

To: MREA districts receiving Minnesota American Indian Aid  
From: Fred Nolan, MREA Exec Director  
Re: Am Indian Ed Plan topics addressed in a 10/24 meeting with Indian Ed Director Jane Harstad and Assistant Commissioner Kevin McHenry and in an 11/5 meeting with Commissioner Cassellius  
Date: November 8, 2018

**The purposes** of the meetings were to discuss the following:

- AMI count issues and requirement for plan resubmittals
- Clarification on guidelines and rationale for approval or disapproval of districts' specific plan activities
- Identify issues which need further follow up

**Count Issues: What to Expect:**

1. MDE plans to send to the districts' MARSS coordinators the list of AMI students that MDE has found by re-analyzing the parent selections to identify all AMI students within a district. This private data.
2. Jane plans to send a public email to superintendents and Indian education coordinators telling them that this email has been sent, to check the numbers on their submitted plans, and if different to resubmit the plans.
3. Jane's office plans to continue to approve plans throughout this time period.
4. MDE will calculate and send to districts' the MCA base line (2018) scores for this identified list of AMI students, and next August send districts the 2019 MCA scores for this cohort as it will be different than the report card data. This is under discussion by MDE at this time, and they do not know exactly what it will look like.

**AM Ed Aid Plans—Topics clarified:**

1. The meaning of the Am Indian Aid Guidance document regarding salaries: Jane stated the guidance is to "recommend" not more than 50% percent for salary, but that is not a hard rule. She sees and approves plans with higher percentages when the positions identified are explicitly aligned with goals.
2. The non-discriminatory statutory language in [124D.74](#) is clear that non-American Indian students can voluntarily participate in American Indian Aid programs and be funded with the aid to the extent that the aid \$'s can cover those expenses. The planned activity must support for AMI students or be to develop intercultural awareness within [124D.74](#) and fit within a WBWF goal area. The voluntary enrollment is open to all students.
3. Proportional funding: When a district has a significant AMI percentage of students, a district can up-front assign a proportional fraction of a new position to AMI aid related to an AMI plan goal based on its AMI student percentage. This would apply in a situation such as when a district wishes to add a career and college counselor to serve all students including AMI and non-AMI students when the purpose for this position is clearly intended to support AMI students and identified in the plan.

**AM Ed Aid Plans—Issues which need further follow up:**

1. A reserve UFARS code for Indian Ed Aid: This will require specific legislative action. MDE will consider this for inclusion in their request to the new Governor for inclusion in the '19 legislative proposals.
2. Supplementing/supplanting: AMI Aid must be supplemental and not supplant district expenditures. These are year to prior year decisions. Specific questions regarding '19 plans should be sent to Commissioner Cassellius.
3. How can the template and guidance be improved to better assist districts in their planning? 124D.74, Subd 1 lays out purposes for the AMI aid, but was originally written for a grant program. MDE's plan template is organized by the five goal areas of the WBWF to focus the districts on these goals, and to allow districts to braid funding streams within goal areas. Some of this can get complicated despite best intentions.

Commissioner Cassellius suggested perhaps MDE could hold two "convenings" after the first of the year to bring stakeholders together with MDE personnel to see if modifications to [the guidance and plan documentation](#) could make this process clearer and more transparent, and to consider changes to [124D.74](#) or other statutes.