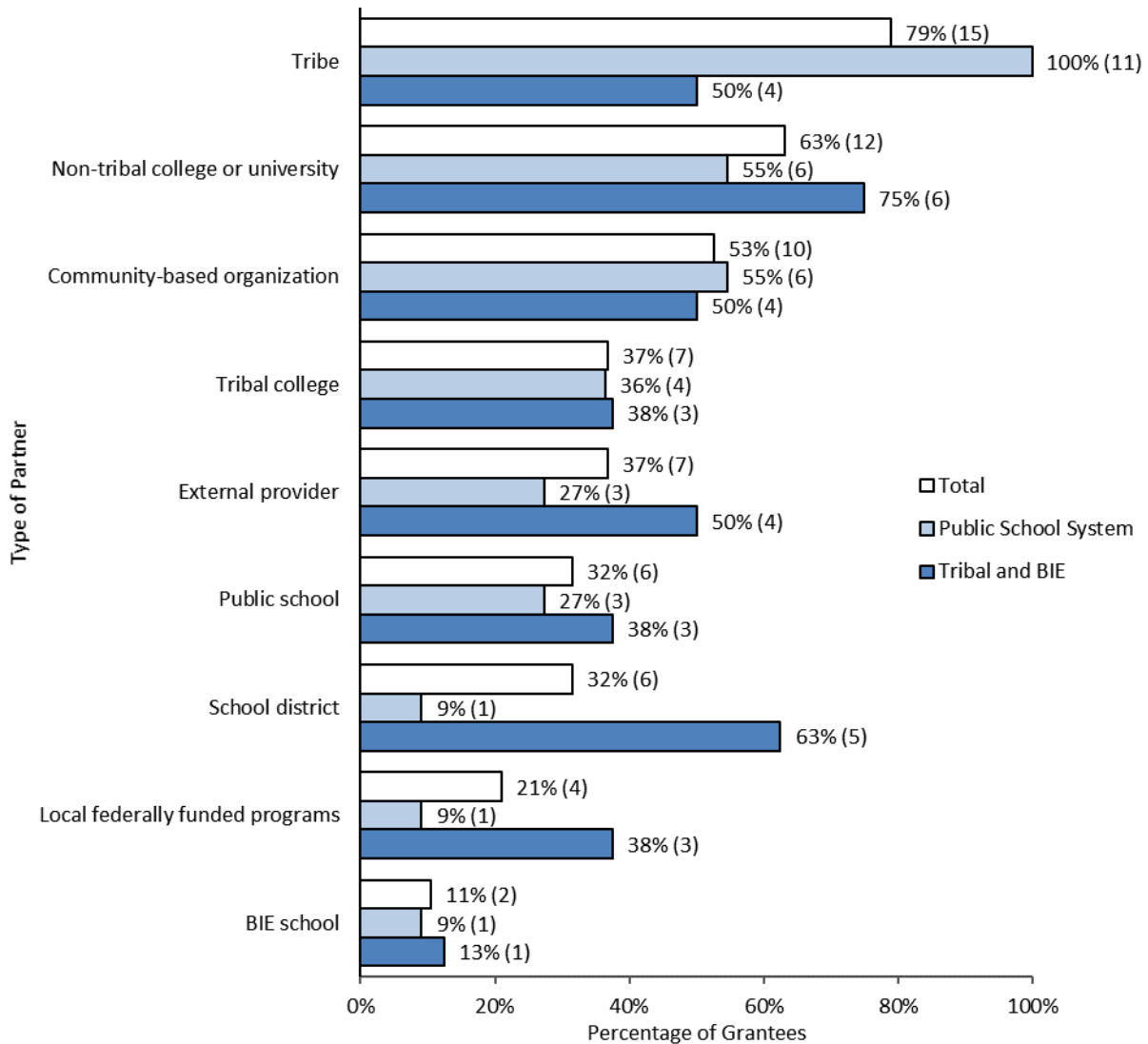
One objective of this study was to understand how grantees worked with different types of partners and for what purposes. This chapter describes the types of partnerships that grantees established across all 19 sites, and the roles partners played in supporting NAM programs, including providing NAM-funded activities and services to help ensure the grantees' success in achieving their projects' goals and objectives.

### Types of Partners

**All of the grantees reported working with at least one partner to gain professional or cultural expertise to support or provide funded activities; the most common type of partners across all grantees were tribes, followed by nontribal colleges and universities and community-based organizations.**

Public school system grantees more frequently reported developing partnerships with tribes to help ensure that grant activities reflected and honored tribal values and cultural knowledge. All 11 of the public school systems reported partnering with tribes, whereas, among the eight tribal and BIE grantee sites, half reported partnering with the local tribe to support grant implementation. Tribal and BIE grantees more frequently partnered with a wide variety of partners than public school system grantees, including non-tribal colleges or universities, external providers, school districts, and local federally funded programs (see Exhibit 14).

**Exhibit 14. Percentages of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees working with different partner types to gain support for program activities, by governance type**



**Exhibit reads:** Seventy-nine percent of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees reported that they worked with a tribe to gain support for NAM program activities.

Notes: Many grantees reported having multiple partners; therefore, the total percentage of grantees in the chart does not add to 100 percent. Source: Interviews with stakeholders at 19 NAM grantee sites, including eight tribal and BIE grantees and 11 public school system grantees.

Nontribal colleges and universities were the next most common type of partner across all 19 grantees, with 12 of the grantees reporting a relationship with these institutions. Community-based organizations<sup>12</sup> were also a common type of partner among approximately half (10) of the 19 grantees. Slightly more than one-third of the grantees (seven) had partnerships with a tribal college. Five of the

<sup>12</sup> For the purpose of this study, “community-based organizations” are nonprofit organizations that served the educational, health, and social welfare of low socioeconomic status (SES) communities, including NA/AN communities. Some examples of the organizations that grantees reported working with included community health clinics, Boys & Girls Clubs, and community learning centers and adult education centers.

tribal and BIE grantees partnered with school districts, whereas one out of 11 public school system entities had a partnership with a school district. These grantees typically described partnering with school districts for professional assistance, including professional development and assistance with assessments. Seven grantees worked in partnership with external providers, including receiving professional development and strategies for parent and family engagement. Six grantees partnered with public schools, some focusing on early childhood development. Small percentages of grantees reported working with other types of partners such as local federally funded programs<sup>13</sup> (four) and BIE schools (two).

## **Roles of Partners in Supporting NAM-Funded Services**

Although all 19 grantees reported developing a relationship with at least one partner, some, particularly FY 2011 grantees whose grants had ended, could not easily recall or describe the specific roles each of their partners played in grant implementation. Nevertheless, many grantees reported that their NAM program activities were closely related and coordinated with other initiatives and programs with similar goals and objectives, for example, in the areas of early childhood development and NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization. Grantees often perceived the individuals and organizations leading these other efforts as NAM grant “partners.”

The partnerships formed across the 19 grantees were diverse and unique to the circumstances of each site. Grantees described working with partners to fill a gap in services, address a specific need of the site (e.g., specialized training for teachers), or supplement the services already being provided by the site related to the grant. Although some entities and organizations were described as formal partners on the grant, others were identified as more informal partners that, because of shared goals, community interests, and/or interrelated activities, were providing supports that enriched grantees’ funded services. In some cases, the partners were the beneficiaries and received services as a result of the grantee’s award. For example, three tribal and BIE grantees partnered with school sites to deliver funded services to students who were members of the tribe.

The roles of the various partners with whom grantees collaborated, consulted, or formally engaged as part of their grant largely centered on supporting grantees’ activities related to their high priority areas such as revitalizing NA/AN languages and cultures, providing ELD instruction and professional development to teachers, parent and family outreach, and preparation for postsecondary success.

### **Seventy-nine percent of the 19 grantees, including all 11 public school system grantees, reported that local tribes supported NAM-funded activities.**

Grantees described working with tribes for a variety of purposes, including to support their grant efforts related to many of the high-priority areas cited above such as NA/AN languages instruction and cultural revitalization, curriculum development, ELD instruction, parent and family engagement, and preparation for postsecondary success. One grantee consulted with the local tribal council regularly for assistance with NA/AN cultural activities and events. A respondent from this site described how the tribal council helped support and facilitate one of the school’s main literacy activities, stating,

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<sup>13</sup> For the purpose of this study, “local federally funded programs” are local programs that are federally funded and provide services to low-income families, including NA/AN families. These programs support and enhance the NAM-funded activities. Some examples of the programs that grantees reported working with included Early Head Start and the Child Care and Development Fund.

*One of our big literacy activities in the fall is to do a berry-picking trip and to write about it. Between the school and the community, we have volunteers that come and help bring us [berries], and then we use that as place-based writing and language development activities. The... Tribal Council has been a supporter and a partner on that project.*

Another public school system grantee worked with a tribe to bring a NA/AN storyteller into the school. The storyteller presented stories about Native history and other culturally relevant topics in the English and Native American History classes. Another public school system grantee with a primary focus on postsecondary preparation and success had formed a partnership with the local tribe to offer students the opportunity to complete a work study program with the tribe. The college-going students targeted by this grantee completed 20 hours of community service with the tribe in return for a stipend to help defray tuition costs.

A small number of the tribal and BIE grantees, which included two BIE school grantees and a tribal college grantee, also reported forming important relationships with tribes. One of these grantees described the role the tribal leaders and elders played in strengthening the community's connection to the school and engaging parents and families in grant-funded activities. Although the tribal members conducting family outreach were not necessarily funded by the grant, the grant coordinator explained that just by virtue of the shared vision for supporting NA/AN students between tribal leaders and grant leaders, the "tribe is very present with all that we do." The grant coordinator went on to describe how the elders were a regular presence in the school, working with families, reading to the children, and interacting and engaging with the staff. Another one of the tribal and BIE grantees worked closely with the tribe to organize and implement an NA/AN language program, including the day-to-day operations of compiling the lesson plans, books, and other materials for the teachers to be able to teach the Native language. The tribe also assisted the grantee with monthly cultural activities, including a blessing feast.

**Sixty-three percent of the grantees formed partnerships with non-tribal colleges and universities, and 37 percent had partnerships with tribal colleges.**

Almost two-thirds of all grantees (12) partnered with a non-tribal college or university to provide professional development as part of their grants. Grantees reported forming these partnerships to draw on the expertise of individual faculty members, send teams of teachers to teacher training centers located within the universities, or to support their efforts related to their grant priority area of postsecondary preparation and success. The training that these faculty experts and university centers provided typically focused on developing teachers' own proficiency and fluency in the NA/AN language of their community or their overall professional growth as educators, strategies and methods for teaching indigenous languages, or instructional practices for developing NA/AN ELs' ELP. Grantee respondents frequently described the value that the professional development college and university faculty and training centers provided. For example, one grantee spoke about how the language courses the local university offered helped teachers develop a stronger understanding of the structure of the Native language, which, in turn, was leading to more robust Native language instruction in the classroom. The grant coordinator for another site explained how their ongoing relationship with the local university was ensuring that teachers had access to professional development and opportunities to earn continuing education unit (CEU) credits.

Some grantees partnered with local community colleges as well as universities to provide dual-credit education, typically for English and NA/AN language or second language course credits to support their grant priority area of postsecondary preparation and success. As an example, one tribal grantee partnered with a university and a school district for this purpose. During summer academies, students

earned half a credit from the university and half a credit from the district for coursework completed. Tribal college partners also worked with some grantees to offer dual-credit education and, in other cases, helped grantees with parent and family engagement. One grantee described collaborating with the tribal college to convene community meetings that involved representatives from the tribal college, tribal elders, and parents. The meetings were used to gain the elders' and parents' input on the NA/AN language and cultural curriculum the site was implementing.

**Fifty-three percent of the grantees developed relationships with community-based organizations, including community health clinics and community centers focused on student learning and adult education.**

For example, one grantee with a priority area focus on early childhood development established a relationship with a clinic to post early English literacy resources for families and new mothers. The grant coordinator described the purpose and significance of this partnership, stating,

*This is a Native-serving clinic where a lot of our folks in the area go.... [We] were able to get them to agree to our putting some of our literacy materials in the clinic, in the waiting room.... I like that because a lot of [Native tribe name] mothers come there for their pediatric problems. It allows us to impact a group of mothers [whose children] are not yet our students.... Early literacy is something we're committed to.*

As another example, a grantee worked with a local organization to secure space for the site's grant-funded afterschool program. This relationship was essential to implementing this component of the grant because the grantee site itself did not have sufficient space to hold the program on the school's campus. To further support the grantee's goals for NAM and serve the broader interests of the community, the organization hired one of the grantee site's teachers to provide homework help to students in their Native language.

**Thirty-seven percent of the grantees developed partnerships with external providers to support NA/AN languages and culture revitalization, ELD, or parent and family engagement activities.**

For example, one public school system grantee contracted with an external consultant with specialization in literacy to strengthen teachers' abilities to meet the English language learning needs of NA/AN ELs. This specialist also coached teachers directly in the classroom. As another example, a tribal grantee that had a focus area of parent and family engagement worked with external consultants who assisted with convening regularly scheduled parent meetings supported by the NAM grant. These meetings included a broad range of topics including education of NA/AN students in general, what the parents would like the school to offer, how to improve the NA/AN students' reading performance.

**Almost one-third of the grantees developed partnerships with public schools and school districts (each) to support activities related to grant design and development, enhancing NA/AN ELs' academic success, NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization, and technical assistance.**

For example, a public school system grantee partnered with multiple schools both to serve as implementation sites for grant-funded activities and to convene meetings with various stakeholders to plan and make grant-related decisions. According to the grant coordinator, the meetings were used to

ensure a shared vision and collective buy-in for the grant's goals and objectives on NA/AN language instruction and cultural revitalization. Administrators, the teachers providing NA/AN language and cultural instruction, and a school board member from the schools were present at these meetings and invited to provide input on planned activities. One tribal grantee described the role of the school district partner in the interpretation of ELP assessment data. The grant coordinator explained how the school district helped the grantee first choose the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) model<sup>14</sup> for assessing students' English language proficiency and learning needs and then provided professional development to all teachers on the assessment:

*They introduced us to the WIDA model and the WIDA testing program. We had the instructor go through the testing so that she could actually facilitate this on-site and provide this testing to basically show us their progress and not wait until they took the test in the classroom, which doesn't happen very frequently. With training, we could actually do that much more often to have a better pulse on what's going on with their progression.*

Another tribal grantee partnered with a school district where the district provided services to the grantee under the NAM grant. The grant coordinator reported the school district provided the teacher of record, who had more than 20 years of language instruction teaching, who incorporated Native cultures and heritage languages into the public schools' core subjects, including ELA. That partnership was key because otherwise they would not have a heritage language teacher to support the grantee's NAM priorities.

A respondent from another one of the tribal and BIE grantees reported partnering with a public school district for assistance in recruiting parents to participate in the grantee's activities, and for assistance with technology: "A lot of the technology support that we received in-house [from the school district's] IT Department help[ed] us out in navigating some of [the] technology equipment."

Other partner types included federally funded program sites, reported by 21 percent of the grantees; and BIE schools, reported by 11 percent of the grantees. Of the grantees that considered federally funded programs as grant partners, one tribal grantee reported that their local Early Head Start program supported their early childhood development activities under NAM by serving as the implementation site for grant-funded activities. The school director of the Early Head Start site worked with the grant coordinator to ensure that there was a daily schedule and structure for incorporating NA/AN languages and cultural instruction into the curriculum. Another tribal grantee indicated that they think of the Child Care and Development Fund as a partner because the local program shares many of the same goals and provides supplemental funding to enhance the NAM-funded activities that align with their program's key priorities. One public system grantee and one tribal grantee each reported partnering with BIE schools to support grant funded NA/AN language and cultural instruction and revitalization activities.

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<sup>14</sup> WIDA supports academic language development and academic achievement for linguistically diverse students through high-quality standards, assessments, research, and professional development for educators (<https://www.wida.us/>).

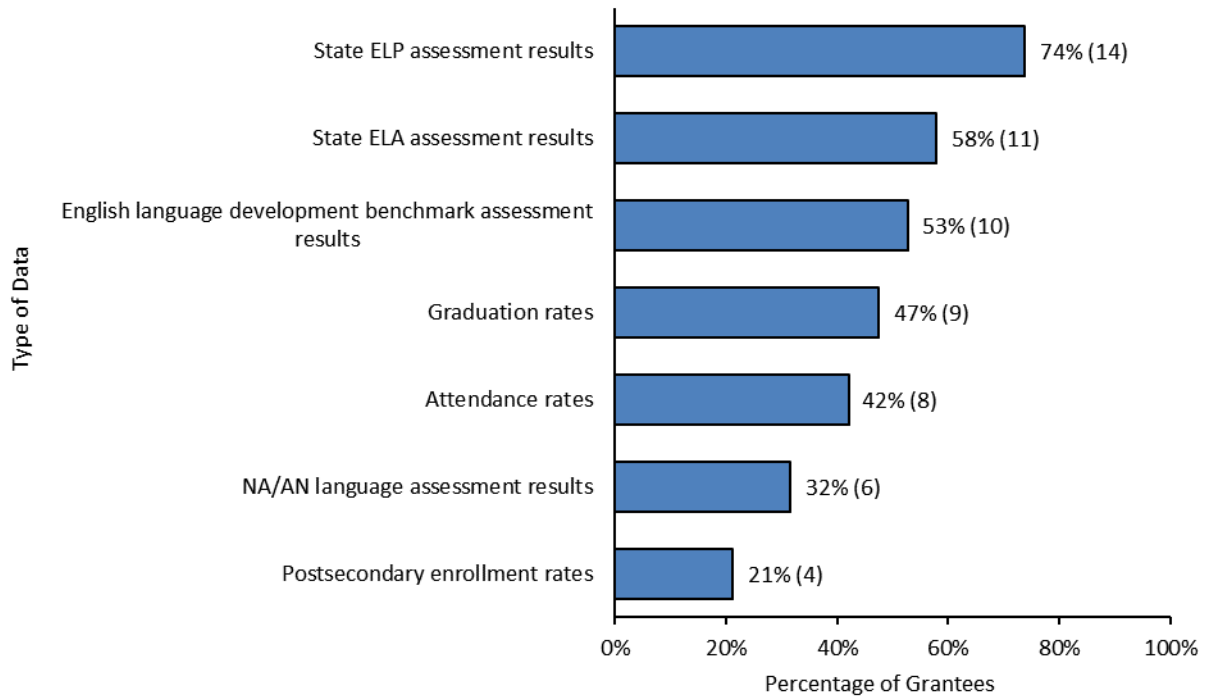
## Chapter IV. Measures and Uses of Data

A component of the study was to explore how grantees measured progress of NAM-funded services. Grantees relied on data to monitor how well their funded activities were addressing the needs of their teachers and students and to adjust implementation as needed. Evaluators complemented this process, but typically provided the external, third-party review of grant-funded services to answer specific grant evaluation questions about grant outcomes and to make recommendations to grant leaders and/or to assist with federal reporting requirements, accordingly. In some cases, the types of measures used by grant leaders and evaluators overlapped; there were also cases where evaluators interacted with grant leaders on a regular basis, not just annually, to provide both formative and summative feedback on grant-funded services.

The first part of this chapter describes the types of data the 19 grantees measured to inform grant activities, and how they used and shared the results of these data. The second part of the chapter describes how the project evaluators were involved in assessing NAM grantees' progress toward achieving their goals and objectives.

### **Types of Measures and Data Used by Grantees**

The NAM program required grantees to collect and report student ELP assessment data, and many of the grantees in this study reported monitoring the success of grant activities using this measure as well as multiple other measures. The most common measure grantees reported using for their internal monitoring of grant progress was the state ELP assessment, followed by state ELA assessments and state, district, or classroom English benchmark and progress monitoring assessments, including those embedded in commercial reading programs. Some grantees also reviewed student high school graduation rates, student attendance rates, and postsecondary enrollment rates to determine the extent to which the NAM-funded activities seemed to be helping them achieve their goals for the grant. Many grantees reported using multiple measures to assess and inform grant activities (see Exhibit 15).

**Exhibit 15. Percentages of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees using data to measure and monitor progress of students and funded services**


**Exhibit reads:** Seventy-four percent of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees reported using state ELP test data to monitor progress of students and funded services.

Note: Many grantees reported using multiple types of data; therefore, the total percentage of grantees in the exhibit does not add to 100 percent.  
Source: Interviews with grantee stakeholders at 19 NAM grantee sites.

**Grantees' most frequently reported data to monitor progress were state ELP assessment results (74 percent), state ELA assessment results (58 percent), and ELD benchmark and progress monitoring assessment results (53 percent). Grantees reported using NA/AN language proficiency data less commonly (32 percent).**

Relatively few grantee sites reported using NA/AN language oral proficiency measures to monitor progress, at least partly because of the paucity of formal assessments focused on Native language learning. When available to grantees, NA/AN language assessments often complemented ELP assessments to measure students' language acquisition and inform curriculum and programming. Grantees that reported using NA/AN language assessment measures often noted that their assessments were more qualitative than quantitative. One grant coordinator explained how the Native language immersion teachers were in the process of improving the Native language oral proficiency assessment to facilitate more robust tracking of student progress.

In the absence of a formal NA/AN language assessment, many grantees reported using alternative types of more informal measures to assess and monitor progress of NA/AN language acquisition. Some grantees reported conducting observations of students to assess the prevalence of NA/AN language being used in the school, and implementing "language challenges" for students to take home and complete with their families. At least two grantees reported using NAM funds to develop their own



classroom assessment of NA/AN language acquisition. One evaluator working with a tribal grantee explained the grantee's Native language fluency assessment process:

*We put together an observational protocol that evaluated [Native] language skill sets and the [Native language teachers] would sit down at the beginning of every school year in December and then at the end of school year and evaluate the proficiency of the kids. This was not the kids actually taking a test, they're doing some sort of self-assessment. It was the [Native] language teachers evaluating and ranking the skills of the individual children.*

In some instances, grantees reported challenges with measuring certain types of data and used strategies to overcome some of these challenges. One grantee that reported postsecondary success as a high priority for their grant-funded activities experienced challenges in measuring quantitative data on postsecondary enrollment. As an alternate for enrollment data, the grantee, and the evaluators who were working closely with the grantee, decided to use ACT participation rates for gauging the extent to which students' college readiness and likelihood of enrolling in a postsecondary program was increasing over time.

## Uses of Data to Inform Grantee Activities

**Grantees reported using and sharing the data they measured in a variety of ways, most frequently to determine students' ELP growth and to make instructional decisions such as student placement into leveled reading groups or intensive reading intervention programs for targeted skills support.**

ELP data were the most common type of data measured among all grantees, and, consequently, almost all grantees reported using data to track ELP growth in their students. Tracking student growth in ELP allows grantees to evaluate their instructional effectiveness, assess their progress toward meeting their NAM goals, and make data-driven decisions about curriculum and programming in ELD instruction.

Grantees also described using up to weekly or biweekly progress monitoring data, often pulled from reading program software, to make small-group reading adjustments and ensure that teachers had the data they needed to target small-group instruction on specific skill areas. Some sites were implementing intensive intervention programs, and these grantees indicated that intervention decisions were primarily data driven.

Data that measured student growth in ELP also allowed grantees to reflect on strategies and programs that work well at their school and programming that may require improvement. One grant coordinator described how their school used ELP data to modify their curriculum to ensure that students were successful in their ELD courses as well as on their state assessments:

*We had...EL students not doing well in the language arts courses, failing them as well as not doing well on the state assessment at the time and the EL assessment.... We made modifications to [an ELA] course that would meet the needs of the students to not only be successful on the standard-based assessment and the high-school graduation qualifying exam but also prepar[e] them to be successful in their regular English class.*

In addition to using data to improve student programming and outcomes, some grantees reported using data to inform and target professional development for teachers, including data on students' progress and performance on ELD assessments as well as any data available on how students were developing in

their NA/AN language learning. In particular, grantees described identifying data use and data-driven decision making as an area for improved practice among their teachers.

## Grant Evaluation Activities

In addition to collecting and using student achievement and progress monitoring data for their own purposes to monitor how well their funded activities were addressing the needs of their teachers and students, 2011 and 2013 NAM grantees, when applying for grant funds, were asked to describe in their applications a plan to evaluate their projects, responding to such factors as: “(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.”

To gain an understanding of how grantees implemented the evaluation plans included in their funded applications, the study team conducted interviews with 12 of the grantees’ external evaluators.<sup>15</sup> Evaluators were asked to comment on their role as evaluators, including how often they interacted with grant leadership; their understanding of the NAM project’s goals and objectives; and what data collection activities they conducted, including the measures they used to track progress and outcomes of grant-funded services. At the remaining grantee sites where the evaluator was not available for an interview, grant coordinators were asked to report on evaluation activities.

**Although there is no requirement for an evaluator to be external to the NAM project, 18 of the 19 grantees had external evaluators who collected and analyzed project data across the grant period. At one grantee site, the grant coordinator took on the role of the evaluator.**

Some of the evaluators were located near the grantee site, whereas others lived in other states, some at a great distance from the grantee site. When the evaluators were located near the grantee, the interactions between the grantee and the evaluator were typically more frequent, with evaluators reporting that they visited the grantee site to collect or reviewed data with program leads monthly or a few times a year. At one site, the evaluator visited as often as once a week. Although having a local evaluator appeared to facilitate more frequent in-person engagement, grantees with evaluators that were not in close proximity, overall, did not indicate any specific challenges due to their evaluator’s distance from the site. One evaluator, however, indicated that the evaluation activities were limited during the second half of the grant period because the budget did not include money for travel. In general, grantees expressed appreciation for the information and supports their evaluators provided in helping them assess and report on grant activities and student performance.

All of the 12 external evaluators interviewed had a number of years of experience as evaluators, program developers, and/or researchers. At least two evaluators had expertise in education and language acquisition. The majority of them had been the project evaluator from the inception of the NAM grant, with only one of the FY 2013 grantee evaluators starting in fall 2016 and another after the first year of the grant. In the latter cases, the evaluator came on later during the grant period to help

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<sup>15</sup> The study team was unable to interview the external evaluators for the remaining six sites because of the unavailability of these evaluators to participate in data collection activities during the study’s data collection window. However, grant coordinators provided information on the evaluators’ data collection activities at these six sites.

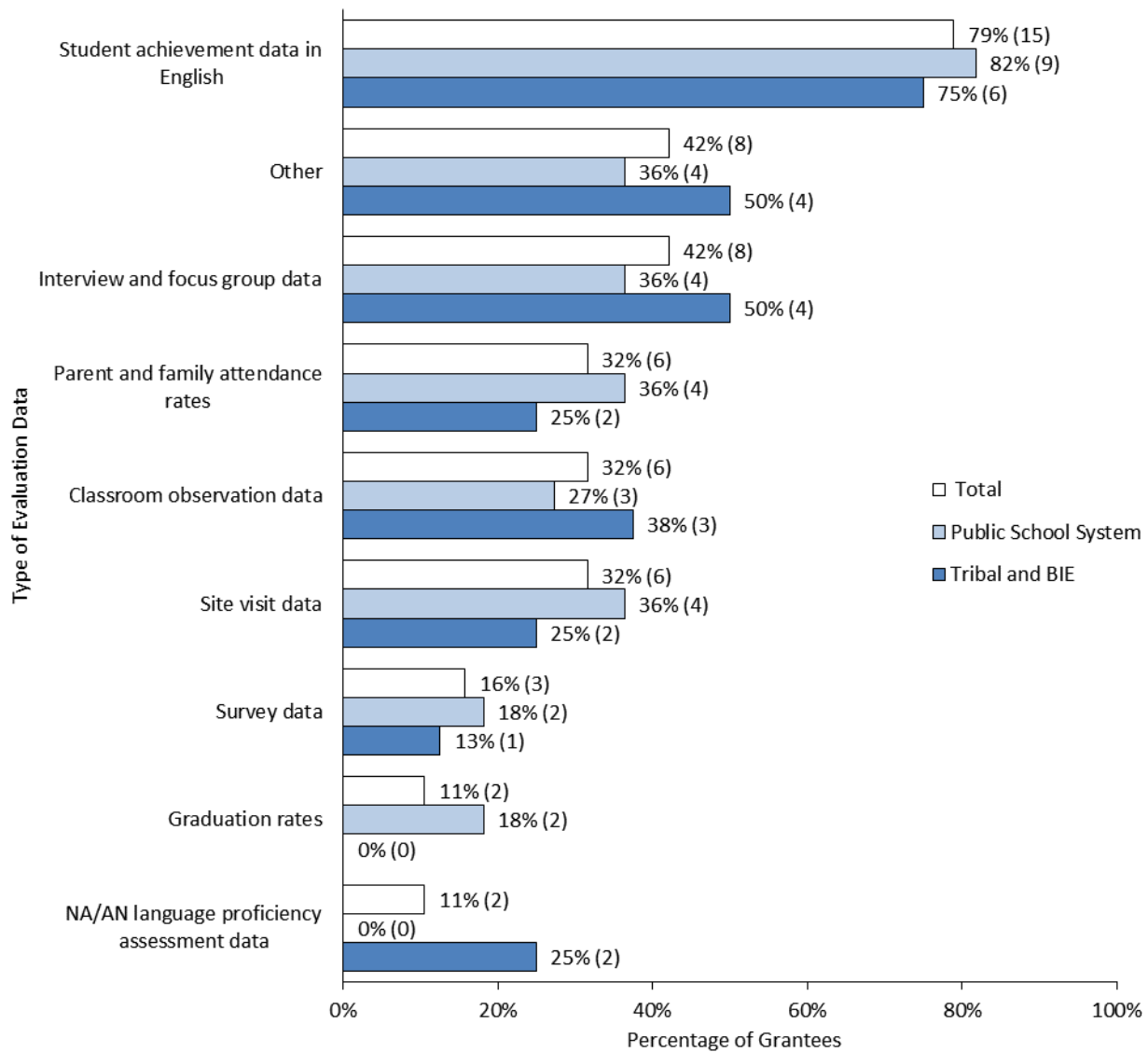
grantees formalize their evaluation activities or fill specific gaps in the evaluation procedures that had been in place. For the most part, a single individual was responsible for the evaluation; however, at two grantee sites, two evaluators worked as a team, and at another site, there was one primary evaluator that oversaw a team of data collectors.

**Grant evaluations relied on multiple sources of data, both qualitative and quantitative, to assess NAM grantees' progress toward achieving their goals and objectives. Similar to grant leaders, evaluators typically collected student achievement data in English, but other types of measures were collected through stakeholder surveys, interviews, and site visits.**

The grant coordinators and grant evaluators commonly reported during interviews that they used the state ELP assessment data to evaluate the potential impact and success of their NAM-funded projects. This is appropriate given the focus of the NAM program and because student ELP achievement is a required measure. State ELA assessment data were equally commonly reported as an important evaluation measure (by 15 grantees). The evaluators for 42 percent (eight) of the grantees also conducted interviews and focus groups with stakeholders to measure implementation activities and progress toward grant goals.

Approximately one-third (six each) of the grantees' evaluators reporting measuring grant implementation through site visits, classroom observations, and a review of parent and family attendance rates at school events. The evaluators for a small proportion of grantees (three) reported administering surveys to teachers and the parents or families of NAM students, and two grantees reported using graduation rates as an evaluation metric. Two grantees reported that formative NA/AN language proficiency assessment data factored into the evaluation. There were no distinct differences in the evaluators' data collection activities between tribal and BIE grantees and public school system grantees, other than graduation rates, which were collected by evaluators for public school system grantees only, and NA/AN language proficiency assessment data for tribal and BIE grantees only (see Exhibit 16).

**Exhibit 16. Percentages of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees reporting an evaluator collected data for evaluation, by governance type**



**Exhibit reads:** Seventy-nine percent of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees reported that their evaluator used data on student achievement in English to inform the evaluation.

Notes: The other category in the exhibit includes measures reported by no more than one grantee each, including attendance rates, postsecondary enrollment rates, teacher professional development logs, the number of dual-credit hours completed by students, and students’ ACT scores. Many evaluators reported using multiple types of measures to collect data; therefore, the total percentage in the exhibit does not add to 100 percent.

Source: Interviews with grantee stakeholders at 19 NAM grantee sites, including eight tribal and BIE grantees and 11 public school system grantees.

According to interview data, 15 grantees shared student achievement data in English to allow the evaluator to measure and monitor grant progress as part of their evaluations. Most frequently, these data included state standardized ELA and ELP assessment data, but also included various progress monitoring assessment data such as data from state and district benchmark exams, and preschool language assessment data. The evaluator for one site with an early childhood development focus reported

receiving data from a commercial school readiness assessment. In some cases, the evaluators performed their own analyses of standardized student achievement test results, and other student achievement data from benchmark and progress monitoring exams or program-embedded assessments that schools provided. On the other hand, eight of the evaluators reported that they collected original qualitative data on their own through interviews and focus groups, which enabled them to have in-depth conversations with project personnel, teachers, principals, superintendents, students, and/or parents.

Nearly half of the grantees' evaluators reviewed a variety of other sources of data to supplement their assessment of grant-funded services, such as student attendance rates, postsecondary enrollment rates, teacher professional development logs, the number of dual-credit hours completed by students, and students' ACT scores (Exhibit 16 reported as "Other").

Although the evaluators from approximately one-third (six) of the sites were themselves collecting data on parents' and families' attendance at school events, including their participation in cultural activities, classroom visits, and parent/family literacy nights, half of the evaluators stated that it was difficult to collect meaningful or accurate data for determining the level of parent and family engagement from others. For example, some grantees did not have systems in place to measure unplanned engagement, such as when parents or families dropped by a table to pick up a flyer at a school fair, or when at a school where there were no specific events for parents, parents dropped into the child's classroom or library. In some cases, there were measures in place, but the reliability of those collecting data was unknown. For example, at a remote site the evaluator had to rely on others on site to count how many parents and families attended events and activities. The evaluators who conducted on-site visits largely described collecting data on the grantee's activities and services implemented—rather than actual attendance and participation—and comparing them to goals and objectives, timelines, and plans for such activities/services as written in the grant proposal.

Approximately one-third (six) of the evaluators reported that they conducted formal classroom observations using observation instruments such as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)<sup>16</sup> but also informally observed classrooms. One evaluator described two specific classroom visits that were conducted as part of the evaluation, providing evidence of the integration of ELD and Native languages and cultural instruction:

*Last year, I think it was a fourth- or fifth-grade room...students were learning geology, and they had pictures of the different slices of the earth. On one side were all the [Native language] names, and on the other side they had all of the English names. Just through observing what's going on, I think you can learn a lot. I watched them last year dissect a fish that they had caught in spearing. They were naming all of the parts in [Native language]. Then the teacher showed me the essays they had written about their experience.*

An evaluator at a grantee site that focused on teacher professional development and coaching reported focusing at least some observations specifically on teacher practice in the classroom — not so much to formally evaluate the teachers themselves but, rather, to gain a deeper understanding of the context in which teachers were working and how they were operating within that context.

Evaluators frequently commented on the importance of collecting multiple measures to assess grantees' implementation and program activities. One evaluator reported, "I try to gather data from a whole

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<sup>16</sup> CLASS is a classroom observation tool for PK–12 classrooms that focuses on the teacher-student interactions that drive learning and development. Teachstone, "The Promise of CLASS," 2017, <http://teachstone.com/class/>.

variety of sources. Test scores can only tell you so much. They can't tell you what the feeling is when you go into the school and [see] what's going on."

## Communication and Use of Evaluation Data

**The majority of the evaluators reported that they attempted to communicate with grantee personnel on a regular basis, and many maintained that it was an important part of the evaluation process.**

One evaluator, for example, described meeting with the grant coordinator to review the results of the data collected and "help[ed] troubleshoot" any areas that appeared in need of adjustment and improvement.

As another example of ensuring that communication between the evaluator and the grantee occurred on a regular basis, one evaluator developed a plan for more collaboration with the project leaders over the course of the grant to help ensure that the evaluation was of value to the program and the results were being used to meaningfully inform program implementation:

*It's on me to keep the ongoing communication more intentional and...that's why we developed a kind of monthly check-in with the leadership team...to evaluate how we [are] doing and what do we need to do and how do we use the data.... This past year, we've finished developing a kind of research partnership document, a[n] outline of our goals together, in selecting the data, how we're using data.*

The majority of the evaluators were able to use the quantitative data they collected to determine the progress the grantees were making toward their academic objectives and goals; for example, by looking at the improvement in the test scores from one year to the next, they were able to determine students' growth in ELP levels. They used the qualitative data to provide descriptive context for determining, for example, whether the teacher professional development appeared to be making a difference in the classroom. Two evaluators reported specifically including a formative component in their evaluation activities. Based on the results of their data collection, they provided recommendations for midgrant changes, while also identifying successful components of the grant that could be leveraged and capitalized on in future activities.

Although the majority of evaluators described primarily communicating with grant leadership, at least one evaluator also provided direct feedback and support to teachers based on the data they were collecting. This evaluator reported,

*Usually what we do is we meet with each teacher.... We provide kind of a print-off of all the data that we've collected, we reflect on that data, talk about how that might influence their instructions around particular children or in terms of patterns in the classroom.*

Beyond providing data back to program leadership, a primary use of the evaluation data was to inform the annual performance report (APR) that all NAM grantees are required to submit to the Department. The APR must include information on program performance outcomes related to the *Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)* as well as project-specific performance measures. At the end of the project period, grantees must submit a final performance report, including sections on goal attainment and program evaluation. Many of the evaluators the study team interviewed for this study indicated that they supported grant leadership's federal reporting by assisting with the data preparation, analysis,

and writing. For example, one evaluator synthesized the information from monthly activity reports from the grant coordinator to support the reporting on grant progress and accomplishments for each of the project's key goals and objectives.

Although most evaluators did not raise concerns about specific challenges with carrying out their evaluation activities, at least one indicated wanting more open and regular communication with project leads to ensure that the evaluation information was being used to its full potential; another expressed concern about the burden of having to submit federal reports that incorporated similar data on the success of programs that served NA/AN students.





## Chapter V. Benefits of NAM Grants

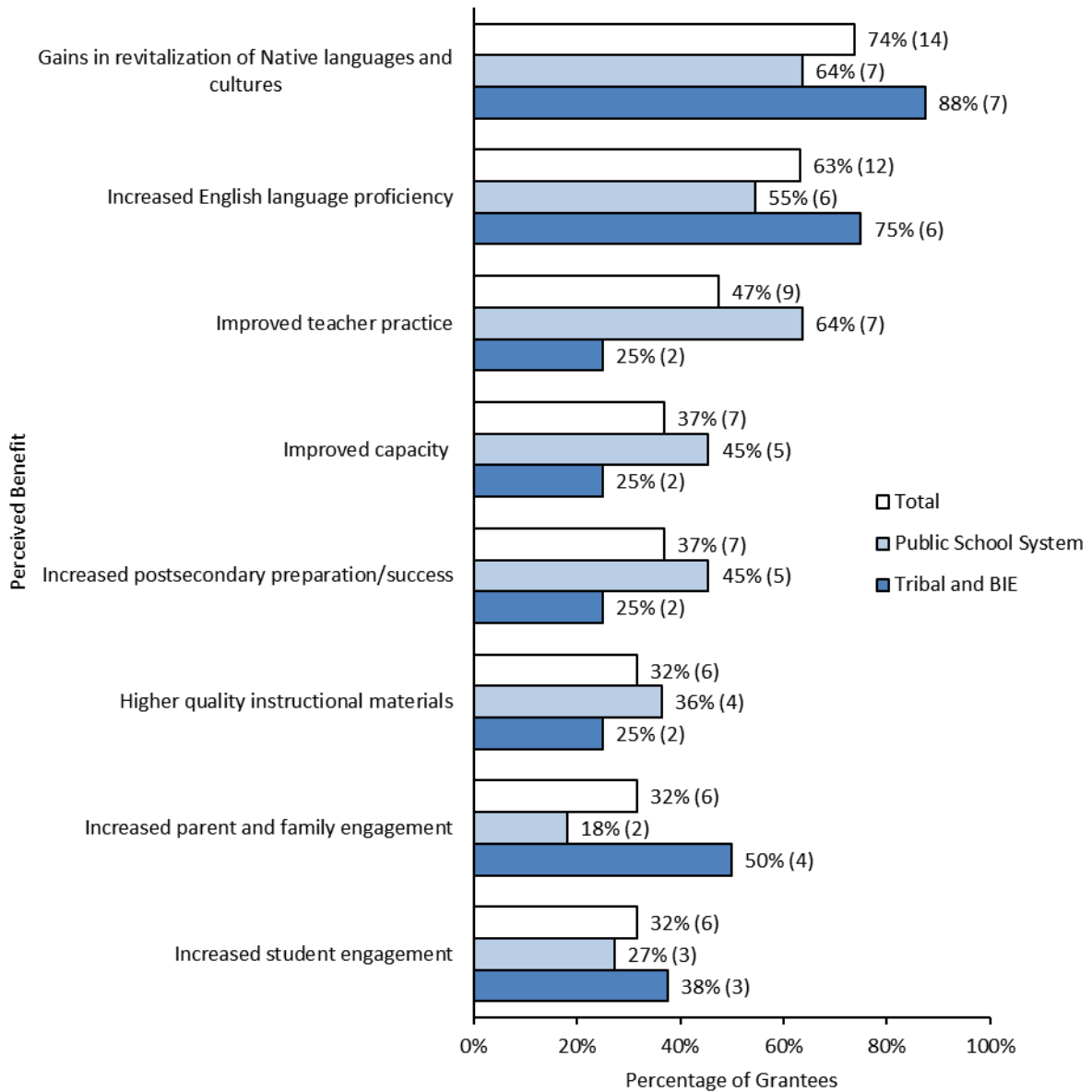
### Types of Benefits Reported by Grantees

Many grantees discussed the benefits of receiving the NAM grant. During the interviews and focus groups, grantee respondents were asked to describe any positive changes or advancements they perceived as associated with their NAM-funded activities. This section of the report describes the grantees' most commonly reported benefits. There were several instances in which tribal and BIE grantees and public school system grantees differed in the frequency with which they reported perceiving certain benefits. It should be noted that the benefits discussed in this chapter reflect only those benefits that respondents recalled and highlighted at the time of the interview. They may not reflect the full range of benefits experienced by grantees as a result of receiving the NAM grant.

**Grantees' most commonly reported benefits were gains in revitalization of NA/AN languages and cultures (74 percent) and ELP (63 percent).**

The majority of grantees indicated that their NAM-funded activities had resulted in positive changes in multiple areas, including in NAM program priority areas they identified as of particular focus for their local NAM-funded projects (see Exhibit 17). The most commonly reported benefit was the revitalization of NA/AN languages and cultures by 88 percent of tribal and BIE grantees (seven), and 64 percent of public school system grantees (seven).

**Exhibit 17. Percentages of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees reporting various benefits, by governance type**



**Exhibit reads:** Seventy-four percent of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees reported gains in revitalization of NA/AN languages and cultures as a benefit resulting from their NAM grants.

Notes: Many grantees reported more than one benefit; therefore, the total percentage of grantees in the exhibit does not add to 100 percent.

Source: Interviews with stakeholders at 19 NAM grantee sites, including eight tribal and BIE grantees and 11 public school system grantees.

Grantees observed revitalization through the increased presence and engagement of elders in the school and increased use of NA/AN languages among students and staff. These grantees further described seeing the benefits of honoring and bringing more attention to the traditions and heritage of the tribal community, as stated by one educator,

*Just seeing the language start to come back. Even if it's a little at a time, we're taking baby steps right now, but before we had none. I'm not kidding when I say the majority of these kids had no [Native] language.... If you walk in [NA/AN instructor's] classroom, you can hear [the students] talking and doing activities in [the Native language] and just to see that and hear that. It's nice to know that...our language isn't just going to die — that there's someone there trying and working to bring it back to life in our kids.*

The principal at another site reported similar benefits, but also noted that they had seen a growing appreciation of diversity among all students and staff as they were introduced to cultures, values, and ways of life that they might otherwise not have been exposed to had it not been for the support of the NAM grant.

Numerous grantee sites brought in tribal elders to share tribal and cultural knowledge with the students; to organize and perform ceremonies; to lead students in traditional games, arts and crafts, and storytelling; and to more informally be a presence in the schools to build a sense of community and connection to the NA/AN languages and cultures. The benefits of having elders in the schools were shared by many grantees. As one respondent described, “[The elders are bringing in] traditional weaving, beadwork, storytelling. And honestly, I think that the biggest benefit that we had this year was that we had elders in the room and they just brought...the tradition with them.”

The grantees reporting this type of benefit also emphasized observing improvements in NA/AN students’ self-esteem and sense of belonging. For example, the teacher from one grantee site remarked, “From my personal experience with the kids, I feel their self-esteem, their self-worth, has blossomed. I can see it when they speak the language. They are proud of themselves. To me, that’s a big thing for me with the children.”

**The majority of grantees reported gains in students’ ELP (63 percent), indicating that they had observed improvements in students’ ELP assessment scores and school readiness.**

Seventy-five percent of tribal and BIE grantees and 55 percent of public school system grantees reported gains in students’ ELP as a benefit. Although the study did not collect student assessment data, these sites reported observing a rise in student assessment scores as well as in students’ oral language, writing, and reading skills. Two grantee sites with a focus on early childhood development reported seeing increases in school readiness assessment scores.

Several grantee respondents spoke to the benefits of the ELD resources and activities that were newly implemented or enhanced with NAM funding. Grantees described how purchasing additional books provided a more literacy-rich environment to which young children and adolescent students had access. For example, one respondent stated, “The access to books is something that these kids would not have. It would be hard to give them exposure and get them as excited as they do get about reading.” The integration of culturally relevant English literature and leveled readers to provide content instruction to better engage and meet the needs of NA/AN ELs was also emphasized as a key benefit of NAM.

Grantees also often linked the benefits they were seeing in students’ ELP to the increase in access to and use of progress monitoring data that NAM had afforded them. Some NAM grantees used their grant funds to purchase English literacy programs with embedded progress monitoring assessments. The in-time data and differentiated instructional materials these programs provided were described as deepening teachers’ understanding of the specific needs of their students and their capacity to adjust

instruction in more effective ways. Some respondents also observed these types of adaptive instructional programs as beneficial in terms of student engagement. They described students as exhibiting more motivation to learn as they saw themselves progressing from level to level.

**Smaller percentages of grantees, depending on grantee type, reported that the grant had led to improved teacher practice, greater capacity to serve NA/AN ELs, more effective postsecondary preparation and success programs, and increased parent and family engagement.**

Close to half of all grantees (nine) indicated that the expanded opportunities for professional development that NAM resources allowed sites to offer, such as through virtual mechanisms; job-embedded support from coaches, linguistic and NA/AN language experts, and elders; and training workshops specifically focused on teaching indigenous languages and ELs, had led to improved instructional practices. This stated benefit was reported by grant leaders and the teachers who participated alike.

The on-site coaching was reported as particularly valuable by sites that funded a literacy coach to support ELD instruction. The early childhood coordinator at one grantee site described how, in her experience, the teachers had been hesitant to try new instructional approaches, but once they had a coach come into the classroom and model it they saw the students engaging and “that’s really where the light bulb comes on for a lot of the teachers.”

Many teachers also commented on the benefits of having a coach provide hands-on and ongoing supports. One teacher highlighted how valuable the coach’s assistance had been in improving teachers’ abilities to support NA/AN EL students’ writing skills in particular:

*Because writing was an area that was just really difficult for teachers, and scary, they didn’t really know how to go about it. So as we worked step-by-step through the writing process, it helped teachers understand exactly how to get away from just making a written assignment to “what’s the process?” Starting with the prewriting and being able to have dialogue but among students.*

Some grantees also noted that the NAM-funded professional development focused on data use had improved teachers’ collaboration around data and their understanding of how to monitor and interpret data. One grant coordinator described how teachers were no longer discussing whether or not to use the data, but rather how to use the data.

Partly related to improved teacher practice, more than one-third (seven) of the grantees, including two tribal and BIE grantees and five public school system grantees, indicated that the resources provided through the grant had built their long-term capacity to better serve and meet the needs of NA/AN EL students. According to these grantees, their capacity was enhanced through the professional development for teachers and the instructional materials they purchased with grant funds. These grantees discussed how the instructional knowledge and resources gained over the course of the grant will remain and can be sustained. In addition, grantees reported that the stronger ties to the community and purposeful and more authentic integration of NA/AN languages and cultures into the learning environments had increased the awareness of staff, students, and leadership in ways that would continue to benefit the grantees in the long term.

Seven of the grantees indicated that their effectiveness in promoting EL students' preparation for postsecondary transitions and success had improved as a result of their NAM-funded activities. In particular, these grantees described benefits related to developing students' awareness of the various postsecondary options available to them through college campus visits and visits from college representatives to the school sites. They also discussed the value of having additional resources to support programs, tools, and activities to help ensure that students had the academic credentials to be able to access those options. The grantee sites that used NAM funds for credit recovery programs, for example, reported seeing improvements in high school graduation rates and in the academic readiness of students to transition into postsecondary pathways. According to one grant coordinator,

*I think the credit recovery really worked out well. It's inspired students. When they realize that they don't have to keep retaking these classes, realize they're closer to being done than they thought. Then they're willing to do the other courses they need to get done. We're seeing that over and over again.... The alternative (program) teachers have been a great cheerleader for these kids. That relationship that I've seen has made a huge difference in a large number of students.*

**Tribal and BIE grantees and public school system grantees differed in the frequency with which they reported certain benefits, most notably in the areas of NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization, ELP, parent and family engagement, improved teacher practice, and postsecondary preparation and success.**

Although tribal and BIE grantees and public school system grantees experienced many of the same benefits, there were some differences in the extent to which these two groups of grantees reported specific benefits. Higher proportions of tribal and BIE grantees perceived benefits related to outcomes such as gains in NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization, growth in ELP among NA/AN ELs, and stronger ties to parents, families, and the broader community. For example, although 74 percent of grantees overall described benefits related to improving NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization, 88 percent of tribal and BIE grantees reported this compared with 64 percent of public school system grantees. Similarly, the grantees perceiving advancements in students' ELP represented 75 percent of the eight tribal and BIE grantees but slightly more than half of the 11 public school system grantees. Tribal and BIE grantees also were more likely than public school system grantees (half compared with 18 percent) to specifically identify parent and family involvement improving as a result of the grant.

In contrast, greater percentages of the public school system grantees than tribal and BIE grantees indicated that their overall capacity, including their teacher staff capacity, to serve NA/AN ELs had grown as a result of having the grant. More than half of public school system grantees compared with 25 percent of tribal and BIE grantees described improved teacher practice as a benefit of the grant. Finally, nearly half of public school system grantees (five) compared to one-quarter (two) of tribal and BIE grantees reported gains in students' postsecondary preparation and success because of grant-funded activities.



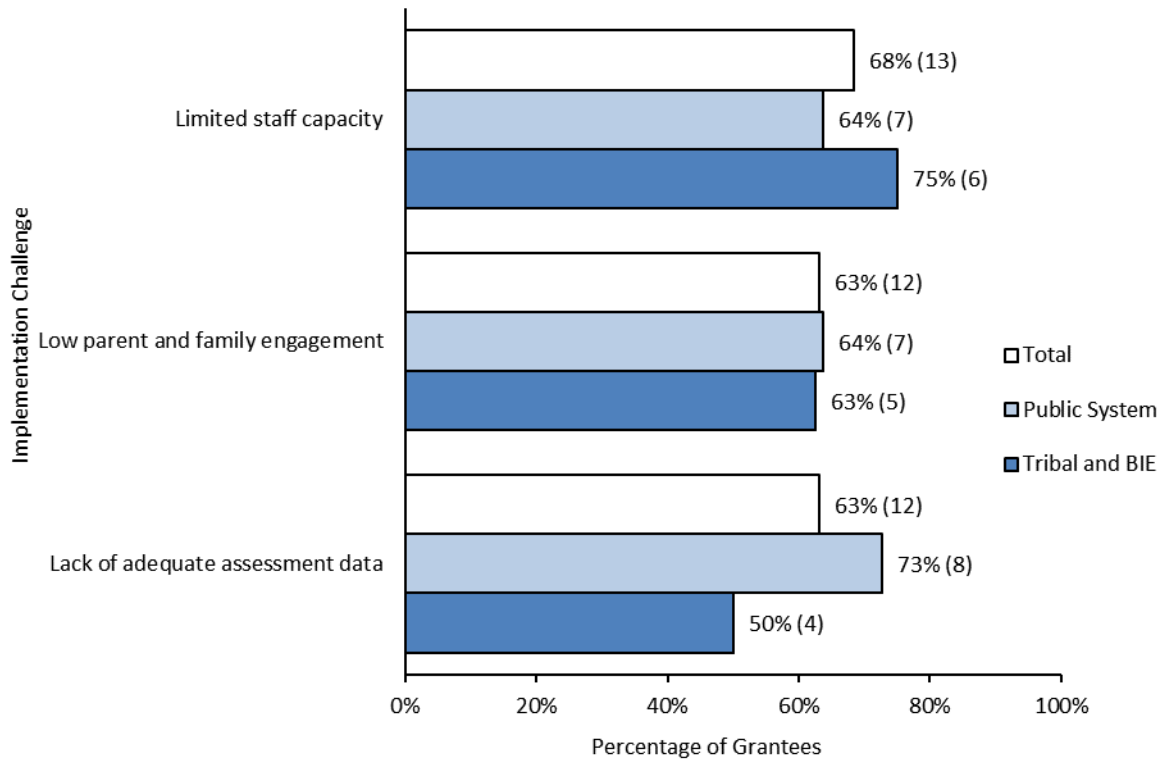
## Chapter VI. Grant Implementation Challenges, Lessons Learned, and Sustainability

This section of the report discusses the types of key challenges reported across the 19 grantees, by governance type and the lessons learned by some of the grantees to overcome some of the reported challenges. In addition, this chapter discusses the supports needed to address the challenges and the extent to which grantees have been able to or anticipate being able to sustain the NAM-funded activities and services into the future. All 19 grantees reported experiencing at least some grant implementation challenges, although according to most grantees, the challenges they experienced did not significantly impede their progress toward achieving many of their NAM project goals and objectives. A wide array of challenges were reported by grantees, but the three most common were: (1) limited capacity to meet the instructional needs of NA/AN ELs; (2) low levels of parent and family engagement in school events and their children’s learning; and (3) inadequate assessment data to track and monitor student progress over time (see Exhibit 18). Few differences in reported challenges were observed between the tribal and BIE grantees and public school system grantees.

### Types of Key Challenges, Strategies and Lessons Learned

**Grantees’ most frequently reported challenges were limited staff capacity (68 percent), low parent and family engagement (63 percent), and lack of adequate assessment data, including longitudinal data to assess progress (63 percent).**

**Exhibit 18. Percentages of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees reporting different key challenges affecting implementation of NAM, by governance type**



**Exhibit reads:** Sixty-eight percent of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees reported that limited staff capacity was a challenge affecting implementation of funded services.

Notes: Some grantees reported experiencing more than one key challenge; therefore, the total percentage of grantees in the exhibit does not add to 100 percent.

Source: Interviews stakeholders at 19 NAM grantee sites, including eight tribal and BIE grantees and 11 public school system grantees.

A challenge that was reported by stakeholders at approximately two-thirds (13) of the grantee sites was limited capacity of staff to provide the instruction and learning experiences NA/AN ELs need. Approximately half of these sites reported not having sufficient numbers of teachers, whereas the other half reported that the challenge was related more to having qualified staff, particularly staff with EL, ELA, and/or Native language immersion qualifications. In a few of these cases, respondents indicated that the teachers did not have enough training to teach and engage with low-literacy students; and in a couple of other cases, the respondents indicated that they did not have sufficient numbers of staff who shared the same culture and background as the NA/AN students being served by the grant. As one respondent stated,

*Finding somebody within [the community] that has that same passion and drive.... [Teacher]'s not from [town.]... [Teacher] doesn't really know the culture and stuff, so he's got to learn that on top of trying to learn about the grant and stuff. Overall, we have such a small amount of people that have the education to be able to fulfill the job duties and then have that background of the culture and language.*



Two grantee respondents commented on the difficulty of recruiting qualified teachers to Native-serving schools and tribal communities, particularly those in geographically isolated or rural areas. As one grant coordinator stated, “That’s an immense challenge. I don’t see this as an easy solve, as an easy fix here.” However, one of these sites had been able to recruit and hire an EL coach, which respondents indicated had eased this challenge somewhat at this site.

Approximately one-quarter (five) of the sites, all tribal and BIE grantees, raised a related challenge to staff capacity, specifically with respect to teaching and revitalizing NA/AN languages and cultures; namely, the limited pool of tribal members with fluency and deep knowledge of the NA/AN languages, traditions, and history in their communities, including those who were available and qualified to teach students. As a respondent from one of these grantee sites indicated, many Native communities are “in a race to archive and revitalize their Native language and culture before it disappears” but remain significantly challenged in doing so even when there is a recognized need and desire among community leaders. This challenge limited students’ exposure in and out of school settings to NA/AN languages and cultures, as well as grantees’ abilities to identify and recruit qualified staff to provide NA/AN languages and cultural instruction.

For example, sites were challenged in hiring staff with sufficient knowledge in NA/AN languages and cultures who also possess the pedagogical and adult learning skills to work with students and teachers. Some of the NA/AN language teachers themselves commented on their own lack of fluency in the language and culture of their tribal communities. As one teacher remarked,

*My biggest challenge is just that I’m not a fluent speaker, and it takes me a little longer to pull the language from the elders that I need because they have a different mindset. They’re the fluent speaker. They’re not the teacher, so I have to help them understand what I need from the language.... I want to tell a story about this plant. Can you give me a phrase that will help me.... Because we want our own perspective [as] opposed to the western way that we would say this word, this phrase, the story of my plant.*

Similarly, a teacher from another grantee site indicated that because of the few fluent speakers and certified teachers in the Native languages, students were not immersed in their Native languages early enough to fully support a strong learning continuum.

Nearly two-thirds (12) of the 19 grantee sites reported challenges related to the broad and consistent engagement of parents and families. The competing obligations and responsibilities of parents and families, common in many non-Native communities as well, exacerbated the challenge of parent and family engagement. Grantee respondents indicated that the parents and family of the children they served were not easily able to carve out additional time to attend and engage in school activities. One grantee respondent reported,

*They [parents/families] come for report card conferences, and they come for the Christmas program, and they’ll come for something special, but as far as day-to-day, coming in, coming to sit with your kid, volunteering to read to their class. Anything like that, that’s the part that’s difficult.*

Grantee respondents also cited long and complicated histories with an American educational system that has not honored NA/AN languages and cultures as factors affecting the involvement of NA/AN parents and families. According to grantees, many of the parents and families in the communities they served were not provided with positive learning experiences in the formal school system. As a result,

some parents and families felt distanced or disconnected from schools in many NA/AN communities. In addition, some grantees reported that parents and extended families seemed to be uncertain or feel unequipped to support their children's academic learning at home.

Grantee respondents described using strategies such as offering light meals or snacks or a door prize to help attract families to school events. Other strategies included establishing computer and library centers that were open after school hours for parents' and the broader communities' use and opening the gym in the evenings to make the school more welcoming to families and to try to incentivize and cultivate families' and parents' feelings of connection to the school. Another grantee site partnered with the school district to conduct healing ceremonies on the school grounds to begin working toward a healthy relationship between the schools and Native people in the community.

The goals and objectives for the majority of the grantees included improving the ELP of the NA/AN EL students who were served under the NAM programs; hence, adequate, timely, and accessible ELP and ELA student assessment data, including longitudinal data to assess progress, were noted among many grantees as essential. Of the nearly two-thirds (12) of the grantee sites that indicated that the lack of adequate student assessment data was a challenge in implementing the NAM program, a larger proportion of public school system grantees reported this challenge (eight) compared with tribal and BIE grantees (four).

Grantees in at least four of the 10 states in which grantees were located expressed concern about their states changing the standardized student assessment during the NAM program cycle, which resulted in the grantee sites not being able to collect longitudinal achievement data to assess student progress. For example, one grantee respondent discussed how the ELP assessment data they were using as their baseline were from an assessment the state was no longer administering, leaving the grantee without a formal measure by which to track student growth over the course of the grant period. One grantee respondent reported that benchmarks on the state assessment were constantly being changed, which affected reporting the numbers of students who were proficient in reading, for example.

Access to assessment data also posed a problem for some grantees. These challenges ranged from (1) the extent to which school sites were willing to submit assessment data to the NAM program leads; (2) technical problems in the administration or scoring of the assessment itself, which resulted in data coming in late for analysis purposes; (3) data management systems that were not aligned, making it difficult to share, track, and access data; and (4) grant leaders having difficulty locating and accessing student performance data that were managed by the school or district partner.

With respect to schools' reluctance to share what they perceived as confidential student assessment data with a NAM project, the coordinator for a grant serving multiple school sites reported on the challenge for data-based instruction:

*I will be frank that it has been a big issue with [NAM project], with schools not wanting to share (hard-to-obtain) data.... Even though we assured them... we don't use any [personally identifiable data] and some of those kind of things, it was a struggle throughout all five years of the grant. So, we weren't probably as successful with the data-based part that we would like to be.*

Some grantees focused on the importance of robust monitoring of student ELP growth, despite the challenges some of the grantees encountered with being able to track data longitudinally. For example, one grantee site in a state that had changed assessments during the course of the grant period

discussed their concerns about being able to accurately report on growth in student performance with OELA. Working with OELA, the site decided to use a different standardized assessment measure that would provide them with a more stable measure over time to monitor student growth. In addition, instead of relying solely on a standardized assessment measure, the grant coordinator explained that they were in the process of identifying other measures they could use to monitor and demonstrate student progress, such as classroom assessments and the assessment linked to their bilingual program. Another grantee respondent facing similar challenges with tracking longitudinal standardized assessment data because of changes in state testing systems mentioned that they also had turned to their classroom and literacy program assessments to provide alternate measures of student performance and growth.

Not all grantees were able to fully overcome or mitigate their key challenges, but 13 reported learning important lessons to help mitigate their challenges.

**Sixty-eight percent of the grantees reported lessons learned based on the challenges they experienced, including the importance of providing teachers with more professional development focused on meeting the unique needs of NA/AN EL students, obtaining stakeholder buy-in and family and tribal community involvement early in the planning and implementation of grant activities, and robust monitoring of student growth.**

Although many grantees provided their teachers with training and workshops, these grantees indicated that they continued to experience challenges related to having limited staff capacity to meet the educational needs of NA/AN EL students. These challenges included, in terms of numbers of staff overall, having staff on hand with the unique cultural and linguistic expertise best suited to teaching NA/AN youth, and having staff with a full understanding of the NAM grant's purpose, goals, and objectives. One grant coordinator noted that had they known what they know now, they would have done "a better job of getting professional development and training for the faculty early on.... And I think that would be something that should be done even before the program begins, if possible."

Other grantees described learning the importance of providing professional development to staff on the NAM grant activities and their local projects' goals, objectives, and implementation plans. According to these grantees, this type of professional development had largely targeted administrators, leaving teachers with a more limited or second-hand understanding of the full range of grant activities and the program's driving goals. For example, one grant coordinator said,

*Teacher professional development] might be a new thing for [us] to think about, because sometimes [our] grant training is geared toward administrators and maybe [we] need to have more webinars for staff on implementation.*

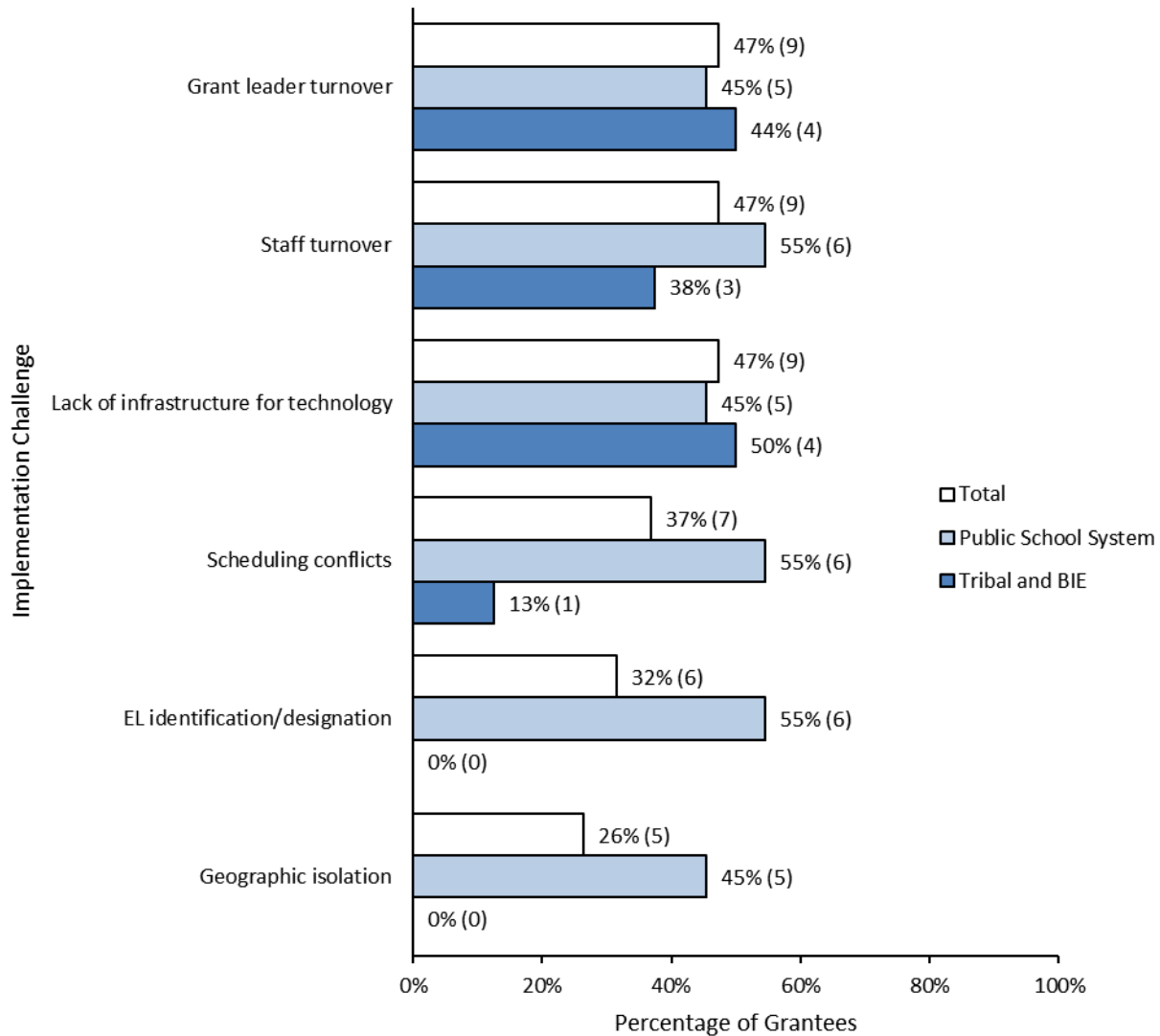
Obtaining buy-in from family and tribal communities throughout the designing and planning of the grant was reported as crucial to successful implementation of NAM-funded activities and services and securing parent, family, and community engagement. For example, when asked about lessons learned, a school-level staff member at one grantee site emphasized that community members should be consulted early in the design of the grant: "I do think that Title III...Native American-related grants have to include community input and buy-in. While I think a lot of people signed onto this grant, both literally and figuratively, I think that the community was not consulted."

A NAM program leader at another grantee site commented on the ongoing challenge they encountered because of some assumptions they had made early on in the planning that elders would be available and willing to participate in program activities for a small stipend or gift card in recognition of their time. Following the grant award, the NAM program leaders found themselves unable to recruit and engage elders using this approach. This respondent said that, in hindsight, they should have conducted a survey or consulted with their elders before they wrote the grant application to establish a mutually agreed upon arrangement for recruiting and compensating elders for their engagement in grant-funded activities.

## **Other Challenges**

In addition to the most common challenges experienced across grantees, a variety of other types of challenges were raised less frequently across the sites. Two of these included grant leader turnover and lack of technology infrastructure, and were mentioned by a higher proportion of tribal and BIE grantees than public school system grantees. Staff turnover, scheduling conflicts, EL identification/designation, and geographic isolation were also mentioned by some sites, including greater percentages of public school system grantees than tribal and BIE grantees.

**Exhibit 19. Percentages of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees reporting less commonly experienced challenges affecting implementation of NAM, by governance type**



**Exhibit reads:** Forty-seven percent of FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees reported that grant leader turnover was a challenge affecting implementation of funded services.

Notes: Some grantees reported experiencing more than one additional challenge; therefore, the total percentage of grantees in the exhibit does not add to 100 percent.

Source: Interviews with stakeholders at 19 NAM grantee sites, including eight tribal and BIE grantees and 11 public school system grantees.

**Forty-seven percent of the grantees reported that grant leader turnover was a challenge. Changes in grant leadership over the course of the grant period sometimes resulted in changes to the vision and understanding of original grant goals.**

The individuals who assumed the grant leadership role described having to go through an adjustment period as they reviewed the requirements of the grant program and became more familiar with the

activities and services that were proposed in the application. Grant coordinators who had taken over the role during midgrant implementation described challenges related to becoming familiar with the proposed activities, goals, and extent to which the project was having success. In some cases, they found a need to adjust existing activities based on data indicating that some services were not effective in advancing program goals or because of other staff changes that required a rethinking or redesign of staff positions. Strategies for change included writing new job descriptions, identifying people to carry out the responsibilities, and meeting with existing and new staff and partners to discuss how things might work better moving forward. At one grantee site, the new grant coordinator established a system for monthly progress reporting to help better ensure the project's success.

As another example, a district-level administrator at one grantee site expressed concern when the grant coordinator left midway through the grant and they were "kind of lost" because the previous grant coordinator was "such a huge part of the project and that was a struggle for us to know that she had moved on." A teacher from another grantee site that had experienced frequent turnover in administrative staff described challenges the instructional staff experienced related to the lack of continuity and consistency in oversight and approach to grant-funded services and serving students' needs under NAM.

**Staff turnover at the teacher, principal, and superintendent levels posed a challenge for 47 percent of the 19 sites, including six public school system grantees and three tribal and BIE grantees.**

Grantee respondents indicated that staff turnover had resulted in a lack of continuity in building relationships, and often led to differing levels of commitment to the NAM program between the new and previous staff. The grantees experiencing these challenges stressed the importance of clearly communicating the main purpose and benefits of the grant, while being willing to adapt the design of specific grant activities or services to fit within the new context. For example, in cases where the turnover occurred at the district level, grantees described having to secure the support of leaders who were not involved in the original discussions about the grant and where it fit within the district's other priorities. One grantee described negotiating with the new superintendent to develop a shared understanding of the purpose of NAM and, specifically, the role the district would play as a partner on the grant. According to this grantee, they met with mixed success in gaining firm commitments from district leadership to the original goals and vision for the partnership, but adapted their services to fit revised goals.

**Forty-seven percent of the grantees reported a lack of infrastructure for technology, including outdated technology.**

As an example, a school-level respondent at one grantee site mentioned that outdated computers were a challenge:

*We are suffering from, we haven't had any purchase of technology — of computers — in a number of years. I've got a guy who's very busy because he keeps many old Macs, some of these computers are from 2008. So, I would say what we really lack is new technology for kids to produce up-to-date materials.*

Similarly, a teacher from another site expressed concern that, although some new technology equipment had been purchased with the support of NAM, the newer equipment was not sufficient to meet the demand and use of the whole staff.

Indeed, some grantees used grant funds to purchase technology resources to enhance ELD instruction and NA/AN languages and cultural instruction. However, despite the many benefits enhanced technology resources bestowed to many sites, some grantees, like those just described, were concerned about the effectiveness of their technology purchased under the grant. This included factors such as limited capacity, including adequate training for staff, to use the resources to their full potential. A few grantee sites reported difficulty with maintaining the equipment, including challenges related to the costs associated with repairing and replacing the equipment (maintenance costs that had not been anticipated or written into the budget for the grant).

**Thirty-seven percent of the grantees also reported on scheduling conflicts with NAM programming. A larger proportion of public school system grantees (55 percent) reported this challenge than the tribal and BIE grantees (13 percent).**

As an example of a scheduling conflict, a professional development provider and a teacher at one public school system grantee site agreed teachers did not have time to attend the professional development workshops funded by the NAM grant because they were overwhelmed with their teaching responsibilities and the bell schedule did not allow for participation. The same site, however, found a solution to this challenge by having the professional development providers, including cultural experts, rotate among the classrooms to provide in-time support and development activities. One school-level respondent indicated the benefit of this new system, which allowed both the teachers and students to benefit from the professional development providers' modeling of lessons and practices.

**Thirty-two percent of grantees reported experiencing challenges related to the possible underidentification of NA/AN students as ELs, which they perceived as limiting some students' access to the full range of language development services that could be available to them.**

The six grantees reporting this challenge expressed concern that some of their NA/AN parents and families were not identifying their children as ELs on home-language surveys even though the children were living in an environment in which a language other than English was having a significant impact on their level of proficiency in the English used in classroom instruction. The respondents perceived this challenge as arising from the reluctance of parents and families to have their children labeled as ELs or because parents and families were not aware that their children could be ELs given that English (even if non-standard English) was the primary language spoken in the home.. Other respondents in this group were concerned that there may be a lack of understanding or uncertainty at the state and local levels about the federal definition of an NA/AN EL, which could lead to NA/AN students not being considered for English language proficiency testing.

**Twenty-six percent of the grantee sites, all public school system grantees, reported geographic isolation as a challenge.**

These grantees were situated in remote areas in three states where external providers and/or recipients of NAM-funded services were required to travel great distances to provide or receive services such as teacher professional development or instruction on NA/AN language and culture revitalization, or school district offices were far from the schools where the NA/AN students were being served. As an example, one grantee respondent described the challenge of program staff traveling a far distance from a city to a school in a rural setting, indicating that “some of the [NAM project] staff, was stretched kind of thin, .... and it definitely did wear on the trainers.”

**A small percentage of sites indicated that they had experienced challenges related to the commitments of their partners on the grant.**

Although the percentage was low, three of the grantee sites described challenges specific to the commitment of their partners on the grant, particularly in cases in which an identified partner completely withdrew their support or participation in the grant after it was awarded. In these cases, the grantee sites were left to scramble to identify individuals or other organizations to fill the gap in services. For example, one grantee site submitted their grant with the expectation and commitment from an external partner to provide professional development or curricular resources but then had the partner withdraw their commitment after the grant was awarded. The grantee respondent explained how the grant application was developed to reflect a close cooperation between the grantee and a partner specializing in the tribal language and culture.

A related challenge was partners participating in multiple programs in addition to NAM not fully engaging in their proposed roles to support grant activities. One grantee respondent with multiple partners noted,

*Probably the greatest [challenge] is...when you have so many different entities and everybody has their own focus. Just trying to keep collective decision making...keeping our focus on students and student achievement in a way that all students are successful...when you have multiple entities involved within one program.*

## **Sustainability**

NAM grants were awarded to FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees in the hope that at least some of the funded activities and services would be sustained, as with the support of grant funds, through the building of capacity of the grantee stakeholders and strengthening of the sites’ infrastructure over the course of the grant period. Although the majority of the 13 grantees that responded to questions on sustainability reported sustaining, or anticipating sustaining, some NAM-funded activities and resources, a few reported or anticipated challenges in doing so.

**Fifteen percent of the FY 2011 and 31 percent of the FY 2013 grantees noted that sustainability of grant activities was an actual or anticipated challenge as of 2017.**

Securing funding from other sources to continue the program’s activities and services to achieve their goals and objectives was expressed as a challenge by these grantees. For example, a district-level



respondent at a FY 2011 grantee site noted that their “biggest” challenge was continued funding and the loss of personnel that were funded under the NAM grant:

*My biggest challenge right now is making sure that it continues to go, we don't lose any teachers, we don't lose any of our events, the culture, everything that's going on. That's my challenge, right now...to find ways to fund this program to keep it going. We have to. It's part of our culture here.*

A FY 2013 grantee respondent expressed similar concerns in looking ahead to the completion of the grant period, especially when new funders often request a focus on different goals and activities. The respondent maintained that they were pleased with what they were accomplishing under the NAM grant and that they hoped they will be able to continue to do what they had been doing.

Another FY 2013 grantee respondent focused on the challenge of funding NA/AN teachers once the NAM grant was over:

*My thoughts on that is without the NAM grant a lot of the program will go away. What I mean by that is we'll have to go back to utilizing what funding we do have, which is very little. Granted, we can go back to relying upon our community resources, and the [tribal community] and whatever.... But [not] as far as being able to supply teachers for [Native] language at the high school or an immersion class.*

**Despite the sustainability challenges some sites reported, a larger proportion of grantees (23 percent of the FY 2011 grantees and 62 percent of the FY 2013 grantees) reported they had sustained or had plans to sustain at least some program-funded services, including in the areas of ELD instruction, professional development for teachers, and NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization.**

As an example, a FY 2013 grantee respondent described keeping the NAM-funded linguist they had hired to support culturally relevant ELA and focused NA/AN languages instruction and curriculum development as a priority. This respondent expressed how invaluable this person's contribution to the school's efforts had been and the plan was to find opportunities to retain the position indefinitely. Another FY 2013 grantee had plans to sustain the reading specialist position and the reading intervention program that were currently being supported by the NAM grant.

Grantees also described how the NAM grant gave them the opportunity to establish an infrastructure that could help them institutionalize and sustain activities in the long term. For example, the grant coordinator for the FY 2013 site that had developed a video-based professional development system as part of their NAM grant reported that the site was in a position to continue to provide virtual support to staff after the grant ended:

*It definitely makes it more challenging when a grant like this ends, but I feel like we've got a strong infrastructure in place in regard to curriculum and in regard to professional development over video that we'll be able to continue some of what we're already doing.*

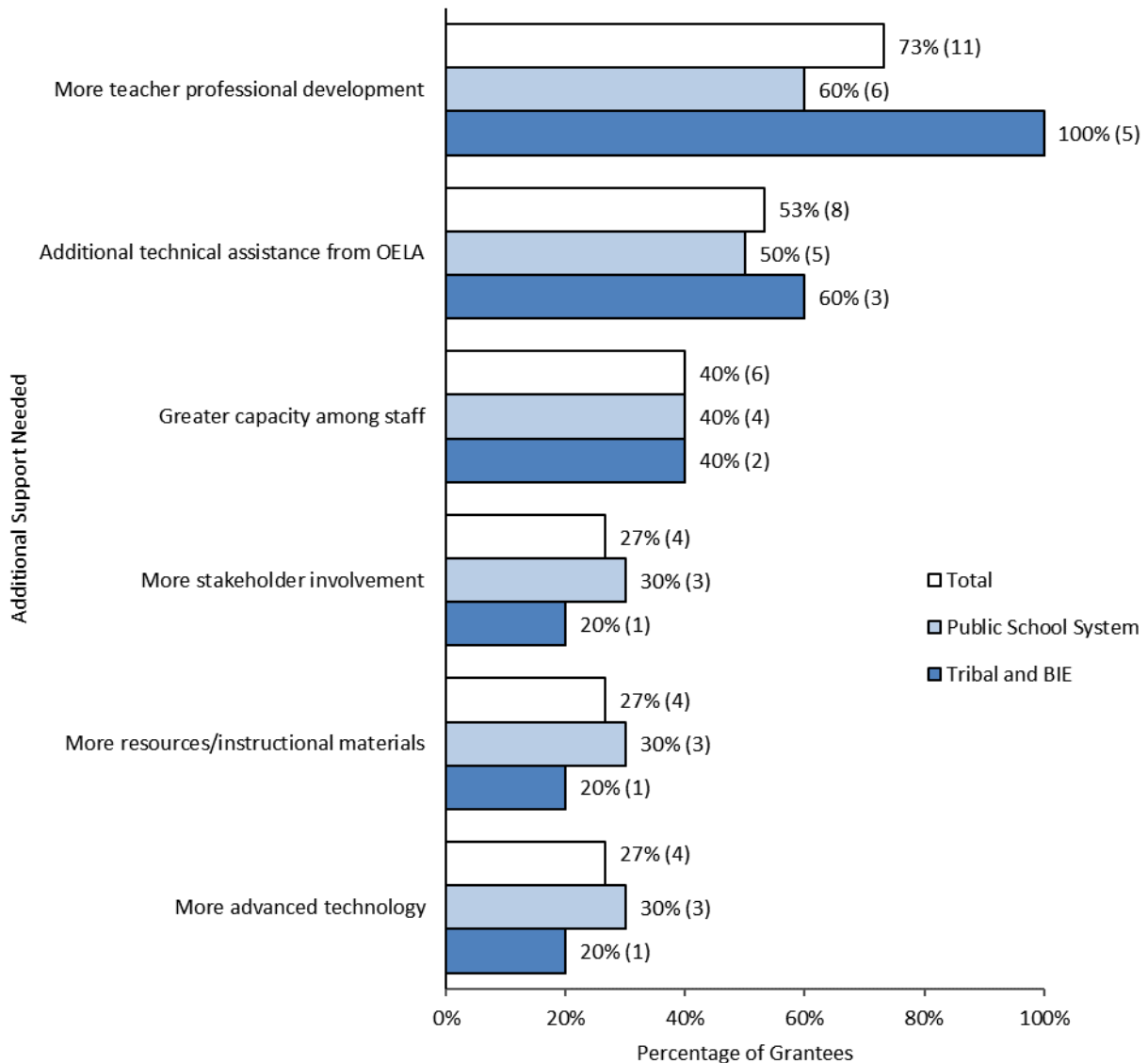
Similarly, a FY 2011 grantee respondent who was continuing to use classroom interventions initially funded by NAM reported that they had found alternate means to provide ongoing professional development in the intervention program, capitalizing on the foundational knowledge the teachers had gained during the NAM grant period.

## Needs for Additional Support to Address Challenges

**Fifteen grantees indicated that additional assistance or supports would be helpful in ensuring the success of their NAM grants; most of these sites (73 percent) reported a need for more support specifically for teacher professional development.**

Across the full sample of 19 grantee sites, four did not mention a need for any additional types of support to improve or facilitate their grant implementation efforts. Fifteen, however, indicated that additional supports would be beneficial. Whether these supports came from the Department, their state or local districts and schools, or the local community, these 15 grantees most commonly noted a need for more resources for teacher professional development, despite the professional development many grantees were providing with the support of NAM (see Exhibit 20).

**Exhibit 20. Percentage of those FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees who reported needing additional supports to help address and overcome challenges affecting implementation of NAM, by governance type**



**Exhibit reads:** Seventy-three percent of the 15 FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees who reported needing additional supports reported needing teacher professional development to address and overcome challenges affecting implementation of funded services.

Notes: Some grantees reported needing more than one type of additional support; therefore, the total percentage of grantees in the exhibit does not add to 100 percent.

Source: Interviews with stakeholders at 15 NAM grantee sites, including five tribal and BIE grantees and 10 public school system grantees.

The grantee sites that reported a need for more professional development described a range of training topics and activities that, if they had the resources to provide, could better support teachers in meeting the academic needs of NA/AN EL students, including webinars on the NAM program, more training on the site’s ELA program, site visits to other grant-funded programs to share best practices, training on

language development and how to teach comprehension, training on how to engage students, and training on tribal history. Tribal and BIE grantees and public school system grantees both reported needing more support in this area.

For example, when asked what types of additional supports would be helpful, one grant coordinator referred to trainings for teachers in which they could visit other grant-funded programs as well as attend summer institutes that facilitated sharing of best practices and teacher collaboration. One teacher at a grantee site expressed a need for an increase in professional development on strategies for engaging NA/AN EL students, stating, “The toughest thing for us is to just get them [students] motivated and to take responsibility for their education. I would like to see a lot of professional development in how to engage these kids into doing that.”

**Although 20 percent of the 15 grantees praised the quality and value of the technical assistance they received from the Department, 53 percent of the grantees indicated a need for additional technical assistance, programmatic supports, or guidance from the Department with respect to grant planning and implementation.**

The three grantees that praised the Department for their technical assistance or guidance appreciated the professional development they provided, including the online EL toolkit and the resources they shared regarding best practices. These grantees also commented that all Department staff that they interacted with were knowledgeable and responsive, consistently inquired about the grantees’ challenges, communicated with the site on a regular basis, and were flexible on timelines as site-based complications arose. For example, one grantee respondent who was enthusiastic about OELA’s online EL toolkit also reported on the districtwide professional development for all core content teachers that had been provided by OELA: “[OELA] skyped with us for several hours one day...for professional development for our whole district...and it was great.” Another grantee respondent said,

*OELA’s one of the better grants in that they try to keep their grantees connected. I think they have the...platforms that they were using to share resources...which is nice. Share research and keep people knowledgeable about best practices.*

Yet, just over half (eight) of the 15 grantee sites (five public school system grantees and three tribal and BIE grantees) suggested that additional programmatic supports, or assistance from the Department could strengthen their abilities to plan and implement effective programs for their students. These suggested supports included, for example, funding to support convenings of different tribes or representatives to collaborate on and make decisions about how to evaluate NA/AN language fluency, and how to build the pool of NA/AN languages teachers. Grantees also expressed a desire for more information on what technical assistance is available from the Department to increase the capacity of potential applicants in grant planning, implementation, and meeting federal reporting requirements. Some grantees indicated they would benefit from additional oversight, feedback, and continuous and consistent communication from the Department. For example, one school-level grantee respondent indicated the need for continuous communication when there are staff changes at the Department that may affect the guidance provided to sites.

Grantees also mentioned a need for additional guidance on defining, identifying, and communicating who is an NA/AN EL student to help ensure students receive the services available to them, and more targeted technical assistance workshops that address the unique contexts of rural schools and communities. One grant coordinator, for example, perceived the content of the Department’s workshops as more applicable

to larger and more urban districts and schools with access to resources and programs not frequently available in geographically remote communities, stating:

*What I found about those workshops [by the Department] is that they really were not applicable to our situation here. They were really targeting big districts with lots of kids, and there was a lot of crossover with other bilingual education type programs, and we're not really doing bilingual education. I think that's been difficult, in terms of they're offering some support through these different conferences, but it's not been really applicable to our situation.*



## Chapter VII. Conclusion

The findings from this study demonstrate that the FY 2011 and FY 2013 grantees had implemented projects with a commitment to improving students' ELP, while simultaneously honoring and promoting students' NA/AN languages, cultures, and heritages. In carrying out this commitment, grantees funded a wide array of resources, services, and activities designed to meet their specific contextual and student needs. For some grantees this meant funding professional development to develop the capacity of their teachers to provide more effective content instruction designed for NA/AN ELs or instruction in students' Native languages and cultures. For others, it meant allocating grant resources to support early childhood development and kindergarten readiness; or placing a primary focus on preparing students to successfully transition into postsecondary pathways by building their awareness of the various options available to them and promoting a college-going culture in their schools. Across all grantees, the importance of engaging parents, families, and the tribal community in the NAM program was reported as essential, if sometimes challenging.

All grantees engaged various types of partners, including colleges and universities (tribal and non-tribal), tribes and tribal members, districts and schools, and external consultants to support their funded activities. Many of these external partners provided guidance and consultation and enhanced sites' capacities in specialized areas such as professional development and interweaving culturally responsive instruction into students' learning experiences.

Grantee respondents frequently mentioned the value of the NAM grant and the benefits it had brought to the teachers and students, and in terms of strengthening the relationship between the schools and the broader community. Several grantees described the value of being able to purchase resources for developing more culturally relevant instructional materials, and the resources they directed to cultivating stronger connections between the schools and the tribal community. These grantees described how these types of connections coupled with the integration of NA/AN languages and cultural learning activities into students' academic experiences promoted a greater sense of belonging, pride, and engagement among students. Nearly all of the tribal and BIE grantees and a little more than half of the public school system grantees reported seeing gains in the revitalization of NA/AN languages and cultures as a result of having the grant, as well as improvements in students' ELP. Public school system grantees in particular also reported seeing improvements in teacher practice, students' postsecondary preparation and success, and their school's overall capacity to engage and meet the instructional needs of NA/AN ELs.

Largely because of these types of benefits, grantees described their efforts to sustain at least some of the core components of their projects beyond the funding period. The most common types of activities and resources grantees described hoping to be able to sustain included those used to support ELD instruction, teacher professional development, and NA/AN languages and cultural revitalization. In general, these were the types of funded services that grantees indicated were of such value that they needed to be sustained after the funding period. In particular, grantees described intentions to secure other sources of funding to support the positions of personnel who were supporting NA/AN languages and cultural curriculum development, and the design of instructional content to meet the needs of NA/AN ELs specifically.

Although many grantees reported experiencing some challenges related to grant implementation, some of which delayed implementation of certain elements or led to modifications to proposed grant activities, grantees overall reported making progress toward their key goals and objectives. Grantees also reported learning important lessons from their challenges, particularly those related to limited staff capacity, low parent and family engagement, and lack of adequate assessment data to accurately monitor and track student growth or other measures for assessing grant progress. For example, they described realizing the importance of building professional development supports into their grant activities, particularly professional development focused on meeting the unique linguistic and literacy needs of NA/AN ELs. They also learned to identify alternate assessment measures when state standardized assessment tests were changed during the grant period or, in the case of NA/AN language assessments, to develop their own to fill a gap in available resources or enhance the rigor of those in place. Finally, one of the most commonly reported lessons was learning the importance of obtaining stakeholder engagement and family and tribal community involvement early in the planning and implementation of activities to establish a shared understanding of the intent of the grant and the roles the school and broader community can play in improving academic outcomes for NA/AN ELs.

The majority of the grantees reported that additional supports, some from OELA and some from other sources, could help further their efforts to successfully implement NAM activities. In particular, grantees indicated that funding opportunities that prioritize supports for teacher professional development to deepen teachers' understanding of how best to meet the unique instructional needs of NA/AN ELs are needed. In addition, while some grantees commented on how valuable the assistance they received from OELA had been, slightly less than half indicated that they could benefit from more oversight, guidance, and ongoing communication with OELA staff to ensure they are accessing all of the technical assistance supports available to them as grantees, and have a strong understanding of the requirements of the grant. Grantees located in remote settings also suggested that workshops or guidance specific to rural sites would be of benefit.

Overall, the grant activities, partnerships, experiences, and lessons learned described by respondents in this study provide insight into how NA/AN ELs can be supported in their academic pathways by offering schools an opportunity to engage them in culturally relevant learning experiences that are strongly linked to their families and tribal communities, and that promote their English language and literacy, while simultaneously honoring and developing their NA/AN language and cultural knowledge.



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## Appendix A. NAM Program Priority Areas

To increase readability, this report employs different, slightly simplified terminology for the purpose and priorities of NAM than used in the FY 2011 and FY 2013 Notices Inviting Applications (NIAs).

### Priorities and Activities

In this report, we call the purpose and the multiple priorities in the NIAs simply “priority areas” or “activities to support priority areas.”

For example, the NIAs state that the major purpose of the program is to provide grants to develop “high levels of academic attainment in English among ELs, and to promote parental and community participation in language instruction educational programs.” One major priority is to support the teaching and studying of Native American languages, but projects serving this priority must have, as a project objective, an increase in English language proficiency for participating students. We refer to both of these as priority areas.

On the other hand, in the cases of the priorities on data-based decision making and civic learning and engagement, we refer to these as “activities” in support of the purpose and other priorities, rather than as priorities themselves. For example, data-based decision making is referred to as an activity that supports the purpose of English language development instruction or improving student outcomes. We include “civic learning and engagement” in the Native community as supporting the revitalization of NA/AN languages and cultures priority.

### Terms to Describe Priorities and Activities

In addition, we refer to purpose and several priorities (in bullets) using slightly different terminology than the NIAs, shown in the parentheses below:

- development of high levels of academic attainment in English (“English language development”)
- promotion of parental and community participation in language instruction educational programs (“parent and family engagement”)
- supporting Native American language instruction (“revitalization of NA/AN languages and cultures” or “NA/AN languages and cultural instruction”)
- increasing postsecondary success (“postsecondary preparation and success”)
- parent involvement to improve school readiness and success (“early childhood development”)
- enabling of more data-based decision making (“data use” or “data-based decision making,” documented under various priorities served by this activity)
- civic learning and engagement (documented under “revitalization of NA/AN languages and cultures”)



## Appendix B. Final Protocols Approved by OMB

### NAM GRANT COORDINATOR TELEPHONE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

#### Role of the Respondent

Most questions will be about the activities you have undertaken with funding specifically from the NAM program. *[Clarify the name of the program and how other people will identify it.]*

1. *[Only ask these questions if the grant coordinator is not the same person as on the original application.]* Could you tell us how long you've been involved in the *[insert name of project]* as grant coordinator? How did you come into this role?
2. Please briefly describe the activities you do in support of the NAM-funded program.

#### History and Context of Program

3. Please share the vision that guided the development of *[insert name of project]*. Who in the community was involved? What needs were identified that contributed to the development of the program?
4. Could you share tribal values and other tribal program priorities that align with this grant?
5. What are the goals and objectives of the program? Have these changed over time (e.g., across the grant cycles)?
6. From your perspective, are some goals greater priorities than others? Why?

#### Implementation for Students

7. Now I want to talk about the students this program serves. What is the target population of students in the program? (Examples: *grade or age level; certain level of English proficiency; certain level of heritage language proficiency; low achieving academically*)

8. What are the main components of *[insert name of project]* for students?

<b><i>Are you supporting...</i></b>	<b><i>If yes...</i></b>
Academic English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What activities do you implement to support students' academic English?</li> </ul>
NA/AN language instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What activities do you implement to support NA/AN language acquisition?</li> <li>• What are the goals of <i>[insert name of project]</i> for students (e.g., maintain the students' native language, introduce the students' heritage indigenous language, tribal language revitalization)?</li> <li>• What is the tribal community's role in the language-learning program? [<i>Probe: instructor selection or certification, material development, other resources provided</i>]</li> </ul>
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What technology resources does the program have access to?</li> <li>• What technology do you incorporate?</li> <li>• Who uses the technology, and how do they use it?</li> </ul>
Early childhood learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there an early childhood program in the community as part of <i>[insert name of project]</i>?</li> <li>• What program activities are in place for young children?</li> </ul>
Data-based decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are data used to support students' academic achievement?</li> <li>• What changes have been made to the school/district's data-based decision making as a result of the grant?</li> </ul>

### **Structure and Content of the Program for Teachers**

9. *[If the program supports educators]* Which teachers, administrators, and instructional staff are targeted to receive training that is funded by the grant?

**Prompts:** classroom teachers only; all teachers; non-instructional staff (such as paraprofessionals, instructional support staff), administrators, counselors

10. Which of these content areas are taught in the educators' trainings? What is the primary focus?

- Linguistics and second language learning
- Teaching English learners
- Curriculum and assessment for English learners
- Strategies to build language skills and subject area knowledge (e.g., how to incorporate language and literacy skills into content such as math, science, social studies)
- Data-based decision making
- Tribal language instruction
- Curriculum development



- h. Culture heritage and cultural sensitivity
  - i. Improving school climate and promoting indigenous culture and language
  - j. Other
11. How do the teachers receive training or professional development as part of the program?  
**Prompts:** professional learning communities (PLCs); class observations or visits followed by a discussion group with peers; mentoring or coaching; co-teaching or collaboration (e.g., between bilingual education, ESL or language acquisition specialists and mainstream teachers); language or cultural immersion
12. Is the training required or optional?  
a. If required, how many hours per school year are required?
13. What is the role of the tribe or tribal government with respect to the training or professional development of educators?

### **Structure and Content of the Program for Families and Community**

14. Who are the partners in the program? What do they do, and how did they get involved?  
**Prompts:** school, district, tribal community, state agency, other entities
15. *[If not included as a partner]* What is the role of the tribe (or tribal government) in:  
a. Planning the program?  
b. Implementing the program?  
c. Evaluating the program?  
d. Helping the program to succeed?
16. *[If not already mentioned]* Please share any family engagement strategies that you incorporate into the program.

### **Grant Outcomes**

17. In what way has this program contributed to the following groups of people? How do you know?
- a. Students:
    - Have you witnessed any change in their English language proficiency?
    - Have you witnessed any change in their NA/AN language proficiency?
    - Have you witnessed any change in their engagement in language instruction and other education programs (e.g., afterschool programs, other academic initiatives)?
  - b. Educators

- c. School
- d. Tribal community
- e. Families and the community
- f. Partners through the collaboration in this program

18. In your application, you identified *[outcome from application]* as a key outcome for this program. What changes have you seen in *[outcome from application]*?

19. What measures have you used to track progress and outcomes for this program?

### **Challenges, Successes, and Sustainability**

20. Please share the challenges you faced in the planning and implementation of *[insert name of project]*. How did these challenges affect your ability to carry out your initial plans?

21. Please share which people or community entities have assisted you to decrease or overcome these challenges. What additional support could you use (e.g., training and technical assistance, information technology, capacity building)?

22. What strategies have you developed in your role as the grant coordinator to overcome these challenges? Are there lessons you have learned that you would be willing to share?

23. What benefits for the students, teachers, or the community have you seen as a result of *[insert name of project]*? What in particular has worked out well? *[Probe for specific activities that have worked well.]*

24. What do you think were the factors that contributed to these benefits?

25. What types of promising practices have been established as a result of *[insert name of project]*? Which activities are planned to be made sustainable and maintained for the future? *[Probe about: (1) to what extent community engagement and parental involvement contributed to sustainability and (2) current challenges that might impede ongoing efforts and how strategies for overcoming challenges might contribute to sustainability.]*

*[For 2011 cohort]* After the conclusion of your 2011 grant, what specific elements or activities of *[insert name of project]* have remained in place?

26. Your application indicates that *[number]* people receive partial funding through the NAM grant. How did the NAM funding change their work overall (e.g., position expanded, complete change in work, no change)?

### **Wrap-Up**

27. Can you please recommend anyone who we should speak to and any particular schools (or entities) to visit and observe?

28. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your program?

## DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT (OR ADMINISTRATOR OF BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION SCHOOLS) INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### Role of Respondent

#### Question

1. How long have you been involved in the *[insert name of project]*? *[If not known]* How long has your district *[or the BIE]* been involved in the program?

*If interviewee(s) helped plan the grant:*

1a. *What were the needs that led to the development of the program?*

#### Look For

*Length of time involved in NAM program*

### Contextual Information

#### Question

2. What are the goals and objectives of the program? Have these changed over time (e.g., across the grant cycles)?

3. From your perspective, are some goals greater priorities than others? If so, why?

#### Look For

*Alignment with other stakeholders' goals and priorities for their grant cycle(s)*

*Focus of the grant for the district [or BIE], alignment of the grant with district [or BIE] goals*

### Grant Services

#### Question

4. Now I want to talk about the students this program serves. What is the target population of students in the program?

5. What services do students in your district *[or the BIE]* receive through the grant? What is the district's *[or the BIE's]* role?

#### Look For

*Which students are targeted for services and how the students are grouped to receive services*

*Which activities the grantee is implementing and details about:*

- *Academic English*
- *NA/AN language instruction*
- *Technology*
- *Early childhood learning*
- *Afterschool services that take place within the district [or the BIE]*
- *Data-based decision making*

## Professional Development

### Question

6. How do teachers, administrators, or instructional staff receive training through the *[insert name of project]*?

### Look For

*District [or BIE] knowledge or involvement in professional development and training for teachers, administrators, and instructional staff:*

- *Who partakes*
- *Content and structure of the trainings (e.g., workshops, seminars, classes, teach-the-trainers, PLCs, peer coaching or mentoring)*
- *Tribal involvement in any training*

## Family Engagement

### Question

7. Please share any family engagement strategies that you're aware of as part of the *[insert name of project]*.

### Look For

- *District [or BIE] knowledge of or involvement in family engagement activities*

## Partners

### Question

8. Who are the partners in the program? What do they do?

### Look For

*The district's [or the BIE's] perspective on who the partners are, especially tribal partners, and what their roles are in terms of planning, delivery, and management or oversight (e.g., providing materials, selecting or certifying language teachers)*

9. How does the district *[or the BIE]* communicate and work with the partners?

*Relationship between the tribal community and the district [or the BIE]*

10. *[If the district or the BIE is the grantee]* Who takes care of the federal reporting requirements?

## Challenges and Successes

### Question

11. *[If the district or the BIE is the grantee]* Is the grant funding level appropriate for the services you provide? How do you prioritize the use of the funding?

12. What benefits for the students, teachers, or the community have you seen as a result of *[insert name of project]*? What in particular has worked out well?

13. Please share the challenges you faced in the planning and implementation of the *[insert name of project]* in your district *[or the BIE]*.

14. What strategies have you developed in your role as the district superintendent *[or BIE administrator]* to overcome these challenges? Are there lessons you have learned that you would be willing to share?

15. What additional supports do you draw on or could you use?

16. What types of promising practices have been established as a result of *[insert name of project]*? Which activities are planned to be made sustainable and maintained for the future?

*[For 2011 cohort]* After the conclusion of your 2011 grant, which elements or activities of *[insert name of project]* have remained in place?

### Look For

- *Priorities for the funding and use of supplemental funding (e.g., other grant money)*
- *Level of family and community participation*
- *Level of student engagement*
- *Factors contributing to success*

### EXAMPLES

- *How challenges impede ongoing efforts and how strategies for overcoming challenges contribute to sustainability*
- *Whether staff who are partially funded by the grant would continue in their positions*
- *To what extent community engagement and parental involvement have contributed to sustainability*

## Grant Outcomes

### Question

17. How do you think the *[insert name of project]* contributed to the following people? How do you know?

- a. Students:
  - Have you witnessed any change in their English language proficiency?
  - Have you witnessed any change in their NA/AN language proficiency?
  - Have you witnessed any change in their engagement in language instruction and other education programs?
- b. Educators in your district *[or the BIE]*
- c. Families and the community

18. The NAM grant application identified *[outcome from application]* as a key outcome for this program. What changes have you seen in *[outcome from application]*?

19. *[If the district or the BIE is the grantee]* What measures do you use to track progress and outcomes for this program?

### Look For

- *Level of family and community participation*
- *Level of student engagement*
- *Educator involvement and engagement*
- *Family involvement and engagement*

## Wrap-Up

20. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your program?

## SCHOOL PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW OR FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

### Role of Respondent

#### Question

1. How long have you been involved in the [insert name of project]? How long has your school been involved in the program?

#### Look For

*Length of time involved in NAM program*

*If interviewee(s) helped plan the grant:*

*1a. What were the needs that led to the development of the program?*

### Contextual Information

#### Question

2. What are the goals and objectives of the program? Have these changed over time?

3. From your perspective, are some goals greater priorities than others? If so, why?

#### Look For

*Alignment with other stakeholders' goals and priorities for their grant cycle(s)*

*Focus of the grant for the school, alignment of the grant with school goals*

### Grant Services

#### Question

4. What is the target population of students served through the program?

5. What are the main components of the [insert name of project] for students in your school?

#### Look For

*Which students are targeted for services and how the students are grouped to receive services*

*Which activities the grantee is implementing and details about:*

- *Academic English*
- *NA/AN language instruction*
- *Technology*
- *Early childhood learning*
- *Afterschool services that take place within the school*
- *Data-based decision making*



## Professional Development

### Question

6. How do teachers, administrators, or instructional staff receive training through the [insert name of project]?
7. Which of these content areas are taught in the educators' trainings? What is the primary focus?
- Linguistics and second language learning
  - Teaching English learners
  - Curriculum and assessment for English learners
  - Strategies to build language skills and subject area knowledge (e.g., how to incorporate language and literacy skills into content such as math, science, social studies)
  - Tribal language instruction
  - Curriculum development
  - Culture heritage and cultural sensitivity
  - Data-based decision making
  - Improving school climate and promoting indigenous culture and language
8. Is your school involved in any of the training delivery? If so, how (e.g., peer teaching, peer mentoring, coaching, PLCs)?
9. Is the training required or optional?
10. Does anyone in the tribe or tribal government provide training to teachers or administrators?

### Look For

*This is one of the most important questions for principals. Find out about:*

- *Who partakes*
- *Content and structure of the trainings (e.g., workshops, seminars, classes, teach-the-trainers, PLCs, peer coaching or mentoring)*
- *Tribal involvement in any training*

## Family Engagement

### Question

11. Please share any family engagement strategies that are part of the [insert name of project].

### Look For

- *How families are involved*
- *Communication methods with families*

## Partners

### Question

12. Who are the partners in the program? What are their roles?

13. How does the school communicate and work with the partners?

### Look For

*The principal's perspective on who the partners are, especially tribal partners, and what their roles are in terms of planning, delivery, and management or oversight (e.g., providing materials, selecting or certifying language teachers)*

*Relationship between the tribal community and the school*

## Challenges, Successes, and Sustainability

### Question

14. What benefits for the students, teachers, or the community have you seen as a result of *[insert name of project]*? What in particular has worked out well?

15. Please share the challenges you faced in providing (or receiving) services for teachers and students through *[insert name of project]*.

16. What strategies have you developed in your role as the principal to overcome these challenges? Are there lessons you have learned that you would be willing to share?

17. What additional supports could you use?

18. What types of promising practices have been established as a result of *[insert name of project]*? Which activities are planned to be made sustainable and maintained for the future?

### Look For

- *Level of family and community participation*
- *Level of student engagement*
- *Factors contributing to success*

### *EXAMPLES*

- *How challenges impede ongoing efforts and how strategies for overcoming challenges contribute to sustainability*
- *Whether staff who are partially funded by the grant would continue in their positions*
- *To what extent community engagement and parental*

*[For 2011 cohort]* After the conclusion of your 2011 grant, which elements or activities of *[insert name of project]* have remained in place?

*involvement have contributed to sustainability*

## Grant Outcomes

### Question

19. How do you think the *[insert name of project]* contributes to the following people? How do you know?

- a. Students:
  - Have you witnessed any change in their English language proficiency?
  - Have you witnessed any change in their NA/AN language proficiency?
  - Have you witnessed any change in their engagement in language instruction and other education programs?
- b. Educators in your district
- c. Families and the community

20. The NAM grant application identified *[outcome from application]* as a key outcome for this program. What changes have you seen in *[outcome from application]*?

### Look For

- *Level of family and community participation*
- *Level of student engagement*
- *Educator involvement and engagement*
- *Family involvement and engagement*

## Wrap-Up

21. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your program?

**ENGLISH-AS-A-SECOND-LANGUAGE TEACHER OR PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF FOCUS  
GROUP PROTOCOL**

**Role of Respondent**

Question

1. Can you please share what your role is, both your professional role and your role in the tribe and community?
2. When and how did you first become aware of this grant?

If interviewee(s) helped plan the grant:

2a. What were the needs that led to the development of the program?

Look For

*Specific title(s)*

*Any involvement in planning the grant*

**Contextual Information**

Question

3. What are the goals and objectives of the [insert name of project] at your school? Have the goals changed?
4. From your perspective, are some goals greater priorities than others? If so, why?

Look For

*Any changes in goals aligned with changes to the grant priorities*

*Any goals that are especially aligned with school, district, or tribal priorities*

**Grant Services**

Question

5. Can you please tell me about the students who are served by the [insert name of project]?
6. Please describe the entrance and exit measures and criteria for your students served by [insert name of project].
7. Please describe the type of English language services you have implemented through [insert name of project]. Are these services the same for all students?

Look For

*Which students are targeted for services and how the students are grouped to receive services*

*English assessment testing, such as WIDA, ELFA, LAS-Links*

*Possible answers:*

- ESL
- Content-based ESL
- Two-way or dual language immersion bilingual education
- Structured English immersion
- Transitional bilingual education

Question

8. What are the main components of the English language services you or other teachers provide through *[insert name of project]*?

9. What is your role in providing these services, and who else provides academic English services to students through the *[insert name of project]*?

10. What do you use as curriculum?

*If curricula or materials are developed by the program:*

10a. *Who develops the curricula or materials?*

10b. *What is the focus of the curricula or materials?*

10c. *What support do you receive for curriculum or material development?*

11. What is the goal of the language services provided through the *[insert name of project]*?

12. What other academic English supports do students receive?

Look For

- *Bilingual heritage language instruction*
- *Sheltered instruction (SIOP)*
- *Number of hours a day/week*
- *Community and tribal involvement*
- *Use of technology*

*Whether curriculum is commercial or developed by the program*



- *Improve academic English*
- *Improve literacy*
- *Learn and maintain an NA/AN language*

*Supports provided through other school or community programs*

**Professional Development**

Question

13. What are the greatest professional development needs of teachers in the school or district?

14. Please describe any professional development that has been provided through the grant.

Look For

- *Providing instruction to ELLs*
- *Cultural and linguistic sensitivity*
- *Content of the trainings:*
  - a. *Linguistics and second language acquisition*
  - b. *Curriculum and assessment for language learners*
  - c. *Strategies to build language skills and subject area knowledge (e.g., how to*

- incorporate language and literacy skills into content)*
- d. Tribal language instruction*
- e. Curriculum development*
- f. Culture heritage and cultural sensitivity*
- g. Data-based decision making*
- h. Improving school climate and promoting indigenous culture and language*

- Structure of the trainings (e.g., workshops, PLCs, coaching or mentoring, online courses)
- Who received the training
- Who provided the training
- Any tribal role in the training

If the interviewee(s) provided training or coaching: ←

14a. How receptive were participants to the training or coaching?

14b. What challenges did you face, and how did you overcome them?

14c. What supports did you receive, and how helpful were they?

## Family Engagement

### Question

15. Does the program have a focus on family engagement? What activities do you do for family engagement?

### Look For

- *How families are involved*
- *Communication methods with families*

## Partners

### Question

16. Who are the partners in the program? What do they do, and what are your interactions with them?

17. What is the role of the tribe or tribal government?

### Look For

*Who the partners are and what their roles are in terms of planning, delivery, and management or oversight*  
*Relationship between the tribal community and the school*

## Challenges and Successes

### Question

18. What supports have you received, and how helpful were they?

19. What benefits for the students, teachers, or the community have you seen as a result of *[insert name of project]*? What in particular has worked out well?

20. What challenges do you face in implementing the *[insert name of project]*, and how have you overcome these challenges?

21. What lessons have you learned that you would share with others?

### Look For

*Support from:*

- *OELA/Department of Education*
- *Tribal entities*
- *School or school district*
- *State agencies*

- *Level of family and community participation*
- *Level of student engagement*
- *Factors contributing to success*

*EXAMPLES*

## Wrap-Up

22. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your program?

**NATIVE AMERICAN/ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION OR CURRICULUM  
DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

**Role of Respondent**

Question

1. Can you please share what your role is, both your professional role and your role in the tribe and community?
2. How did you get involved with this grant? What is the process for becoming a language instructor in your community?

Look For

- Specific title(s)*
- Any involvement in planning the grant*



*If interviewee(s) helped plan the grant:*

*2a. What were the needs that led to the development of the program?*

**Contextual Information**

Question

3. What are the goals and objectives of the *[insert name of project]*? Have the goals changed?
4. From your perspective, are some goals greater priorities than others? If so, why?

Look For

- Any changes in goals aligned with changes to the grant priorities*
- Any goals that are especially aligned with school, district, or tribal priorities*

**Grant Services**

Question

5. Can you please tell me about the students who are served by the *[insert name of project]*?
6. What are the main components of your school's (or district's) program for students?

Look For

- Which students are targeted for services and how the students are grouped to receive services*
- *NA/AN language or culture*
  - *Early childhood education*
  - *Technology*
  - *Community and tribal involvement*



<i>Are you supporting...</i>	<i>If yes...</i>
NA/AN language instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please share with us the number of hours, teachers, grade level, and community (tribal) involvement.</li> <li>• What is the goal of the instruction (e.g., maintain heritage language, tribal language revitalization)?</li> <li>• What results are you seeing?</li> </ul>
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What technology do you use in the <i>[insert name of project]</i>, and how do you use it?</li> </ul>
Early childhood education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any programs or services for children 0–4 years of age? Please describe.</li> <li>• What language focus do young children receive (e.g., English, heritage language)?</li> </ul>
Data-based decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are data used to support students’ academic achievement?</li> <li>• What changes have been made to the school/district’s data-based decision making as a result of the grant?</li> </ul>

7. What is your role in providing these services, and who else provides services to students through the *[insert name of project]*?

8. What do you use as curriculum?

*Whether curriculum is commercial or developed by the program*

*If curricula or materials are developed by the program:*

*8a. Who develops the curricula or materials?*

*8b. What is the focus of the curricula or materials?*

*8c. What support do you receive for curriculum or material development?*

## Professional Development

### Question

9. What are the greatest professional development needs of teachers in the school or district?

10. Please describe any professional development that has been provided through the grant.

### Look For

- *Providing instruction to English learners*
- *Cultural and linguistic sensitivity*
- *Content of the trainings:*
  - a. Linguistics and second language acquisition*

- b. Curriculum and assessment for language learners*
- c. Strategies to build language skills and subject area knowledge (e.g., how to incorporate language and literacy skills into content such as math, science, social studies)*
- d. Tribal language instruction*
- e. Curriculum development*
- f. Culture heritage and cultural sensitivity*
- g. Data-based decision making*
- h. Improving school climate and promoting indigenous culture and language*

- Structure of the trainings (e.g., workshops, PLCs, coaching or mentoring, online courses)
- Who received the training
- Who provided the training
- Any Tribal role in the training

If the interviewee(s) provided training or coaching: ←

10b. How receptive were participants to the training or coaching?

10c. What challenges did you face, and how did you overcome them?

10d. What supports did you receive, and how helpful were they?

## **Family Engagement**

### Question

11. Does the program have a focus on family engagement? What activities do you do for family engagement?

12. What is the role of the community in your classroom and school?

### Look For

- *How families are involved*
- *Communication methods with families*

## Partners

### Question

13. Who are the partners in the program? What do they do, and what are your interactions with them?

14. What is the role of the tribe or tribal government?

### Look For

*Who the partners are and what their roles are in terms of planning, delivery, and management or oversight*

*Relationship between the tribal community and the school*

## Challenges and Successes

### Question

15. What supports have you received, and how helpful were they?

16. What benefits for the students, teachers, or the community have you seen as a result of *[insert name of project]*? What in particular has worked out well?

17. What challenges do you face in implementing the *[insert name of project]*, and how have you overcome these challenges?

18. What lessons have you learned that you would share with others?

### Look For

*Support from:*

- *OELA/Department of Education*
- *Tribal entities*
- *School or school district*
- *State agencies*
- *Level of family and community participation*
- *Level of student engagement*
- *Factors contributing to success*

*EXAMPLES*

## Wrap-Up

19. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your program?

## PARENT OR FAMILY COORDINATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### Role of Respondent

#### Question

1. Please share the activities you do in support of the [insert name of project].
2. How did you get involved with this grant?

If interviewee(s) helped plan the grant: ←  
 2a. What were the needs that led to the development of the program?

#### Look For

*Specific role(s) and title(s)*  
  
*Any involvement in planning the grant*

### Contextual Information

#### Question

3. What are the goals and objectives of the [insert name of project]? Have the goals changed?
4. From your perspective, are some goals greater priorities than others? If so, why?

#### Look For

*Any changes in goals aligned with changes to the grant priorities*  
  
*Any goals that are especially aligned with school, district, or tribal priorities*

### Grant Services

#### Question

5. Can you please tell me about the students who are served by the [insert name of project]?
6. Does the [insert name of project] have a focus on family engagement? If so, what activities are provided to foster family engagement?
7. Does technology have a role in community engagement? How?

#### Look For

*Which students are targeted for services and how the students are grouped to receive services*  
 - *Community and tribal involvement*  
 - *Types of activities*  
 - *Opportunities for family involvement (e.g., decision making, involvement in extracurricular events, parent education classes, volunteering at the school)*  
  
 - *Use of technology*

8. What is your role in providing these services, and who else engages in family engagement through the *[insert name of project]*?

9. What is the goal of the community engagement services provided through the *[insert name of project]*?

- *Improve academic outcomes*
- *Learn and maintain an NA/AN language*
- *Promote postsecondary retention and completion*

## Professional Development

### Question

10. Are family and community members invited to participate in training for the *[insert name of project]*? In what ways do they participate?

11. Are there any trainings for educators on family and community engagement?

### Look For

- *Community members receiving training or providing training*
- *Content and structure of trainings*
- *Who attends*
- *Tribal role in trainings*

*If the interviewee(s) provided training or coaching:*

*11a. How receptive were participants to the training or coaching?*

*11b. What challenges did you face, and how did you overcome them?*

*11c. What supports did you receive, and how helpful were they?*

## Family Engagement

### Question

12. Have you found other ways to engage families in *[insert name of project]* activities?

### Look For

- *How families are involved*
- *Communication methods with families*

## Partners

### Question

13. Who are the partners in the program? What do they do, and what are your interactions with them?

14. What is the role of the tribe or tribal government?

### Look For

*Who the partners are and what their roles are in terms of planning, delivery, and management or oversight*

## Challenges and Successes

### Question

15. What supports have you received, and how helpful were they?

16. What benefits for the students, teachers, or the community have you seen as a result of *[insert name of project]*? What in particular has worked out well?

17. What are your thoughts about how the *[insert name of project]* is perceived in the community?

18. What challenges do you face in implementing the *[insert name of project]*, and how have you overcome these challenges?

19. What lessons have you learned that you would share with others?

### Look For

#### *Support from:*

- *OELA/Department of Education*
- *Tribal entities*
- *School or school district*
- *State agencies*

- *Level of family and community participation*
- *Level of student engagement*
- *Increase in number of students attending*
- *Increase in graduation rate*
- *Increase in English language learning scores*
- *Increase in continuation to four-year institution*
- *Factors contributing to success*

*EXAMPLES*

*EXAMPLES*

## Wrap-Up

20. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your program?

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDER FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

### Role of Respondent

#### Question

1. Can you please share what your role is, both your professional role and your role in the tribe and community?
2. Did you work with the district, school, tribe, or Bureau of Indian Education prior to *[insert name of project]*? If so, what kind of work did you do?
3. How did you get involved with this grant?

#### Look For

*Specific title(s)*

*Any involvement in planning the grant*

*If interviewee(s) helped plan the grant:*

*3a. What were the professional development needs that you were looking to address?*

### Contextual Information

#### Question

4. What are the goals and objectives of the grant as you understand them? What are the main priorities for professional development?
5. What are the greatest professional development needs of teachers involved in the program?
6. Can you please tell me what you know about the students who are served by the *[insert name of project]*?

#### Look For

*Any goals that are especially aligned with school, district, or tribal priorities*

- *Providing instruction to English learners*
- *Cultural and linguistic sensitivity*

*Which students are targeted for services and how the students are grouped to receive services*

### Professional Development

#### Question

7. Could you please share how you (or your group) were selected to provide the professional development?

#### Look For

*Why interviewee and the institution were selected*

*If interviewee is at an institution of higher education:*

*7a. Do you provide pre-service or in-service training or both to teachers?*

*7b. What are the degrees and endorsements? Do the in-service teachers receive credits of some type (e.g., continuing education)?*

If interviewee is at a commercial provider:

7c. Does your professional development connect to textbooks or resources that the school, tribe, or Bureau of Indian Education purchased?

7d. Is the professional development at no cost?

If interviewee is part of the NAM grantee institution:

7e. What specialized training did you receive for the topics that you present?

8. Please describe the professional development you provide.

9. Please describe the topics of the professional development that has been provided through the grant.

10. Does the professional development you provide include learning through technology?

*[If yes]* Have you increased the teachers' understanding and capacity to use technology? In what way?

11. Who participates?

12. Are you aware of any other professional development or training that is occurring?

13. How receptive were participants to the training or coaching?

- *Continuous*
- *Hands-on*
- *Modeling or coaching*
- *Classroom materials introduced and implemented*
- *Based on needs assessment:*
  - a. *Linguistics and second language acquisition*
  - b. *Curriculum and assessment for language learners*
  - c. *Strategies to build language skills and subject area knowledge (e.g., how to incorporate language and literacy skills into content)*
  - d. *Tribal language instruction*
  - e. *Curriculum development*
  - f. *Culture heritage and cultural sensitivity*
  - g. *Data-based decision making*
  - h. *Improving school climate and promoting indigenous culture and language*

- *Teachers, administrators, aides, parents*
- *How different professional development is prioritized*



## Partners

### Question

14. Who are the partners in the program? What do they do, and what are your interactions with them?
15. What is the role of the tribe or tribal government?

### Look For

*Who the partners are and what their roles are, especially in terms of training and certification and selection of instructors*

## Challenges and Successes

### Question

16. What supports have you received, and how helpful were they?
17. What benefits for the students, teachers, or the community have you seen as a result of *[insert name of project]*? What in particular has worked out well?
18. What challenges do you face in implementing professional development through *[insert name of project]*, and how have you overcome these challenges?
19. What lessons have you learned that you would share with others?

### Look For

*Support from:*

- *OELA/Department of Education*
- *Tribal entities*
- *School or school district*
- *State agencies*
- *Level of family and community participation*
- *Level of student engagement*
- *Factors contributing to success*

*EXAMPLES*

## Wrap-Up

20. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your program?

## TRIBAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### Role of Respondent

#### Question

1. How long have you been involved in the *[insert name of project]*? How long has your tribe been involved in the program? Please briefly describe the activities you do in support of the program.

*If interviewee(s) helped plan the grant:*

1a. Please share the tribe's vision that guided the development of the grant.

1b. Which sectors of the community were involved?

1c. What strengths and needs of the community were identified that contributed to the development of the program?

#### Look For

*Length of time involved in NAM program*

### Contextual Information

#### Question

2. What are the goals and objectives of the program? Have these changed over time (e.g., across the grant cycles)?

3. From your perspective regarding the needs of children in your tribe, are some goals greater priorities than others? If so, why?

#### Look For

*Alignment with other stakeholders' goals and priorities for their grant cycle(s)*

*Focus of the grant for the tribe, alignment of the grant with tribal goals*

### Grant Services

#### Question

4. How are the students identified to receive services funded by the grant?

5. What services do students receive through the grant? What is the tribe's role in providing these services?

#### Look For

*Which students are targeted for services and how the students are grouped to receive services*

*Which activities the grantee is implementing and details about:*

- Academic English
- NA/AN language instruction
- Technology
- Early childhood learning
- Afterschool services that take place within the tribe

Question

Look For

- *Data-based decision making*

**Professional Development**

Question

6. In what areas, if any, do tribal staff receive training through *[insert name of project]*? How are these areas related to tribal priorities for training?

7. *[If the tribe is the grantee]* What types of training do tribal staff provide through *[insert name of project]*?

Look For

*Tribal knowledge or involvement in professional development and training for teachers, administrators, and instructional staff:*

- *Who partakes*
- *Structure of the trainings (e.g., workshops, seminars, classes, teach-the-trainers, PLCs, peer coaching or mentoring)*
- *Content:*
  - a. *Linguistics and second language acquisition*
  - b. *Teaching English learners*
  - c. *Curriculum and assessment for English learners*
  - d. *Strategies to build language skills and subject area knowledge (e.g., how to incorporate language and literacy skills into content such as mathematics, science, social studies)*
  - e. *Tribal language instruction*
  - f. *Curriculum development*
  - g. *Culture heritage and cultural sensitivity*
  - h. *Data-based decision making*
  - i. *Improving school climate and promoting indigenous culture and language*
- *Tribal involvement in any training*

*FOCUS ON the priority areas for each grantee.*

**Family Engagement**

Question

8. Please share any family engagement strategies that you're aware are supported by the *[insert name of project]*. How is the tribe involved?

Look For

- *Tribal knowledge of or involvement in family engagement activities*

## Partners

### Question

9. Who are the partners in the program? What do they do?

10. How does the tribe communicate and work with the partners?

11. *[If the tribe is the grantee]* Who is responsible for the federal reporting requirements?

### Look For

*The tribe's perspective on who the partners are, especially school or district partners, and what their roles are in terms of planning, delivery, and management or oversight (e.g., providing materials, selecting or certifying language teachers)*

*Relationship between the tribal community and the district*

## Challenges, Successes, and Sustainability

### Question

12. *[If the tribe is the grantee]* How do you prioritize the use of the funding?

13. What benefits for the students, teachers, or the community have you seen as a result of *[insert name of project]*? What in particular has worked out well?

14. Please share the challenges you faced in the planning and implementation of the *[insert name of project]* in your tribe. How did those challenges affect your ability to carry out your initial plans?

15. What strategies have you developed in your role as the tribal education director to overcome these challenges? Are there lessons you have learned that you would be willing to share?

16. What additional supports do you draw on or could you use?

### Look For

- *Priorities for the funding and use of supplemental funding (e.g., other grant money)*

- *Level of family and community participation*

- *Level of student engagement*

- *Factors contributing to success*

*EXAMPLES*

17. What types of promising practices have been established as a result of *[insert name of project]*? Which activities are planned to be made sustainable and maintained for the future?

*[For the 2011 cohort]* After the conclusion of your 2011 grant, which elements or activities of *[insert name of project]* have remained in place?

- *How challenges impede ongoing efforts and how strategies for overcoming challenges contribute to sustainability*
- *To what extent community engagement and parental involvement have contributed to sustainability*

## **Grant Outcomes**

### Question

18. What has changed for the students and community as a result of *[insert name of project]*?

19. The NAM grant application identified *[outcome from application]* as a key outcome for this program. What changes have you seen in *[outcome from application]*?

20. *[If the district is the grantee]* What measures do you use to track progress and outcomes for this program?

### Look For

- *Level of family and community participation*
- *Level of student engagement*
- *Educator involvement and engagement*
- *Family involvement and engagement*

## **Wrap-Up**

21. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your program?

## TRIBAL COLLEGE INSTRUCTOR FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

### Role of Respondent

#### Question

1. Can you please share what your role is, both your professional role and your role in the tribe and community?
2. How did you get involved with this grant?

#### Look For

*Specific title(s)*

*Any involvement in planning the grant*

*If interviewee(s) helped plan the grant:* ←

2a. *What were the needs that led to the development of the program?*

### Contextual Information

#### Question

3. What are the goals and objectives of the [insert name of project]? Have the goals changed?
4. From your perspective, are some goals greater priorities than others? If so, why?

#### Look For

*Any changes in goals aligned with changes to the grant priorities*

*Any goals that are especially aligned with school, district, or tribal priorities*

### Grant Services

#### Question

5. Can you please tell me about the students who are served by the [insert name of project]?
6. Please describe the entrance and exit measures and criteria for your students served by [insert name of project].

#### Look For

*Which students are targeted for services, including young adults transitioning from high school and older adults returning to school through tribal college*

*How it is determined that students need assistance*

*Possible answers:*

- *Accuplacer (College Board tests for reading and writing)*
- *TABE (test for adult ESL skills)*

Question

7. Please describe the type of English language *[and/or Native language]* services you have implemented through *[insert name of project]*. Is it the same for all students?

8. What are the main components of the English language *[and/or Native language]* services you or other instructors provide through *[insert name of project]*?

9. What is your role in providing these services, and who else provides academic English *[and/or Native language]* services to students through the *[insert name of project]*?

10. What do you use as curriculum?

*If curricula or materials are developed by the program:*

*10a. Who develops the curricula or materials?*

*10b. What is the focus of the curricula or materials?*

*10c. What support do you receive for curriculum or material development?*

11. What is the goal of the language services provided through the *[insert name of project]*?

12. What other academic English supports do students receive?

Look For

*Possible answers:*

- *Summer program*
- *Transitional program*
- *Tutoring support for college content courses*
- *LEP instructional strategies*
- *Computer-assisted learning*
- *Learning cohorts*
- *Number of hours a day/week*
- *Community and tribal involvement*
- *Use of technology*

*Whether curriculum is commercial or developed by the program*

- *Improve academic English*
- *Improve literacy*
- *Learn and maintain an NA/AN language*
- *Promote postsecondary retention and completion*

*Supports provided through other school or community programs*

## Professional Development

### Question

13. What are the greatest professional development needs of teachers and instructors at the college? How do you know? How have you responded to those needs?

14. Please describe any professional development that has been provided through the grant.

### Look For

- *Providing instruction to ELLs*
- *Cultural and linguistic sensitivity*
  
- Content of the trainings:
  - a. *Linguistics and second language acquisition*
  - b. *Curriculum and assessment for language learners*
  - c. *Strategies to build language skills and subject area knowledge (e.g., how to incorporate language and literacy skills into content)*
  - d. *Tribal language instruction*
  - e. *Curriculum development*
  - f. *Culture heritage and cultural sensitivity*
  - g. *Data-based decision making*
  - h. *Improving school climate and promoting indigenous culture and language*
  
- Structure of the trainings (e.g., workshops, PLCs, coaching or mentoring, online courses)
- *Who received the training*
- *Who provided the training*
- *Any tribal role in the training*

If the interviewee(s) provided training or coaching:

14a. *How receptive were participants to the training or coaching?*

14b. *How do you know if the professional development is “working”? Have you seen instructors change their practices?*

14c. *What challenges did you face, and how did you overcome them?*

14d. *What supports did you receive, and how helpful were they?*



## Family Engagement

### Question

15. Have you found other ways to engage families in students' tribal college education?

### Look For

- *How families are involved*
- *Communication methods with families*

## Partners

### Question

16. Who are the partners in the program? What do they do, and what are your interactions with them?

17. What is the role of the tribe or tribal government?

### Look For

*Who the partners are and what their roles are in terms of planning, delivery, and management or oversight*

*Relationship between the tribal community and the college*

## Challenges and Successes

### Question

18. What supports have you received, and how helpful were they?

19. What benefits for the students, teachers, or the community have you seen as a result of *[insert name of project]*? What in particular has worked out well?

### Look For

*Support from:*

- *Department of Education/Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA)*
- *Tribal entities*
- *School or school district*
- *State agencies*

- *Level of family and community participation*
- *Level of student engagement*
- *Increase in number of students attending*
- *Increase in graduation rate*
- *Increase in English language learning scores*
- *Increase in continuation to four-year institution*
- *Factors contributing to success*

20. What challenges do you face in implementing the *[insert name of project]*, and how have you overcome these challenges?

21. What lessons have you learned that you would share with others?

*EXAMPLES*

**Wrap-Up**

22. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your program?

## PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR OR EVALUATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### Role of Respondent/Evaluator

#### Question

1. How long have you been an evaluator of the *[insert name of project]*?
2. Could you please share what you do in your role as an evaluator of the program? What does the evaluation process entail? Has it changed?
3. Do you have any other roles, for example, do you provide any technical assistance or professional development? *[If yes]* Could you please share what that involves?

#### Look For

*Length of time involved in NAM program*

*Role of evaluator, including other activities:*

- *Conducting a formative and/or summative evaluation*
- *Using qualitative or quantitative methods*
- *Writing reports; how often*
- *Presenting data in other ways*

### Contextual Information

#### Question

4. What are the goals and objectives of the program? Have these changed over time (e.g., across the grant cycles)?

#### Look For

*Alignment with other stakeholders' goals and priorities for their grant cycle(s)*

### Grant Services

#### Question

5. Could you please briefly share what kinds of services are provided through *[insert name of project]*? How are the provided services related to the outcomes you are evaluating?

#### Look For

*The evaluator's perspective on the kinds of services provided through the NAM grant and theory of change for these services*

## Partners

### Question

6. Who are the partners in the program? What do they do? How have they contributed to the outcomes you are measuring?

7. *[If not included as a partner]* What is the role of the tribe (or tribal government)?

8. How do the grantees meet federal reporting requirements? What requirements are there for you as the evaluator?

### Look For

*The evaluator's perspective on who the partners are, especially tribal partners, and what their roles are in terms of planning, delivery, and management or oversight (e.g., providing materials, selecting or certifying language teachers)*

## Challenges and Successes

### Question

9. What benefits for the students, teachers, or the community have you seen as a result of *[insert name of project]*? What in particular has worked out well?

9a. What do you think were the factors that contributed to these benefits?

10. Please share the challenges that the grantee has faced in the planning and implementation of *[insert name of project]*.

10a. Have any of these challenges affected the outcomes you are measuring?

11. Please share which people or community entities have assisted the grantee to decrease or overcome these challenges.

11a. What additional supports could the grantee use?

### Look For

- *Level of family and community participation*
- *Level of student engagement*
- *Factors contributing to success*

### *EXAMPLES*

## Grant Outcomes

### Question

12. In what way has this program contributed to the following groups of people? How do you know?

- a. Students:
  - Have you witnessed any change in their English language proficiency?
  - Have you witnessed any change in their NA/AN language proficiency?
  - Have you witnessed any change in their engagement in language instruction and other education programs?
- b. Educators
- c. School
- d. Tribal community
- e. Family and community
- f. Partners through collaboration in this program

13. The *[insert name of project]* grant application identified *[outcome from application]* as a key outcome for this program. What changes have you seen in *[outcome from application]*?

14. What measures do you use to track progress and outcomes of funded services?

### Look For

- *Level of family and community participation*
- *Level of student engagement*

## Wrap-Up

15. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the program?



## Appendix C. Extant Data Analysis Categories and Descriptions

Study Question	Construct	Description
n/a	[ <i>General information</i> ]	List the grantee name, grant coordinator, year the grant was awarded, and tribal information as listed in the grant application
n/a	[ <i>Grant context</i> ]	Brief summary of each problem the grantee states will be addressed by the grant
SQ1a	Target population for services	Estimated number of students to be served by the grant and their grade levels
SQ1a	Project goals and objectives	Brief summary of the goals grantees identified for their projects
SQ1ai	Academic English instruction	Planned English instruction provider(s) Students for whom instruction is targeted Planned curricula, materials, or methods for English instruction
SQ1ai	Native language instruction	Planned Native language instruction provider(s) Students for whom instruction is targeted Planned curricula, materials, or methods for Native language instruction
SQ1ai	Curriculum development	List of planned curriculum developers Students for whom the curricula are targeted Topics of planned curricula (e.g., culture)
SQ1ai	Professional development	List of planned professional development providers (e.g., instructional coaches) List of planned professional development recipients (e.g., teachers) Names of planned professional development types (e.g., SIOP, Reading First) Structure of the planned professional development (e.g., workshops, coaching) Topics covered by the planned professional development (e.g., language instruction) Frequency or duration of the planned professional development (e.g., monthly)
SQ1ai	Parent and family engagement	List of those individuals or organizations providing planned community outreach Targeted groups for outreach (e.g., parents) Planned outreach types (e.g., family events)
SQ1ai	Data use	Types of data planned for use Who will use the data How participants will use the data

<b>Study Question</b>	<b>Construct</b>	<b>Description</b>
SQ1ai	Early childhood development	List of those individuals or organizations providing early childhood education programming Planned early childhood learning programming
SQ1aai	Technology use	Which technologies are planned for use Who will use the planned technologies Uses for the planned technologies
SQ1b	Grantee funding priorities	How funds are allocated across services
SQ2	Partners	Type of partners providing or supporting services Role of partners in providing or supporting services
SQ3	Measurable outcomes and progress	Which outcomes are planned for measurement How outcomes are planned to be measured Evaluation activities



## Appendix D. Study of Title III NAM Program Codebook

Code	Sub-Codes	RQ(s)	Protocol Interview Question(s)	Notes and Examples (includes definitions and exclusions)
1. Grant Context		n/a	GC3; ED1a-c; Sup1a; Pr1a; ESL2a; Lang2a; TC2a; PC2a; PDP3a	<i>The grant context that guided the development of the NAM project or program, e.g., context in which grant is implemented, context being needs of students, including general info about needs of students and specific needs of students, what the community is like/community characteristics, state/district policy that is important to understand the context in which the grant is situated, etc. <u>INCLUDE</u> what needs were identified that contributed to the development of the project or program, including the vision expressed by the grant coordinator and other stakeholders, e.g., literacy skills for ELL students. <u>DO NOT INCLUDE</u> the project goals and priorities, which has its own parent code.</i>
2. Target Population		1a	GC7; ED4; Sup4; Pr4; ESL5, 6; Lang5; TC5, 6; PC5; PDP6	<i>The target population of students that the NAM project or program services includes, e.g., grade or age level, certain level of English proficiency, certain level of heritage language proficiency, and low achieving academically.</i>
3. Grant Goals and Priorities	3a. Changes in Project Goals	1a, 1b	GC5; ED2; Sup2; Pr2; ESL3; Lang3; TC3; PC3, 9; PDP3a, 4, 5; Eval4	<i>Descriptions of any changes in NAM project or program goals during and across the grant cycles, e.g., goals at the beginning of the grant might be focused on increasing parent and community engagement but then may shift to family literacy.</i>

<b>Code</b>	<b>Sub-Codes</b>	<b>RQ(s)</b>	<b>Protocol Interview Question(s)</b>	<b>Notes and Examples (includes definitions and exclusions)</b>
	3b. Use of Supplemental Funding to Support NAM Priorities/Goals	1b	GC26; ED12; Sup11	<i>Use this code when interviewee discusses <u>USE OF SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING SOURCES TO SUPPORT NAM PRIORITIES/GOALS</u>, e.g., blending of NAM funds with other funds; federal, state, local, and other grants that provide support to NAM activities or services (e.g., project staff who receive partial funding through the NAM grant as well as other grants, or other services/providers that are considered part of NAM but are also funded by other sources as well as NAM funds.)</i>
<b>4. Partner Roles</b>		2, 2a, 2b, 2c	GC14, 15; ED9, 10, 11; Sup8, 9, 10; Pr12, 13; ESL16, 17; Lang13, 14; TC16, 17; PC13, 14; PDP14; Eval6, 6.7, 8	<i>Descriptions of who the partners are. The interviewee's perspective on the partners' roles in terms of supporting, collaborating, planning, delivering services, managing, or overseeing services/activities (including federal reporting), e.g., tribal college, university, external professional development provider, community center, etc. <u>USE</u> this code when partners are <u>DIRECTLY PROVIDING</u> or otherwise <u>SUPPORTING SERVICES</u>, including <u>FEDERAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS</u>. As applicable, <u>DOUBLE CODE</u> here and under 14, Challenges, if interviewee indicates challenges with any partners, including partners that may have been involved and then dropped out or changed their level of involvement.</i>
<b>5. Academic English Instruction</b>	5a. NAM-Funded Personnel	1ai	ESL9; TC9	<i>Use this code when interviewee is specifically referring to his or her own position or any personnel/staff at the school/district whose positions are at least partially funded by the NAM grant to focus on enhancing the academic English skills of students.</i>
	5b. NAM-Funded Services	1ai	GC8; ED5; Sup5; Pr5; ESL7, 8, 11; TC7, 8, 10, 11	<i>Descriptions of the NAM-funded activities or services (in school/district or out of school/district) that focus on enhancing the <u>academic English</u> skills of students.</i>
<b>6. Native Language Instruction</b>	6a. NAM-Funded Personnel	1ai	Lang7; TC9	<i>Use this code when interviewee is specifically referring to his or her own position or any personnel/staff at the school/district whose positions are at least partially funded by the NAM grant to focus on enhancing the <u>Native language</u> skills of students.</i>

Code	Sub-Codes	RQ(s)	Protocol Interview Question(s)	Notes and Examples (includes definitions and exclusions)
	6b. NAM-Funded Services	1ai	GC8; ED5; Sup5; Pr5; Lang6, 7, 8; TC7, 8, 9	<i>Descriptions of the NAM-funded activities or services implemented to support Native language instruction and cultural revitalization. <u>ONLY</u> include NAM-funded services (do include services partially funded by NAM if not fully funded).</i>
<b>7. Curriculum Development</b>		1ai	ESL10a, 10b; Lang8, 8a, 8b; TC10, 10a, 10b	<i>Descriptions of activities and personnel that focus on developing or support in developing curriculum to enhance instruction. <u>ONLY</u> include NAM-funded services and personnel.</i>
<b>8. Professional Development (PD)</b>		1a	GD10, 11, 12; Pr7, 9; ESL13; PC11; PDP8, 9	<i>Includes descriptions of the PD content and structure at the <u>DISTRICT</u> or <u>SCHOOL</u> level, e.g., workshops, seminars, PLCs, peer coaching or mentoring focusing on teaching ELs, strategies to build language skills, native language instruction, technology, etc. <u>ONLY INCLUDE</u> at least partially NAM-funded services. <u>INCLUDE</u> any tribal involvement in the development of PD.</i>
	8a. Provider	1ai	ED7; Pr8; ESL14; Lang10; TC14; PDP7, 7a–e	<i><u>INCLUDE</u> in this sub-code PD provider's affiliation, e.g., external provider, school, district, tribe, how PD provider was selected and his or her training, and whether PD is provided at the <u>DISTRICT</u> or <u>SCHOOL</u> level. Note: PD provider may be partially funded by NAM grant.</i>
	8b. Participants	1ai	GC9, 13; Sup6; Pr6, 10; ESL 14; TC14; PC10; PDP11; ED6, 7	<i>Teachers, administrators, and/or instructional staff (and, if applicable, tribal partners) at the <u>DISTRICT</u> or <u>SCHOOL</u> level who are targeted to receive training that is funded by the NAM grant.</i>
	8c. Perceptions of PD	1ai	ESL13, 14, 14a, 14c; Lang9, 10b, 10d; TC13, 14a, 14d; PC11a, 11c; PDP3a, 5, 13; GC13; ED6, 7; Sup6; Pr10	<i>Descriptions of how receptive participants at the <u>DISTRICT</u> or <u>SCHOOL</u> level are to the PD, including supports and needs. If applicable, <u>INCLUDE</u> any perceptions of tribal partners of the PD.</i>
<b>9. Data Use</b>		1ai	GC8; ED5; Sup5; Pr5; Lang6	<i>Descriptions of how data are used to support students' academic achievement. <u>INCLUDE</u> changes that have been made to the school or district's data use as a result of the NAM grant. <u>ONLY</u> include NAM-funded services. <u>DO NOT INCLUDE</u> descriptions of data collected by evaluators.</i>

Code	Sub-Codes	RQ(s)	Protocol Interview Question(s)	Notes and Examples (includes definitions and exclusions)
10. Early Childhood Learning		1ai	GC8; ED5; Sup5; Pr5; Lang6	Descriptions of services and personnel for children 0–4 years of age that are part of the NAM program. <u>ONLY</u> include at least partially NAM-funded services.
11. Technology		1aii	GC8; ED5; Sup5; Pr5; Lang6; PC7; PDP10	Descriptions of technology resources that the NAM project or program has access to and which technologies are incorporated into the NAM-funded services, including the focus of the technology and the users of the technology. <u>DOUBLE CODE</u> professional development including technology here and under 8, Professional Development.
12. Family Outreach		1ai	GC16; ED8; Sup7; Pr11; ESL15; Lang11; TC15; PC6, 8, 9, 12	Descriptions of strategies to engage family and community in students' education. <u>ONLY</u> include NAM-funded services.
13. Measurable and Perceived Outcomes and Progress	13a. Measurable outcomes and progress	3	GC10, 17, 19; ED20; Sup17, 19; Pr19; Eval8, 12, 14	Descriptions of <u>MEASURABLE (NOT PERCEIVED) PROGRESS or OUTCOMES</u> (i.e., those supported by assessment data, survey data, and other sources of data the grantee collects/evaluator collects on project goals). <u>INCLUDE</u> evaluator's descriptions of role in federal reporting requirements.
	13b. Perceived outcomes and progress	5	GC17; ED18; Sup17; Pr19; PC17; Eval12	<u>INTERVIEWEE'S PERCEPTION</u> of progress and outcomes that are not captured by data (e.g., community participation, student engagement, and other benefits). <u>INCLUDE</u> perceptions of successes.
14. Challenges		4a, 4b, 4c	GC20, 21; ED14, 16; Sup13, 15; Pr15; ESL18, 20; Lang15, 17; TC18, 20; PC15, 18; PDP16, 18; Eval10, 11	Description of barriers or challenges in planning and implementation of NAM project or program services and ability to carry out initial plans. Include strategies grantees have used to overcome challenges and any supports stakeholders have received to overcome challenges, e.g., from tribal communities, school, district, state agencies, Department of Education, etc. <u>DO NOT INCLUDE</u> broad challenges that are not part of the implementation of the NAM grant, which should be coded under 1, Grant Context.

Code	Sub-Codes	RQ(s)	Protocol Interview Question(s)	Notes and Examples (includes definitions and exclusions)
<b>15. Lessons Learned</b>		4d	GC22; ED15; Sup14; Pr16; ESL21; Lang18; TC21; PC19; PDP19	<i>Description of lessons learned in the planning and implementation of the NAM project or program services, e.g., realizing that transportation can be an issue for students participating in afterschool programs if they live far from the school.</i>
<b>16. Supports Needed</b>		4c	GC21; ED16; Sup15; Pr17; Eval11a	<i><u>INTERVIEWEE'S PERCEPTION</u> of what additional supports are needed, e.g., from tribal communities, school, district, state agencies, Department of Education, etc.</i>
<b>17. Sustainability</b>		4	GC25; ED17; Sup16; Pr18	<i><u>For 2013 grantees, INCLUDE</u> promising practices that have been established, e.g., activities planned to be made sustainable and maintained for the future. For 2011 grantees, INCLUDE promising practices that were established, e.g., any activities that have remained in place since funding ended.</i>
<b>18. Data Collected</b>		3	Eval2; 14	<i>Use this code when the evaluator (or others who assist the evaluator) is describing the collection of quantitative and/or qualitative data for measuring outcomes and progress. <u>ONLY</u> use when the outcomes are not mentioned; otherwise, use 13, Measurable and Perceived Outcomes and Progress. <u>DO NOT INCLUDE</u> data used by grantees in support of student achievement or changes that have been made as a result of the NAM grant, as well as descriptions of the goals and objectives of the grant.</i>

\*GC=Grant Coordinator; Sup=District Superintendent or BIE Administrator; Pr=Principal; PDP=Professional Development Provider; ESL=ELA or EL Instructional Staff; Lang=NA/AN Language Instructor; PC=Parent/Family Coordinator; TC=Tribal College Staff



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