School Climate Transformation: Using a PBIS Model in Indian Country

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...transforming the social culture.

An effective school represents the community it’s a part of. The school must be a reflection of community values and traditions.”

- A Tribal Elder from the Fort Belknap Reservation (2015)

Goal
To fully implement a culturally-grounded and culturally-appropriate Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI) in schools that serve primarily tribal areas.

Partners
- Tribal Cultural Advisors
- Target Schools
- MBI and Indigenous Consultants
- Montana OPI American Indian Youth Development Coord.
- Project SOARS - Montana’s School Safety and Mental Health Initiative

Participation
Quaglia Student Voice participation for SCT Schools:
Secondary - 1514
Elementary - 579
Staff - 209
Parent/Families - 167

Changing Adult Behavior
- Build and grow decision making systems
- Encourage positive interactions with children
- Engage students, families and cultural advisers in problem solving
- Align multiple programs into a “paradigm”

Montana Schools
- 144,500 total students
- White: 79% of school-age population
- American Indian: 11% of school-age population
- Special Education rate is 3.5% higher for American Indians than Whites

Challenges
- Extensive staff and administration turnover
- Tension between “Native” ways and “White” ways
- Staff availability for training (substitute teachers are not available)
- Too many programs in high need schools
- Inconsistent data and decision making infrastructure
- Target schools average 280 miles from SEA
- Inconsistent Internet availability

Montana is home to seven reservations and 12 sovereign Native American nations.

Current Target Schools: Hays/Lodgepole, Pryor, Wyola, Frazer, Browning & Butte
Future Target Schools: Brockton, Poplar, Heart Butte, Wolf Point, Lodge Grass