INDIAN CONTROL OF EDUCATION: FACTORS THAT DETERMINE SUCCESS IN INDIAN EDUCATION – A CASE STUDY OF TWO TRIBALLY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS

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by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify successful tribally controlled schools and to determine the factors that contributed to their success. It also examined how stakeholders defined success. Two schools were studied.

A review of literature on Indian education was conducted to determine the factors that are associated with improving Indian education. These criteria were utilized to select the two tribally controlled schools for this study. An expert panel was convened, and asked to review the criteria and identify two schools they considered to be successful.

A case study of two successful tribal schools was conducted to determine how and to what degree these factors were implemented into each school. The study describes how these factors were adapted, operationalized, and/or institutionalized to meet each school’s own unique needs and goals as Indian controlled institutions.

Qualitative research methods were used to collect data (e.g., interviews, document collection, and observation). The study examined the following questions:

1. What are the factors that make an Indian controlled school successful?

2. How do these schools define “success?”

The study included 28 interviews with school board members, administrators, tribal council members, parents, tribal college faculty, and teachers at two tribally controlled schools. The researcher also collected data through school documents, newspapers, meeting minutes, observations and field notes.

Findings indicate that the interviewees want their students to be successful on their terms. They want students to be academically prepared but with a foundation in
their language and culture. They want students to pursue their goals and to bring back home their knowledge if they chose to. Additionally, the interviewees perceived all the factors found in the review of literature were present to some degree in their schools.

This study indicates that tribally controlled schools need to be researched further to determine if the implementation of these success factors is being met to the fullest degree possible. In addition, research needs to be conducted on what it takes to be an effective leader in a successful Indian Controlled School.
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CHAPTER ONE

Background and Statement of the Problem

Introduction

The American system of formal education for American Indians/Alaska Natives started as an effort to “civilize” and “christianize” Native people (Fuchs & Havinghurst, 1972; Szasz, 1988; Tippeconnic, 1991; Utter, 1993). As early as 1512, select groups, namely Indian leaders’ children, were educated in a European manner (Williams, 1990), meaning they were taught to read and write with Christianity woven in. In 1776, the United States Federal Government formally funded these efforts in assimilation into the White culture, when it provided for educators to live with Indians in the state of New York (Utter, 1993). Between 1778 and 1871, treaties between various tribes and the federal government included education provisions for Indian children (Tippeconnic, 1991).

After the treaty-making period that ended in 1871 (Indian Appropriations Act 25 Section 71 (United States, 1871)), a variety of groups took on the responsibility of educating American Indians/Alaska Natives. Christian missionary groups and the federal government established schools on- and off-reservations (U.S. Department of the Interior, [U.S. DOI] 1988). In 1879, the first off-reservation boarding school was established in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, with its motto of “Kill the Indian and save the man” (In the White Man’s Image, 1991; Utter, 1993) as the guiding philosophy to educate American Indians/Alaska Natives. State schools, mission schools, and federally run schools were found by government-appointed investigators to be woefully lacking in academics and
basic care of children in the early part of the century. Unproductive educational systems like those mentioned continue to this day.

In 1928, a comprehensive government study entitled *The Problem of Indian Administration*, better known as the *Meriam Report*, found that the educational needs of American Indian/Alaska Native children had largely been unmet. The study detailed the failure of the federal government’s management of Indian affairs, including education (Meriam, 1928). It pointedly attacked the Bureau of Indian Affairs’ (BIA) boarding schools, where conditions were found to be neglectful. Neglect was determined when students were found to be malnourished and physically abused by unqualified staff, and they were literally providing the labor and food to run the schools (Szasz, 1977). Programs of study, such as vocational training and basic skills, were found to be lacking in providing adequate vocational skills, and were in serious need of revision in how they were taught. The Meriam Report noted that Native cultures and languages were discouraged from being taught or spoken, and, more often than not, they were omitted from the curriculum. It recommended the establishment of more day schools as opposed to boarding schools, more parental participation, and a relevant curriculum (Meriam, 1928). Day schools would allow for children to remain near home, parental participation would encourage children to perform well in school, and a curriculum that was up to date would teach skills students could use.

Forty-one years later, in 1969, another national government study, the *Kennedy Report*, found little had changed for American Indian/Alaska Native students (Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). Educational systems for Native children, including BIA and public schools, did little to stimulate intellectual
development with its outdated materials and ineffective administrators and teachers, which resulted in high dropout rates and an aversion to school. Parental involvement was also discouraged for fear the students would return to their traditional ways of living and thinking. Teachers in both the public and BIA school systems also lacked the teaching skills to adequately teach Native children. Similar to the Meriam Report, the Kennedy Report recommended more parental involvement and Indian control of education but with more detailed recommendations that also addressed public education. This led to increased efforts by tribes, local communities, and Indian educators to gain control of Indian education. The Kennedy Report concluded that the education of American Indians and Alaska Natives was a “national tragedy” and recommended Indian involvement and control of education as a way to improve the education of Native students.

The Kennedy Report recognized the potential of Rough Rock Demonstration School in the “development of new and more effective programs for Indian children” (Senate Special Subcommittee, 1969, p. 130). Rough Rock Demonstration School was established in 1966 as the first Indian-controlled school (U.S. DOI, 1988). Navajo Community College, now Diné College, the first college controlled by Indians, followed in 1968. Rough Rock Demonstration School and Navajo Community College were an outgrowth of the Great Society programs of the 1960s. Programs such as Upward Bound, Job Corps, VISTA, and community action programs helped to usher in more Indian participation and control (Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). Rough Rock was run by Navajos and supported by the BIA and the Office of Economic Opportunity. President Johnson directed BIA schools to start forming parent advisory boards in schools, and by 1969 many were in place. The push for self-determination has
been an on-going battle since the 1960s (Deloria, 1974). Native people have worked hard to gain control of their education (Tippeconnic, 2000).

Beginning in 1970, there has been a growing movement for more control of education by tribes and Native educators. Major acts of Congress and reports that promoted Indian control included: the Indian Education Act of 1972; the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975; the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978; the Education Amendments of 1978; the Tribally Controlled Schools Act of 1988; and the Indian Nations at Risk Report (1991).

Major efforts by tribes and Indian educators were: the White House Conference on Indian Education (1992); the National American Indian/Alaska Native Education Summit (1995); the Comprehensive Federal Indian Education Policy Statement (1999); and Executive Orders for Indian Education and for Tribal Colleges (1996 and 1998). American Indian/Alaska Native people were instrumental political advocates for much of the legislation, Executive Orders and policy statements, and, as a result, there are more American Indians/Alaska Natives who are directly involved in the education of their children.

Today, Indians have more control of their education than ever before (Tippeconnic, 2000). The number of BIA-funded tribally controlled elementary and secondary schools has risen to 123 out of 183 total (Dr. A. Felix, personal communication, May 7, 2009). The remainder are BIA-operated elementary and secondary schools. The difference between a tribally controlled school and a BIA-operated is the amount of control the tribe has in the development and operation of their schools. There are 37 tribal community colleges offering associate to master’s degrees
Indian magnet public schools, charter schools, and tribally controlled schools are also found on reservations and in urban areas.

Despite the growing movement toward tribal control of education in the BIA system, remnants of the deficit model of Indian education still remain (Tippeconnic, 2000). This deficit model promotes the extinction of tribal cultures and languages. For example, language and culture have not been fully integrated into all the schools serving American Indian/Alaska Native students (Tippeconnic, 1999). The dropout rate for Native students remains higher than the national average (Reyhner, 1994). Academic achievement in BIA schools and public schools continues to be below the national norms (Indian Nations at Risk Report Task Force, 1991). Parental involvement is still lacking (Tippeconnic, 1999). Teacher preparation programs have not equipped teachers to come to the reservations adequately prepared to teach Native children (Indian Nations at Risk Report Task Force, 1991).

Purpose of the Study

There is sufficient evidence to support the current trend toward American Indian control of education. Native educators and communities want to determine how their children are educated just as mainstream communities want local control versus state or Federal control. Some of these decisions will be linked with who they are as a distinct cultural group. For example, one school incorporates the tribe’s traditional value system into the school system along with the language of the tribe. Traditional ways of knowing can be preserved and utilized when there is local control of education. According to the Meriam Report (1928):
Most superintendents of reservations and agency employees generally do not understand the fundamental educational principle that the Indian must learn to do things for himself, even if he makes mistakes in the effort. They do not seem to realize that almost no change can be permanent that is imposed from above, that no “progress,” so called, will persist and continue if it is not directly the result of the wish and effort of the individual himself. (p. 401)

The theme of Native local control is present in government and independent studies (e.g., the Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969; Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, 1991; White House Conference on Indian Education, 1992; Tharp, Feathers, Epaloose, Bird, Hilberg, & Rivera, 2001) and supports the current policy of Indian self-determination.

The purpose of this study was to identify successful tribally controlled schools and to determine the factors that contribute to their success. Stakeholders defined success in their terms. Two tribally controlled schools were studied independent of each other. A review of the literature concerning Indian education, especially Indian control of education, was conducted to determine the factors that are associated with improving Indian education.

An expert panel, selected on the basis of their extensive knowledge of Indian education, was convened, and asked to review the criteria and use the criteria to identify two tribally controlled schools that they considered to be successful. A case study of these two tribal schools was then conducted to examine to what degree the factors were
implemented into each school. The study describes how stakeholders at the schools viewed their school and how they define success.

**Research Questions**

This study examined the following questions:

1. What are the factors that make an Indian-controlled K-12 school successful?
2. How do these schools define and measure success?

**Significance of the Study**

Meaningful Indian involvement and control of education has been recommended as a way to improve the education of American Indians/Alaska Natives. Rough Rock Demonstration School was the first Indian-controlled school started in 1966. Today, 44 years later, 123 of the 183 BIA-funded schools are Indian-controlled schools. This study addresses the need to define successful Indian-controlled schools and to identify schools that are successful.

Information derived from this study can be shared with other schools, both public and tribal, to understand ways to enhance the achievement of Native children. As the *Kennedy Report* mentioned, demonstration schools such as Rough Rock can have “input on the development of new and more effective educational programs for Indian children in both public and federal schools” (Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969, pp. 129-130). The ultimate goal is to provide information that will “assist tribes in meeting the unique educational needs of their children, including the need to preserve, revitalize, and use Native Languages and cultural traditions” (Executive Order, 1998, p 1).
This study also represents a comprehensive response to the national need for better education of American Indians. Based on the historic failure of public education, Indian educators have found that they must also advocate for Indian control. When Native people are in control of their own education, a greater possibility exists that they can repair some of the damage resulting from loss of culture and language. It is part of a “more prolonged movement of cultural revitalization in which certain models of psychological breakdown and reconstruction can occur” (Clifford, 1973, as cited in Deloria, 1974, p. ii).

Finally, this study is significant in that it addresses the importance of Indian control and studies schools directly run by Indians. “Indian control of education is essential to individual Indian identity, tribal self-sufficiency and restoration and vitality of Indian languages and culture” (Tippeconnic, 2000, p. 47). As stated earlier, Native people must have a voice in determining how their children will be educated. With that voice comes a vested interest in the success of children in an educational environment. Additionally, “schools that respect and support a student’s language and culture are significantly more successful in educating those students” (Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, 1991, p. 16). It is important that we, as Native people, succeed in Indian control of education. When you achieve educational success, as Deloria (1974) indicates, other areas of self-determination can then be pursued. He also believed Indian people are being tested in order to see if they can run their own programs and implement policy. This would determine whether self-determination policy could be realized.

**Definition of Terms**

*Alaska Native*
“term used to distinguish the Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut people of Alaska” (Utter, 1993, p.13).

American Indian

“a practical and basic legal definition of an Indian would be one which sets two essential qualifications: (a) some of the individual’s ancestors lived in what is now the United States before the first Europeans arrived and (b) the individual is recognized as an Indian by his or her tribe or community” (Cohen, 1982, as cited in Utter, 1993, p. 13).

Bureau of Indian Affairs

The branch of the Department of the Interior that has the responsibility of carrying out the treaty rights of the federally recognized Indian tribes.

Bureau of Indian Affairs/Education Schools/Office of Indian Education Programs

Schools established to educate children who are one-fourth or more American Indian/Alaska Native or are a member of a Federally recognized tribe and who qualify under the educational or social criteria set by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. These include elementary, secondary, and boarding schools. Acronyms such as BIA, BIE, and OIEP will be used interchangeably in this study.

Indian Control

“Organizational and infrastructure levels which include schools that are controlled and primarily staffed by tribal members and school curriculum that reflects the culture, language, teachings and values of the tribe” (DeLong, 1998, as cited in Tippeconnic, 1999, p. 39).

Indian Education Act of 1972
“Legislation established funding for special bilingual and bicultural programs, culturally relevant teaching materials, proper training and hiring of counselors, and establishment of an Office of Indian Education in the U.S. Department of Education. Most importantly, the act required participation of Native Americans in the planning of all relevant educational projects” (Cohen, 1982, & O’Brien, 1989, as cited in Utter, 1993, p.197).

*Indian Reorganization Act of 1934*

“an act purposely designed to help re-establish self-government and restore to tribes sufficient powers to represent tribal interests in a variety of political and economic circumstances” (Utter, 1993, p. 166).

*Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975*

The Act provided for and encouraged “the contracting out of BIA functions to Indian tribes themselves. The long-run goal set by the Act was the assumption by the tribes of managerial and policymaking responsibilities for their own affairs” (U.S. DOI, 1988, p. 9).

*Office of Indian Education Programs*

See definition for Bureau of Indian Affairs/Education.

*Self-Determination*

“a catch-all term that covers a variety of concepts including tribal restoration, self-government, cultural renewal, reservation resource development, self-sufficiency, control over education, and equal or controlling input into all policies and programs arising from the Native American–federal government trust relationship” (Waldman, 1985, as cited in Utter, 1993, p.170).
**Success**

“degree or measure of succeeding/favorable or desired outcome” (Mish, 1998, p. 1175).

**Title XI of the Education Amendments Act of 1978**

Promoted Indian self-determination, stating that “it shall be the policy of the Bureau, in carrying out the functions of the Bureau, to facilitate Indian control of Indian affairs in all matters relating to education” (U.S. DOI, 1988, p. 9).

**Tribally controlled schools**

Schools under contract or grant through the BIA that are operated directly by tribal governments (U.S. Department of the Interior, [U.S. DOI] 2001, p. 3).

**Summary**

Chapter One discussed the purpose of the study and introduced the research questions. A historical perspective relating to American Indian education was briefly described. Terms relevant to the study were also introduced.

Chapter Two will provide a brief history of Indian education and the studies conducted in relation to this topic.
CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Chapter Two reviews the literature concerning the education of American Indians/Alaska Natives in the United States. Literature related to the history of Indian education, tribal control of Indian education, and examples of tribal control of Indian education are presented. Finally, factors associated with improving the education of American Indians/Alaska Natives in tribally controlled schools are identified.

History of Indian Education

The history of education for American Indians/Alaska Natives has been a difficult one. Education has been used as a tool to civilize and christianize American Indian/Alaska Natives. Native students were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic according to European custom. Additionally, children were forced to give up any semblance to his/her culture and language and accept Christianity. The forced approach to assimilation resulted in elimination of tribal cultures and languages. Neither tribes nor parents had a voice in the education of their children. Not until the 1960s did the policies and practices change to allow more tribal control and parental involvement.

During the early history of Indian education, the premise was to assimilate Indian children into Christianity (Szasz, 1977). Various groups, from the Catholic Church to the Federal Government, took on the mission of assimilation (Szasz & Ryan, 1988). The result was children who did not fit into white society and were considered useless to and by their own tribes because of their “white ways” (Szasz, 1977). The forced assimilation education model proved to be disastrous for the Indian child. As these early attempts to
assimilate demonstrate, “formal education of the American Indian has been not so much to educate him as to change him” (Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969, p. 10).

Mission Period 1568-1865

As early as the 1500’s, different groups of Europeans sought to “civilize the barbarians” (DeJong, 1993; Fuchs & Havinghurst, 1972; Szasz, 1988). In 1568, the Catholic Jesuits established schools for Native children in Florida. The main purpose of the schools was to civilize the Natives with Christianity (Reyhner, 1994; Szasz, 1998; Tippeconnic, 1991). The majority of the Christianizing missionaries did not necessarily want American Indians to be integrated into their society, instead they sought to make them more agreeable to their way of living on farms and towns in the hope of their giving up more of their land (Szasz, 1998).

The dominant theme in providing education to indigenous peoples throughout American history was primarily one of “forced” assimilation. In the early colonial period, it was the prevailing thought that, if the Indians could be educated and assimilated into the dominant Christian culture, it would be easier to persuade them to become allies in time of war, thereby paving the way for territorial expansion and economic gain (American Indian Policy Review Commission, 1976). European countries that laid claim to the New World attempted to do this, although each country’s approach was different. For example, the French integrated into the Native way of life, while English groups kept themselves separate from Natives.

The British effort to educate the American Indian began in 1619, with the establishment of an Indian college called Henrico College near present day Richmond,
Virginia (Szasz, 1988). That attempt was foiled by an Indian uprising in 1622 led by the Algonquian Opechancanough, half-brother to Powhatan (Szasz & Ryan, 1988). A majority of the time, the aim of most educational efforts was not to make Indians equal to the White man, but to use them as buffers against invading tribes on the frontier. Neither the Natives nor colonists gained much from the exposure to each other. In New England, attempts to educate Indian children started with the founding of Harvard College in 1636, but that failed when the students died or went home (DeJong, 1993).

Later, in 1693, the College of William and Mary was chartered and initially dedicated to Christianizing Indians. The school provided elementary education to American Indian children from 1693 to 1717 (Szasz & Ryan, 1988). That meant the child might learn to read and write.

In other parts of the colonies, Indian education was sporadic at best. If there were groups interested in educating Native children, they were free to pursue that goal. Also, around that time, the boarding school concept of educating Indian children emerged. It was thought that, if you removed the child from his environment, his assimilation would be more likely (DeJong, 1993).

In 1735, John Sergeant started a boarding school for Native children at Stockbridge in Massachusetts (Szasz, 1988; Szasz & Ryan, 1988). That was followed by Eleazer Wheelock’s “Moors Charity School” in Lebanon, Connecticut in 1754, which was forced to close in 1769 (McCallum, 1932). Wheelock continued to be involved in efforts to educate Natives when he served as president of Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, which was founded solely for the purpose of educating Natives.
It was believed that assimilation would turn Native children and later their families to the “civilized” way of life, thereby allowing for more land acquisition by Europeans. The practice of removing Native children from their homes and sending them to boarding schools was funded initially in part and later fully by the Federal Government. This system of separation of family continues to this day. The whole effort to remove Indian children from their environment was an attempt to assimilate them into the White culture.

Whereas the first attempts at education were to Christianize the “savage,” later attempts were mainly politically inspired. The colonial leadership sought to make allies of the various tribes on the East Coast through education. The Continental Congress appropriated money to educate those tribes found to be sympathetic to their fight against the French during the French and Indian War (Szasz & Ryan, 1988).

Missionary attempts at education continued until after the Civil War ended in 1865. The Federal Government then funded religious organizations (i.e., the Catholic Church) to establish boarding schools that continued to deny Indian children their cultures, languages, and religions (Tharp, Lewis, Hilberg, Bird, Epaloose, Dalton, Youpa, Rivera, Riding-In-Feathers, & Eriacho, 1999). In some schools, the efforts of Christian missionaries to assimilate American Indian/Alaska Natives were unsuccessful because American Indian/Alaska Native students returned to their traditional ways once they went home (Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). For example, a child would return to the religious practices or the clothing of their tribe. Ultimately, the Federal Government took over the education of American Indians/Alaska Natives and instituted a policy of assimilation (Tharp, et al., 1999). Once again, language and culture
would be left at home, and a Eurocentric point of view would be taught (Robinson-Zanartu, 1996).

**Federal School System 1879-Present**

Historically, efforts by the Federal Government to educate American Indians/Alaska Natives were based on a desire to acquire more land (Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). A special subcommittee report on Indian education commissioned by the Federal Government known as the *Kennedy Report* (1969), stated:

> Government leaders recognized that if Indians could be converted from hunters into farmers, the Indians would require less land and would be easier to contain by white men. Education of Indians was seen as the means of accomplishing the conversion. (p. 11)

The practice of “education as a form of conversion” was so entrenched in federal policy that to ensure this took place at least 116 of the 374 ratified treaties made with tribes between 1778 and 1871 contained a provision concerning the education of Native people (Kappler, 1972; Reinhardt, 2004; Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). In 1802, Congress began appropriating up to $15,000 a year for “civilization efforts”. That money was usually given to Christian missionaries to provide an education (Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). An 1819 Act, repealed in 1873, which made “provision for the civilization of the Indian tribes adjoining the frontier settlements” (3 U. S. Stat. 516), was the funding source for the majority of
education services such as schools (Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). To further that effort, many missionaries were encouraged to take advantage of those funds to educate American Indian/Alaska Native children (U.S. DOI, 1988). Later, the Federal Government would take over the main responsibility of educating American Indian/Alaska Native children.

The Indian Service, later known as the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), was first established in 1836 under the War Department, then moved to the Department of Interior in 1849 (Fuchs & Havinghurst, 1972; U.S. DOI, 1988). The BIA would not assume responsibility for Indian education until the late 1800s, when teachers were absorbed under the civil service system (Fuchs & Havinghurst, 1972).

The federal system of Indian education was instituted in response to protests regarding funding to sectarian groups for the education of Natives (Fuchs & Havinghurst, 1972). People recognized that large religious organizations such as the Catholic Church were receiving a majority of the funds or that there should have been a separation of church and state. The Federal Government then established boarding schools geographically separated from reservations and, forcibly removed Indian children from their families to attend these schools (U.S. DOI, 1988). One of the first and most famous schools was the Carlisle Indian Industrial School founded in 1879 by Captain Richard Henry Pratt, who served in the U.S. Army. Prucha (1984) wrote that Pratt sought “complete integration of the Indians into white society, and his whole program was geared to that good. Anything that tended to isolate or segregate the Indians [among themselves] was to him anathema” (p. 696).
Pratt’s design soon generated more industrial off-reservation schools such as Chemawa Indian School in Oregon (1880), Albuquerque Indian School in New Mexico (1884), Chilocco Indian School in Oklahoma (1884), Santa Fe Indian School in New Mexico (1890), Genoa Indian Industrial School in Nebraska (1884), Haskell Indian School in Kansas (1878), Phoenix Indian School in Arizona (1890), Pierre Indian School in South Dakota (1891)\(^1\), and Flandreau Indian School in South Dakota (1893). By 1889, approximately a third of Indian children attending school were placed in these types of schools (Noriega, 1992).

The ultimate goal of the federally supported schools, denominational schools and later, public schools, was to instill white culture and values into the Indian child and to destroy tribal identity and values (Szasz & Ryan, 1988). Pratt’s institution, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, was viewed as a failure because the Indian child often “returned to the blanket” (Szasz, 1999, p.10). The children often went home, and resumed Indian identity and ways. To the Federal Government, this was seen as a failure of such efforts to successfully assimilate the Indian child. On the other hand, some Native children who returned from these types of schools were considered useless to, and by, their own tribes and were often ridiculed because of their “white ways” (Szasz, 1977). They could not speak their language anymore, do traditional work in and outside the home, or remember their traditional ceremonies. In some cases, they no longer wanted to be a part of their culture.

The other boarding schools mentioned fared no better. Due to unqualified staff and outdated curriculum, they were turning out students with little more than an eighth grade education and no usable skills (Meriam, 1928). Teachers who sometimes had no

\(^1\) In 1971, this school was renamed the Pierre Indian Learning Center.
training in education were hired to teach with materials public schools would no longer use. Also, the number of children who ran away underscores the fact that those institutions were not successful on their own terms. Yet, with this growing evidence of a system failure, the boarding school system continued as a major provider of Indian education until the 1930s. In 1928, the government published a report that exposed the failures of these systems and called for major reform (Szasz, 1999).

The Federal Government’s first study was “commissioned by the Institute for Government Research (now called the Brookings Institution)” (Foreman, 1987, p. 2), and was entitled *The Problem of Indian Administration*. It became known as the *Meriam Report*, published in 1928. The report detailed the failure of the federal government’s management of Indian affairs, including education (Szasz, 1977). Some of the findings of the *Meriam Report* were “1) Indians were excluded from management of their own affairs, and 2) Indians were receiving poor services (especially health and education) from public officials who were supposed to be serving their needs” (Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969, p. 13).

The study revealed the education of American Indians/Alaska Natives was substandard. Unqualified staff, inappropriate programs of study, lack of community involvement, little or no direct control by Indian parents, and poor conditions of schools were cited as major problems. The *Meriam Report* (1928) advocated the return of Native students to their own communities. It specifically called for the establishment of day schools on the reservations and elimination of boarding schools. The report noted the boarding school system was permeated with inefficiency and abuse. Lacking nutritional meals and adequate sleep, students as young as six were providing manual labor to run
the schools. The researchers found the staff to be under qualified, overworked, and under paid. The curriculum was found to be outdated and irrelevant to student needs.

The *Meriam Report* (1928) recommended broad changes to be instituted to improve Indian education. Some of the factors it cited that would contribute to the success of Native students included: (a) the dissolution of the boarding school system and creation of more day schools, (b) development of a more relevant curriculum based on individual needs of the student, (c) participation from the community in the direction of their schools, (d) a change in attitude from one of destroying family ideals to one of strengthening them, (e) implementation of cultural and bilingual education, and (f) the hiring of qualified staff. While the study did not specifically recommend Indian control, it did move closer to involving American Indian/Alaska Native parents by suggesting ways that would strengthen ties to the community.

Soon after this report was published, two men attempted to implement the recommendations found in the *Meriam Report*. The first, Will Carson Ryan, who wrote the chapter on education in the *Meriam Report* (Aurbach, 1967; Szasz, 1977), sought to improve education by developing community-based schools on the reservations. Such schools were designed to educate younger children in local settings where they could be closer to their families (Szasz, 1999). As Education Director, Ryan also sought to bring culture into the schools through the elimination of “routinization” of the day’s activities (Szasz, 1977). Lastly, he sought to end the boarding school system. Ryan would not accomplish all his goals. He would continue to work under another man who believed, as he did, in the importance of educating children near their home.
John Collier was named Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1933, during the Roosevelt Administration. With Will Carson Ryan and Willard Walcott Beatty, who later followed Ryan as Education Director, Collier sought to implement new methods needed to improve the education of Native students. Collier was instrumental in promoting: (a) a curriculum more suited to the needs of the child, (b) more community emphasis on schools, (c) the decreased use of boarding schools, and (d) the hiring of more qualified instructors and staff. Collier “battled BIA bureaucracy and his critics for 12 years with modest success” (Reyhner, 1994, p. 13). The Federal Government was not the only system of education available to Natives. Public schools were also in the business of educating Native children.

Public School System 1891 to Present

Public schools have been educating American Indian/Alaska Native children since 1891 (DeJong, 1993). One prevailing thought was that Indian students could be absorbed into the mainstream culture by attending public schools off the reservation. Beginning in 1860, some public schools were educating Native children. Following the passage of the Johnson-O’Malley Act (J-O’M) in 1934, the Federal Government started contracting with states for the education of American Indian/Alaska Native children. By 1930, 53% of American Indian/Alaska Native children were being educated in public schools (U.S. DOI, 1988). The government provided funding because these children lived on non-taxable federal land. This proved to be a cumbersome task as the BIA started contracting with individual school districts in every state (Szasz, 1999). Beatty predicted that this funding format would ultimately fail Native children. In addition to Indian
children attending public schools, the BIA was opening more day schools on reservations during this time.

States, for the most part, funded school districts that used the J-O’M monies to run schools with little or no regard to meeting the special educational needs of Native students. Public schools, it seemed, had to be enticed with money to open their doors to Native students. Then, they proceeded to whittle away all of who the child was. The child was made to feel like an outsider and inferior (DeJong, 1993; Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969; Szasz, 1999). As late as the 1960s, public schools were using textbooks that depicted Natives as “savages” (DeJong, 1993; Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969; Szasz, 1999). Administrators and teachers were loath to administer and teach these children and, at times, could barely be cordial. The effect on the Native child in public schools was clearly illustrated by the high rate of dropouts, low academic achievement levels, negative attitudes toward Native students, insensitive curricula, and the children’s belief in their own inferiority (DeJong, 1993; Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969).

It was hoped that J-O’M funding would help achieve equality in education funding across the board; however, what happened was one program would end up picking up costs that the other did not (DeJong, 1993; Szasz, 1999). Throughout the time period from 1934 through the 1960s, J-O’M, which was to be used to enhance the educational needs of American Indian/Alaska Native students, would benefit non-Native students a majority of the time (Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969; Szasz, 1999).
It was not until the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the amendments to this law, that Native students were actually specified to receive funding for services through Titles VII and I. Unfortunately, like J-O’M and PL 81-874, these monies were spread across the system and were not targeted specifically for services for Native students (Szasz, 1999). Beatty’s prediction that public schools would be more interested in funding than educating Indian students proved to be correct (DeJong, 1993; Szasz, 1999). Around that time, American Indian/Alaska Native people were becoming cognizant of their non-role in the education of their children and of the processes of self-empowerment. They were once again in a survival stance as federal policy shifted to one of termination.

Termination Period 1945-1960

No longer was the government interested in reforming Indian education; now the trend was to terminate federal responsibility to educate Indian people. After World War II, the Federal Government instituted a policy of termination. Indian reservations and tribes were terminated which meant they were no longer eligible to receive federal funding. This was another attempt at assimilation (Szasz, 1999). Education was geared toward encouraging Native students to move off the reservations and into urban areas.

The termination policy was formally stated in House Concurrent Resolution 108, whose goal was to “end the federally recognized status of Indian tribes and their trust relationship with the United States” (Utter, 1993, p. 39) as soon as possible. Nearly 100 Indian tribes lost their federal tribal status, their government-to-government relationship with the federal government, their land, and became subject to state laws (Utter, 1993).
BIA education was no longer made available to tribes whose federal recognition was eliminated.

Additionally, the effects of World War II resulted in reallocation of funds and personnel that were designated for school construction and retaining staff on remaining reservations. As a result, the day schools that were recommended by the *Meriam Report*, fell into disrepair (Szasz, 1999). Once again, there was a push for a return to off-reservation boarding schools and total assimilation.

Despite this movement by policy makers, Indian people had become more politically savvy and began to fight against efforts to terminate (DeJong, 1993; Szasz, 1999; Utter, 1993). They realized the importance of education, but wanted it on their own terms. By the 1960s there would be a growing movement toward Indian self-determination.

*Self-Determination 1960-Present*

By the 1960s, changes in the broader society such as the Civil Rights Movement created an impetus for Indian people to retrieve and maintain their traditional ways of life. Native students were now being funded for and attaining a post-secondary education (Deloria, 1974). As a result, Indian educators and students pushed for more of a voice in their education. One such movement started on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona.

In 1966, the BIA built a new school in Rough Rock, Arizona on the Navajo Reservation. The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), a federal program, opened up a new avenue of funding for new projects. As the Bureau became more receptive to the idea of innovation, Navajo educational leaders jumped at the chance to try a new
approach (Johnson, 1968). This “new approach” meant that Indian people actually had direct control in determining the curriculum, organization, and operation of the school.

In 1969, the government published a report, *Indian Education: A National Tragedy-A National Challenge*. Commonly known as the *Kennedy Report*, it “recommended that control over local schools be given to Indian people whenever possible” (Deloria, 1974, p. 84). This included the promotion of Native language and culture in the classroom (Olsen, Baxter, Tetzloff, & Pierson, 1997). It also noted that not much had changed in Indian education since the *Meriam Report*.

One area of the study’s focus was on the failed response by public schools. It cited how the public school system so defeated the Indian child that he/she gave up before being given a chance to learn. The *Kennedy Report* pointed out that the failure of the public schools was due to the schools’ curricula, values, attitudes, and views that devalued American Indian/Alaska Native ways of life (Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). The obvious absence of parental participation through school boards was due to the alienation parents felt from the school districts. DeJong (1993) wrote “Indian participation and control over their children’s education was essential, the report concluded; without that control, most Indians experienced a feeling of powerlessness and a sense of despair, leaving many Indian children feeling as if education were an enemy, rather than a friend” (pp. 195-196).

In fact, some of the same deficiencies that were found in the *Meriam Report* were still apparent forty years later when the *Kennedy Report* was published. Boarding schools were rigid and ineffective. Students were in a system that was, as one doctor, Daniel J. O’Connell, described: “totally inadequate as a substitute for parents and family” (Senate
Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969, p. 67). In some dormitories, students as young as six years old were not allowed to see their parents when they came to visit. There were even cases where students ran away and froze to death (Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). This breakdown in family structure of separation of parent and child would reveal itself in the high rate of alcoholism and neglect found in Native communities. Parents, raised in the boarding school system, separated from loving parents and raised in an oppressive atmosphere, would themselves become apathetic parents (Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). The recommendations in this report would have bearing on legislation passed in the 1970s. In the *Kennedy Report*, it was found not much had changed in Indian education since the *Meriam Report*. The focus of the Senate Subcommittee was not only on the federal school system but also on public schools. The *Kennedy Report* forwarded the following major recommendations for Indian education: (a) increase community and parental participation in school programs, (b) include Native language and culture in the curriculum, (c) provide summer school programs for all Indian children, (d) expand bilingual education programs, (e) appropriate funding for educational programs, (f) train Native teachers, (g) develop culturally sensitive curriculum materials, and (h) design and implement teaching methods for Native children (Special Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). These recommendations would later be the impetus for legislation passed in the 1970s that would impact Indian education.

In 1972 and 1975, two major bills were enacted by Congress that would affect Indian education. First, the Indian Education Act, Title IV of P.L. 92-318 (86 Stat., 334-345) was passed in 1972. That act provided for monies to meet the culturally related and
academic needs of Native students with the mandate that parents be involved in decision making. In 1975, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (Public Law 93-638) was passed. This act “authorized the federal government to enter into ‘638 contracts’ with Indian tribes and tribal organizations for tribal operation of Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service programs” (Tippeconnic, 1997, p. 23). The next publication would be more of a report on the status of Indian education at the time.

In 1976, a report carried out by a “joint team of congressmen and Indian leaders” (Szasz, 1999, p. 200) was proclaimed to be the next Meriam Report. The American Indian Policy Review Commission’s (AIPRC) evaluation of government programs and policies that affected American Indian/Alaska Natives was entitled Report on Indian Education. It recommended the following changes for Indian education: (a) schools need to be sensitive to the bicultural needs of Native students, (b) bilingual education needs to be stressed, (c) curriculum needs to be inclusive of Native cultures, (d) parents need to be included in the decision making process of schools, and (e) more Native teachers should be hired (White House Conference on Indian Education, 1976).

The Education Amendments of 1978 (Public Law 95-561) advocated for the increased participation of Native parents and communities in “all matters relating to education” (Bordeaux, 1996, p. 7). This was followed by the Tribally Controlled School Act (Public Law 100-297), passed in 1988, which allowed for grants to school boards as opposed to contracts as set forth in 1975. The difference in the contract and grant would be in the amount of control of the funding. A grant would be given to a tribe to run a school as they saw fit as opposed to a contract that did not allow for as much flexibility and was held more accountable to the BIA. Grants would allow for more tribal control of
education. Schools with grants would be able to make decisions that would directly impact their children’s education.

In 1991, another report was published entitled *Indian Nations At Risk: An Educational Strategy for Action*. That report was an evaluation done by a task force commissioned by Secretary of Education Lauro F. Cavasos. The Task Force, composed mainly of Indian educators, worked with the National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE) and conducted public hearings nationwide to compile information on American Indian/Alaska Native education (Szasz, 1999). In the report, there were, once again, factors that were considered to be essential for the betterment of Indian education.

Four priorities were emphasized to improve academic performance and promote self-sufficiency among American Indians and Alaska Natives:

(a) develop parent-based, early childhood education programs that are culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate; (b) establish the promotion of students’ tribal language and culture as a responsibility of the school; (c) train Native teachers to increase the numbers of Indian educators and other professionals and to improve the quality of instruction; and (d) strengthen tribal and Bureau of Indian Affairs colleges as a means to enhance communities and prepare students for higher levels of success when they move on to four-year colleges and universities. (Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, 1991, pp. 22-23).
Following that report, the 1992 White House Conference on Indian Education submitted its *Final Report of the White House Conference on Indian Education*. Conference members included a large number of Indian educators from across the country, and they passed resolutions that reflected their beliefs and stance on Indian education. In this report, resolutions were passed that would recommend the following: (a) recognize the unique sovereign status of tribes; (b) increase funding of educational programs; (c) increase training and hiring of Native administrators and teachers; (d) increase the participation of Indian parents and community in the planning, evaluating, governing, and assessing of educational programs; and (e) develop appropriate curricula relevant to Native cultures and languages (White House Conference on Indian Education, 1992). Other writers would promote these same factors when writing about Indian education.

McCoy (1991) and Tippeconnic (1999) advocated tribal control of education as being the most effective way to educate American Indians/Alaska Natives. Cummins (1989) wrote that Indian students need schools that: (a) incorporate the cultural and linguistic background of the student into the school and curriculum, (b) incorporate the participation of the community in school activities, (c) use interactive/experiential teaching methods that emphasize an active role for students; and (d) promote school testing programs that recognize linguistic and cultural differences and search out student strengths rather than being used to track minority students into special education programs.
The self-determination era proved to be a struggle. Native people gradually gained the opportunity to control the education of their children, but obstacles still remain in regard to determining what that control will ultimately be.

*The Meaning of Indian Control of Education*

“Indian control,” “self-determination,” “tribal control,” and “local control” are terms that are used interchangeably in federal policy discourse, but these terms can have different meanings depending on which educational system is being referenced. “Indian control” was defined by Tippeconnic (2000) as “Indian people have the power to decide what their youth and adults are to be taught, how they will be taught and what human and fiscal resources will be used to support teaching and learning—without outside forces influencing or dictating the educational system” (p. 44). Tippeconnic (2000) also discussed how two of these terms differ. He stated:

The most significant difference is between tribal control and local community control—with tribal control meaning the actual tribal government is in control as opposed to education controlled by community members, usually on school boards. Tribal control is in keeping with the government-to-government relationship and the federal policy of tribal self-determination. Parent involvement does not necessarily mean tribal control. Community controlled schools can mean tribal control if schools are sanctioned or chartered by tribal governments. (p. 44)
Indian control of education is also defined by DeLong (1998) as having two levels. She states, “The organizational level refers to greater jurisdiction over staffing with Native faculty that reflects the Native student population. At the infrastructural level the school curriculum reflects the culture, language, teachings and values of the tribe” (pp. 13-14).

Indian control of education can be traced back to 1835 when tribes such as the Choctaw and Cherokee operated their own schools that incorporated tribal and the English languages into their studies (DeJong, 1993; Deloria, 1974; Fuchs & Havinghurst, 1972; Szasz & Ryan, 1972; Tippeconnic, 1999). The Choctaw and Cherokee decided what they wanted in their schools, and the schools produced students who went on to Eastern colleges (U.S. DOI, 1988).

Tribes wanted to determine what kind of education would be provided for their children and, with the help of community action programs, took it upon themselves to establish more relevant educational alternatives. The first such effort during the 1960s was Rough Rock Demonstration School, established in 1966. The Navajo Tribe (now known as the Navajo Nation) had input into all aspects of school operations (Collier, 1988; Johnson, 1968). The Kennedy Report later recommended the school be used as a model (Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969).

Bordeaux (1996) and Pavel (1995) both stressed that when considering Indian control of education, there are several problems that are inherent in that control. The work of Indian educators in taking over the control of their education will not be minimal. They face a daunting task in assuming control. Bordeaux (1996) writes:
Once communities assume control of the education process they must deal with the vestiges of an education system that tried to stamp out all remnants of Indian culture and values. They must utilize teachers who were stripped of the language by the education system. They must provide a safe and supportive environment in buildings that are often obsolete, ill designed or condemned. They must deal with the economically poorest segment of American society. They must teach basics, counter at risk factors and enhance culture with bare bones budgets. (p. 3)

Senese (1986) and Snyder-Joy (1994) join in the concern of those willing to take on local control of education. They wrote that, although the passage of the Indian Education and Self-Determination Act of 1975 encouraged active participation by Indian groups in the education of their children, those efforts are stymied by BIA control and regulations.

Despite these problems, Native people have been willing to assume greater local control since 1966. The number of tribally controlled schools has only increased in recent years. There are now 123 out of 183 BIA funded schools that are tribally controlled (U.S. DOI, 2006).

Examples of Indian Controlled Schools

In 1835, the Choctaw and Cherokee nations established “extensive school systems operated and financed by themselves. Deloria and Wildcat (2001) write:

When the Five Civilized Tribes operated their own school system, they used to have several days of formal recitation of what students had learned
or were learning in school, and the communities played an integral role in judging whether or not the school system was educating their children.

(p.158)

Among these were the more than two hundred schools and academies of the Choctaw nation in Mississippi and Oklahoma “which sent numerous graduates to eastern colleges, and which flourished” (Fuchs & Havinghurst, 1972, p. 6), until the Curtis Act terminated them in 1898 (30 U. S. Statute, pp. 495-503).

The Cherokees also developed an educational system for their children that proved successful. Literacy rates in the late 1800s ran as high as 90 percent and they “had [a] higher percentage of better educated persons than the white settler population of Texas and Arkansas. The Cherokee schools taught not only English, but “Cherokee as well, using the alphabet invented by Sequoyah” (Fuchs & Havinghurst, 1972, pp. 6-7). The Creeks, Chickasaws, and Seminoles also maintained schools (DeJong, 1993; Harlow, 1935; American Indian Policy Review Commission, 1976; Szasz & Ryan, 1988; Tharp, et al. 1999; Tippeconnic, 1999).

In 1966, the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and the BIA signed a contract with Demonstration in Navajo Education (DINE), a non-profit private corporation, to start Rough Rock Demonstration School. Members of DINE included Allen Yazzie, a member of the Navajo Education Committee, Tribal Council, Ned Hatathli, director of the Resources Division of the Navajo Tribe, and Guy Gorman, a member of the Tribal Council, a school board member, and former member of the Navajo
Education Committee. Non-Native Robert Roessel was named director of the school (Johnson, 1968).

The main emphasis of the Rough Rock Demonstration School was one of community. The school board was made up of community members, all of whom had little or no formal education. All the members, except Director Roessel, spoke and understood only Navajo. The school board met regularly with the community to promote the school’s strong desire to integrate the Navajo language and culture into the school setting. It also opened up the school facilities for community use and offered education to adult learners. Native people were encouraged and welcomed to come to the school at any time (Johnson, 1968).

The school received numerous delegations such as politicians and educators from Washington, D.C. and from the Tribe itself. It was under very close scrutiny to succeed, which added pressure to parents and educators alike. By 1968, the OEO contracted for an evaluation of the school by a University of Chicago professor named Donald A. Erickson. In his evaluation, he found the school lacking in its academic program due to the board’s focus on community economic improvement (Szasz, 1977). On the other hand, Navajo leaders evaluated the school in 1969, and found that the children, although lacking “total achievement,” were getting “a ‘better education’ because it was community education and tribal education” (Szasz, 1977, p. 173). In addition, the Kennedy Report (1969) recommended Rough Rock Demonstration as a model school. Since Rough Rock, there have been other tribally controlled schools that have been successful.

Rough Rock would become the inspiration for other tribes to follow. Today, there are 123 out of 183 BIA funded schools that are contract or grant schools. In 1970, Ramah
Navajo became the first Indian controlled secondary school (Bordeaux, 1996), followed by St Francis Indian School (St. Francis, South Dakota) in 1972. This school continues today. According to Bordeaux (1996):

The school strives to provide a sound academic program (the basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and expressive writing), Indian culture, vocational, art, music, competitive and intramural sports, special education and chapter programs which give the students the capability to enter higher learning institutions or the job market (p. 26).

In Bordeaux’s (Tippeconnic, 2000) school, Tiospa Zina Tribal School, in South Dakota, tribal control made the difference in high school completion rates. Graduation rates increased 50% from 1970 to 1996 under Indian control (Tippeconnic, 2000). Dr. Bordeaux’s school has also developed its own educational standards and assessment strategies, while other schools chose state standards. Other schools such as Santa Fe Indian School (New Mexico), Cherokee Elementary and High School (North Carolina), St. Stephens Indian School (Wyoming), and Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig (Minnesota) have been recognized as Blue Ribbon Schools (Tippeconnic, 2000). A Blue Ribbon School is one that has submitted a self-evaluation and has had a site visit from experienced educators that report the school is progressing toward National Education Goals (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Factors Contributing to Success of Tribally Controlled Schools
Research and national studies identify a number of factors that are critical if the education of American Indians/Alaska Natives is to improve:


These factors, some of which were first identified in 1928, continue to appear in later reports and studies. Since then, Native educators, in their own reports, have agreed with what was found in earlier studies. These factors have proven difficult, if not impossible, to implement in public schools and BIA-funded schools. As the Kennedy Report recognized, the best hope to improve Indian education is to incorporate these factors within tribally controlled schools. Today, there are 123 tribally controlled schools. The number has increased significantly since Rough Rock Demonstration School was established in 1966. It would appear logical to conclude that, if these factors were in place and the recommendations were followed, Native students’ educational experience would be more successful. This study attempted to explore this premise of Indian control and determine if the six factors contributed to the success of a tribally controlled school. Further, the study determined the degree to which they have to be in place in order to make a difference.

Summary

Chapter Two presented an overview of the history of Indian education and use the review of literature as the basis for how the six factors for success were determined. Chapter Three will provide the methodology used in this study and the processes for collecting data.
CHAPTER THREE

Research Design

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the factors that are associated with successful Indian-controlled schools. Using factors found in the review of the literature as a starting point, this study revealed whether these factors and/or other factors are the basis for success in tribal schools. The definition of school success can vary according to local custom; therefore, in this study, each school provided their definition of success. Success in this study was defined in terms of academic achievement and cultural and language proficiency as determined by the studies used in this paper. Using a qualitative research design, this study was guided by the following research questions: 1. What are the factors that make an Indian-controlled K-12 school successful? and 2. How do these schools define and measure success?

Methodology

Qualitative Research

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) noted that qualitative research seeks to explain the ways people make sense of, work with, and operate in their social environment by eliciting social meanings through observations, interviews, and document review. Qualitative research seeks to contribute to the collective understanding of social practices – why they occur and what they mean to the members of the structure being studied (Louis, 1982).

Yin (1994) identified three types of qualitative research methods that were well-suited to the study of tribal school success: the case study, ethnography, and grounded
theory. These methods are not mutually exclusive and can be used in combination within the same study. Qualitative research is not meant to “tell the whole story”. The focus is on a specific case (or cases in a multisite design) and not the total population of the area being studied (Stake, 1988). Stake (1988) explained that “in the case study, there may or may not be an ultimate interest in the generalizable…the search is for an understanding of the particular case, in its idiosyncrasy and its complexity” (p. 268). Even though a case study may not produce findings that are “generalizable” it can provide insights into important research questions.

*Case Study Method*

The research questions in this study were best addressed by utilizing qualitative research methodology, specifically the case study. According to Merriam (1998), “case study research in education is conducted so that specific issues and problems of practice can be identified and explained” (p. 34). A case study design also allows a researcher to investigate “a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin, 1984, p. 23). Since an in-depth understanding of a situation or phenomenon was desired, case study research provided a richly descriptive end product focused on meaning, process, and understanding (Merriam, 1998). This study investigated successful Indian-controlled schools to better understand their success and how those within the schools defined success. The case study approach offered a variety of means to assist the researcher in this endeavor.

In determining what kind of case study to use, the researcher determined that an exploratory study would best fit as the area to be studied was new. The literature review
revealed no studies of this type. This method of investigation allows the researcher to explore a new territory, in this case, the American Indian definition of success in Indian education.

Site Selection

This study was conducted in two tribally-controlled schools identified as being successful by an expert panel of three American Indian educators who were familiar with these types of schools. The selection of the experts was based on their experience working with tribally controlled schools, writing about Indian education, and/or being recognized nationally for their work in the field of Indian education. The number of experts consulted was limited to three to enable the researcher to efficiently identify successful tribal schools. The relatively small panel ensured a faster turnaround (one week) in the selection of schools. The experts were contacted by phone and by e-mail. Each expert received an electronic and faxed copy, in table format, of the initial factors identified in the literature that were thought to determine success. These factors were used as criteria for the selection of the schools (see Appendix D). The experts selected four tribally controlled schools that they believed met the criteria. The two schools that were most frequently identified as having a greater number of these factors were chosen as research sites.

Once the two schools were identified, their superintendents were contacted by letter (see Appendix C), with a follow-up contact by telephone, in order to gain access. The purpose of the study and the criteria used in selecting their schools were shared with the superintendents. Each superintendent then presented the research proposal to his or her school board, which provided approval for researcher access. Once permission from
the schools was obtained, the researcher drew upon qualitative research methods, as delineated by such scholars as Creswell (1998), LeCompte and Schensul (1999), Merriam (1998), and Yin (1997). Many tribes have an Internal Review Board and any research conducted on their lands must have prior approval. In this study, no such permission was required by either tribe.

Sample

A purposeful sampling of 14 people at each site was used in the interview process. According to Merriam (1998), “purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 61). One to three people from each designation (e.g., administrators, board members, teachers, parents, community members, and tribal leaders) provided the researcher with a more rounded view of the school. A type of purposeful sampling called “network sampling” was used.

In order to provide an accurate account of the views and opinions of the participants, the researcher needed to establish rapport and include a variety of views. To achieve that end, network sampling (Merriam, 1998) was employed. This method of participant selection allowed the researcher to ask the 14 initial participants in the study to refer other information-rich participants who provided insights into the area being studied (Patton, 1990).

Data Collection

Data collection included observations, interviews, and a review of documents. According to LeCompte and Schensul (1999), the ways of gathering data “should foster
and enhance intimacy between the researcher and the community in question” (p. 11). This was done through face-to-face interaction with parents, teachers, administrators, support staff, and community members. Data collection was conducted, in multiple locations within the schools, including classrooms, boardrooms, and offices utilizing multiple sources of information (Creswell, 1998). Observation of these areas was important in order to gain some insight into the extent to which six factors identified in the literature were incorporated.

The six factors that were identified in the review of literature as contributing to the success of tribally-controlled schools included: (a) meaningful community and tribal involvement and control; (b) meaningful parental involvement; (c) a relevant curriculum that recognizes and integrates tribal histories, cultures, and languages; (d) an increased number of American Indians/Alaska Natives serving as principals, teachers, counselors, and other professional educators in schools; (e) recognition of the unique tribal sovereignty status, based on treaties, court decisions, and acts of Congress; and (f) use of teaching methods that integrate American Indian/Alaska Native cultures and languages. This researcher hoped to reveal the local description of each factor, as participants believed it applied to their school. The factors were not absolute, in that the participants could identify other factors that they believed contributed to their school’s success. For example, if the school integrated the language and culture of the tribe, it might be generally reflected throughout the whole school.

The research was conducted in compliance with the federal regulations established by the Office for Regulatory Compliance at The Pennsylvania State
University. Permission to collect data was obtained from the schools’ superintendents or executive directors.

*Observation*

According to Merriam (1998), “…observations take place in the natural field setting…[and]…represent a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest…” (p. 94). The researcher conducted direct observations in the school setting. For example, a classroom was observed to ascertain whether certain factors, like language and culture, were integrated into the culture of the school. Observational field notes were taken during interviews, board meetings, in classrooms, during assemblies, lunch, and after a walkthrough of the schools. Particular attention was given to the evidence of parental involvement, community/tribal control, the integration of language and culture, and attention to the school’s mission.

*Interview*

The use of the interview is important in that it allows the researcher to gain understanding of individual perceptions. The interview provides information that cannot be observed, such as thoughts and feelings (Merriam, 1998). In order to gain this type of information, the researcher must determine what kind of interview will be used. For the purposes of this study, semi-structured interview questions were utilized. Interviews were conducted, and were recorded through note taking and the use of two hand-held tape recorders. The fundamental questions for the interview protocol were derived from the six factors that were identified in the literature as contributing to the success of tribally controlled schools. Each interview took place in a room within one of the schools or in a local restaurant, with an individual interviewee and the researcher. The researcher gave
each interviewee an informed consent form (see Appendix B) to sign and a brief
description of the study.

The use of a semi-structured interview format allowed the researcher to ask
specific questions aimed at gaining an understanding of the determiners of success, while
allowing participants the freedom to explore other questions not originally included in the
protocol. According to Maxwell (1996), including these types of information, “…requires
creativity and insight, rather than a mechanical translation of the research question into an
interview guide” (p. 74). These questions applied to the position or place the interviewee
held in the school or community. For example, a question about funding would be asked
of a superintendent and not of a cook.

Document Collection

Documents that provided insight into the six literature-identified success factors
were gathered at the two separate tribally controlled schools that were selected by the
expert panel. Merriam (1998) combines the definition of documents with that of artifacts
to mean “public records, personal documents, and physical material” (p. 113) that the
researcher can use in analysis. In this study, items that were reviewed included, but were
not limited to, the following: (a) BIA School Report Cards, (b) BIA School Improvement
Plans, (c) the school mission statements, (d) curriculum materials and guides, (e)
newsletters, (f) school board minutes, (g) Federal program proposals, (g) test score
composites and any other relevant documents that could be found in the school. The
researcher specifically focused on how the six factors were incorporated by the school.
For example, how many American Indian professionals were there, was the language and
culture reflected in the curriculum, and so on. What was found in the documents was
used in the demographic descriptions of the schools and as corroborating evidence with
the interviewees’ responses and the observations. According to Yin (1984), a review of
documents is used to “corroborate and augment evidence from other sources” (p. 80). In
the case of this investigation, documents provided indicators of the success of the
schools.

Analysis and Treatment of Data

According to LeCompte and Schensul (1999), the final aspect of the study should
be the interpretation and analysis of what people say, do, and believe as guided by the
concept of their culture. In this study, the factors that schools, parents, and their tribes
defined as contributing to their schools’ success were interpreted and analyzed according
to a process developed by Creswell (1998). This technique consists of “moving in
analytic circles rather than using a fixed linear approach” (p. 142). The “loops” consisted
of steps that were taken in the data analysis process.

Data Analysis

The first loop in the data analysis spiral included the management of data. Prior to
analysis of the data, the two major research questions and the questions pertaining to each
of the six literature-identified factors were color-coded. Field notes and interviews were
transcribed and separated into folders. Notes taken during the interview process were
placed in the folder with the interview transcriptions. Observations of the setting were
placed in separate folders.

Documents were sorted according to importance. The researcher had requested
specific documents such as the BIA School Report Card and the BIA Comprehensive
School Reform Plan. Additionally, the study included two schools involved in the same
project that focuses on school reform. The strategic plan for that project was also reviewed. Other information such as budget, programs, grants and/or curriculum guides were placed behind these documents in order of importance. The next step in the spiral process included reading the data.

The interviews, documents, and field notes were read at least twice with memos written in the margins. Creswell (1998) writes that a researcher should read interviews several times in order to “immerse yourself in the details, try to get a sense of the interview as a whole before breaking it into parts” (p.143). Following the reading, the next loop in the spiral is “describing, classifying, and interpreting” (p.144).

A description of the setting was written for both schools. In Chapter Four, the two schools’ history and the present situation is given, along with information such as budget, staffing, curriculum, and test scores. The community composition was also described as it related to the schools. The information found in the descriptions was also included in the classifying loop.

Creswell (1998) writes, “classifying pertains to taking the text or qualitative information apart, looking for categories, themes, or dimensions of information” (p. 144). Themes contained within the transcribed interviews were highlighted in congruence with the color-coding used for identifying the associated research questions and those questions pertaining to the associated factors, by using colored markers to identify emerging themes. The next area of data (documents/field notes) was examined to identify information that corroborated the answers provided in the interviews. Evidence found in these documents was categorized into the emerging themes found in the interviews.
Contrary evidence was also given a separate placement. After this was done, another loop in the analysis spiral was initiated.

The interpretation of the data incorporated an indigenous viewpoint. Creswell (1998) writes, “several forms exist, such as interpretation based on hunches, insights, and intuition” (pp. 144-45). As an indigenous researcher, the author understands the importance of the maintenance of Native languages and culture. Based on this viewpoint, when looking at the data, academic achievement and proficiency in language and culture were viewed as being equal in importance.

The information gathered was used to answer the two main research questions. Data was then used to determine in what ways interviewees perceived the six literature-identified success factors and other success factors, to be represented in their schools. Supporting evidence from the documents and observations provided additional insights.

This study sought to determine if the factors found in the review of the literature on Indian education were evident at successful tribally controlled schools. Further, the study sought to determine if schools that include language and culture have high levels of parental involvement, use relevant curriculum, and have a high degree of community input would tend to be more successful.

**Validity**

According to Berg (1995) triangulating data provides researchers with information that supports other data. Dobbert (1982) explains triangulation as follows: “Multiple methods enhance validity and reliability through increasing the number of perspectives employed. Multiple perspectives permit cross checking of all types of data for accuracy and completeness. They also add to depth and breadth of interpretation” (p.
265). It is important that the author look not only at individual perceptions, but also at written documentation and observation to achieve a more rounded view of the data.

In observation, there is always the danger of inaccuracy (Dobbert, 1982). One way to ensure accuracy in observation is the development of field notes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). According to Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995), writing field notes requires the researcher to remember, elaborate, fill in, and comment on their notes. It also requires the researcher to “give special attention to the indigenous meanings and concerns of the people studied” (p. 11). It requires the researcher to make choices about what is going to be written in order to produce a more rounded version of what was observed.

Validity was also enhanced by conducting member checks of the interviews and descriptions of the schools that were provided. It was important to find people who viewed the schools from the outside as well as internally.

The potential bias of the researcher might initially appear to be a limitation of the study; however in the setting of the study the bias was an advantage. As a Native American who has experience in the field of Indian education and who is studying this area, this researcher’s biases uniquely qualify her. Native people are focusing their efforts now more than ever on doing their own research. One rationale for why Indigenous people should be doing research was stated by Stanfield (1998) when he wrote, “post-1970s Western and Westernized academic disciplines, particularly in most social sciences, continue to marginalize and exclude ethnically diverse interpretations of reality and styles of knowing in relation to mainstream normative knowledge, creation, and reproduction” (p. 343). At times, the “reality” of the mainstream researcher is not the same reality as that of Natives. According to Swisher (1996), “Indian people should be
given more authority in writing about Indian education” (p. 83) because they will have the “passion from within and the authority to ask new and different questions based on histories and experiences as indigenous people” (p. 86). This researcher acknowledged that fact when she asked tribally controlled schools to define “success” on their own terms. Finally, Champagne (1998) wrote, “an Indian scholar may have the advantage of direct access. Having grown up in an American Indian culture can provide considerable insight and understanding that may take a non-tribal fieldworker years to acquire” (p. 182). As a Native researcher, I attempted to accurately represent an indigenous viewpoint while recognizing there could be contrary findings.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation that is sometimes associated with interviewing is determining whether or not the participants are actually cooperating during the interview (e.g., giving honest answers; saying what they view as truths) (Tuckman, 1988). The researcher must always be cognizant of the angle from which the interviewees see things and what their bias might be.

A second limitation of this study was the amount of time spent at the two schools. Due to limited resources, two weeks were spent at each school with an additional day later given for member checks of the interviews. The timing prevented the opportunity to observe a wide range of school board meetings, parent meetings, and staff meetings.

Another limitation was the lack of other studies done in the area of success in Indian education. The measure of success on Native terms had to be defined.

Finally, in case study research findings are not usually generalizable, nor was it the desire of this researcher to work toward those ends. Merriam (1998) contends, “the
researcher has an obligation to provide enough detailed description of the study’s context to enable readers to compare the “fit” with their situations” (p. 211).

Summary

Chapter Three described the methodology used in this qualitative research study. Special emphasis was given to the indigenous perspective of the researcher in both the limitations and advantage of such a study. Chapter Four will provide a demographic description of the two schools studied.
CHAPTER FOUR

School Descriptions

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that are associated with successful Indian controlled schools. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section will describe the school system where each school is found. The remaining two sections will provide a brief and separate description of each school and of each school’s community.

Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools

Tribally Controlled Schools

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) has funded and operated schools dating back to 1819 (U.S. DOI, 1988). The obligation came from treaties signed with individual tribes that guaranteed education for their children. Mission “contract” schools were the first schools to receive funding from the Federal government. Boarding schools, starting in 1879, followed with the continuing mission of converting Indian children to Christianity. Day schools on reservations came into existence soon after the Meriam Report in 1928. These schools sought to return the children back to the community and to their culture. This non-assimilationist policy would change after World War II.

By the 1950s, the prevailing government policies were termination and assimilation. The BIA closed schools “in the states of Idaho, Michigan, Washington, and Wisconsin” in order to transfer students to public schools (U.S. DOI, 1988, p. 7). In Arizona and New Mexico, the BIA actually expanded some schools for 14,000 Navajo children who were not in school. By the 1960s, the BIA had even planned new school
construction. Additionally, the 1960s brought back Indian self-determination. Native people sought to control, among other things, education in their own communities. The first example of this was in 1966 when Rough Rock Demonstration School started as “the first Indian-directed, locally controlled school” (Szasz, 1974, p. 155). The school was funded by the BIA, but operated by the tribe. The formalization of appropriating monies in the form of contracts came in 1975 with the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. By 1988, there were 65 schools operating under contracts. That number continued to rise throughout the 1990s with 105 out of 185 BIA schools being tribally controlled by 1996. There are now 123 tribally controlled schools operating in 23 states. Tribally controlled schools were considered to have more direct Indian control (U.S. General Accounting Office, [U.S. GAO] 2001).

BIA schools educate “less than 10 percent of all Indian students enrolled in elementary and secondary schools in this country” (U.S. GAO, 2001, p.3). Most schools are found on or near reservations in mainly rural areas. While one third of the BIA schools board their students (U.S. GAO, 2001), the two schools in this study were not residential. In BIA-funded schools, “1 in every 5 BIA students is enrolled in special education” and “nearly 60 percent of BIA students have limited English proficiency” (U.S. GAO, 2001, p. 10). Additionally, there is a backlog for school repairs and maintenance that is reaching $1 billion (U.S. GAO, 2001). Administration of services to these schools is through the BIA’s Office of Indian Education Programs (OIEP) located in the BIA, Department of the Interior (U.S. DOI, 1988). BIA-funded schools also have access to other funding such as Johnson-O’Malley, Title I monies, special education, Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities, U.S. Department of
Agriculture’s breakfast and lunch programs, and, for the schools studied here, Title VII funds are also allocated.

Academic achievement, based on standardized test scores, in most BIA-funded schools is on average lower than in public schools. In the area of academic achievement, BIA-funded schools not only use standardized testing but also authentic assessment (U.S. GAO, 2001). This is thought to be a better measurement tool and shows that “about half of BIA students have been assessed as proficient or advanced, in both math and language arts” (U.S. GAO, p. 14).

Staffing issues that arise in BIA-funded schools include recruitment and certification. Several BIA-funded schools are located in isolated or rural areas and it is hard to attract and retain quality teachers (Meriam Report, 1928; Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969; U.S. DOI, 1988; U.S. GAO, 2001; U.S. DOI, 2006). In tribally controlled schools, fewer numbers of teachers are certified than in BIA-operated schools. In this case study, both schools had teachers fully certified and several teachers with advanced degrees and/or special education endorsements.

Class size in BIA-funded schools tends to be smaller than in public schools. In tribally controlled schools, the classes are even smaller. The average class size is 17 students for grades K-6 and 16 students for grades 7-12 (U.S. GAO, 2001). While class size may be small, classrooms in these schools have fallen into disrepair. “Almost half of the buildings are more than 30 years old and almost 15 percent are between 50 and 100 years old” (U.S. GAO, 2001, p. 27). Problems with outdated wiring, asbestos and mold contribute to the poor educational environment. This is added to the cost to educate each pupil.
In a tribally controlled school, the average per-pupil expenditure average is $10,423 while BIA-operated schools spend $7,677 per pupil. The difference is attributed to administrative costs that tribally controlled schools must bear. The national average for public schools is $6,189. The BIA-funded schools tend to be higher due to the heightened levels of special needs, poverty, limited English proficiency students, staff costs\(^2\) residential care, and the isolated locations of schools (U.S. GAO, 2001).

For the purposes of this study, tribally controlled schools were chosen because they best fit the definition of “Indian control” (Tippeconnic, 2000). Loretta DeLong defines Indian control as follows: “An organizational level of Indian control is exhibited in schools that are controlled and primarily staffed by tribal citizens. [Whereas, an infrastructure level] is exhibited when the school curriculum reflects the culture, language, and values of the tribe” (DeLong, 1998, p. 14).

Indian control of education was found in the literature to be a factor contributing to the success of Indian education. The two schools studied are unique in their own ways and each was found to epitomize a majority of the factors found in the literature. Each school examined embodies their own individual location and cultural history.

School Demographics

School A – All Nations School

All Nations School is a K-8 tribal grant school located 20 miles south of a major metropolitan area on an Indian reservation comprising two tribes. The mission of the school is as follows: “To work together to promote academic excellence; honor the teachings of our elders, culture and environment; promote a safe and healthy learning environment” (School document, 1998-1999). The school was chartered in 1995;

\(^2\) BIA-operated schools’ staffs are paid on a government pay scale.
however, this site had a school that served the local Indian population since 1900. It was a Bureau of Indian Affairs school before becoming a Tribal Grant school (School document, 2002). The school is accredited through the North Central Association.

The enrollment for the 2001-2002 school year was 324 students pre-school through eighth grade. The number of teaching personnel was 17. There were 180 days of instruction. Average daily attendance was 92%. The percentage of students receiving special education services was 15%. There was an executive director and teacher mentor in administrative roles. The school board is elected by tribal district and made up of five tribal members.

The state’s average cost per pupil is $5,320; however, All Nations only receives 63% of what students in public schools receive. The BIA per student funding is $1,810 below the above amount (School document, 2002). Revenue at All Nations School comes from state, federal, tribal, and corporate sponsor funds. All Nations is a full inclusion school with all 17 certified instructional staff holding special education endorsements. The school staff also includes an executive director, a school nurse, a counselor, and a school social worker.

The average graduation rate for high school students is 20%. There is no high school located on the reservation, so students must request to be enrolled in a city high school where they may have to wait to be accepted. Many choose to drop out rather than wait. Because of these escalating problems, the community sought to remedy this by chartering their own school with the hope that by infusing the curriculum with language and culture and providing a sense of community, the children would take ownership in their school and in education in general.
The community surrounding the school experiences problems common to a large city. The reservation has some of the highest rates of all reservations for substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, and gang activity. The number of gang-related incidents is equal to or greater than in the city to the north. Diabetes is prevalent in the whole community with children showing symptoms of Adult onset diabetes. The tribe feels a responsibility toward education now that they have the financial resources to do so.

Evidence of taking ownership was demonstrated in the recent takeover of a county school by the Tribe. They asked All Nations to run the county school with the promise of over a million dollars in funding. The schools must continue to lobby the Tribal Council to secure funding promised to them. The school was in major disarray. Teachers had to be hired in the middle of the year. For purposes of this study and the criteria that the two schools were selected under, this county school was not included. The takeover happened at the beginning of the school year. The information used to select the research sites did not include this separate school.

The tribe’s main source of income is casino gaming revenue. There are two casinos located on the reservation. Revenue from casino profits has been promised to the schools on the reservation. The school budget is shown in Table 1 below. The school has applied and been awarded several grants, the most recent being a family literacy program designed for parents and children 0-5. It has four main components: adult education in the school and/or home, early childhood, parenting skills, and parent and child time. This was the first year All Nations School implemented the program. Table 1 displays the amounts budgeted for All Nations School.
Table 1

*School Wide Budget FY 01-02*

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<sup>3</sup> ISEP: Indian School Equalization Program
Table 1 (continued)

School Wide Budget FY 01-02

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<td>2,337,165</td>
<td>2,702,165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Amounts are rounded to the nearest dollar.

\(^4\) CSRDP = Consolidated School Reform Development Plan
\(^5\) FACE = Family and Child Education
All Nations School Board of Education is comprised of members elected from two of the seven voting districts on the reservation. Several members have served 10 or more years. The board has been recognized as the Indian School Board of the Year from the National Indian School Board Association for their leadership. They have also been a part of a school reform project like the next school.

**School B Eagle Crossing School**

Eagle Crossing is a K-12 grant school located on a reservation in the Midwest. It is about 70 miles from a large town. The vision of Eagle Crossing School is as follows: “Learners will retain their own unique culture and be prepared for a technological/multicultural society” (Eagle Crossing Parent Student Compact, 2001-2002). They also incorporate five tribal values - respect, generosity, cherish, honesty and compassion. These are written in their language and prevalent throughout the school. Eagle Crossing School was started by parents and community members in 1981, and was in the process of being accredited through the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA).

The enrollment for the 2001-2002 school year was 388 students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. The number of teaching personnel was 42. There were 180 days of instruction. Average daily attendance was 86%. Twenty percent of the population was in Special Education. There was an elementary principal, secondary principal, and a superintendent in administrative roles. The school board is elected by tribal district and is made up of seven tribal members. The school budget is shown in Table 2 below.
### Table 2

**School Wide Budget FY 00-01**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Funding</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Titles I, II, IV</th>
<th>DOHHS</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Grant &amp; Contract Revenues</td>
<td>3,771,857</td>
<td>629,832</td>
<td>175,000</td>
<td>138,682</td>
<td>172,234</td>
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<td>Personnel</td>
<td>2,137,428</td>
<td>388,412</td>
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<td>52,794</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,578,633</td>
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<td>Fringe Benefits</td>
<td>417,009</td>
<td>87,781</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>13,041</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>523,831</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>102,225</td>
<td>27,444</td>
<td>37,096</td>
<td>1,446</td>
<td>22,730</td>
<td>190,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance &amp; Repairs</td>
<td>51,685</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33,647</td>
<td>85,332</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>280,908</td>
<td>14,794</td>
<td>34,815</td>
<td>66,832</td>
<td>16,025</td>
<td>413,372</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultant/Contractual Services</td>
<td>110,953</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>104,040</td>
<td>4,569</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>219,562</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>361,232</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1,112</td>
<td>372,528</td>
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<td>Amortization</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>150,287</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>602,219</td>
<td>80,581</td>
<td>28,400</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42,476</td>
<td>753,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration-School Board</td>
<td>27,702</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Costs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7,839</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>4,247,212</td>
<td>617,035</td>
<td>210,351</td>
<td>138,682</td>
<td>115,990</td>
<td>5,329,265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Amounts are rounded to the nearest dollar.*

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6 DHHS = Department Of Health & Human Services
The community surrounding the school would be described as low socio-economic status. This tribe’s main source of income is from two casinos operating on tribal land. The dropout rate for grades 8-12 was 15.8% (The School District of Eagle Crossing School, 2001).

_School Improvement_

The All Nations and Eagle Crossing Schools are each involved in a comprehensive school reform project based on the Effective Schools model developed by Dr. Larry Lezotte. The Bureau Effective Schools’ team research found three additional correlates and based on that research, a curriculum was developed by the National Indian School Board (Reyhner, 2006). This involves incorporating the Effective Schools model that includes the following indicators:

- Clear Sense of Educational Mission and Purpose
- Frequent Monitoring
- Feedback of School and Student Progress
- Challenging Curriculum and Instruction
- High Expectations for Student Success
- Safe and Nurturing Learning Environment
- Parental and Community Involvement and Empowerment
- Strong Leadership
- Participatory Management and Shared Governance
These schools are finding when using the curriculum in grades 3-5, there have been greater gains in reading scores (Reyhner, 2006). Summary

Chapter Four provided a description of schools found in the BIA’s Office of Indian Education Programs school system. It also included brief descriptions of the two schools included in the study, and details of budgeting and per-student spending. Chapter Five will discuss the findings from the interviews in both schools and how they related to the six factors found in the review of literature. It will also focus on how the interviewees defined “success.”
CHAPTER FIVE

Findings

Case Study of the All Nations School District and the Eagle Crossing School District

This chapter will examine two tribally controlled schools and the interviewees’ responses to the two research questions and factors posed in this study. The chapter will also examine how the responses relate to the success factors at each of these schools. The findings are descriptive in nature. Each school studied was examined individually and separately; they are not compared to each other. The intent of this study was to present an examination of schools that met most of the success factors found in the review of literature. The study also explored how people working and living in the community define success for their tribal school.

Tribally controlled schools are a recent form of education for American Indian students. The first tribally controlled school, Rough Rock Demonstration School, was established in 1966 (Szasz, 1999), with an all Navajo school board. As indicated by the review of literature, studies on Indian education anticipate tribal control being an indicator for future success of Indian students (Tippeconnic, 2000; U.S. DOI, 2006). The two school districts in this study include tribally controlled schools that are located on two separate and distinct reservations.

How parents, staff and community define success is influenced by their ability to control their educational destiny. The ability to articulate a definition of success came only after a long and tumultuous struggle to secure a position in the education of American Indian/Alaska Native children. Indian stakeholders’ input was not sought by those who have made decisions for American Indians in schools. The history of Indian
education is also unique in that the educational system was developed by the Federal
government specifically for American Indians as a method to assimilate them into
mainstream society (Fuchs & Havinghurst, 1972). It cannot be compared with African
American or Hispanic education history (Lynch & Charleston, 1990). According to
Lynch and Charleston, (1990):

Black children went to nearly completely segregated schools while Hispanic and
Indian children attended increasingly desegregated schools. However, there were
chances for Blacks to become teachers and administrators in their schools, but this
was not so in schools for Indian children. (p. 2)

The opportunity for American Indians to control the education of their children
first took place as recently as 1966 when Rough Rock Demonstration School was opened.
Currently, there are 123 tribally controlled schools operating in 23 states. One of the
goals of the BIA-OIEP, (Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Indian Education Programs),
is to have all BIA operated schools become grant/contract schools and thereby be Indian
controlled. Tribally controlled schools represent the epitome of Indian control of
education based on DeLong’s (1998) definition of success that states the following:

An organizational level of Indian control is exhibited in schools
that are controlled and primarily staffed by tribal citizens. [Whereas,
an infrastructure level] is exhibited when the school curriculum
reflects the culture, language, and values of the tribe (as cited in

64
The two schools examined here met this definition and therefore were included in this study. They are both tribally controlled and are meeting a majority of the factors for success found in the review of literature. An expert panel was consulted to determine what schools met this criteria.

The following sections will discuss:

- What are the factors that the stakeholders believe make the two individual Indian controlled schools successful?
- How do these schools define success of students who leave their schools?
- What do stakeholders see as meaningful ways the community and tribe have local control?
- How do the schools get more parents involved in meaningful ways at the school?
- How does the curriculum reflect tribal culture, language and history?
- What is the increased number of American Indian professionals’ roles in the school?
- How do outside agencies recognize the unique tribal sovereignty status based on treaties, court decisions, and acts of Congress?
- How do the schools integrate teaching methods that are based on American Indian culture and languages?
The Factors

The factors, found in the review of literature, that are associated with successful Indian controlled schools are:

- Community/tribal involvement and control
- Meaningful parental involvement
- A relevant curriculum that recognizes and integrates tribal histories, cultures and languages
- Increased number of American Indian/Alaska Natives that serve as principals, teachers, counselors and other professional educators in schools
- Recognition of the unique tribal sovereignty status, based on treaties, court decisions and acts of Congress
- Use of teaching methods that are based on American Indian/Alaska Native culture and language.

The other factor that makes these two schools successful in their own right was not found in the literature, but is apparent in the findings. Both schools’ stakeholders interviewed stated that leadership was a significant factor in their schools’ success. The leaders were both American Indian and had been in their roles for over five years. Both leaders viewed their role as facilitator. The superintendent at Eagle Crossing School and the Director at All Nations School explained their roles as leaders in the following ways:

The best school systems don’t necessarily have to have a high quality superintendent or a high quality principal. Instructional leadership can be managed by three or four real good teachers . . . .If you get that
critical mass of 10 or 15 or 20 people that are going to continue to go on regardless of what strengths and weaknesses individual personnel have, it will still succeed. (Interviewee F-2, April 2002)

I look at myself basically as a vision carrier. I mean as the leader of a school, you have to carry the vision. If you don’t carry the vision, the school won’t make it. That’s very strong and I’m emphatic about how important that is. If you can’t carry it, don’t do it. Don’t even get in, cause you’re just in the way then.

(Interviewee A-1, April 2002)

These two schools were identified by an expert panel as having a majority of the successful factors found in the review of literature. The interviewees were asked what factors they thought were present in order for their school to be considered successful. They were then asked how each of the factors described in Chapter Three were integrated into their school.

All Nations School

For All Nations School, the interviewees, which included teachers, administrators, school board members, support staff, community members, and parents, initially expressed surprise to learn their school was considered successful by external experts, but readily agreed that there were factors in place that could make that so. The factors that the interviewees felt were present in their school covered a wide range of responses such as the following:

- True involvement by stakeholders
• Long-term vision
• Adequate funding
• Consistency with administration
• Minimal turnover in staff
• Quality and dedication of the staff.

This researcher found the climate in All Nations School to be in the earliest stages of developing a sense of cooperation among staff. Several teachers interviewed did not seem to have a general idea of the direction of the school or of what other teachers were doing. One teacher stated:

Well, they have a new, I guess, it’s, what’s it called? They’re starting that curriculum. They mentioned at the beginning of the school year and they’re trying to get a lot of the Native American books in. (Interviewee F-1, April 2002)

Another teacher added:

I’ve seen many programs come through, many. I’ve wasted a lot of time on a lot of the programs. (Interviewee D-1, April 2002)

The parents were even less informed, with several stating they “did not know” in response to questions. The school board members had longevity and interest in the school. They indicated that they took their role as elected officials seriously. Some had been serving since the school was chartered in 1995.
Eagle Crossing School

At Eagle Crossing School, the researcher noted that there were indications of a strong sense of collegiality in the school. The teachers held their colleagues and supervisors in high esteem. Two teachers shared the following:

We have a visionary leader who has plans for constantly working on ways to do it better through talking to each other, and talking to parents. (Interviewee J-2, April 2001)

I mean, we know that parental involvement is important for our kids to be successful in our school, but I think it’s the sense of really saying that we’re a family and we all take care of these kids. (Interviewee B-2, April 2002)

The climate appeared to be one of trust and openness. The staff was friendly and welcoming (Personal observation, April 2002). The written curriculum was developed by the staff so they tended to be knowledgeable about the vision of the school and the direction taken to achieve the vision. The traditional values of respect, generosity, cherishing, honesty, and compassion were prominently displayed throughout the school and incorporated into the standards.

At Eagle Crossing School, the interviewees indicated the following factors contributed to their success:

- Curriculum that honors Native people
- Openness
• Sense of family

• Native school board set the policies and allow the professionals to focus on what they are hired to do

• Native staff.

The fact that the origin of the school was in response to the parents’ needs not being met by the local public school is reflected in the vision they have determined for their school (School document, Eagle Crossing School 2002). They have responded to the needs of the community by developing a curriculum, including teaching methods, that includes language and culture and other academic subjects and by giving them equal importance (School document, Eagle Crossing School 2002).

The school board at Eagle Crossing School is elected by districts in tribal elections. School board members feel a responsibility to their districts similarly to members at All Nations School. The Eagle Crossing School Board members are elected to serve on the school board, but are not on the Tribal Council; however, they do answer to the Tribal Council. Some interviewees noted that members on their tribal council do not send their children to their school, although they do support them with funding for items such as school buses. School board members did send their children to Eagle Crossing School.

Success

Academic success is pivotal to mainstream educational institutions and that is articulated in a majority of schools’ mission and philosophy statements. In a tribally controlled school, this study indicates the definition of success was found to be more

7 Consistent with well-established qualitative research practices, the identities of the participants have been masked by using pseudonyms.
encompassing. Parents and community members want their children to have more than academic success. They want them to be well versed in their culture and language (Indian Nations At Risk Task Force, 1991; U.S. DOI, 2006). They want them to know their identity and remember that identity if and when they choose to leave the reservation. In both schools, this sentiment was expressed by most interviewees.

_All Nations School_

At All Nations School, interviewees expressed how they defined success for students leaving their school with the following themes:

- Social
- Always striving to achieve to higher levels
- Ready on their own terms
- Be the best
- Be humble
- Carry their language and culture with them
- Come back and help people
- Confident
- Self-sufficient
- Knows who he is and his relationship to everything, the earth.

Interviewees saw a successful student exemplified in the following ways:

One that knows who he is, that he’s tethered to the ground. You can fly as high as you want but you have to have roots otherwise you bounce around. They have to understand who they are and their relationship to everything. Where they came
from. The relationship to the earth. That’s something we haven’t had quite yet.

(Interviewee H-1, April 2001)

Somebody that just takes on the challenges, that no matter where they’re at, that they could be anything that they want to be and still feel good about who they are.

(Interviewee E-1, April 2002)

The child will have success because they’ve done everything they have here and that’s successful. You’re a success to yourself and to your family. You’re able to help your family. They know where they started from, and that’s not being ashamed of because you were Indian. You’re proud to be what you are.

(Interviewee I-1, April 2002)

At All Nations School, they can begin to build this foundation because the school offers classes from kindergarten through eighth grade. They have seen their students leave the reservation to attend public high school and soon drop out (The School District of All Nations School, 2000). These high school students felt the schools in the city did not meet their needs nor did they feel they were adequately prepared to attend these schools. All Nations School did not track their students after they left eighth grade. Eagle Crossing School has the advantage of being a K-12 school and able to track their students after they have graduated.
At Eagle Crossing School, interviewees offered their definitions of qualities their students would acquire as follows:

- Positive risk taking
- Humble
- Articulate
- Respectful
- Empathetic for those who are less fortunate
- Generous, willing to share their knowledge with others
- Technologically savvy or advanced
- Fluent in language
- Equipped with tools to go to college
- High self-esteem
- Is a role model
- Maintains Native identity
- Follows own path
- Not change who they are.

The respondents defined success in the following ways:

Success means to me that child moved on, was able to get a job in any field they chose and be happy doing it. Be able to come back and visit his family, be proud of his tribal affiliation, speak his language, understand and hopefully be able to advocate. (Interviewee C-2, April 2002).
I would say that student knows about the culture, the language, and their history but also wants to go on further. (Interviewee M-2, April 2003)

Success would be a risk taker, self pride, culturally immersed, humble, articulate in speaking, self-confidence when it comes to challenges. Respectful when comes to cultures-cultures could be intercultural. Empathetic for those who are less fortunate. Generous, willing to share their knowledge with others. A person leaving here would have all those traits or those qualities and then I suppose you’d have to put in the technologically advanced. Those are the things that I see of a student leaving here should have. (Interviewee N-2, April 2002)

Eagle Crossing School has tracked their students after graduation for up to ten years. Out of 175 graduates, 73 attended college, 55 were employed, 16 entered the military, 12 were at home, five were deceased or incarcerated and the whereabouts of 26 were unknown (School memorandum, 2001).

The school also has started conducting exit interviews so they will be able to assess if their students acquired qualities in meeting the described definitions of success. The tracking and exit interviews provide an assessment mechanism for the tribe and community to control the education of their students and have been desirable methods since the school started in 1981.

Tribal and Community Involvement and Control
Local control is something taken for granted in mainstream schools across the country but is only a recent occurrence in Indian country. Since the founding of Rough Rock Community School in 1966 (Roessel, 1968) barely a generation of children have attended Indian controlled schools, and only a minority of those Indian children have had that opportunity. The ability to control the direction of the education of their children is still considered very important in moving toward the desired outcome of an educational system.

In order to gain local control, communities need to be involved in the education of their children. Research in American Indian education has found that there is a reluctance to be involved in a system that had historically tried to eradicate the Indian and his language and culture (Beaulieau, 2006; Tharp et al., 1999; Tharp, 2006). In also looking at the history of Indian education, one of the most significant examples that promotes community involvement took place in the time of Sequoia, the famous Cherokee who invented their alphabet. With the involvement of the community, he was able to help 90% of his tribe become literate within ten years (Tharp, 2006). Education took place in the home and in the community. Simply, everyone was involved. The advent of the boarding schools movement took away a vital role the community played, which still affects Native education to this day.

In tribally controlled schools like All Nations School and Eagle Crossing School, one way community involvement is demonstrated is through tribally elected positions on their school boards. The tribal councils delegate responsibility to these elected officials for overseeing the schools. Board members also answer to and solicit input from the
individual districts from which they are elected. In this study, the interviewees at these two schools articulated what this control and involvement should be for success.

All Nations School

At All Nations School, an essential core transformation started at the board level. In both schools, the school boards represent individual political districts. The members feel they are obligated to represent the voices of their districts. At All Nations School, tribal control of and involvement in Indian education was described in the following ways:

- All Native staff incorporating our environment and local history
- Indian school board members
- Bringing in their own experiences

Interviewees defined tribal and community involvement and control in the following ways:

Indian control to me is the ability for local communities to run a school with their own traditions or values, Indian core values. But that has to be, I guess, judged and viewed in the ways of the community. A lot of times we expect our community members to be more involved, but on the other hand, they are very trusting that they’re going to get the education. (Interviewee H-1, April 2002)

The tribe coming in, we had the governor come through quite a bit since I’ve been here. The governor always sends the lieutenant governor to functions. He did just recently come in and talk to our staff at a staff meeting and just the tribal people
coming into the school whenever they’re asked to come. I think for parents, it’s a real open door policy. They’re not afraid to come in the school. It is also open to the public any time they want to come in and talk to the teachers. (Interviewee C-1, April 2002)

Indian control means that Indian nation or tribe would strive to see that all Indian children are taught to their ability, to learn just the same as any other person whether it be Indian or whatever. The Indian person that’s in the Nation would be able to have that voice in that. Everything that’s needed to teach them, that Indian would have a say in it, not by somebody else’s advice. (Interviewee I-1, April 2003)

The school would be run by Native people, preferably the Native people of the area. Also, the inclusion would be done not only with, for instance, our board meeting-let’s start there. The board meetings wouldn’t only be open at a certain time. It would be made open to everyone when it would be convenient for everybody to come, not just for the board. And once more, most of the time it would probably be in the evening when everyone could come to that. I think if that happened that would make a big difference as far as involvement. (Interviewee B-1, April 2002)

This control has only been in place since 1995 when the school was first chartered. Eagle Crossing School, the other school, had started 14 years prior.
Eagle Crossing School

At Eagle Crossing School, control of Indian education has evolved during its history. In the early 1980s, some parents felt they were not getting the kind of education they wanted for their children from the local public school in a nearby town. They removed their children from the public school and started to educate them in tribal buildings. They submitted requests to the BIA to fund their efforts to educate their own children but initially the government refused. They applied for grants from other governmental agencies and sought accreditation from the state in the beginning years (The School District of Eagle Crossing School, 2001). Interviewees defined tribal and community involvement and control in the following ways:

Indian control allows a local community to be in control of the school system. It allows people who are stakeholders in the community, or any school, to have some input as far as curriculum and professional development, cultural components . . . locally controlled by Native American members. (Interviewee N-2, April, 2002)

There’s a multitude of ways for us. One of the principal ways is that the charter that we have with the tribe that set up the system for the school board, the board members have one representative from each one of them for the school districts on the reservation. And then our bylaws recommend that those representatives be parents of students in the school. So they participate that way. We also have a school improvement committee
that helps with our school reform plan and about a third of them are parents that are not on the board. There’s all kinds of ways that they have input into what we’re trying to do. (Interviewee F-2, April 23, 2003)

Indian control of education means to be free of the mainstream education system, which means to me tribally controlled school systems have control over what they can implement into their curriculum in terms of traditional values and traditional teachings, whereas in the mainstream you don’t have that option. It also gives tribes the opportunity to expand themselves as a nation, as sovereign nations, and to be competitive in the mainstream learning system. (Interviewee G-2, April 23, 2003)

This was the motivation to start their own school and develop long range goals to have input into their children’s education (The School District of Eagle Crossing School, 2001).

The interviewees at this school were in agreement as to the specifics of what Indian control of education means. Their ideas were expressed as follows:

- Native American decision making at the school board level, administration, and in the curriculum
- Issues of sovereignty
- Having a purpose, a goal
- Cultural relevance
- Involvement in every facet of the education system.
This goes back to the history of the start of Eagle Crossing School. Parents felt their children were not being treated fairly in the public school and wanted to have a say in their education (The School District of Eagle Crossing School, 2002). This level of involvement suggests that the next factor is predominant at their school.

**Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement has long played a pivotal role in the educational setting in all societies, but was seriously challenged by the Federal government in schools for American Indian children (Indian Nations as Risk Task Force, 1991; Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). Parental influence was neither sought nor encouraged in the boarding school system and in fact was set up to take away any parental influence to assimilate Indian students as described in Chapter Two. The influences of that era remain in American Indian schools today as they struggle to get parents more involved (U.S. DOI, 2006).

In the *Kennedy Report* (1969), it was argued that many of the ills of reservation life could be laid at the doorstep of boarding schools. One interviewee summarized that attitude:

> We have a legacy of being very suspicious of education. At one point in our history, education was the enemy because it took away from our culture, took us away from our language, it took away from our family, away from our extended family. So in that sense, education was used against us.

(Interviewee M-2, April 22, 2003)
At the All Nations School, parent involvement is continuously being developed. One of this researcher’s observations took place off campus at a parent involvement workshop. The parents were given transportation and meals and their input was sought as to how to improve their school. It was facilitated by the Head Teacher who was comfortable in the role. Although the parents observed took most of the morning before they would actively get involved in the process, the Head Teacher was adept at giving parents credit when a particular idea was put forth (Observation, April 2002).

At the All Nations School, the results of a school-generated survey indicated parental involvement was around 47% for the 2000-2001 school year (The School District of All Nations School, 2001). The school also works with outside agencies on the reservation to recruit and transport parents to participate in activities. The researcher saw the largest number of parents at the school at an early childhood program.

In this program, the school day involves parents and pre-kindergarten children. The parents bring their children to school, work on their education, and learn how their children learn best. Most interviewees cited this early childhood program and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) as the most visible examples of parental involvement. They stated the following:

Right now we’ve got several parents that are starting to become more involved in the FACE program and they are doing some ongoing education for themselves. We do have a PTO here that gets involved for certain things. I mean it’s like within any community you got a select
few that seem to do quite a bit. We do have parents for certain things like community dinners and programs that we put on. There tends to be a good deal of parental attendance and family attendance for that. (Interviewee L-1, April 2002)

They do have some parents with the FACE program. With the younger programs you’re seeing more parents starting to get involved. Now if we can hang on to those parents, that’s the key. Once the kids are out of FACE, and they get into 2nd and 3rd grade, I think there’s a tendency not to see them anymore. I know that the PTO is trying to push for the teachers to come back to the meetings. They have the parents but the teachers are now not involved. (Interviewee D-1, April 2002)

As Interviewee D-1 states, the transition of parents staying involved with their children after they leave the FACE program has not fully connected with the regular school curriculum. Some interviewees find involvement declines in the regular curriculum. One interviewee stated:

The truth is, a lot of the people come to the events but to actually get them in the classroom, to actually come in, I don’t get much answers. (Interviewee H-1, April 2002)
Another reason for the decline may be the availability of work due to the new casinos. This job opportunity also contributes to low turnout because of work schedules.

In response, the school has tried to accommodate parental work schedules.

The interviewees at All Nations School indicated that the school solicits parent involvement using the following:

- An open door policy
- Inclusiveness
- Being active partners
- Supporting their children, understanding their role
- PTO
- Family literacy
- Community dinners
- On-going education for parents
- Parent conferences
- Cultural programs.

One interviewee discussed the extra effort teachers took to engage parent participation:

So one of the things that we did was we started, two of our teachers, actually, started a program where every quarter they would go to the public library on the bus and the parents would go with them. The goal was that every kid under third grade would have his or her own public library card and that parent would have a public library card. (Interviewee J-1, April 2002)
This activity allowed parents to receive all the services of having a library card and to teach their children the importance of reading. Such involvement is evident at the other studied school also.

_Eagle Crossing School_

At the Eagle Crossing School, this study found that parental involvement is also a concern for interviewees. They expressed their concern in the following ways:

The school can do so much. They advertise, they send out pamphlets, handouts, perhaps e-mails, phone calls and what not. Yet it seems like the parents are not responding to that. I don’t know what cause may be for that but it is very poor in my opinion. For instance, the last meeting we had was last week and I went. The school put up a big traditional meal, fried bread and soup and only three people, three parents showed up. I was kind of disappointed in that and it’s been an ongoing issue. (Interviewee G-2, April 24, 2003)

I think the main thing here right now is we’re still convincing a lot of community people that education is important. (Interviewee F-2, April 23, 2003)

Parent involvement is one of the things that we keep trying to improve because we don’t do it enough. Parent involvement is a struggle. (Interviewee H-2, April 13, 2002)
In this school, the environment is welcoming. The school invites parents to share lunch with their children and to go into the classrooms. They also have dinners and sponsor nights where parents work with their children in cultural and educational projects (Observation, April 12, 2002).

Despite this, the interviewees realize the process is slow and is by no means at an acceptable level. Eagle Crossing School used the following strategies to solicit parent involvement:

- Open door policy
- Inform and invite parents to celebrations and successes
- A welcome back to school open house
- Seek volunteers in the classroom
- After school activities that are culturally related
- Field trips
- Help with discipline.

In examining school documents, the researcher found items that were given to parents in an effort to educate them on things such as self-esteem and literacy. Their accreditation report (Evaluation Report, 2001) also indicated that there was a feeling of family within the school. At different points in the students’ education program, they are required to present to their teachers and families their educational accomplishments (Evaluation Report, 2001).

The interviews indicate that despite the efforts of the schools, parental involvement remains a challenge that both sides will have to work harder to improve. A curriculum that recognizes the cultural differences in background and learning styles may
also bring in more parents in the future. Both schools are also working toward this next factor.

*Relevant Curriculum that Recognizes and Integrates Tribal Histories, Cultures and Languages*

Schools are constantly working to align their curriculum to state standards in order to meet requirements of Federal law. In American Indian schools, a curriculum that recognizes and integrates tribal histories, cultures, and languages is also desirable (Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, 1991; Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969, U.S. DOI, 2006). In Indian controlled schools, the extent of this recognition and integration varies. The degree to which teachers impart tribal histories, cultures, and languages depends on multiple influences. If a school has staff who have the knowledge and skills to teach such information, the extent of integration happens along a continuum. One school may fully integrate language, culture and tribal history across the curriculum while another may have a pull out class for any or all of these areas. The definition of culture is subject to interpretation. Culture may mean elders come into the school to speak or students are taught how to make dance regalia. Language instruction may mean total immersion or one class a week.

Both All Nations and Eagle Crossing School have full-time culture teachers. This study indicates tribal history, culture, and language integration is evident at both schools. It must also be understood that the recognition and integration of tribal histories, cultures and languages is fluid, meaning that unless it is a part of the written curriculum, it could change with school boards and administrators. At All Nations School, this integration of
tribal history, culture and language appears to be operating in isolation and at Eagle Crossing School, standards have been written and are implemented across the curriculum.

**All Nations School**

At the All Nations School, the interviewees felt this type of curriculum was important but varied in their assessment of how successful the school was at implementing it. When asked how the curriculum recognizes and integrates tribal histories, cultures and languages, the respondents related how this is accomplished by the following descriptions:

- Teaching what was going on in Indian country
- Constantly reinforcing the tribal heritage
- A lot of Native American books in the children’s tribal language other than English.

The lead teacher discussed the history of how this integration developed at All Nations School with the following:

The board actually made a decision that it start as a pull out because at the time it was so hard to find anybody who even spoke the language. That still continues to be a problem. There is a tribal cultural committee and that committee has been authorized by the tribal council to create what it is that the tribe wishes to have taught, the order that they wish to have it taught, and that will include both how they wish language taught and even though we’re a relatively small community, we’re still a dialectical community. So people on this end of the community and people on the southern end of the community don’t sound exactly the same.
We make attempts early on; one of the very first things that we attempted to do was include technology as a way of helping kids with that culture and language. One of the very first projects that we did included a website with the speakers of (the language) on our web. The kids could go into it. They could practice (the language) with this speaker on the site and it was bilingual. It was written as well as spoken. They had pieces of history that you could access that went with it---the ones that were appropriate. And, at the request of the tribe, it was pulled. They believed that having it on the web created access to those who might abuse it or might not take care of it properly.

It took us another good two or three years to figure out what we were going to do instead. We tried a lot of different models. We had a full immersion model, we had a partial immersion model, we had an arts model. We’re pretty happy with, sort of, kind of, with what we’ve got only we think we want more of it. We want to be able to figure out what we can build in terms of tribal curriculum. The board would like to see more of it in the classroom as well. (Interviewee J-1, April 2001)

All Nations School has a specific class where students retain their culture, but not a formal written curriculum that integrates tribal histories, cultures and languages. The reservation has two tribes, making it difficult to determine what would be taught and who should teach it. Native language is found in some of the classrooms (Observation, April 2002). Items in the rooms are labeled in English and in the Native languages. The Native
teachers’ classrooms varied also in the degree to which cultural influence is evident (Observation, February 16, 2003). Observations of the researcher indicate the length of time a school has been in Indian control may determine how far this integration process has progressed. At Eagle Crossing School, Indian control has been in place since 1981.

*Eagle Crossing School*

At Eagle Crossing School, the school has developed a formal curriculum that includes language, culture and tribal history. The tribal values are displayed throughout the school, in school documents, and in the vision statement of the school. The school has sought to earn accreditation through the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA). This agency includes Cultural Relevance as one of the indicators for accreditation (The School District of Eagle Crossing School, 2002). One condition the school board has included in the teachers’ contracts (The School District of Eagle Crossing School, 2002) is that “each teacher is required to take classes so they know about the language and the culture and it has to be implemented into their lesson plan” (Interviewee O-2, April 23, 2003).

Cultural relevance is a theme that surfaces in the interviewees’ responses to questions about this factor in the following ways:

- Specific [Indian] studies standards for math and science
- Learning styles
- Graduates will be fluent in their language
- A formal curriculum that addresses culture, history and language

Interviewees expressed their ideas on this theme in the following ways:
We want all of our kids to retain their culture and yet learn about other cultures and we really try to emphasize that. Since I’ve been here, we’ve just gotten better and better about integrating our culture into the classroom. This summer we had a presentation from (a prominent Native curriculum specialist). She came down and we’re developing more cultural units for the classroom that the teachers can use and so teachers are using more Native authors, Native books, and they are tying in the language. When I talk to my parents at the beginning of the year, they say one of the main reasons they want their kids to go here is because they want them to learn the language and the culture. (Interviewee B-2, April 24, 2003)

They had (Indian) studies and language that is a class and is part of our curriculum. They have their course outlines and just like the other disciplines, it’s incorporated. Plus we ask community members to come in; our curriculum is a little different because we in the elementary school have a philosophy. The Native American cultural units they’re incorporating with is Indian art. We have teachers that take (Indian) studies and language classes. They use the simple phrases. We read to the students in the morning in our language, they count in (Indian language they have the simple phrase like thank you and can I get a drink of water. It’s just something that is here and it’s what you see. It’s just part of what we do every day. It’s not a separate entity. (Interviewee E-2, April 23, 2003)

An accreditation evaluation report noted the Native values of the tribe in the school building and indicated they witnessed the use of these values in the curriculum
throughout the school. (Evaluation Report, 2001). The report also indicates that Indian language proficiency was emphasized for all the students and was the foundation of the school curriculum (Evaluation Report, 2001).

The number of American Indian professionals suggests that this integration is implemented more extensively than in schools with few Natives professionals. American Indian professionals are sought in many schools like the two studied here.

*Number of American Indian Professionals*

Studies in American Indian education indicate that the number of American Indians serving as principals, teachers, counselors, and other professional educator capacities is crucial to the success of Indian children (e.g., *Meriam Report*, 1928; Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969; Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, 1991). At All Nations School, 12 American Indian professionals, defined as those holding licensure, are employed out of a staff of 99. At Eagle Crossing School, there are 19 out of 42 staff members who are American Indian.
All Nations School

How the interviewees assess these 12 people’s roles was articulated in the following ways:

- Respectful
- Leaders
- A relationship where they are able to make a connection with Native students
- Patient and understanding
- Humble in their knowledge
- Positive Indian role models
- Knowledgeable about parents and community.

Interviewees further summarized the role of American Indian professionals in this way:

I’d say that that’s key. I really would because once again you go back to that vision thing. Those individuals, I guess in a way you’ve two factors. The first thing I see is that everybody on this staff has to have the shared vision. The perspective that those key individuals provide is really, really critical because they add an element to the vision that would not otherwise be there because they bring their own perspectives from either their own tribal communities, from their own backgrounds as children and learners themselves. Having navigated all of those external systems and they make very strong leaders for all of the young teachers that are under you and have a very major influence on what goes on around them.

(Interviewee J-1, April 2, 2002)
I see their roles as the leaders. I see them as probably some of the more successful on staff. The understanding with students, that relationship that they’re the ones that are able to make that connection where a lot of these newer teachers they struggle with it and they either leave or have done very well with it too.

(Interviewee D-1, April 3, 2003)

One of the interviewees also noted that the American Indian superintendent was a key player in bringing to life the school’s vision. She stated:

The community, the parents, making their statement both as parents and then also as the board of directors crystallizing that vision; having everybody in that group on the same page. Then their decision to go and seek out, once they’d made the decision for where they wanted to go, once the tribe decided that this would be a tribally controlled grant school. Once the board said we want this, then their ability to go out and acquire the dynamic visionary leader, that created all that was the absolute root to what was able to happen. Because if you took out that whole piece from the tribe and you just put your dynamic visionary leader in here, well okay, but what about his mandate? He’s got his charisma, he’s got his leadership, he’s got all of the things that make him that powerful incredible person to work for, but without a mandate, it may work or it may not.

(Interviewee J-1, April 2002)
At Eagle Crossing School, the role of their American Indian leader also played an important part in their success.

_Eagle Crossing School_

At Eagle Crossing School, the school board pays an incentive for teachers to earn their graduate degrees by allocating $1000 per teacher. One Native teacher who was starting her doctoral program was funded by the school. One administrator, however, felt they might be educating their staff just to lose them. The school has a total of 19 American Indian professionals out of 42 certified staff. The superintendent, high school principal, and business manager are Native. They have been in their roles for over five years. There are also 10 teachers and one nurse who is Native. The school recruits at conferences, in Native periodicals, and by word of mouth to recruit American Indian professionals.

The sense of collegiality is reinforced by the fact that when the school board has a retreat, the whole staff is invited. Also, several teachers are delegated different responsibilities in the school and encouraged to assume leadership roles (The School District of Eagle Crossing School, 2001).

The interviewees responded to the question of what role American Indian professionals play in their school in the following ways:

- Native American role models
- Guidance
- Native ways of knowing
- Insight into the students
- Leaders
• No cultural barriers
• Empowers the community
• Comfort level with Native American instructors and administrators.

Interviewees summarized the role of American Indian professionals in the following ways:

I think creating more role models, Indian role models, for the children is an important factor in terms of teaching and when it comes from a non-Indian, then I don’t think it’s quite as effective as it should be. (Interviewee G-2, April 22, 2003)

I think it’s just important for our kids to see Native American role models and see people, other Indians, doing things like this so they know when they leave they can come back and do the same thing or they can do, they can be whatever they want to be and not just work here and there or do whatever. (Interviewee B-2, April 22, 2003)

There’s pressure being a role model, watching what you do and watching what you say because you’re on tribal land. You’re put higher on a pedestal and you have be on your toes. (Interviewee O-2, April 23, 2003)
The role of teaching is a traditional way of the tribes. When the schools are able to assert their right to teach in a certain way and be respected for it, the recognition of tribal sovereignty comes into focus.

Recognition of Tribal Sovereignty

The recognition of tribal sovereignty was the most difficult of all the factors for the interviewees to articulate. Sovereignty has been defined by Utter (1993) as the following: “Once granted by a nation, initially through a formal declaration this recognition becomes the official acceptance of one nation by another as a fellow sovereign government” (p. 31). How this status applies to education has yet to be tested in court. Tribes may develop tribal education codes and may want to enforce them upon public and grant schools. Fortunately, by 2000, over five tribes and their schools entered into agreements and collaborations with state and federal agencies regarding Indian education (http://www.narf.org). In 2000, the Native American Rights Fund wrote, in a prepared paper for the National Congress of American Indians, “cooperative agreements and intergovernmental collaborations are a valid means of exercising tribal sovereignty. They do not in and of themselves compromise tribal sovereignty” (http://www.narf.org).

Inherent in tribal sovereignty is the right to an education as provided by the U.S. Government’s 116 treaties with American Indian tribes. These treaties included provisions for education (Reinhardt, 2004). The interviewees described this understanding of tribal sovereignty in the following ways:

- Thought of as separate entities that to some are nonexistent and not part of the public school system
Native American tribes have been kept down by the fact that the government wants to step in only when they’re doing well.

Tribes feel there’s not a whole lot of support across the board from federal or state nor do they (Federal and state governments) care.

All Nations School

Interviewees from All Nations School summarized this recognition of sovereignty in the following ways:

By recognizing the tribal sovereignty and the right of the community whether it’s a big community or a small community to be able to make major decisions about where the education of the children is going to be. That piece of sovereignty, that piece of control, empowers your parents. (Interviewee J-1, April 2, 2002)

One is I don’t think they care. Do they see me as the same? I don’t think so. (Interviewee K-1, April 2, 2002)

The local schools really don’t give a rat’s ass. I’m a registered state lobbyist for education, Indian education, and I’ve had to get on my knees. I’ve literally told them, ‘what you’re doing is genocide.’ (Interviewee H-1, April 2002)

Eagle Crossing School

The recognition of sovereignty seems to have empowered parents and community at Eagle Crossing School. The interviewees had a historical viewpoint when it came to
tribal sovereignty. In 1981, the parents and tribe exercised their right to tribal sovereignty by starting their own school. This effort was perceived as a struggle by the community, which was rewarded by having a new school building (The School District of Eagle Crossing School, 2001). The interviewees’ feelings about the recognition by outside entities of tribal sovereignty was as follows:

- Not in a partnership, but the government is starting to come around to fully recognizes them as an equal
- Little openness or working together
- Governments overlook them
- Regulated by the state through accreditation and not supported by them per se
- Only tolerated as a legal entity to operate a school, which is the mindset of ignorance.

Interviewees stated:

I think schools like Eagle Crossing are an expression of tribal sovereignty. It doesn’t mean that it’s a perfect expression but it is an expression. (Interviewee M-2, April 23, 2003)

When we first started it was difficult. It was, I always felt, like we weren’t taken very seriously. We met criteria so while we were in the process of meeting right there so we were tolerated. (Interviewee H-2, April 2002)

I still think that the mindset out there is ignorance. Being a member of this community since I grew up here and being within the public school system,
there’s still a lot of ignorance which results in racism. (Interviewee N-2, April 2002)

The school seems to operate in isolation from public education agencies because it is willing to test tribal sovereignty. Despite that, it is willing to work, on its terms, with state and the Federal governments. The tribe will incorporate ideas, such as the next factor, into their school, that will address the standards they have developed.

*Teaching Methods Based on American Indian Culture and Language*

In 1992, the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force commissioned papers from educators across the country. In the summary of a paper on integration of language and culture in the curriculum, Linda Skinner (1992) stated, “Educators must learn how to respectfully incorporate learning within a Native context, and how to incorporate the Native context within the learning structure” (p. 57).

Research (e.g., *Leadership Beyond the Seventh Generation II*, 1998) has promoted the idea that incorporating language and culture makes curricula meaningful for all Native children. The extent that this is occurring in these tribal schools is evidenced by their responses.

*All Nations School*

At the All Nations School, the people interviewed were able to articulate how they used teaching methods in the following ways:

- Teachers use the language with students
- The language displayed throughout the school
- Staff orientation
- Use of traditional Native American methods
• Manipulative activities
• Careful selection of open-ended, child centered holistic and experiential programs
• Emphasis on cooperative and group learning
• Teachers empower Indian children to better understand who they are

The researcher observed many of these methods in the classroom and in the building (Observation, 2002). Respondents further explained how these methods were incorporated into their classrooms:

I take the words that we happen to be teaching and we use them in sentences in place of English words. I speak a little so I use it in my everyday speaking with the kids. (Interviewee C-1, April 2002)

Each room has the responsibility. It starts with the little ones all the way up to putting signs on each door, each wall. Orientation of the staff members. We do that, we also try to give them some history, give them books, increase our curriculum as far as you will do this. [The teacher] has done so much empowering these children to understand who we are. (Interviewee H-1, April 2002)

I feel that as a school we’re doing, taking steps in order to try to provide culture with the children, something that I would want the kids to be aware of and to have it think that if we
taught them using traditional Native American methods or something like that. (Interviewee L-1, April 2002)

I incorporate that in and do it that way. For the little ones, more of the hands-on activities, a lot of manipulative activities for the kids. (Interviewee F-1, April 2002)

The programs that have been selected for the school have been selected very thoughtfully. They tend to be more holistic in nature. They tend to be more open-ended and child centered in nature. They tend to be very experiential so that we try and get more experiential learning in. They also emphasize cooperative and group learning. (Interviewee J-1, April 2, 2002)

_Eagle Crossing School_

At Eagle Crossing School, a curriculum has been developed with standards based on the language and culture. In their school, the interviewees saw this teaching occurring in the following ways:

- Collaboration both natural and planned
- Discovery and hands-on
- Experiments and application
- Cultural projects
Two interviewees offered how they view American Indian children learning experiences:

I try not to raise my voice. I try not to make things demeaning or make them feel small, belittle them. I speak to them with an air of respect. When you speak to a certain child, a certain way, they’ll pay attention. You don’t need to holler at them. You speak to them.

The other traditional area was learning with humor.

(Interviewee O-2, April 14, 2002)

According to the statistics, most Native American children don’t learn by just hearing something. They are the observers and they’re going to watch things taking place and they’re going to watch the activities that are going on and when they get comfortable enough they will come and participate.

(Interviewee E-2, April 14, 2002)

By being cognizant of these learning styles, the school has made children feel more comfortable in the classroom (The School District of Eagle Crossing School, 1989).

Although this study did not utilize a rubric with which to measure the degree the factors were incorporated, it appears that both schools have all the factors present. In
addition, this study did not attempt to compare the two schools as it pertains to the degree the factors are found in their schools, but sought to present these schools that were found to be successful. In summary, the researcher sought to explore what is taking place in schools deemed successful by Indian educators.

Summary

Chapter Five presented the data analyzed for the research questions posed at two tribally controlled schools. The study found that all factors identified in the literature were present, to some degree, in both schools:

- Meaningful community/tribal involvement and control
- Meaningful parental involvement
- A relevant curriculum that recognizes and integrates tribal histories, cultures and languages
- Increased number of American Indian/Alaska Natives that serve as principals, teachers, counselors and other professional educators in schools;
- Recognition of the unique tribal sovereignty status, based on treaties, court decisions and acts of Congress
- Use of teaching methods that are based on American Indian/Alaska Native culture and language.

Chapter Six will discuss the findings and implications for further research and policy.
CHAPTER SIX

Conclusions

The primary purpose of this case study was to present factors that determine success for American Indian students in two tribally controlled schools on reservations located in different states, and how success was defined by stakeholders. Schools were not chosen based on academic scores alone but also on whether, according to an expert panel, they were using factors found in the review of literature that were associated with successful Indian controlled schools.

Summary of Findings

Two central questions guided this research:

1. What are the factors that make an Indian-controlled K-12 school successful?
2. How do these schools define and measure success?

The review of the literature (Indian Nations at Risk Report, 1991; Meriam Report, 1928; Report on Indian Education, 1976; Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969; White House Conference on Indian Education, 1992) suggested that an Indian controlled school and its students would be considered successful if there are six factors present. These factors include: (a) meaningful community and tribal involvement and control; (b) meaningful parental involvement; (c) a relevant curriculum that recognizes and integrates tribal histories, cultures and languages; (d) an increased number of American Indians/Alaska Natives serving as principals, teachers, counselors and other professional educators in schools; (e) recognition of the unique tribal sovereignty status, based on treaties, court decisions, and acts of Congress; and (f) use of teaching methods that integrate American Indian/Alaska Native cultures and languages. The degree to
which these factors are in place was not fully measured in this study as rubrics are not available for every factor. Location and community structure leads to variances in how a factor may be perceived. For instance, in one school culture may mean students are making arts and crafts while in another it may mean traditional customs are being taught in the school.

These factors were used as the only criteria for the expert panel to choose All Nations School and Eagle Crossing School. In this study, the criteria were not fully met by either school chosen by the panel. It remains to be seen if tribally-controlled schools can meet all the factors or criteria determined by the review of literature and if that school will be successful.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted at both schools. Approximately 14 interviews were conducted at each school. Network sampling, a type of purposeful sampling, was utilized in order to reach a varied group (Merriam, 1998). In each interview, the researcher used the factors, structured as questions, to guide the interview. The interviews included the two school superintendents, three principals, four school board members, five parents, one cook, one nurse, two tribal college faculty, one tribal council member, one business manager, and eight teachers. A second visit was conducted at each school for a total of two weeks.

The analysis strategy used was the data analysis spiral that Creswell (1998) describes as “the process of moving in analytic circles rather than using a fixed linear approach” (p. 142). The data were grouped together for each school and analyzed as a whole with major themes emerging as they related to the research questions and factors. Multiple and different sources, such as checking interviews with school documents, were
used to understand each school. The researcher observed meetings and classrooms. School documents such as memorandums, grant applications, school report cards, newspapers, curriculum guides, student handbooks, and web pages were also examined.

The study was limited by several factors. First, there was a limited sample size due to the size of the schools. The schools were over a thousand miles apart. Cost was also a factor. Second, finding time in the school day where people were willing to be interviewed was difficult to manage, especially for the teachers. Third, some of the questions were very difficult for lay people to answer. The researcher assumed Native people would have a grasp of what sovereignty was as it applies to education; however, this was not true for all participants.

Conclusions

In reexamining what needs to be done in Indian education, the conclusions remain the same over time as far as what needs to be done to improve American Indian education. As far back as 1820 when Jedidiah Morse came to the conclusion that the Kennedy brothers would find in 1969, to the present when President George W. Bush outlined what had been previously stated before; Indian children are attending schools that do not have greater local control, meaningful parental involvement, increased numbers of American Indian/Alaska Native professionals, relevant curriculum, recognition of tribal sovereignty, or that do not use teaching methods that integrate American Indian/Alaska Native culture, history and language. Vine Deloria once stated, Indian education studies all found that “we are not doing anything, we need more money, and Indians are not involved,” (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, p. 151).
What is needed to improve American Indian education has been documented in many reports and studies, including the *Meriam Report* in 1928. During the over 80 years since the *Meriam Report* progress to improve Indian education has been slow and inconsistent given the complex nature of the environment in which education takes place and the external forces that influence education. Locally controlled tribal schools, like the two in this study, were considered an alternative to public and BIA controlled schools to improve the education of Indian students; especially if they used the factors identified in this study. Local control was considered essential to student success in schools.

The definition of success at the two schools examined was uniquely indigenous in nature. The parents and community want their children to be highly skilled in academics but rooted in a strong foundation of their tribal language and culture. They also indicated they wanted students to be successful whether they stayed on the reservation or if they went to the outside world.

The parents, staff and community members at both schools noted the following as contributing to school success: continuous and visionary leadership, true involvement by stakeholders, local control, relevant curriculum integrated with language and culture, openness, dedicated and focused staff with minimal turnover, increased number of Native professionals, adequate funding, and differentiated instruction. They were also able to articulate how the six factors found in the review of literature were present in their school.

Interviewees at both schools were able to indicate if the factors found in the review of literature were being used at their schools. It appeared the implementation of the factors was further along at Eagle Crossing School likely because they have been a
tribally controlled school for a longer period of time. Since the school’s inception, they had a formal written curriculum that included language and culture, high percentage of American Indian professionals that included administrators and representative Native school board, they had tested tribal sovereignty, incorporated teaching methods based on Native learning styles, but were still lacking increased parental involvement despite documented efforts. At All Nations School, parental involvement appeared to be one of their stronger areas.

One reason for increased parental involvement at All Nations School may have been because of their early childhood program, which was located in the school and required the parents’ participation. Additionally, the school actively engaged parents as evidenced by the numerous activities aimed at getting them into the school.

As far as relevant curriculum, All Nations School was in the early stages of determining what they wanted to teach. Eagle Crossing School had a pull-out language and culture class. The use of teaching methods was fairly strong because they had incorporated a traditional teaching method that reinforced their culture and integrated subject areas and student discipline.

The high number of American Indian professionals at All Nations School may be because they actively recruit Indian professionals, including Native teachers from a nearby university. In the area of tribal sovereignty, the interviewees conveyed they felt it was for the most part, nonexistent.

This study also found that leadership plays an important role in school success. Both administrators had been in their schools for over five years and were both American Indians. They both successfully delegated authority and empowered their teachers. They
each had sought to find ways to assert tribal sovereignty when they could. The superintendent of Eagle Crossing School exercised sovereignty when he sought outside accreditation separate from the state and that state’s activity association would eventually allow them in. The director at All Nations School was instrumental in taking over a local public middle school with the tribe’s assistance.

This study found that the definition of success used in these schools is uniquely indigenous. Both schools want their students to be academically successful and competitive, but also they want students to have a foundation in tribal language and culture in order to be successful in the two worlds in which they live.

These two schools feel that the factors identified in the literature are present in their schools, but realized that much more needs to be done for students are fully successful. It appears they will continue to be innovative and test the boundaries of sovereignty in order to provide relevant and quality education to their students.

*Implications for Further Research*

There is a need for increased research on leadership in tribally controlled schools, especially American Indian leaders who have brought success to their schools. The leadership and role of American Indian professionals would seem to be an indicator of how much further these schools will go in preparing successful students. Upon review of the documents and while talking to the interviewees, this researcher noted the many times leadership was acknowledged for guiding the schools effectively through the years and enabling the schools to become vested in the educational process.

The review of literature and the findings of this study also suggest the need for additional research to determine if the factors identified in this study are the key factors
that determine Indian controlled school success and if certain factors are more important than others in determining school success. Also future research is needed to determine the extent these factors are being implemented in tribally controlled schools. American Indian education is complex given tribal diversity and local context in which education takes place. Future research is needed to examine this complexity and the local context to determine the external and internal influences that determine or limit school and student success.

A longitudinal study of all tribally controlled schools is suggested to determine the meaning of local tribal control and how tribal schools determine student success, including focus on the variables of American Indian administrative and teacher leadership; parent, community and tribal involvement; relevant curriculum that recognizes and integrates tribal histories, cultures and languages; and recognition of tribal sovereignty.

Local control of education needs to be examined to determine if schools can truly have local decision-making authority if funds and federal and state mandates influence what goes on in schools. In particular, the integration and use of tribal languages and cultures needs to be examined to determine its impact on student success, including, but not limited to, student academic achievement. In the long term, research is needed to determine if students become productive tribal citizens.

Implications for Policy and Practice

In order to understand the context of this study, it is important to provide some current information about Indian controlled schools and the impact of No Child Left Behind with its emphasis on using test scores to determine student and school success.
President George W. Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 on January 8, 2002, which focused on accountability, standards, and high stakes testing in education. The Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), a national federal school system, holds the same status as a state department of education with one exception: The BIE is responsible for 183 (123 of them Indian Controlled) schools and dormitories located in 23 states. When Negotiated Rulemaking took place and NCLB was enacted, the BIE ended up accepting and using 23 different Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations. In the 2009-2010 school year, there are 143 out of 174 schools with academic programs that did not make AYP (Dr. P. Abeyta, personal communication, May 12, 2009). The differences in how the 23 states determined AYP made it impossible to assess all BIE schools in the same manner and makes it difficult to formulate one assessment of the situation.

Back in 1988, the BIA’s Office of Indian Education Programs (OIEP) used two types of assessment, the California Achievement Test (CAT) and the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), of which scores were reported to the U. S. Department of Education (Dr. A. Felix, personal communication, May 7, 2009). Between 1988 and 1994, schools added the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) if they were used in the state their school was located. In 1994, the requirement of all states to develop Criterion Referenced Tests (CRT) and report performance in terms of percentages (advanced, proficient and partially proficient) had OIEP schools continuing to use state Norm Referenced Testing (NRT)s. According to Dr. Felix, schools were to report:
proficiency levels according to criteria in the State Plan
(1-34--partially proficient; 35-66-- proficient—one standard
deviation above and below the mean and 67-100-- advanced)
but to work toward the following: If they chose to follow
state standards, they would implement the new state CRTs when
they were developed or follow national standards and utilize
the Learning Record assessment system. Schools chose to utilize
the state standards or to utilize them as the basis for developing
local standards by combining them with national standards or
American Indian or tribal standards. The American Indian
standards were not stand-alone standards. (Dr. A. Felix, personal
communication, May 7, 2009, p. 1)

By 2002, only six states had developed their own CRT.

The U.S. Department of Education encouraged the OIEP to develop a CRT for
their schools but that did not happen. As stated earlier, during the Negotiated Rulemaking
process, Indian tribes chose to use tests utilized by their state. By 2005, all schools had to
use a standards based assessment or use what the state used. What also needs to be
understood is that schools were given an AYP calculation based on their current test
scores. Schools would be classified as making AYP, if not, they would be put on Alert. If
the next year they still did not make AYP, they would be put in School Improvement 1
followed by School Improvement 2, Corrective Action 1, Corrective Action 2 and finally Restructuring. If they made AYP in one of those years, they would have to make it for two years consecutively before they would be considered making AYP (Dr. P. Abeyta, personal communication, May 12, 2009).

In addition, states have raised their Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) that affect these schools. The AMO is the percentage of students that need to be proficient and is a percentage that increases each year. Different states set that percentage in different ways. For instance, one state set their AMO at single digits and now has to double that amount to be on track. Also, states set different requirements for different types of schools. In New Mexico, the state set the AMOs for a K-5 school for 63% in reading and 56% in math, and for a K-8 school, 60% in reading and 44% in math for the 2008-2009 school year (Dr. P. Abeyta, personal communication, May 12, 2009).

In a 2005 study, Martin reported only 13 percent of BIE-operated schools and 31 percent of tribally controlled schools were making AYP. The BIE has a goal of 100 percent of BIE-operated schools making AYP in 2014 (Martin, 2005, as cited in U.S. DOI, 2006). Dr. Abeyta also stressed there are several things that can affect a school’s AYP determination and it is not only test scores (Dr. P, Abeyta, personal communication, May 12, 2009). Attendance and special education also affect AYP. If a school has an elementary and a high school and either one does not do well; it will affect the whole school’s AYP determination.

In the study of the 16 BIA schools, the research group of TMS analyzed five highest performing schools and five lowest-performing schools in the BIA. In addition, it added six Hopi schools that were high performing (U.S. DOI, 2006). Neither of the two
Schools in this study were included in the 16 schools. The study found that three things needed to be in place to improve low-performing schools. Schools needed to have external support for school reform, effective administration, and academic leadership (U.S. DOI, 2006).

In the No Child Left Behind Act, there is a provision for American Indian schools to use an alternative definition of AYP (Public Law 17-110). One state in this study is now looking into utilizing this alternative. An education consortium in that state is looking at developing alternative AYP standards for several tribal schools. The BIE is responsible for providing technical assistance to all schools regardless of the alternatives.

For the 2009-2010 school year, both All Nations School and Eagle Crossing School are in Restructuring. In the 2001-2002 school year, both schools had an AYP determination made based on the assessment tools they were using. They were put into School Improvement 1. This means both schools in this study have not made AYP for two consecutive years for the last seven years. This implies and supports the findings of this study that the two schools do not place emphasis on test scores as the main or sole factor in determining success. Rather, other factors identified in this study are just as important to the interviewees as test scores in determining success. Policymakers should consider granting greater flexibility to Indian Controlled Schools to use multi-measures to determine school and student success. For now, tribally controlled schools will need to rely on the leadership of their school and the BIE system as a state system of support.

The BIE has recently focused their attention and financial resources on instructional programs. Outside consultants can come in and build capacity for individual schools’ staff while they focus on data driven decision-making. Technology is being
enhanced and utilized in new ways that allows schools to see the results of their programs, teaching, and quality of education. Education line offices and the national offices are providing technical assistance in getting schools back on track. It does come down to whether individual tribally controlled schools want to take that assistance or not. They will have to decide how much external assistance will affect their tribal sovereignty if at all and what are the implications for policy and practice?

The implications for policy and practice are continually being researched and promoted as Native people move toward true control of Indian education. Education for American Indian children, while nowhere near perfect, has come a long way. There are more Natives in control of their schools in their communities, more Native people are conducting research, instruction in Indian schools is improving, American Indians are attending post-secondary institutions in greater numbers, and the number of tribal colleges continues to grow. As these trends continue to increase, it is important to consider the implications for policy and practice.

At the school level, leadership is one of the key factors in successful schools (Redding, 2006). Native school boards need to recruit and retain quality American Indian leaders who will facilitate the vision of their stakeholders. In the Bureau system, the national offices and education line offices can take the lead in providing the training for boards in transforming their schools and share leadership in the process. This shared leadership should translate down to the teachers.

In the classroom, teachers need to continually meet to discuss data and develop curriculum and use of teaching strategies that will also include the relevant cultures,
languages and histories of their unique communities. They will need to reach out and create a community beyond the classroom walls that will bring their parents in also.

Parental involvement may have to be stipulated based on past Indian education history. Schools need to bring back their parents and involve them in meaningful ways. In addition, because of the unique sovereignty status afforded to tribally controlled schools, tribes can initially mandate that involvement in a non-threatening manner through parent-school compacts. The community will need to be versed in the benefits of parental involvement starting before a child walks in the building.

Schools as communities must also become a policy for tribally controlled schools. As DeLong (1998) once indicated, there are two levels of Indian control—organizational and infrastructural. Until both levels are fully realized and continuously improving, success for American Indian children will remain a challenge.
REFERENCES


National Indian School Board Association and Bureau Effective Schools Team. (1998). Leadership beyond the seventh generation II: A tool for everyone reforming schools to be more effective so all children will learn. Polson, MT: National Indian School Board Association.


APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol
Project: Case Study of Two Tribally Controlled Schools

Time of interview:
Place:
Date:
Interviewee:
Interviewer:

(Briefly describe study)

Questions:

1. What are the factors that make an Indian controlled school successful?

2. In what ways do the community and tribe have local control?

3. In what ways are parents involved in the school?

4. How do you solicit parent involvement?

5. How does the curriculum in your school recognize and integrate tribal histories, culture and language?
6. What are the number and positions of American Indian professionals in your school?

7. How do you recruit American Indian professionals to work in your school?

8. In what ways does the teaching staff use teaching methods that are based on Native culture and languages?

9. How does the federal, state or local school districts recognize your unique tribal sovereign status?

10. How do you define “success”?

(Thank the interviewee for participating in this interview. Reassure interviewee of confidentiality and future need for clarifications)
I agree to participate in a scientific investigation of “Indian Control of Education: Factors that determine success in Indian Education – A Case Study of Two Tribally Controlled Schools,” as an authorized part of the education and research program of the Pennsylvania State University.

I understand the information given to me, and I have received answers to any questions I may have had about the research procedure. I understand and agree to the conditions of this study as described.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, I have no physical or mental illness or difficulties that would increase the risk to me of participation in this study.

I understand that I will receive no compensation for participating.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, and that I may withdraw from this study at any time by notifying the person in charge.

I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.
APPENDIX C

114 W. South Hills Ave.
State College, PA 16801
DATE

Name
Title
Address

Dear

As a Ph.D. candidate in Educational Administration, I am conducting a case study at the Pennsylvania State University of two tribally controlled schools that have been identified as being successful models in Indian education. Your school was chosen as one of the schools. My study, entitled, “Indian Control of Education: Factors that determine success in Indian education – A case study of two tribally controlled schools” is intended to provide a descriptive and analytical study of the factors which are said to be found in your school. Qualitative data will gathered through observations, interviews, and document collection of administrators, teachers, parents, and community members over a two-week period.

I would be very grateful if you would agree to have your school participate in the study. If you agree to take part in this research, you will be asked to:

   A) agree in writing to take part

   B) return written agreement by mail with the enclosed envelope, fax a copy to me, and e-mail an initial agreement

   C) upon e-mail receipt and faxed receipt of the agreement, you will be contacted by telephone to schedule the two-week visit (time and location at your convenience during November, 2001)

Your participation in this research will require a one hour block of uninterrupted time for the interview, which, if you are agreeable, will be audiotaped for subsequent analysis. Your responses, together with those of approximately 15 other aforementioned people, will be used to draw conclusions regarding what factors determine “success” in tribally controlled schools.

You may ask any questions about the research procedures and those questions will be fully answered by me or my advisor, Dr. John Tippeconnic.
The intent of this study is the publication of the results of this research. Therefore, if at any time during the interview, you would prefer that any portion(s) of your comments remain confidential, your request will be honored.

Your participation is voluntary. You are free to stop participating in the research at any time, or decline to answer any specific questions without penalty.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the telephone number or e-mail address below.

Sincerely,

Katherine A. Campbell
Researcher/Doctoral Candidate
The Pennsylvania State University
(814)234-5589
Fax (253)399-1753
kac289@psu.edu
katwinyan@yahoo.com
APPENDIX D

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SUCCESS IN INDIAN EDUCATION

Please name four tribally controlled schools that you determine have the following factors in place at their school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School name:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factors:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community/tribal involvement and control</td>
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<td>Increased parental involvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>A relevant curriculum that recognizes and integrates tribal histories, cultures and languages</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Natives that serve as principals, teachers, counselors and other professional educators in schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognition of the unique tribal sovereignty status, based on treaties, court decisions and acts of Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of teaching methods that are based on American Indian/Alaska Native culture and language</td>
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</table>
Other (please specify):

Researcher:

I certify that the informed consent procedure has been followed, and that I have answered any questions from the participant above as fully as possible.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
VITA

Katherine A. Campbell

Katherine Arleen Campbell, an enrolled member of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, was born on July 13, 1963, in Sacramento, California. She graduated from Todd County High School in Mission, South Dakota. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota in 1989. She graduated from the University of South Dakota with a Master of Arts in Educational Administration in 1998.

From 1989 to 1997, she taught at Winnebago Public School in Winnebago, Nebraska. She was Assistant Principal at Winnebago Public School from 2003 to 2007. In 2007, she was employed with the Bureau of Indian Education as an Education Specialist.