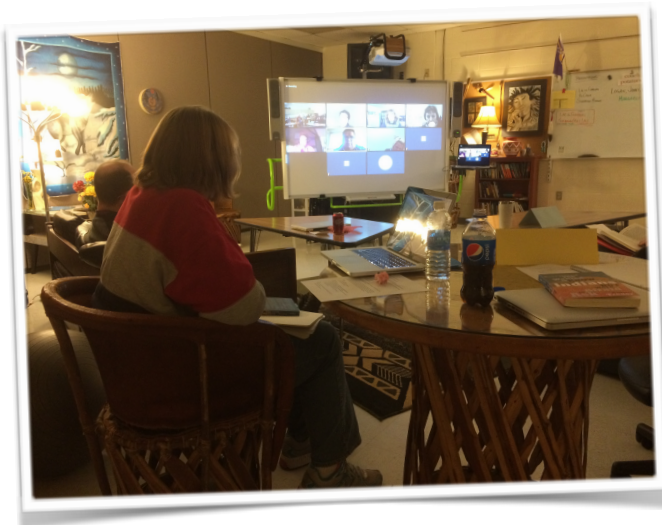


Title VII

Unity School District Native American Programming



Integrating
"Indian Specific
Content"
into the
Curriculum



Professional Staff Development
Increases Student Achievement



Cultural Identity
and Awareness

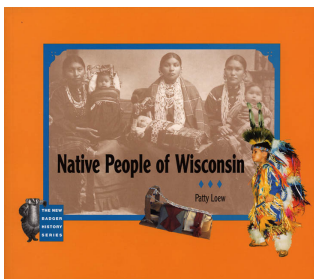
Native American Studies - districtwide - is driven primarily by the Title VII Grant objectives which, in turn, drives curriculum development, staff development, and student-related services.

We are currently winding down the second year of a multi-year grant cycle (approx \$80,000/4) targeting the following four objectives:

- 1) Increase integration of Indian specific content into curriculum
- 2) Increase knowledge of cultural identity and awareness
- 3) Increase school attendance
- 4) Increase academic achievement

1) **Curriculum** development and integration of Indian specific content has been evolving at Unity over the past several years. In response to community conversations, teacher surveys, and in compliance with Wisconsin's Act 31, a committee was created in 2012 to examine the impact of an **infusion model** of integrating Native American studies throughout social studies courses at every level and weaving it into the fabric of electives, specials, and a variety of core curricular areas in order to give all students a healthier and broader foundation on which to assemble their cultural knowledge.

Fourth grade students enjoy an in-school field trip to the Native American classroom where they learn about the profound influence of Native Americans on the founding of America and then team up to create beautiful replicas of eleven Wisconsin tribal flags.



Using primary documents and Native American UW Madison Professor Patty Loew's book, [Native People of Wisconsin](#), fifth graders build on their tribal knowledge and hone their library research skills by developing a presentation on the history and culture of Wisconsin's federally recognized tribes.

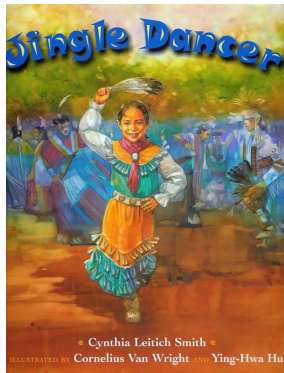
Eighth grade students have a trimester of Cultural Studies where sovereignty and treaty rights are highlighted and research is focused on present-day Indian country in Wisconsin while understanding who we are as a reflection of our collective past. Students also begin to understand the fluidity and social construction of culture, which segues nicely into the History through Film elective in the High School where Hollywood's creation of "The Indian" is explored through a century of cinema. Biology classes also seek to infuse Native aspects of science by teaching through the lens of "tiospaye" - the concept that "we are all related, all things are connected" - as in the symbiotic relationship of wolves and crows (ma'iingan and andeg).



2) **Evidence-based research** shows that students who have a well-rounded culturally based education develop an integral awareness of their role in society, their impact and influence on others, and the beauty and wisdom of cultural diversity.

Supporting our Native American students by coordinating Title VII services with Title I reading support creates a unique opportunity to have an expansion of literacy based education to include specific Native focused resources. Culturally based children's and young adult literature can serve to highlight Native ways of knowing; cultural wisdom enlightens and informs their worldview, expanding their thinking paths and developing aesthetic, psychosocial, and instructional reading experiences. **Aesthetic** reading opportunities draw the student into the story where they identify with the characters and are entertained with the story line.

Psychosocial benefits of literature provide characters and events with which children can identify and through which they can consider their own actions, beliefs, and emotions. The characters and situations in books introduce learners to what the world may look like through others' eyes and offers a chance to further construct their own views of self and the world.



Research confirms the value of the dual role in multicultural children's literature: **it can serve as a mirror or a window.** A child may see his or her own life reflected in a book or may have an opportunity to see into someone else's life. Historically, children outside the mainstream have had few literary mirrors that affirm their identities, although they have plenty of windows through which to view life in the dominant culture of the United States. Coordinating Native literature with Title I will help all Unity students expand the foundation on which they assemble their **cultural knowledge, cultural identity, and cultural awareness.**

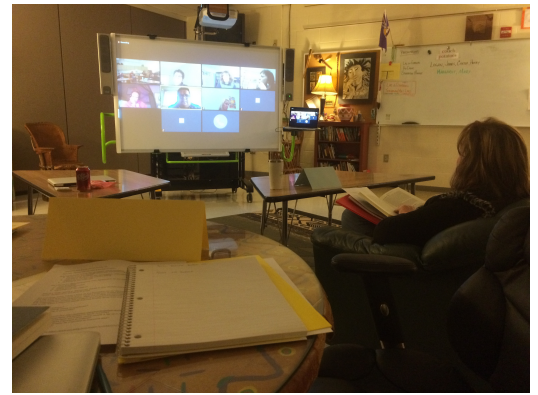
3) **School attendance** is comprehensively tracked through Skyward and is addressed through standard administrative routes such as truancy letters to parents, and through less formal routes such as texts to parents and informal conversations or happenstance encounters with parents where casual communication often provides insight into truancy issues. Overall, attendance for Native American students at Unity is consistent with their non-Native peers.

Beyond tracking attendance, Title VII staff also utilize DPI's DEWS (Dropout Early Warning System), which uses multiple data points beyond attendance, (such as discipline, mobility, and state assessment performance) to generate a risk score that flags individual students whose behavioral and achievement data indicate they may be at risk for dropping out of school.

Extra-curricular activities continue to provide a reliably positive means of engaging and connecting students to school, thereby increasing attendance and ensuring academic success.



4) **Academic achievement** is readily addressed through consistent efforts to develop cultural sensitivity and responsiveness of Unity's staff along with promoting parental involvement at all levels. Professional Staff Development opportunities are integral to this venture.



Over the past two school years, more than a dozen teachers participated in a CESA 11-sponsored book club, which met in the Native American office on six separate occasions after school to take part in a live online meeting with at least 25 other Wisconsin teachers who work with Native American students in a public school setting. DPI's Native American Consultant David O'Connor facilitates these discussions along with CESA 11's Melissa Moe. Additionally, three staff members traveled to Wausau for a one-day conference featuring renowned speaker/author Anton Treuer on addressing Native American Equity and the Achievement Gap in 2015; another three staff members attended a one-day conference featuring Dr. Patty Loew in 2016; and Native American Coordinator Sam Rivers attended the National Indian Education Association's annual conference with yet another staff member.





Ojibwe Language Revitalization is the final link in providing a well-rounded cultural education and support system for our students at Unity. Through additional competitive DPI grant funding specific to language revitalization and a unique partnership with Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Community College, Unity offers a variety of language classes both during and after school.

Supportive language speakers from the St. Croix Band of Ojibwe encourage student and teacher learners alike to engage in a wide variety of language learning activities including creating movies, arts and crafts, scrapbooks, songs, books, and many fun ways to put Ojibwemowin into the minds and hearts of Unity's students.



Title VII grant funds supplement the regular school programs at Unity. Projects help Native American students sharpen their academic skills, assisting students in becoming proficient in the core content areas, and provide students an opportunity to participate in enrichment programs that would otherwise be unavailable. A variety of grant funds support such activities as after-school Ojibwe language revitalization programs, tutoring, and dropout prevention in addition to professional staff development opportunities and curriculum infusion creating a culturally responsive schooling environment for all Unity students.