

Title 16 – Tribal Education Code

Chapter 1. General Provisions

Sec. 103. Findings, Intent and Purposes, and Declaration of Policy.

(a) Findings. The Fort Peck Executive Board finds that:

(1) Achievement levels at all elementary and secondary schools on the Fort Peck Reservation with high Native American enrollment are notably low.

(2) Drop-out rates in the elementary and secondary schools on the Fort Peck Reservation are exorbitant when compared to State of Montana and national averages.

(3) Indian Studies is taught in only some elementary and secondary schools on the Fort Peck Reservation on a limited basis. Specific tribal studies curricula have not been fully developed or implemented in any school system;

(4) Dakota and Nakoda languages are not offered in all elementary or secondary schools on the Fort Peck Reservation;

(5) While the elementary and secondary school population on the Fort Peck Reservation in 1995 was over fifty percent Indian, the percentage of Indian faculty and staff at those schools is much lower.

(6) Due to the number of middle and secondary school students on the Fort Peck Reservation who are parents, parenting and family life education has been identified as a primary need on the reservation to encourage positive, effective parenting skills, as well as effective parental involvement in the schools;

(7) Parental and community involvement in the schools is inadequate. Such involvement, for the most part, is limited to parent groups, committees, and procedures as required under federal Indian education laws and programs; and

(8) The federal government has a trust obligation, as embodied in treaties, statutes, and the United States Constitution, to provide for the formal education of Indian students who attend federal, tribal, and state schools. The federal government historically has failed to live up to its responsibilities in the area of Indian education. The

State of Montana has also historically failed to meet the needs of Indian students on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation. Recognizing that a good formal education is critical to the survival of the Fort Peck Tribes, it is in the best interests of the Tribes to assert its responsibility over the formal education systems on the reservation to improve those systems and the Tribes.

(b) Intent and Purposes. It is the intent and purpose of this Tribal Education Code to:

(1) Preserve, protect, and perpetuate the Tribes. Provide the necessary resources to preserve, protect, and perpetuate the Fort Peck Tribes with its human and land resources.

(2) Promote intra-government understanding and coordination. Provide a means to promote understanding and coordination of branches, agencies, and entities of the Fort Peck Tribal Government on the purposes, standards, and functions of education on the Fort Peck Reservation; and

(3) Make education a good experience and good preparation for life. Make education on the Fort Peck Reservation a good experience and provide a means to prepare tribal members for life on and off the Reservation.

(c) Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Fort Peck Tribes that:

(1) Tribal government must provide for education to protect its members. The most valuable resources of the Fort Peck Tribes are its tribal members and the Reservation landbase. To preserve, protect, and perpetuate the human resources within and on the native homelands of the Assiniboiné and Sioux Tribes, the Tribal Government must be actively involved with all educational endeavors on the Reservation to ensure an effective, appropriate, and relevant education of its tribal members.

(2) Education must be effective, appropriate for and relevant to the Reservation. An effective, appropriate, and relevant formal education on the Reservation includes, but is not limited to: academic excellence and high but realistic expectations for all students; competence in all basic academic and cognitive skills; competence in English language and knowledge of the non-Indian

American culture, governments, economics, environment, and history; knowledge of Fort Peck Dakota and Nakoda languages and knowledge of Fort Peck Assiniboiné and Sioux culture, government, economics, and environment; knowledge of the history of the Fort Peck Tribes and the role of tribal members in promoting the future of the Tribes; development of students as healthy individuals, members of families and communities, parents, citizens of the Tribes, the State, and the United States of America; development of self-discipline and positive self-worth; development of respect for all other living beings; development of attitude which encourages life-time learning, decision-making, and undertaking of responsibilities in family life, community and tribal affairs, employment, recreation, and the use of the environment; and parental and community involvement in the formal education process whereby the educational aspirations and the cultural values of parents and community members are promoted and respected;

(3) Education shall help prepare students to perpetuate the Tribes. Curriculum, education standards, educational policies and programs, and employment practices developed, implemented, or regulated under this Tribal Education Code shall help prepare students to assume their responsibilities to perpetuate the Tribes, its resources, and its culture; shall be carried out through coordinated efforts between the Tribal Education Department, local schools, other educational institutions, and chartered educational programs and chartered schools; and shall otherwise incorporate the intents, purposes, and policies of this code to the maximum extent possible;

(4) Tribal government shall work with state and federal governments to improve education. The Tribal Government shall develop cooperative working relationships with the state and federal governments to improve the education systems on the Reservation; and

(5) Ultimate education goal of Tribes is self-determination consistent with its heritage. The Tribes are a people with a distinct political, economic, and cultural heritage. The ultimate goal of

the Tribes regarding education is self-determination consistent with this heritage.