



Kansas–Nebraska Indian Education Study and Community Building Project Summary

A Collaboration between The Kansas Association for Native American Education (KANAE) and the Nebraska Indian Education Association (NeIEA)

Project Summary

With the rich American Indian histories found in Kansas and Nebraska (formerly Indian Territory), there is a significant presence of Indigenous people and their children in these states today – the 2010 Census shows 59,130 Native American people residing in Kansas and 29,816 in Nebraska. Despite these numbers, there is a lack of basic geographic, demographic, and student success data for American Indian students, which represents a significant boundary to creating state-wide improvement plans, building partnerships, guiding research, soliciting external funding for specialized programming, and more. Additionally, though there are a large number of American Indian education programs and institutions operating across tribal, federal, state, and local contexts, many Indian education leaders—and their student success data—remain isolated from one another. Conducting a comprehensive Indian education study across Kansas and Nebraska will help build a more complete understanding of the status of Indian education in the region. This will also allow stakeholders to make more data informed decisions, improve conditions for future collaborations, and allow Indian education leaders across these states to access and deploy state-wide research when seeking external funding for the purpose of improving education for American Indian students.

With support from the Kansas Health Foundation and Kansas State University's College of Education, and Indian education leaders from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln's College of Education and Human Sciences, this project is aimed at making American Indian students, educators and programs more visible by listening to local leaders in Indian education as they describe their communities, programs, successes, struggles, and areas of need. Additionally, this project will work with Indian education program leaders to compile student success information across multiple programs in an effort to build a comprehensive understanding about how American Indian students are performing across our states. Through these efforts, we hope to create a foundation to build a stronger regional community of practice as we search for ways to improve education for American Indian students.

This effort will culminate with a report expected to be published by the end of the December 2020.

Project Objectives

1. Build a comprehensive understanding of the Indian education landscape in Kansas and Nebraska so that stakeholders will have foundational research and data that can be used to improve practice and seek additional resources and grants.
2. Build a community of practice that breaks down the silo effect experienced by Indian education practitioners who work in federal, tribal, state, and local contexts. This community of practice, which will connect researchers and Indian education leaders across all forms of government, can be used to develop and share promising practices across Kansas and Nebraska. Relationships will be built through the project interviews and a directory will be developed to sustain communication between and among educators and researchers across the region.

Project Timeline

Phase 1 - Introductory Interviews (January–June):

Across both states, researchers will personally reach out to Indian education leaders of known programs and institutions associated with Indian education (*BIE schools, Title VI, JOM, Tribal Ed Departments/ programs, etc.*) and set up individual or small group interviews to gain a basic understanding of the community, student clientele, their programs, and leaders perspectives about Indian education in their community.

Phase 2 - Follow up Visits and Focused Data Collection (June–November):

After an initial visit with leaders from each site, the research team will then analyze the information gained from the first round of visits to construct a more specific and focused data collection plan for a second round of visits. This will likely include survey data collection, and will be built in a manner that can capture more specific information on various topics related to answers provided in Phase 1, in order to produce data that can be compared across programs to gain a more complete understanding about the status of Indian education in Kansas and Nebraska.

Anticipated Topics to be Included in the Final Report

- Featured success stories of programs that demonstrate positive developments in Indian education
- A list of key concerns and/or areas needing improvement
- A complete list of programs found in Kansas and Nebraska, along with enrollment numbers and any other relevant demographic information
- A directory of program and institutional leaders and their contact information
- Various breakdowns of student success data (as best as it can be compiled, compared and analyzed across tribal, federal, state, and local databases)

Lead Research Team

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