

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES OF AN AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION LEADER  
SERVING INDIAN STUDENTS IN AN INDIAN COMMUNITY

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

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by

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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES OF AN AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION LEADER  
SERVING INDIAN STUDENTS IN AN INDIAN COMMUNITY

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A candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education

And hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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Dr. Doug Thomas

*I am an Indian; and while I have learned much from civilization, for which I am grateful, I have never lost my Indian sense of right and justice.*

Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa)  
*From the Deep Woods to Civilization*

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ABSTRACT

*The voices and perspectives of Native people occupy center stage: accounts of their own, carefully designed education systems; experiences in boarding schools; self-reflections on language, culture, and identity; and the windows of opportunity they have pried open to exercise choice in the content and process of their education. Choice, we argue—the right to “remain an Indian” on local, Indigenous terms—is the defining expression of tribal sovereignty and self-determination.*

K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa L. McCarty, *To Remain an Indian*

The purpose of this study was to add to the knowledge base on American Indian education leadership by examining the leadership experiences of an American Indian education leader serving predominately Indian students on an Indian reservation. The researcher viewed the study through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory which values narrative and stories as important sources of data and “emphasizes that colonization is endemic in society while also acknowledging the role played by racism” (Brayboy, 2005, p. 430). The questions guiding this investigation centered on the leadership experiences of an American Indian education leader of a public school district on an American Indian reservation and the influences of the leader to give voice to his constituents in the development of a culturally relevant curriculum.

The study population consisted of an American Indian education leader of a public school district, school district faculty, graduates of the school district, and parents;

all participants were tribal members. The setting was a public school district located on an American Indian reservation. The researcher chose a qualitative case study approach to examine for understanding the leadership experiences of a specific American Indian education leader of a public school district on an American Indian reservation. Creswell (2003) emphasizes qualitative research is interpretive which allows the researcher to interpret the data including “developing a description of an individual or setting, analyzing data for themes or categories, and finally making an interpretation or drawing conclusions about its meaning personally or theoretically” (p. 182).

Data Collection methods included audio-recorded onsite interviews with the leader participant and three different focus groups consisting of faculty members, former graduated students, and parent/community/tribal participants. Other data sources included the analysis of documents and visual observations of the school district and reservation.

The study findings articulated that the American Indian education leader’s experiences centered on the development of cultural identity and Indigenous knowledge. The researcher was particularly impressed by the need to actively involve the parents and communities in the development of a culturally relevant curriculum and culturally responsive teachers. The implications of this inquiry for practice in education could impact both K-12 institutions and higher education institutions as they address the challenges of educating students from different cultures.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

*From 1970 to the present, American Indians have had further opportunities to implement what has been their will and wish for more than 200 years: to take leadership roles in educational systems and institutions, to guide and design policy, and to implement innovative and locally responsive curricula and pedagogies. . . . American Indian community-controlled schools present an ideal case to examine contemporary developments in education. As is suggested by their name, these schools are prime arenas for the exercise of Indigenous leadership and education control.*

(Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002, p. 289)

#### *Background*

There is a belief that the ideals of American education in a democratic society provide equitable opportunities for all citizens. While equity may exist for some populations, this belief would be hard to substantiate in the education of the American Indian (Deloria, 1994). Prior to contact with the Europeans during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, traditional forms of education, both formal and informal, were used by tribes to sustain their cultures and ways of life (Van Hamme, 1995). The arrival of the European colonialists to the western hemisphere brought tremendous change to the lives of Indigenous peoples, including how Indian children would be educated (Van Hamme). Traditional educational methods utilized by tribes were replaced by Christianity and formal schooling to educate Indian children into the European culture and way of life (Hoxie, 1984).

Reyhner and Eder (1992) wrote, “The original idea behind Indian education was to ‘civilize’ and assimilate Indians into the mainstream of the dominant culture brought from Europe” (p. 35). The traditional form of Indian education was developed and

maintained in a society of responsibility (Deloria, 1991) and prepared children for life roles as well as the passing on of culture from generation to generation (Carney, 1999). However, Reyhner asserted that the Europeans' ethnocentrism did not allow for Indians to be accepted as equals, and Catholic and Protestant Christian missionaries rejected the traditional practices of American Indian tribes. These inequities have continued to exist in Indian education, and this inequitable education provided to American Indians by the colonialists has become institutionalized and perpetuated by the federal government (Tippeconnic, 1991). Tippeconnic (1999) noted, "There is increasing evidence that when tribes control education, American Indian students do better" (p. 42). He further concluded, "Indian involvement and control can be achieved only when leadership is provided by Indian people, tribes, educators, organizations, and institutions" (pp. 45-46).

Historically, leadership in Indian education was primarily by non-Indian people and decisions were made with little or no involvement or participation from Indian people (Tippeconnic, 1991). The civil rights movement and increased Indian activism during the 1960s gave rise to a stronger Indian voice opposing the oppressive policies and authority of the federal government (Grande, 2004). The creation of an atmosphere of change helped bring about the passing of significant federal legislation by Congress aimed at providing greater Indian control of and increased participation in Indian education (Kaltsounis, 1972). American Indian tribes began to develop a core of leadership capable of telling the federal government what they wanted (Grande, 2004; Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

The efforts and voice of Indian educators and leaders to generate change in federal policy prompted the creation of two major reports, *Indian Education: The*

*National Study of American Indian Education* (1971) directed by Robert J. Havighurst and a study by the Special Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education titled *Indian Education: A National Tragedy, a National Challenge* (U.S. Senate 1969). These two reports clearly helped to create an atmosphere leading to the passage of two of the most significant pieces of federal legislation affecting Indian education, the 1972 *Indian Education Act* and the 1975 *Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act*. The studies have been used to identify the conditions of Indian education and the effects they have had on the educational outcomes of Indian people and students. The consistent evidence throughout the studies indicates there is a need for greater Indian control and more parental involvement in creating a more culturally responsive curriculum if Indian education is to improve. However, Tippeconnic (1991) suggested that while these studies are evaluative in nature and politically motivated, there is little focus on teaching and learning.

At the forefront of this educational struggle for equity and social justice is the maintenance of bonds to traditional and contemporary American Indian culture while also providing preparation for successful participation in a culturally diverse, modern society (Grande, 2004; Van Hamme, 1995). The paucity of information on the effects and educational benefits of American Indian leadership in school systems with predominant numbers of Indian children and under the local control of tribes and Indian people is regrettable. The question remains whether Indian leaders and educators can achieve cultural preservation and growth as they face the challenges of defining Indian education.

The *American Indian Self-Determination and Education Act* in 1975 provided American Indians greater control over the education of their children. While tribes found

favor with the passing of the self-determination legislation, their ability to achieve educational success for their children has faced many challenges (Reyhner, 2006). To address these challenges, indigenous scholars seek to develop frameworks to create indigenous thought and knowledge. Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit), one such framework, was created not only to challenge traditional educational beliefs and practices, but also, as Brayboy (2005a) asserted, more specifically to address “American Indian liminality as both legal/political and racialized beings” and “the experience of colonization” (pp. 428-429).

A key component of TribalCrit is the use of narrative and stories as important sources of data (Brayboy, 2005a). American Indian tribes value oral tradition as a means of transferring cultural traditions, spirituality, and lived experiences, as well as providing education (Becker, 1997). As an indigenous person, this researcher recognizes the importance of the need to allow the research participants to tell their own stories through their own voice. It is equally important to note that the examining of data and drawing of conclusions will be from an indigenous perspective. Discussed in this chapter are the theoretical underpinnings of TribalCrit, the history of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and TribalCrit, leadership and American Indian leadership, leadership and American Indian leadership in education, the histories of public education and American Indian education, and the use of storytelling in education. In addition, the problem, purpose, research questions, limitations and assumptions, design controls, and the definition of key terms relevant to this study will be addressed.

### *Conceptual Underpinnings of the Study*

TribalCrit is the conceptual framework that was used to guide this study.

TribalCrit was developed specifically to address the educational experiences of American Indian people (Bartlett & Brayboy, 2005). The nine tenets of TribalCrit can be summarized as follows: 1) TribalCrit recognizes that colonization is endemic to society; 2) TribalCrit believes U. S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain; 3) TribalCrit accounts for both the political and racialized natures of indigenous identities; 4) TribalCrit maintains a belief in and desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification; 5) TribalCrit offers alternative ways of understanding the problems of culture, knowledge, and power when examined or viewed through an indigenous lens; 6) TribalCrit recognizes that governmental and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation; 7) TribalCrit emphasizes the importance of tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups; 8) TribalCrit argues that stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being; and 9) TribalCrit contends that theory and practice must be connected in deep and explicit ways so that scholars work towards social change. (Brayboy, 2005a, pp. 429-430)

### *History of Tribal Critical Race Theory*

TribalCrit emerged from the growing popularity of Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Bartlett & Brayboy, 2005). Developed in the 1970's, CRT focused on the civil rights

issues of African American people (Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRT posits that racism is endemic in society and in education, and has become so engrained in society and schooling that it has become invisible (Bartlett & Brayboy). In contrast, the basic tenet of TribalCrit emphasizes that colonization is endemic to society (Brayboy, 2005a).

TribalCrit is a theoretical approach specific to the lives and experiences of American Indian tribes (Bartlett & Brayboy, 2005); the basic tenet of TribalCrit theory emphasizes that colonization is endemic in society (Brayboy, 2005a). TribalCrit was used by the researcher as an analytical frame to understand the diverse educational experiences of an American Indian education leader of a school district within an Indigenous environment. Brayboy acknowledged that “many of the tenets are intimately linked to others”; however, the nine tenets of TribalCrit were applicable to this study.

TribalCrit is rooted in the commonalities of Indigenous knowledge that exists in Indigenous communities; it also recognizes the range of difference and variation that exists within and between communities, as well as individuals (Brayboy, 2005a). TribalCrit recognizes the unique position of American Indian tribal peoples as both a political and a racial group (Brayboy).

#### *Tribal Critical Race Theory in American Indian Education*

While acknowledging the role played by racism, Brayboy (2005a) emphasized that colonization is endemic to society. Thus the need for theory in Indian education as well as greater involvement of Indigenous scholars in educational discourse with critical theory was the inspiration for Brayboy (2005a) to develop a theoretical frame to analyze the problems encountered by American Indians in educational institutions and programs serving American Indian communities. For many Indigenous scholars, “theory is not

simply an abstract thought or idea . . . theories are stories and other media that serve as “roadmaps for our communities and reminders of our individual responsibilities to the survival of our communities” (p. 427). Therefore, Brayboy introduced the analytical frame of TribalCrit to specifically address the educational experiences of Indigenous peoples.

### *Storytelling*

An important principle of TribalCrit is storytelling. Delgado Bernal (2002), Solorzano and Yosso (2002), and Lopez (2003) posited that storytelling provides people of color with opportunities to tell their own versions of racial oppression. Through counterstorytelling, people of color can challenge the stories of racial privilege of the dominant society and construct their own reality (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Cajete (1994) asserted that the ability to use language through storytelling “. . . was highly regarded by all tribes as a primary tool for teaching and learning” (p. 33). The stories told by speakers were considered an expression of reality and, therefore, considered sacred (Cajete). Lomawaima and McCarty (2002) discussed the use of stories for indigenous instruction to offer advice and for learning the ways of everyday life. One example of the use of storytelling can be found in the leadership role of tribal elders. Becker (1997) and Cajete each discussed the importance of oral traditions for cultural survival used by tribal elders as a “source of information for younger generations” (Becker, p. 4). “The oral transfer of cultural traditions, spirituality and experience served to protect the existence of the tribe” as well as to provide education and entertainment (Becker, p. 4).

### *Statement of the Problem*

American education in a democratic society has sought to provide equitable opportunities for both its educators and students. Since the arrival of the European colonists, the evolution of American education was shaped by a variety of ideologies and formative themes (Guttek, 1991). This was in part due to the cultural differences and similarities that existed among the colonists, as well as the American Indian tribes encountered upon their arrival (Guttek). This became a major area of conflict and concern. Movement westward and the changing of environments brought new interactions with people and environments that influenced the development of formal education (Guttek). Education helped to develop the character and identity of American life on new frontiers (Guttek). Education and schools were used as a mechanism for the transmission of American ideals and the socialization of young people toward building a democratic society (Tippeconnic, 1991). Therefore, living in a democracy based on the principles of equality, freedom, and social justice afforded privileges to all citizens (Tippeconnic).

The democratic ideals that are promoted by public education seem more relevant for some citizens than for others (Tippeconnic, 1991). The history of the education of American Indians in the United States was recognized as a means to change the American Indian (Reyhner, 2006). Tippeconnic identified several factors that illustrate the need for understanding the education of American Indians: first, schools were not used as tools for the transmission of traditional and indigenous knowledge to tribal members and, therefore, are not considered part of the Indian culture; second, the special relationship between the federal government and American Indian tribes means, as with all federal intervention, the federal government has played a dominant role in their

education; and third, the American Indian population represents less than one percent of the total population of the United States broken down into more than three hundred tribes. This tribal diversity creates difficulty in establishing unity among American Indians as each tribe has its own cultural identity (Tippeconnic).

Because American Indians make up a small part of the population, the benefits and opportunities of public school education for American Indians are disproportionate to the rest of society. Statistically only a little over one percent of the total student population of public schools in 2000 (Census, 2002) are American Indian/Alaska Native. According to the *2003-2004 Characteristics of School, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Librarians* (NCES), of the total teacher population of public schools only half a percent are American Indian/Alaska Native. Of the total population of school principals of public schools in 2003-2004 only seven tenth of a percentage are American Indian/Alaska Native. These statistics indicate that American Indian people are a minority population in education. This minority population, representing a great diversity of Indian tribes, each with their own cultural identity, must compete for attention to issues, concerns and resources in a democratic society. This competition results in a lack of unity, negating any possibility of strength in numbers.

Opportunities created through the process of American education lack relevance for American Indians because the developers of American education have failed to recognize or accept the cultural differences and traditional needs of American Indian tribes (Tippeconnic, 1991). Tippeconnic blamed this lack of relevance on the lack of understanding of the history of Indian education as well as the culture of American Indian tribes. Education has been used as a process to assimilate American Indians into the

mainstream society (Reyhner, 2006). Snyder-Joy (1994) reported that one of the most promising turn of events for Indian education occurred in the early 1970s when legislation was passed giving American Indian tribes greater control over their own affairs, including education. Tribal control is viewed by many American Indians as necessary not only to achieve tribal and individual self-sufficiency but to reclaim and strengthen the use of Native languages and cultures in schools and communities, thus ensuring a strong future for all Indian people (Snyder-Joy).

#### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership experiences of one American Indian education leader of a public school district serving predominately American Indian students on an American Indian reservation. The researcher chose this study because of his interest and involvement in Indian Education as well as his desire to expand the knowledge base and to impact the future of Indian Education.

Furthermore, K-12 institutions may benefit from information provided by the study to understand the need to create activities that recognize the cultural differences of American Indian students. This study may help educational institutions and programs working with American Indian students to understand the need for knowledge about the history of American Indian education as well as current demographics and statistical information

The data collected, while somewhat limited, may be useful to colleges and universities seeking to enhance their ability to recruit and retain faculty of color through culturally sensitive programs and leadership. Schools of Education leadership programs

may find information useful in the development of educational leadership programs for both American Indian as well as non-Indian students.

Specifically, the experiences of the leader were examined through the lens of TribalCrit. This theory offered a way “to address the range and variation of experiences of individuals who are American Indian” (Brayboy, 2005a, p. 430). The focus of TribalCrit is on the educational issues that are a result of the liminal positioning of American Indians, as well as the hundreds of years of abusive relationships between American educational institutions and indigenous communities (Barlett & Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy, 2005a). The questions guiding this research focused on the behaviors of the Indian leader that give voice to educational constituents in their effort to develop a culturally-relevant education program. The study also focused on the constituents’ response to those behaviors that empowered them to develop a culturally-relevant education program leading to greater success for Indian students.

#### *Research Questions*

Creswell (2003) wrote, “In a qualitative study, inquirers state research questions. . . . These research questions assume two forms: a central question and associated subquestions” (p. 105). The central question is written in broad terms and presents the issue being examined in the study, while subquestions are written to help narrow the focus of the study into topics to be explored through the collection of data (Creswell). This study began with asking the question, “How does one American Indian education leader describe his experiences as a leader of a public school district serving predominately American Indian students on an Indian reservation?”

The review of the literature on public education and Indian education provided significant documentation regarding the lack of input and involvement of Indian people in education and education leadership. A second question considered in the study was, “How does the leader influence or give voice to his constituents in the development of a culturally-relevant education? The synthesis of related literature focused on the need for educators working with Indian students to have an understanding of the historical relationship between American Indian cultures and the American educational system.

As a result of the review of the literature, the following questions emerged to inform the study:

1. What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to Indian students and faculty as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?
2. What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to an Indian community as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?
3. What impact does an American Indian education leader have on empowering faculty to address the issues that come from giving Indian students a voice?
4. How has an American Indian education leader enhanced the learning of Indian students by giving the Indian community a voice?
5. Who is defining Indian education in the twenty-first century?

#### *Delimitations, Limitations and Assumptions*

According to Creswell (2003), delimitations are used to “narrow the scope of a study” (p. 148). This study focused on the experiences of one American Indian education leader of the only public school system on a specific American Indian reservation.

Participants selected for interview such as community/tribal members, teachers, school and district administrators came from the same school district; and, tribal and community leaders were selected from communities within the same reservation.

In qualitative research, “the researcher is the primary instrument for the data collection and analysis” and interacts with the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Merriam (1988) explained that because “the primary instrument in qualitative case study research is human, all observations and analyses are filtered through one’s world view, one’s values, one’s perspective” (p. 39). Since the researcher worked with the leader participant for seven years and both are American Indian, some biases may exist.

Limitations such as internal validity (are the findings congruent or do they match reality) and reliability (can findings be replicated) are potential weaknesses of the study (Creswell, 2003). Creswell recommended that researchers develop strategies to check the accuracy of the data and findings. To insure the accuracy of the findings, the researcher will implement the use of triangulation of different data sources of information, implement a process of “member checking,” and clarify any bias the researcher brings to the study (Creswell, p. 196). The researcher assumed the forthrightness of the research participants who were selected for interview.

A second potential limitation was the external validity or the extent to which the findings of this study can be generalized to other situations (Merriam, 1988). Merriam stated, “generalizing from a single case study selected in a purposeful rather than random manner makes no sense” (p. 173). The intent of the researcher, using a case study approach, is to focus on the leadership of only one American Indian education leader in one public school district on one Indian reservation. Merriam concluded that traditional

research views of case study are case study cannot be generalized and are regarded as a limitation. However, the triangulation of the data from multiple sources enhanced the transferability of the findings.

### *Design Controls*

To address the issue of internal validity, the researcher triangulated the data employing various strategies outlined by Creswell (2003). The researcher used rich, thick information from interviews and focus groups of the research participants. In addition, the researcher analyzed documents and collected artifacts. Feedback received from research participants was transcribed and participants were asked to read and verify for accuracy through the process of “member checking” (Creswell, p. 196).

Finally, the researcher is aware of the potential for bias. Creswell (2003) wrote that qualitative research is interpretive in nature, and biases, values, and judgments must be explicitly stated. The researchers own biases have been shaped from having worked with the leader in the same educational and indigenous environment, as well as the experience in serving as an American Indian education leader. Although every effort was made to ensure objectivity, the researcher’s perceptions of the data collected and interpretations may be affected by these biases. The researcher strived to the utmost to avoid ideological preconceptions and subjectivity and to ensure that all data was accurately reported.

### *Definition of Key Terms*

The following terms were used in this study; they are defined to help the reader gain a better understanding:

*American Indian; Indian.* The indigenous people of America. In the United States, the term refers to those indigenous people who are members or descendants of members of federally recognized Indian tribes. Terms used interchangeably.

*American Indian students:* Students who have attended or are attending a public, Bureau of Indian Affairs, or Tribal contract school and are members of a federally recognized tribe.

*Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).* The agency of the United States Department of the Interior responsible for providing services to federally recognized Indian tribes.

*Indian Education.* Hampton (1993) identified five different meanings to the term *Indian education*. These meanings are: (1) traditionally Indian forms of education, (2) schools established and controlled by Indian tribes for self-determination, (3) schooling for assimilation by non-natives using non-native methods and non-native personnel and with non-native goals, (4) education by Indians in native controlled schools with native teachers and leaders using native educational methods and the development of native curriculum and (5) Indian education *sui generis*, a self-determined Indian education using models of education structured by Indian cultures. Within the context of this research study, any one of these definitions may be used as a meaning for Indian education.

*Leadership.* “Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives” (Yukl, 2002, p. 7).

*Leadership role.* To take more responsibility for the overall direction of the group by performing important leader functions such as establishing direction, organizing, coordinating activities and resources, motivating, and managing conflict (Johnson, 2005).

*Leadership style.* The manner in which actions are performed in helping a group move toward goals acceptable to its members (Mills, 1977).

*Liminality.* Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the legal/political and racialized natures of their identities (Brayboy, 2005).

*Tribe.* A group of Indians organized as ethnographic or political entities and recognized by Congress.

*Voice.* “Voice” is a component of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) that provides a way to communicate the experience and realities of oppressed cultures (Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRT and TribalCrit accept storytelling as an important method of data collection and the sharing of knowledge. American Indian cultures have strong oral traditions. Listening to stories is a form of engagement and allows individuals to talk (Brayboy, 2005a).

### *Summary*

Tippeconnic (1999) stated, “Tribal control is a basic principle inherent in the sovereignty of American Indian tribes. Its premise is that the education of American Indians will be most effective when controlled directly by tribal governments” (p. 41). This premise is the primary reason that further study of American Indian leaders in Indian education is necessary.

Indian education leaders serving in Indian communities are a reflection of the ability and authority of tribes to create and administer local education programs. Many

American Indian tribes are already in control of their schools and more are seeking control. Tribal and Indian control of education poses many challenges. One such challenge is the lack of educated American Indians. Tippeconnic (1999) asserted, “There is a need to prepare more Indian people for leadership roles, including staff, teacher, administrator, and school board roles” (p. 45).

There is a dearth of research on leadership of American Indian school leaders educating Indian students in Indian communities. The importance of having American Indian education leaders in schools should be viewed as a positive influence on determining what Indian education should be and knowing how the needs of the immediate community will be addressed. Snyder-Joy (1994) stated, “American Indian education is viewed by many American Indians as means of cultural preservation and growth” (p. 1).

Van Hamme (1995) reminded educators of American Indian children of the need to maintain the connection between traditional and contemporary American Indian cultures while providing preparation for successful participation in a culturally diverse, modern technological society. The study should inform school administrators working with American Indian students in any educational setting of the understandings, knowledge and skills necessary in addressing multicultural issues.

Included in Chapter One is the statement of the problem relating to this study, research questions, the limitations of the study, and definitions of key terms. Provided in Chapter Two is a literature review of the historical context of American Indian education. Other topics to be addressed in this literature review will be the absence of American Indians from the educational process, the use of education as a tool for extinguishing

Indian cultures, and American Indian leadership role and voice as a fairly recent phenomenon. Provided in Chapter Three is the methodology used in this study. A description of the sample, the instrument of research, data collection and analysis procedures will also be discussed in Chapter Three. The fourth chapter will present the results of the data analysis. Summarized in Chapter Five are the conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### *Introduction*

In the United States, American democracy is based on the principles of equality, freedom and social justice that afford privileges to all citizens (Covaleskie, 2007; Tippeconnic, 1991). While there is a belief that these democratic ideals apply to all citizens, experiences have demonstrated that these democratic concepts are more relevant for some than for others or elude many people (Larson & Murtadha, 2002; Tippeconnic). Moreover, the existence of equity would be hard to substantiate in the education of the American Indian (Spring, 2007). The idea of the American Dream set forth by Thomas Jefferson in the United States Constitution has helped to provide privileges to certain groups of people, but has left other groups of people—including American Indians—to be exploited by the political and legal system (Beach, 2007).

As Dussias (2001) reported, beginning in the sixteenth century, European policy makers and educators, and later their American successors, created and imposed educational programs upon Indian people with no regard or participation from Indian people. These programs were designed to further the goals of the newly established society and to create subordinate roles for Indian people within this society (Dussias). The early history of the United States records a policy of education being used to change American Indians by destroying their tribal cultures, including native religions and languages, ultimately assimilating them into Euro-American society (Dussias; Tippeconnic, 1991).

The legacy left by past policies and programs to educate American Indians must be clearly understood in order to comprehend the current state of American Indian education and the challenges it faces in order to create equal educational opportunities for Indian people (Carney, 1999; Charleston, 1994; Deloria, 1991; Dussias, 2001; Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972; Grande, 2004; Hampton, 1993; Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Reyhner, 1992, 2006; Snyder-Joy, 1994; Spring, 2007; Szasz, 1999; Tippeconnic, 1991; Van Hamme, 1995). History can illuminate contemporary issues and provide insights into common problems. As Wiseman, Knight and Cooner (2002) stated, “. . . an understanding of the history of education and how it connects with the present can help us interpret the present and perhaps help us avoid repetition of past mistakes” (p.32). Educators involved in the education of American Indians must possess an understanding of the historical relationship between the various American Indian cultures and the American educational system (Van Hamme). Educational processes and schools must validate both the traditional and contemporary cultures of their students as well as recognize the contributions that American Indians have made in shaping society (Van Hamme).

The purpose of the first part of this literature review is to provide an outline of the purpose and foundation of American education; to describe the historical development of Indian education; to define the current status of Indian education; and to outline the inequities inherent in the American education system. The second section will address leadership, specifically American Indian education leadership, and Critical Race Theory, focusing on Tribal Critical Theory. This background information will form the foundation to examine the lived educational experiences of an American Indian education

leader who served the educational needs of Indian students and people within a tribal society.

### *Foundation and Purpose of American Education*

#### *Historical Foundations of American Education*

American education had its beginning during the early 1600's with the settlement of the North American continent; European colonists sought to recreate European ideologies and establish a new homeland (Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner, 2002; Gutek, 1991). Immigrants who came to North America during the early 1600s represented cultures of several countries. The early colonists had no common language; however, because most were of British descent, English was the language used to connect them as well as "the educational philosophies, institutions, and instructional methods" they brought with them (Gutek). During this period, an elitist attitude prevailed in which free and universal education did not exist (Alexander & Alexander, 2005). Almost no educational opportunities existed for poor children, children of slaves and other cultures, or for young girls (Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner).

During the colonial period, religion had the biggest impact on the establishment of schools for the purpose of providing the opportunity for young people to study religion (Gutek, 1991; Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner, 2002). Gutek reported that in 1635 English colonists divided education into two distinct levels. Elementary or primary education for common people provided for the teaching of reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic (Gutek). The establishment of the Latin Grammar Schools provided a more secondary level education for the social elite (Gutek).

Philosophers such as John Locke, who published his ideas in 1693, wrote about the purpose of education being opportunities for young people to have healthy life experiences (Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner, 2002). Additionally, the beliefs of John Calvin and Martin Luther strongly influenced the religious purposes of schools. (Guttek, 1991; Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner). According to Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner, the concepts of Calvin and Luther helped to establish who should have control over education as well as the idea that education is for everyone.

Puritans who settled in Massachusetts used school to teach children to read the Bible and notices about events taking place within the community (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998). As early governments began to develop, and laws were passed, such as the Massachusetts Bay School Law of 1642 requiring parents be held responsible for the education of their children and later the Massachusetts Law of 1647 requiring communities to employ a schoolmaster to teach reading and writing (Alexander & Alexander, 2005; Guttek, 1991; Ornstein & Hunkins; Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner, 2002).

Gradually, the purpose of education began to shift from religious education to a purpose of providing knowledge that would be required of citizens in order to maintain a democratic society (Wiseman, Knight & Cooner, 2002). The role and purpose of education for the future would continue to be shaped and influenced by the concepts derived from these culturally diverse societies and the development of government (Guttek, 1991).

#### *1700s –Jefferson Era*

After gaining independence from England, American leaders focused their attention on two important tasks, first, building a nation through the development of an

organized government which eventually led to the ratification of the United States Constitution in 1788; second, building a citizenry through the development of plans for public education (Reuben, 2005). Reuben suggested that the history of education and citizenship in the United States has been closely connected which gives cause to schools being used as a means of creating a national identity. This Jeffersonian point of view is that “. . . democracy is dependent upon a knowledgeable and virtuous public” (Graham, 2005, p. 5).

Prior to the ratification of the United States Constitution, two laws relevant to education were enacted under the Articles of Confederation. The Land Ordinance of 1785 stipulated that a sixteenth section of government land in each township be used for the maintenance of public schools; and, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 affirmed that schools and education would be supported by the states (Guttek, 1991; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998; Tyack, James & Benavot, 1987). Eventually, in 1791, the first Congress of the United States passed the Bill of Rights, and while it did not mention education, the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution designated the function of education to the people and the States (Guttek; Ornstein & Hunkins; Tyack, James & Benavot).

Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Rush, Noah Webster, Thomas Jefferson and others sought to reform education and schools to address the needs of the new republic and to build a democratic society with the creation of a liberated and educated citizenry (Reuben, 2005; Guttek, 1991). Franklin and Jefferson believed that in order to survive as a nation, Americans needed to establish a common identity through freedom of expression and universal education (Guttek; Wiseman, Knight & Cooner, 2002). Franklin valued formal education and viewed schools as a means to prepare young people for business or

professions (Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner). Jefferson believed education should be the responsibility of the states and financed through public taxes to ensure that all citizens received equal educational opportunities (Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998). Jefferson had a vision of schools being a way to produce well-educated leaders as well as well-educated citizens for a democratic society (Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner).

During the 1760s and 1770s, the idea developed that education should be a free system for the purpose of developing the democratic ideals of government (Alexander & Alexander, 2005; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998). The attributes of the system should include: first, some uniform access to education; second, a method to pursue a particular curriculum; and third, some institutional organization to progress from primary to secondary to college or university (Alexander & Alexander). This view of a single, free system of education was shared by Rush who believed strongly that education should be used “as a means of developing a common nationalistic consensus that would create an American character and cultural identity (Gutek, 1991). Webster, like Rush, believed that since gaining cultural and political independence from England, Americans needed to establish a uniquely American form of language (Gutek; Ornstein & Hunkins). According to Ornstein and Hunkins, Webster set out to reshape the English language used in the United States. Webster spent much of his life writing spelling and reading books, but perhaps his greatest work was completed in 1825, *The American Dictionary* (Ornstein and Hunkins).

## *1800s*

In the beginning of the 1800s, Americans continued their struggle to establish their own uniform educational system that included a more clearly defined role of the states (Alexander & Alexander, 2005; Gutek, 1998; Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner, 2002). Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) stated, “Even though much criticism was leveled against European thought, American education was greatly influenced by it” (p. 68). Early in the nineteenth century, American educational reformers were influenced by Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and other Europeans whose educational ideas and characteristics were introduced into American schools that are still in place today (Ornstein and Hunkins; Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner).

The common school was established in 1826 in Massachusetts, when state law required every town to establish a school board to be responsible for all schools in the local area (Ornstein and Hunkins, 1998). Horace Mann was regarded as the foremost leader of the common school movement that eventually led to the American public school system (Gutek, 1991). The prospects for public education improved with the common school movement as all children would be educated together providing some assurance for the future that they would become responsible citizens (Reuben, 2005). Mann believed that the common school was critical for the American system of equality and opportunity, a sense of community, and to create a national identity (Ornstein and Hunkins). The foundation of the American public school system was established through the creation of common schools and education created by the various states (Ornstein & Hunkins). Wiseman, Knight, and Cooner (2002) reported that by 1860, most states had developed some form of public school system.

Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) cited that the common school established the basis for tax-supported and locally controlled elementary school education. In 1821, the first public high school opened. The emergence of secondary schools during the early 1800s “was fueled by the belief that democracy could not be totally run by those with an elementary education” (Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner, 2002, p. 38). Academies began to become more dominant during the middle of the nineteenth century as they began to replace the Latin grammar schools; by 1855, more than 6,000 academies had been established (Orstein & Hunkins). The era of the academies ended in the 1870s and was replaced by high schools (Orstein & Hunkins).

The 1880s marked a growth in United States school systems witnessed by the increase of theories of teaching and learning (Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner, 2002). Reuben (2005) asserted that race posed a challenge to the ideals of common schools. Not all cultures or citizens had equal access to education (Reuben; Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner). At the end of the 1800s, the most significant accomplishments were free schooling, the development of an organized system of education beginning with the education of young children and continuing through a higher education system, and the development of policies and governance systems to oversee educational system (Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner).

#### *1900s and the Progressive Era*

The beginning of the twentieth century saw the beginning of the Progressive Era in education. The educational system was viewed as ineffective; its philosophies and purposes questioned; and, there was an emergence of new ideas and theories (Wiseman,

Knight, & Cooner, 2002). In 1919, the Progressive Education Association was founded with the goal of bringing reform to American education (Guttek, 1991).

During this period, progress in government was linked to school reform (Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner, 2002). Schools were encouraged by the Progressive movement to assume a greater role in helping young people to realize their abilities and potential in order to enhance their contributions to political life and the quality of democracy (Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner). Reuben (2005) reported that Progressive Era educators believed government should take a more active role in securing the welfare of its citizens.

Those educators who identified with the linking of progress to education sought to adopt educational strategies and develop curriculums that moved away from subject-centered schools to child-centered schools where educational experiences were based more on the interests of the students (Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner, 2002). Francis Parker and John Dewey, two American philosophers, became actively involved in the Progressive education movement creating new ways of thinking about education and voicing their opposition to traditional education (Guttek, 1991; Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner).

Guttek (1991) identified four major chronological phases of progressive education: (1) the genesis period from 1900 to 1919, in which progressive education was part of national reform; (2) the period from 1919 to 1930, when progressive education shifted from social reform to focus on child-centered school; (3) the tumultuous era of the Great Depression and World War II, from 1930- to 1945, when internal ideological conflict arose between child-centered educators and social reconstructionists; and, (4) the 1950s,

when critics of progressive education blamed them for the decline of educational standards in the United States because they identified with life-adjustment education.

During these chronological phases, progressivism developed a variety of views and ideas that expanded the responsibilities of schools and related education to social, political, and economic reform (Guttek, 1991; Reuben, 2005). Guttek reported that many of these views and ideas are still a part of American education. Guttek asserted that although progressive education brought together individuals who opposed traditionalism, a sound educational philosophy did not develop. Progressive education as a movement experienced some successes in creating reform and bringing about change in American education (Guttek). Guttek reported that eventually, in 1955, the Progressive Education Association voted to end its existence.

During the 1950s, public schools felt the brunt of the criticism over the quality of education as critics blamed life adjustment education for lower academic standards, diminished student effort, and lower achievement (Ravitch, 2001). However, in 1957 a significant event would occur that would have a greater impact on the educational context—the launch of the satellite Sputnik by the Russians (Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner, 2002). Schools would once again absorb the criticism and the blame for the failure to educate our young people to compete in a world becoming more progressively modern (Graham, 2005; Ravitch; Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner). Following the success of the satellite launch by the Russians, Americans began to rethink their national priorities and provide a greater support for education (Guttek, 1991). A sense of urgency was created to: restructure education to make students more competitive; obligate more

federal money to develop curriculum that focused on math, science, and technology; and, implement new teaching methods and practices (Graham; Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner).

By the end of the 1950s, the purposes and nature of education continued to be a topic open for discussion (Guttek, 1991). Racial and gender equality and civil rights became major issues (Guttek). The development of technology is beginning to revolutionize communication and society in general (Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner, 2002).

#### *1960s and 1970s*

The 1960s and early 1970s was a time of social change and a raised level of consciousness of minority groups and student activism over concerns such as poverty, racial discrimination, equal educational opportunity, and the Vietnam War (Graham, 2005; Guttek, 1991; Ornstein and Hunkins, 1998). In this climate of change, new aims and educational priorities as well as new development of educational curriculum and instruction were established in an attempt to adapt to these changes (Guttek; Ornstein & Hunkins).

Several major developments in American education occurred as the result of the impact of the Russian launch of Sputnik. The federal funding increase from the passing of the National Defense Education Act in 1958 helped produce needed changes in curriculum, especially in the areas of math and science as well as to advance organizational innovations and instructional methods (Anderson, 2001; Guttek, 1991). The Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964 prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, sex, and religion or national origin (Anderson; Graham, 2005; Guttek). In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed to provide support and improve the education of disadvantaged, poor, and minority group children (Anderson;

Graham, 2005; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998). ESEA helped to fund programs that were made compensatory for the purpose of creating equality of educational opportunities for minority students (Anderson; Graham; Gutek). The passing of the Bilingual Act in 1968 helped to support the expansion of bilingual programs for Hispanic, Asian American, and American Indians (Ornstein & Hunkins).

With all that was going on in education during the 1960s, this period of time was proclaimed to be a revolution in education (Gutek, 1991). Such innovations included changes in school architecture and design, organization of curriculum, class scheduling, organization of staff, and an increased use of technology (Gutek). However, the Vietnam War continued to be a thorn in the side of America continuing to bring a lot of discontent and unrest to American society (Gutek). Gutek stated the end of the 1960's closed with an unstable society that had failed to materialize as a revolution in education in spite of its many advancements and important achievements.

The early 1970s brought political implications for more state and local control of education (Gutek, 1991). Although local governments were thought to be able to assess their educational needs, an increased federal role in education was created with the passing of a revenue-sharing plan in 1972 (Gutek). Gutek acknowledged that direct federal funding created interference into local affairs by federal bureaucrats and created a lack of trust of big government.

Economic uncertainty in the 1970s had a tremendous impact on American society as well as education. Elementary and secondary schools were faced with fiscal issues as a result of declining enrollments as the country approached a zero population growth (Gutek, 1991). Gutek, stated, "The result was that while school revenues decreased or

remained fixed, expenditures increased” (p. 320). The impact on budgets resulted in the lowering of operation costs, concerns for teacher salaries and benefits, and in some instances the closing of schools, and loss of staff due to reduction in force (Guttek).

The emergence of the information age during the 1970s placed a strong emphasis on technology, computers, and electronics in education (Guttek, 1991). This had a profound effect on the curricula of schools in two ways: first, students are not being taught the intellectual skills to acquire new skills associated with computer-assisted information systems; and second, vocational programs are not effective (Guttek). Guttek reported that national reports called for tougher standards to be developed in the building of basic intellectual skills.

During the 1970s, two issues relative to equal educational opportunity in education were resolved by the enactment of laws (Alexander & Alexander, 2005). Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 “was enacted to protect the rights of individuals and prohibit discrimination based on gender in educational programs or activities receiving federal funds” (Alexander & Alexander, p. 818).

Education of the handicapped and students with learning disabilities also received stronger attention (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998). Congress enacted the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which required schools to provide vocational training, employment opportunities as well as remove structural and transportation barriers (Guttek, 1991). The Education of All Handicapped Children Act passed in 1975, mandating appropriate education suited to the student’s individual needs in the least restrictive environment for all handicapped children and youth between the ages of three and twenty-one (Graham, 2005).

The close of the 1970s brought legislation to create the Department of Education (DOE) in 1979 (Guttek, 1991). The purpose of the DOE was to coordinate and provide oversight of all federal educational initiatives and to create a public platform where educational issues could receive national exposure (Guttek). Education in the 1970s created an emphasis based on back-to-the-basics established at the local and state levels and its momentum would carry on into the 1980's (Guttek).

#### *Purpose of Public Education*

Alexander and Alexander (2005) wrote, "Public education is shaped by the political philosophy of particular governments and the social and cultural traditions of the country in which those governments are found" (p. 21). Alexander and Alexander asserted that education is not mentioned in the Constitution and is "therefore presumably reserved to the states or to the people" (p. 67). In 1958, the United States Supreme Court affirmed that the responsibility for public education is primarily the concern of the states (Thomas, Cambron-McCabe, & McCarthy, 2009).

Covaleskie (2007) stated, "To talk intelligently about public schools and democracy requires that one understand the meaning and operation of a public" (p. 29). Covaleskie believed that schools are a public enterprise and exists as a social institution to reflect "who society is now and its hopes for the future: (p. 39). The public view of education in the United States has meant schools are controlled by the public; therefore, schools should address the needs of the public (Graham, 2005; Covaleskie).

Reuben (2005) assumed that the histories of citizenship and education in the United States have been closely connected. Americans view schools as a way to help citizens identify with the nation (Reuben). Barber (2004) asserted that throughout much

of American history, the connection between democracy, public citizenship, and public education has shaped the foundation of schooling. Perhaps then the purpose of schools is to prepare future citizens, instill loyalty and common values, and develop a strong national character (Reuben).

Galston (2005) argued there is a general level of agreement about the purposes of K-12 education in the United States. According to Galston,

Schools are expected, first to prepare students for economic life, by imparting basic knowledge and skills and (in many cases) readying them for postsecondary education and training. Second, schools are expected to help prepare students for social life, in which they will need to interact civilly and work cooperatively with many different kinds of people. Third, it is believed that schools should prepare students for democratic citizenship, by giving them the knowledge and skills that they will need to vote, serve on juries, evaluate the performance of elected leaders, and participate in neighborhood and community affairs. Finally, many (not all) believe that schools have a general cultural purpose, imparting to students a love of knowledge, learning, and artistic excellence. (p. 59)

Thus, the traditions of the United States are to maintain a republican form of government that is best achieved through a universal public education (Alexander & Alexander, 2005).

#### *Equitable Educational Opportunities*

Corcoran and Goertz (2005) wrote, “In theory, the public schools provide the space in which children from diverse racial, ethnic, and religious heritages learn how to live together” (p. 28). However, divisions arise among Americans over education policy because of “different understandings of the meaning of equal opportunity” (Corcoran & Goertz, p. 29).

The Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, ratified in 1869, contained the equal protection clause which provided equal protection under the laws and

had a great impact on public schools (Spring, 2007). Under Section 1, all rights of United States citizens are protected from state governments:

Section 1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. (p. 55)

In response to the 1998 Executive Order signed by President Clinton, Dussias (2001) questioned the government's commitment to providing equal educational opportunity to American Indians. Dussias wrote, ". . . against the backdrop of the history of prior Indian education policies and government reports on Indian education" (p. 821), it can be considered whether "the Order represents a real government commitment. . ." (p. 821). The government pledge is to provide an educational system that addresses the needs of all students; inclusive of this pledge is the education opportunities provided to Indian students (Dussias).

Fuchs and Havighurst (1972) noted,

With only minor exceptions the history of Indian education has been primarily the transmission of white American education, little altered, to the Indian child as a one-way process. The institution of the school is one that was imposed and controlled by non-Indian society...its goals primarily aimed at removing the child from his aboriginal culture and assimilating him into the dominant white culture. (p. 19)

Cocoran and Goertz (2005) asserted that most citizens support policy changes that advance equal opportunity. Dussias (2001) concluded, "In order to fully comprehend the current state of Indian education and the challenges facing it, it is important to understand the history of these educational programs, because it is their continuing legacy that those who wish to create equal educational opportunities for Indians must undo" (p. 823).

## *American Indian Education*

Review of the history of American Indian education must begin with the longstanding history of cultural traditions and values (Becker, 1997). Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, the Indian nations of North America possessed their own forms of education (Hampton, 1993; Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Van Hamme, 1995). American Indian children were educated in a natural way by working with and imitating their elders (Haig-Brown, 1988). Cajete (1994) asserted that tribal teaching and learning were interwoven with the daily lives of both teacher and learner. Members of the extended family taught their children by example, and children copied adult activities as they played (Reyhner, 2006). Many educational processes were structured such as vision quests and other ceremonies, ritualized stories, oral histories, and formal instruction. Other less formal processes included tag-along teaching which involved observation and imitation of daily activities geared toward teaching children the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for survival within the organization of the tribe and tribal community (Hampton, 1993; Reyhner, 1994). Hampton noted,

All of the traditional Native methods took place within cultural settings that were characterized by subsistence economies, in-context learning, personal and kinship relationships between teachers and students, and ample opportunities for students to observe adult role models who provided good examples of the knowledge, skills, and values being taught. (p. 268)

This traditional form of Indian education was developed and maintained in a society of responsibility (Deloria, 1991); the philosophical view of this society was that all members had roles to perform that were essential to the maintenance and preservation of life and culture. Within the tribal community, Indian elders prepared children for life roles in society and passed culture from generation to generation (Carney, 1999). Thus, as

Noley (1981) asserted, it is clear that education was not a concept exclusively belonging to Europeans.

### *History of American Indian Education*

Reyhner and Eder (2004) reinforced that the importance of understanding the current status of American Indian education requires an understanding of its past history. Though the history of American Indian education has been mapped in a variety of ways (e.g. chronologically, thematically), Grande (2004) in *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought* utilized Szasz's (1999) three eras of prevailing power: (1) the period of missionary domination- from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries; (2) the period of federal government domination- from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century's; and, (3) the period of self-determination from the mid-twentieth century to the present.

### *The Period of Missionary Domination*

During the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the European powers (England, France, Spain, and the Netherlands) arrived on the continent of North America (*Report on Indian Education*, 1976). In their quest for land and material wealth in a New World, the Europeans encountered the native inhabitants. Motivated by their need to spread Christianity and acquire land for developing colonies, and the desire to build wealth and power, the Europeans undertook whatever activities they felt would further their economic advantages and political prowess against other nations competing for the resources of the New World (*Report on Indian Education*, 1976). These encounters brought tremendous changes to the life of the Indigenous peoples (Reyhner, 2006). Reyhner and Eder (1992) wrote, "The original idea behind Indian education was to 'civilize' and assimilate Indians

into the mainstream of the dominant culture brought from Europe” (p. 35). The objective from the beginning was to force the Indigenous peoples to accommodate the presence of the Europeans rather than the acceptance of and adaptability to Indian ways. Reyhner (2006) concluded that Native education was established by the Europeans through the efforts of missionaries to convert Indians to Christianity.

The Spanish came to North America to convert Indians to Catholicism through the missionary efforts of Franciscan fathers who established communities centered around missions. Indians were taught religion and an agricultural way of life. Although the Spanish attempted to integrate Indian languages and customs, the Spanish exploited Indian people through forced labor and their conversion to Catholicism, because of their interest in land and mineral resources (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Schools did not emphasize the academic subjects, but instead focused on agriculture, carpentry, blacksmith work, masonry, spinning, and weaving (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972). The Spanish believed they were a people chosen by God, “to bring the ‘inhuman’ into the realm of the human” (Spring, 2007, p. 3).

The French Jesuits established missions along the St. Lawrence and Mississippi Rivers between 1611 and 1700 (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972). Unlike the Franciscans, the French were not averse to assimilating into and with the Indian tribes, which resulted in a more friendly and cooperative relationship (*Report on Indian Education*, 1976). Following the order of Louis XIV, the French sought to Christianize the Indians and teach them French culture in a traditional French manner (Fuchs & Havighurst). The idea of changing the Indian was not as important as enlisting them as allies against the British and gaining their assistance in trapping and hunting.

The Dutch paid little attention to the conversion of and integration with Indians, focusing instead on the unlimited riches brought by fur trading (*Report on Indian Education*, 1976; Wilson, 1998). In order to maintain the economic advantages brought about through fur trading, the Dutch sought to establish a policy of negotiation with the Indians to acquire land for settlement and avoid conflict (Wilson, 1998). The Dutch would eventually succumb to the settlement expansion interests of the English (*Report on Indian Education*).

The English continued the use of education as a means to colonize and civilize the Indians. Fuchs and Havighurst (1972) reported that in 1617 King James I issued a directive to establish “some churches and schools for ye education of ye children of these Barbarians in Virginia” (*Report on Indian Education*, 1976, p. 26). Puritans insisted that Indians give up their traditional lifeways (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Protestant clergyman such as Thomas Mayhew and John Eliot, the most influential and successful of the Puritan missionaries, helped to establish schools “as an agent for spreading Christianity and the transmittal of Western culture and civilization” (Reyhner & Eder, 2004, p. 3). By 1651, “the first ‘Indian Praying Town’ was established at Natick by John Eliot” (*Report on Indian Education*, 1976). Many of the institutes of higher education of today, Dartmouth, Harvard, and William and Mary among them were financed by clergy and government to provide education aimed at Christianizing Indigenous peoples (*Report on Indian Education*).

As reported by Fuchs and Havighurst (1972), education in the colonial period offered a curriculum of academic study to Indian as well as non-Indian children. Focusing more on Christianity and assimilating Indians into European culture and

civilization, the Europeans gave little attention to incorporating Indian languages, culture, and history into the curriculum. Indians were expected to adopt the White ways of life and give up their own. During the colonial period, schools met with an obvious lack of success due in part to the increased hostilities between the colonies, conflict between the various Indian tribes, and a resistance by Indians to giving up their religions and styles of life (Fuchs & Havighurst). The policy of using boarding schools by the European nations to educate Indian students failed when in 1744 the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy felt that those who had been educated were no longer useful in their tribal communities and refused to have their children taken away (Reyhner and Eder, 2004).

#### *The Period of Federal Government Domination*

The period of federal government domination ideologically began with the passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830 (Grande, 2004). According to Fuchs and Havighurst (1972), the future policies of the United States Government in their dealings with the Indians would be an affirmation of policies developed and pursued by the European nations. These policies included missionary-supported civilization efforts, treaty-making, regulation of trade and intercourse, and the precedence of national over local jurisdiction for Indian affairs.

The United States' interest in divesting the Indians of their land and resources resulted in a policy of forced assimilation (Cockrell, 1992). The reorganization of the government under the new United States Constitution adopted in 1787 gave Congress the fundamental authority to regulate commerce with the tribes, to make treaties, and to control public lands occupied by and reserved for the tribes. In addition, the admission of new states to the Union could be regulated. The federal jurisdiction over all Indian lands

laid the legal foundation for the later reservation system and relationships between Indian tribes and the federal government (*Report on Indian Education, 1976*).

The establishment of treaties clarified the relationship between the Indian nations and the United States Government (*Report on Indian Education, 1976*). Treaties outlined the mutual responsibilities and rights between governments such as sovereignty, protection from encroachment of their tribal lands, and negotiation of trading privileges and land cession.

Reyhner and Eder (1992) wrote that the first of almost 400 treaties was made with the Delaware tribe in 1778 and before Congress ended the making of treaties in 1871, almost a billion acres of land was ceded to the United States (*Report on Indian Education, 1976*). Many treaties included provisions for education (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972). The first treaty to include provisions for education was made between the federal government and the Oneidas, Tuscarora, and Stockbridge Indians on December 2, 1794.

In the 1790s, Congress passed a series of temporary “trade and intercourse” acts to address the problem of interactions between Indians and white men. The Trade and Intercourse Act of 1802 incorporated a plan to civilize the Indian by providing social and educational services (Reyhner & Eder, 1992). Reyhner and Eder reported that Congress passed the Indian Civilization Act in 1819 and approved an annual appropriation not to exceed fifteen thousand dollars for the purpose of providing financial support to religious groups and other interested individuals willing to live among and teach Indians. Ten Thousand dollars a year was authorized under the act. This money was supplemented by money for education provided to tribes by treaties “for the purpose of providing against the further decline and final extinction of the Indian tribes, adjoining the frontier

settlements of the United States, and introducing among the habits and arts of civilization” (p. 43). The 1976 *Report on Indian Education* concluded, “As more treaties were negotiated, the provisions for education for the purpose of civilization became more frequent. These laws and treaties began to reflect a greater federal responsibility for Indian education” (p. 13). The Civilization Fund was operated until 1873.

In 1820, the Indian Office began developing plans to move Eastern tribes west of the Mississippi River (Reyhner & Eder, 1992; *Report on Indian Education*, 1976; Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972). While missionary groups continued to expand their efforts among Indian tribes, the United States government in 1824 created the United States Office of Indian Affairs under the direction of Thomas J. McKenney (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). McKenney supported and advocated for a national school system for Indians and requested that Congress appropriate more money. However, in 1830 McKenney was forced out of the Indian Office by the new president, Andrew Jackson. The replacement for McKenney wrote in the 1831 annual report:

Indians are gradually diminishing in numbers and deteriorating in condition; incapable of coping with the superior intelligence of the white man; ready to fall into the vices, but unapt to appropriate the benefits of the social state; the increasing tide of the white population threatened soon to engulf them, and finally cause their extinction. (ARCIA 1831, 172)

Reyhner and Eder (2004) concluded by stating, “His antidote for this depressing situation was schooling and the removal of the Indians west of the Mississippi River” (p. 49).

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 authorized President Jackson to exchange tribal lands in the east for land in the west (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). The option was available for Indians to either go or remain, but if they remained they would be subject to the laws of the state in which they resided (*Report on Indian Education*, 1976). The dual policy of assimilation versus isolation was an on-going dilemma for the United States government.

The *Report on Indian Education* cited several factors for this dilemma: (1) constant controversy between the States and the Indians living within their limits; (2) government wanted to acquire as much Indian land as it could coerce the tribes to relinquish; (3) efforts to civilize Indians were not always sustained within tribal societies; and finally, (4) Indians were not accepting of the Christianizing and civilizing work of the missionaries (pp. 34-35). These factors essentially became the justification for removing Indians from the territorial United States. Although met with great resistance and hardship by the tribes, the federal government continued their efforts to remove Indians.

The position of Commissioner of Indian Affairs was created in 1832 and was placed within the War Department, but was eventually transferred to the newly created Department of the Interior in 1849 (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). The essential responsibilities of the Commissioner were to direct and manage all Indian affairs between the removed tribes and other tribes and the federal government. Despite the efforts by tribes to maintain their sovereignty and avoid being under the control of state laws, tribes continued to be threatened with “gradual and complete assimilation or total isolation” (*Report on Indian Education*, 1976, p. 38). The transfer to the Department of the Interior had little effect on Indian education, and missionary schools continued to be the primary source of education (Reyhner & Eder, 1992).

The continued western expansion of white settlers helped to bring about a new policy to the Removal option in 1851 to resettle tribes onto reservations (*Report on Indian Education*, 1976). The establishing of reservations meant the removal of more tribes to Indian territory to lands already settled by previously removed tribes (*Report on Indian Education*). Indians found themselves being forced to move to reservations in the

west along with a change in legal status. Schools established on the reservations were designed to devalue the traditional culture and religion of Indian people and force the assimilation Indian youth (Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

At the end of the Civil War, President Grant instituted the Peace Policy. In 1869, Grant appointed a Board of Indian Commissioners to supervise the administration, organization, and appointment of Indian agents, teachers, farmers, and the purchase of supplies. The board operated until 1933. The commissioners divided the reservations by religious groups (Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

Congress passed legislation in 1870 to move the control of Indian education to the Bureau of Indian Affairs as well as to appropriate funds for the support of establishing day, boarding, and industrial training schools (*Report on Indian Education*, 1976). Congress ended the making of treaties with Indian tribes in 1871. The end of the treaty-making period created the first appropriation for Indian education not contingent on treaty obligations. Each year as the appropriations increased, the number of day and boarding schools increased, and the Indian Office found itself supporting a variety of educational institutions (*Report on Indian Education*).

The reservation settlement policy as well as the assimilating and civilizing of Indian tribes continued through the 1930s creating for many tribes a total dependence on the federal government for food, shelter, and clothing (*Report on Indian Education*, 1976; Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Although schools were institutions imposed on Indians by the whites, several of the tribes operated and financed extensive school systems themselves. However, by the late 1890s, these schools would be closed by the federal government.

The reservation system created great difficulty for tribal government and leaders to exercise leadership among their people and communities (*Report on Indian Education*).

The General Allotment (Dawes) Act enacted by Congress in 1887 was intended to create a major shift in policy and to deal with the dependency of American Indian people on the federal government from having been forced to live on reservations (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972). Reservation lands were divided and distributed to people as individual allotments of forty, eighty, or one hundred sixty acres. A Fee patent title was issued to each allottee to be held in trust by the federal government for twenty-five years (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Any land declared surplus after distribution was purchased by the federal government, then resold for funds to be used for education and “civilization” (p. 7). All allottees were to be granted citizenship within twenty-five years. As a result of the Dawes Act, tribal holdings of land went from 140 million to 50 million acres. Not all reservations were allotted (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Reyhner and Eder (2004) wrote, “Under the allotment program, it was hoped that Indians would attend public school” (p.83). Education for citizenship and vocations remained basic education policy (Fuchs & Havighurst).

Although the cited purpose of allotment was to make Indians American citizens, its real purpose was to open more of the west to white settlement (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). General Thomas Morgan was appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1889 (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Morgan sought to reconfigure the Indian school system using the United States public school system as a model. Morgan’s plan included the establishment of school rules, compulsory attendance, a merit system for personnel, standardized curriculum, textbooks, and instruction (Reyhner & Eder). In support of

Morgan's plan, Congress passed laws to enforce school attendance by withholding rations and annuities from Indian families who did not send their children to school (Reyhner & Eder).

With the start of the twentieth century, the growing trend was to educate American Indian students in public schools rather than the federal school system operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Congress authorized the payment of tuition to public schools enrolling Indian students. Reyhner and Eder (1992) reported, "By 1912 there were more Indian children in public schools than in government schools and the number of government schools for Indian children began to decline" (p. 50). The use of federal funds to support education in church schools was made illegal in 1917 (Reyhner & Eder, 1992).

With the passage of the 1924 Indian Citizenship Bill (Snyder Act), citizenship was granted to all Indians (*Report on Indian Education*, 1976). During the period of allotment, some Indians had previously been granted citizenship. Also in 1924, the Secretary of the Interior and a "committee of One Hundred Citizens" met to discuss ways to improve Indian education. The committee recommended better school facilities, better trained personnel, increased number of Indians in public schools, and scholarships for high school and college (*Report on Indian Education*; Reyhner & Eder 1992). These recommendations led to reservation day schools offering a sixth-grade education and reservation boarding schools offering an eighth-grade education (*Report on Indian Education*; Reyhner & Eder).

*The Meriam Report* was published in 1928 and is recognized as the first major assessment of the economic, social, and educational conditions of the American Indian

(Tippeconnic, 1991). The report condemned the allotment policy and the poor management services provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Other recommendations included the need to protect Indian property and the allowance for more freedom of Indian people to manage their own affairs. Specific to education, the report brought attention to the shocking conditions of boarding schools, the need for more day schools, and the need to stop sending elementary age children to boarding schools (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1992; Reyhner & Eder, 2004, 1992).

John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs during the Roosevelt administration, sought to implement the recommendations of *The Meriam Report*. This led to the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act (Wheeler Howard) of 1934 which ended the allotment era, provided for a measure of tribal self-government, gave preference to the hiring of Indians in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Indian religious freedom. During the same year, the Johnson O'Malley Act of 1934 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to enter into contracts with states or territories to pay them for providing services to Indians. The Johnson O'Malley Act allowed for payments to public schools for educating Indians (Reyhner & Eder, 1992).

Although the intent of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 was to create positive change for Indian people, following World War II, the mood in Congress was that there was a need to "set the American Indians free" (Reyhner & Eder, 1992, p. 52). Congress began their efforts to end federal commitments to Indian tribes, a policy known as termination (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972). The termination period of 1945 to 1968 brought about another federal government policy to terminate the reservation system, relocate Indians to urban areas, and turn the responsibility of educating Indians over to

the states (Van Hamme, 1995). Wilson (1998) reported that, from 1954 to 1960 some fourteen recognized tribes with reservations were terminated, in most cases without consent. The first tribe to have their reservation terminated by Congress was the Menominee in 1954; however, the termination policy of the 1950's was judged a failure, and the Menominee tribe was reinstated to federal trust status in 1973 (Fuchs & Havighurst). Other terminated tribes were not so lucky. Working in conjunction with the termination policy was the relocation policy which began in 1951 (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972). Indian people were moved from their reservation to the city where they were provided housing and job training for the purpose of achieving self-sufficiency (Reyhner & Eder, 1992). Wilkinson (2005) stated, "More than 100,000 Indians moved as part of the formal relocation program, and a similar number left the reservations in response to bureau persuasion or on their own initiative" (p. 85). The termination era was recognized as a policy failure and ended by the 1970s

#### *The Period of Self-Determination*

Over the years, American Indian involvement in education, federal programs, and mainstream America has provided a platform for the development of leadership capable of expressing their rights and concerns to the federal government (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). During the 1960s, the civil rights movement sparked a stronger voice among American minority populations seeking equal rights. American Indian leaders expressed their unanimity in the opposition to termination and other oppressive government policies (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). The termination era was recognized as a failure of policy and ended during the 1970s. The consistent failure of federal policy along with a stronger voice of resistance by Indian leaders to existing federal policy helped to set an agenda of

self-determination or “letting Indian people determine their own destiny” (Grande, 2004, p. 16).

The movement toward self-determination suggested that the most legitimate critics of Indian education were Indian people (Szasz, 1999). Major studies of Indian education at the end of the 1960s and Indian activism in the 1970s led to the passage of the 1972 Indian Education Act and the 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act and other significant pieces of legislation affecting Indian education (Reyhner, 2006). The Indian Education Act of 1972 provided funds for supplemental programs for Indian children in public schools on and off Indian reservations, while the Self-Determination Act of 1975 allowed tribes and Indian organizations to take control and run Bureau of Indian Affairs programs (Reyhner, 2006). Additionally, on January 2, 1975, a law was signed providing for the American Indian Policy Review Commission (P.L. 93-580). This law called for a joint team of congressmen and Indian leaders to review government programs and policies involving American Indians (Szasz). Szasz stated,

The Indian Education Act of 1972, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, and the AIPRC were milestones for the Indian people. They meant that the web of government control had been loosened. Henceforth, direction and leadership in Indian education should come increasingly from Indians themselves. (p. 200)

Two major studies of Indian education were published at the end of the 1960s:

*The National Study of American Indian Education* (1971) directed by Robert J. Havighurst, and a study by the Special Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education titled *Indian Education: A National Tragedy, a National Challenge* (U. S. Senate, 1969). These two reports clearly helped to create an atmosphere leading to the passage of two of the most significant pieces of federal legislation affecting Indian education. Perhaps the most

recognized study of the economic, social, and educational conditions of American Indians is *The Meriam Report* (1928) under the direction of Lewis Meriam. Other published, political documents helping to paint a grim picture of the status of Indian education include the report of the American Indian Policy Review Commission in 1976, the *Indian Nations at Risk* report in 1991, the *White House Conference on Indian Education* report in 1992, the *Comprehensive Federal Indian Education Policy Statement* in 1997, and the *Executive Order on American Indian and Alaska Native Education* in 1998 (Grande, 2004; Tippeconnic, 1991). These reports independently resulted in numerous recommendations, “that addressed virtually every aspect of education, e.g., teachers and teaching practices, curriculum, funding, Indian control, bilingual-bicultural education, boarding schools and parental involvement” (Tippeconnic, p. 184). Collectively, the results of these studies indicate “that the condition of Indian education in this country is poor” (Tippeconnic, p. 184).

These studies have been used to identify the conditions of Indian education and the effects they have had on the educational outcomes of Indian people and students. The consistent evidence throughout the studies indicates there is a need for greater Indian control and more parental involvement in creating a more culturally responsive curriculum if Indian education is to improve. However, Tippeconnic (1991) suggested that while these studies are evaluative in nature and politically motivated, there is little focus on teaching and learning.

Historically, the United States used education as a means to move American Indians away from the use of their languages and cultures (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). European hegemony pressured Indians to conform to white ways of behavior, dress, and

religion (Reyhner, 1992). Attempts to educate Indians were not a process to create opportunity for equality, rather to assimilate, acculturate, and even destroy the Indian way of life. Van Hamme (1995) stated, “Much of the history of American Indian education to this day has been characterized, in increasingly subtle ways, by the same purpose” (p. 22).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report, *Status and Trends in the Education of American Indians and Alaska Natives* (Freeman & Fox, 2005), in 2002, approximately one percent (approximately 550,000 – excluding students attending Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools) of the nation’s public elementary and secondary school students were American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) students. This figure has remained fairly constant since 1986. BIA schools indicated that seven percent of all AI/AN students attended their schools. According to the Department of the Interior, the Bureau of Indian Affairs funds 184 schools and operates 64 of the schools while tribes operate the remaining 120 on sixty-three reservations and in twenty-three states.

The paucity of information on the effects and educational benefits of American Indian leadership in school systems with predominant numbers of Indian children and under the local control of tribes and Indian people is regrettable. At the forefront of educational struggles for equity and social justice is the maintenance of bonds to traditional and contemporary American Indian culture while also providing preparation for successful participation in a culturally diverse, modern society (Grande, 2004; Van Hamme, 1995). The question remains whether cultural preservation and growth can be achieved with Indian leaders and educators as they face the challenges of defining Indian education.

### *Autonomy to Inequality*

Historically, treaty obligations and trust responsibilities have created a dependency by Indian tribes on the federal government (Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Tippeconnic, 1991). Education of American Indian children is one of those treaty obligations and trust responsibilities. Federal policies have attempted to give tribes more autonomy, but perhaps with a focus or intent of terminating their federal responsibilities (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972). Most tribes believe this policy dilemma to be a double-edged sword. This government-to-government relationship allows the tribes to sustain themselves, but fails to definitively give tribes greater self-determination and local control (Snyder-Joy, 1994).

O'Brien (1990) stated, "Despite history, Indian advocates still think education is the key to the economic survival of their people and are optimistic that improvements will be made" (p. 22). Self-determination and local control in American Indian education is viewed by many American Indians as means of cultural preservation and growth (1994). Many American Indians view the authority to create and administer local education programs as a means to this end.

There is little research that examines federal Indian education policies and the request of American Indian leaders for greater control over the administration of schools in Indian communities. Control lends itself not only to increased local autonomy, but also limits the external control by the bureaucracy, therefore giving tribes more authoritative decision-making power (Snyder-Joy, 1994). The concepts of self-determination and local control are vitally important for tribal communities and tribal leaders in facing the challenging task of educating their children (Snyder-Joy, 1994).

Flannery and Vanterpool (1990) stated,

Traditional structures of curriculum and instruction perpetuate the myth of a single American culture and devalue the cultural pluralism upon which this nation's past, present, and future lies. The same traditional structures of curriculum and instruction promote such strong feelings of ethnocentrism that Americans tend to place little value on other world cultures. (p. 159)

Van Hamme (1995) believed the challenging task facing educators of American Indian children is “to assist in the maintenance of bonds of traditional and contemporary American Indian cultures . . . [and] provide preparation for successful participation in a culturally diverse, modern technological society” (p 21). The idea of self-determination and greater control to meet this challenging task supports the belief that it takes an Indian to teach an Indian. However, this belief would be more profound and less naive if the shortage of American Indian educators did not exist (Tippeconnic, 1991).

#### *Current Status of American Indian Education*

Reyhner and Eder (2004) suggested that recent events in Indian education indicate that Indian people are trying to change a history of repression of their languages and cultures. Since the beginning of the self-determination era, Indian people have supported schools teaching their children “non-Indian ways without forcing them to forget their Indian ways” (p. 330). There is a much greater Indian influence in Indian education and it needs to continue to increase (Reyhner, 2006).

Trujillo and Alston (2005) reported that American Indian students “face many obstacles in their schools and communities” (p. 23). In 2005, the National Education Association published *A Report on the Status of American Indians and Alaska Natives in Education: Historical Legacy to Cultural Empowerment*. The report identified three broad themes that have established a focus of what is currently taking place within Indian

education. These themes are: (1) the use of Native language and culture to promote success in Indian students; (2) preparing educators to be effective supports for student achievement; and (3) reaching out to the community to create success in the classroom (pp. 11-18). Public educational policies, community involvement, and individual educator practice are contributing to the improvement of educational outcomes for American Indian students (Trujillo & Alston).

### *Current Issues and Inequalities*

Educational processes must provide Indian students with the knowledge of how their tribal cultures interact with the complex, multicultural American society (Van Hamme, 1995). Indian students could then participate successfully in the larger society, if they choose to do so, while maintaining their own cultural identities (French, 1987). The issues of multicultural and bicultural education must be addressed by local schools serving Indian students (Van Hamme). In order to effectively meet these challenges, the leadership styles of American Indian education leaders and others must have a focus reflecting an understanding of these challenges in order to identify and create strategies that will build on the self-esteem of American Indian children in a cultural way (Van Hamme).

### *Leadership and Leaders*

Leadership is a subject that has captivated the interest of people as they attempt to define or conceptualize it (Northouse, 2007; Yukl, 2006). A review of the literature reveals considerable scholarship and the existence of numerous leadership theories. Yukl (2006) concluded that the focus of much of the research has been on the determination of leadership effectiveness. Leadership has been defined in terms of traits, behaviors,

influence, interaction patterns, role relationships, and occupation of an administrative position (Yukl, 2002). Northouse (2007) suggested that some definitions view leadership as the focus of group processes, personality perspectives, acts or behaviors, power relationships, transformational processes or a skills perspective. Yukl (2002) argued that the numerous definitions of leadership have very little in common and reflect deep disagreement about what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders or what distinguishes effective leaders from ineffective leaders.

The images of leaders are powerful, dynamic individuals who command armies, direct large corporations, or shape the course of nations (Yukl, 2002). Throughout history, events have occurred influenced by military, political, religious, and social leaders with little understanding of what caused the events and how much influence the leader really had or asserted (Yukl, 2002).

Short and Greer (1997) reported some the earliest leadership studies were labeled great man studies; these studies were all about men in leadership positions. The common belief was by studying the personal qualities of great men, it would be possible to identify the common personal qualities possessed by leaders and not by the followers (Short & Greer). These universal qualities would be of great importance in the identification and selection of future leaders. Researchers believed certain people possessed these natural talents and skills that could not be acquired through training or experience (Northouse; Short & Greer; Yukl, 2006).

The scientific research on leadership began in the twentieth century (Banks, 2000) and primarily focused on the determinants of leadership effectiveness (Yukl, 2002). Bass (1981) asserted that the lack of research on women and people of color until the late

1970s was not problematic because race and gender were not considered differences of consequence. This kind of assumption provided for leadership researchers to apply their findings without regard to race and gender. Hoyt (2007) contends that leadership theory and practice are evolving and the traditional leadership paradigm is being challenged as increasing numbers of women and people of color enter leadership positions and academia.

### *Leadership in Education*

The quest to understand leadership and leaders in education and schools has generated considerable interest. Davis (2003) asserted that leadership “implies movement, taking the organization or some part of it in a new direction, solving problems, being creative, initiating new programs, building organizational structures, and improving quality” (p. 4). This assertion supports the claim by Furman (2003) that leadership in education is focusing more on what leadership is *for*. Furman contended that leadership in education focuses more on the purposes of leadership in schools. Studies of educational leadership by Leithwood and Duke (1999) indicated that the literature traditionally focused more on the profiling of leaders, identifying leadership practices and leadership behaviors.

Northouse (2007) suggested that despite the many conceptualizations of leadership, important elements of leadership as a process involves influence of individuals within a group context toward the attainment of a goal. Yukl (2002) defined leadership as a process “whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization” (p. 2). While there are numerous definitions of leadership and some more

useful than others, Yukl (2006) concluded there is no consensus as to the exact meaning of leadership.

Ryan (2007) asserted that school leaders take on a variety of identities when interacting with stakeholders of their school communities. Ryan explored the identities that school leaders assume when they engage in dialogue in diverse school settings and communities. Ryan purported that school leaders assume the identity of a mediator as they engage in dialogue with students, educators, and parents in an effort to create meaningful involvement in the operation of the school and learning practices.

Tippeconnic (2006) suggested that leadership in education is often used as “an all-encompassing notion, applied to a wide variety of situations” (p. 1). Tippeconnic believed those individuals in the business of education make the difference in the success and failure of students, and, therefore, commit to leadership approaches that fit individual values, beliefs, and attitudes. It is through lived experiences that identity is created and helps to determine an individuals’ approach to education.

#### *American Indian Leadership*

In general, American Indian leadership is most often associated with the governance of a tribal organization. Gardner (2000) suggested that one of the first steps toward establishing a mature view of leadership is to accept complexity and context. Ayman (1993) believed that norms of a leadership situation are determined by the general culture of a society. In a report for the American Indian Research and Policy Institute, Becker (1997) reported traditional American Indian leadership displayed characteristics that developed out of cultural traditions and values.

Becker (1997) asserted that long before contact with Europeans; American Indian people had complex and dynamic methods of developing and asserting leadership in

tribal matters. Among American Indian tribes, leadership was based on relationships and kinship responsibilities and leaders were traditionally chosen as a result of their service to the community (Deloria, 1994; Becker). Because of the diversity of American Indian tribal cultures and traditions, leaders came in many forms, with different styles and diverse qualities (Gardner, 2000).

### *American Indian Education Leadership*

Traditional American Indian values and culture have been handed down through generations and continue to influence American Indian leadership today (Report by American Indian Research and Policy Institute, 1997). Krumm (1997) discussed in her examination of American Indian women in leadership roles in education the need to demonstrate appropriate leadership qualities which included wisdom, spirituality, and being able to have a vision for the future. Becker (1997) asserted that the history of traditional American Indian education based on values and culture can have a strong influence on the perceptions of contemporary American Indian educational leaders in their efforts to provide leadership in developing, maintaining and improving the quality of Indian education.

When education was a natural part of the structured life style of American Indians, leaders naturally emerged (Becker, 1997). Leaders were those tribal members who made contributions to the tribe and displayed characteristics of knowledge, wisdom, skills and experience. They proved themselves to be capable of leadership and deserving of respect. Contemporary American Indian education leaders emerge in the same manner (Becker).

Despite the change in federal policy during the 1970s that gave American Indian tribes more control and self-determination authority, there continued to be an under representation of American Indians in many areas: few role models in professional practice; few American Indian faculty in professional preparation programs; nationally, few American Indian leader preparation programs; and Indian education issues not addressed by leader preparation programs (Hampton, 1993). Tippeconnic (1999) suggested that the key to achievement of tribal control and Indian involvement is leadership provided by Indian people, tribes, educators, organizations, and institutions. He reiterated the need to prepare more Indian people for a variety of education leadership roles. Tippeconnic (1999) concluded: “The Indian control movement gained momentum in the 1990s; indications are that tribal control will become even more established and prominent during the twenty-first century” (p. 47). However, the severe shortage of qualified American Indian administrators persists.

According to the 2000 Census, the American Indian population and American Indian student population represents less than one percent of the general population (United States Census 2000). Perhaps the relevance of the issue of population is the suggestion that few higher education institutions are willing to establish programs for such small numbers (Tippeconnic, 1999). The solution may be that tribes and Indian people will have to resolve these issues themselves through tribal control and self-determination that generates more involvement of Indian people (Tippeconnic, 1999).

Nationally, few schools have American Indian leader preparation programs such as those at Pennsylvania State University, Arizona State University, the University of Oklahoma and South Dakota State University (SDSU) (Mills & Amiotte, 1996). SDSU

involved two tribal community colleges, Oglala Lakota College on the Pine Ridge Reservation and Sinte Gleska University on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation, in their leadership program to provide a Master's of Education in Educational Administration (Mills & Amiotte). The program was specifically designed for American Indian educators and addressed educational concerns associated with the two Sioux reservations. Programs such as these provide an optimistic promise that the shortage of qualified Indian education leaders may be addressed.

### *Issues in American Indian Education Leadership*

With the passing of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act in 1975, American Indians tribes and organizations were allowed to take over and operate Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) programs, including BIA schools (Grande, 2004, Reyhner, 2006). Reyhner (2006) wrote, "Self-determination is the idea that Indian people, not the U. S. government, should decide what is best for Indian America" (p. 1). During this period of self-determination, the opportunities were presented for American Indians to assume administrative and leadership positions, however there were very few American Indian professionals in these positions or qualified to assume them (Lynch & Charleston, 1990). Lynch and Charleston asserted, while the entry of American Indian men and women into leadership positions is still considered to be a recent development, the dearth of Indian professionals in the BIA is a major issue.

Another issue arose due to the lack of Indian professionals and that was the preparation of Indian professionals. As Lynch and Charleston (1990) reported, efforts to prepare Indian teachers and administrators to direct Bureau of Indian Affairs schools and public schools with significant numbers of American Indian children was met with little

enthusiasm. In 1969, Jim Wilson of the Indian Office of Economic Opportunity worked to initiate an administrator training program at four universities (Lynch & Charleston). Those participants who would complete the program with expectations of making a positive impact on Indian education discovered very quickly the reality of Indian politics within Indian communities (Lynch and Charleston). The defining of Indian education will require future leaders who are energetic and creative with the ability to adapt to changing conditions (Lynch & Charleston).

Since 1975, Indian education has made substantial progress; however, there is ample documentation and statistics supporting the need for improvement in Indian education (Grande, 2004). Indian education leaders face many challenges and issues, specifically: high dropout rates, lowest achievement rates, absence of cultural relevance in the curriculum, high turnover rates of faculty and staff, racism, and inadequate funding (Grande). Tippeconnic (2000) concluded, while many of the issues in Indian education have been around for a long time, Indian involvement and control of education has made a significant increase.

### *Critical Race Theory*

Critical Race Theory (CRT) refers to the work of legal scholars of color who are attempting to change or develop laws that account for the role of racism in American law and that works to eliminate racism as well as all forms of subordination (Matsuda, 1991). CRT is a theoretical framework that can be used to theorize, examine and challenge the ways race and racism implicitly and explicitly impact social structures, practice and discourses (Yosso, 2005). CRT emphasizes the use of “voice” and storytelling as a way to connect form and substance in scholarship (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Ladson-Billings

posited that the role of voice in scholarship brings power to the legal discourses of racial justice and stories provide necessary context for understanding, feeling, and interpreting. Solorzano and Yosso (2002) outlined five defining elements that form the basis of the CRT movement:

1. CRT makes the assumption that racism is not a series of isolated acts, but is endemic in American life.
2. CRT challenges the traditional claims made by dominant groups of legal neutrality, objectivity, meritocracy, colorblindness, race neutrality and equal opportunity.
3. CRT is committed to social justice and offers a transformative response for the elimination of racism, sexism, poverty and advocates for the empowerment of subordinated minority groups.
4. CRT recognizes the need of experiential knowledge of people of color to understand, analyze, and teach about racial subordination.
5. CRT challenges ahistoricism and the undisciplined focus of most analyses and insists on analyzing race and racism by placing them in both historical and contemporary contexts. (pp. 25-27)

Yosso (2005) concluded that these five themes challenge the existing modes of scholarship on race and racism. CRT addresses the social construct of race by examining the ideology of racism. Racial circumstances become exposed and those afflicted by racism develop a voice in which to make argument and are able to defend themselves (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso).

### *Evolution of Critical Race Theory*

Critical Race Theory (CRT) evolved in the mid-1970s as a response to the criticisms of the legal movement called Critical Legal Studies (CLS) (Brayboy, 2005a; Ladson-Billings, 1998). CLS exposed the contradictions in the laws and illustrated the ways that laws create and maintain the hierarchical society (Brayboy). Delgado and Stefancic (2000) and Yosso (2005) believe that CRT emerged because of the discontent with the slow pace of CLS in critiquing and changing societal and legal structures that specifically focused on race and racism. Ladson-Billings concluded that CLS failed to provide pragmatic strategies for material social transformation because it did not incorporate race and racism in its analysis and critique. Additionally, the failure of CLS to listen to the lived experiences and histories of those oppressed by institutional racism has limited CLS scholarship (Yosso).

Because of these CLS failures, CRT scholars initially began focusing on the Civil Rights issues of African American people (Brayboy, 2005a). As a result, much of the CRT scholarship was articulated in Black vs. White terms (Yosso, 2005). Yosso stressed that oppression in the law and society could not be fully understood in terms of only Black and White. Women and other people of color needed to have a voice in CRT. Over the years, this brought about an expansion of CRT to incorporate the racialized experiences of women, Latinos, Native Americans and Asian Americans (Yosso). As a result, Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) and Asian Critical Race Theory (AsianCrit) are elements of CRT that represent racism and oppression in Latino/a and Asian American communities respectively (Brayboy; Chang, 1993; Chon, 1995; Delgado, 1997). In addition, Feminist Critical theory (FemCrit) theory was developed to address

feminist critiques of racism and classism experienced by women of color (Caldwell, 1995; Wing, 2000). CRT was expanded by white scholars to include White Critical Race Theory (WhiteCrit), which exposes white privilege and challenges racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). Finally, Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) is a framework specific to the needs of American Indians and emphasizes that colonization is endemic to society (Brayboy).

### *Critical Race Theory in Education*

In the mid 1990s, Critical Race Theory (CRT) was applied to research in education as an alternative way of viewing or examining educational institutions and the difficulties faced by people of color within these institutions (Brayboy, 2005, Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRT poses a challenge to the dominant educational ideologies made by educational institutions toward objectivity, meritocracy, colorblindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity (Brayboy, 2005; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Parker & Villalpando, 2007; Solorzano, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005;). According to Solorzano (1998), CRT “challenges the dominant discourse on race and racism as they relate to education by examining how educational theory, policy, and practice are used to subordinate certain racial and ethnic groups” (p. 122). Solorzano (2002, 1998) identified at least five tenets that form the basic views, research methods, and pedagogy of a critical race theory in education: (1) the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism; (2) the challenge the dominant ideology; (3) the commitment to social justice; (4) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and (5) utilization of interdisciplinary perspective (p. 25-27).

Yosso (2005) supported the idea that the five themes identified by Solorzano (1998) challenge the existing modes of scholarship. Scholars continue to broaden the scope of literature and discussion of race and racism; Yosso defined CRT in education as a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses. Yosso asserted that CRT is committed to social justice and offers a liberatory response to racial, gender and class oppression. Delgado Bernal (2002) stated that CRT theorists acknowledge that education structures, processes, and discourses function in contradictory ways with the potential to oppress and marginalize and the potential to emancipate and empower. CRT in education refutes dominant ideology and White privilege while validating and centering the experiences of People of Color (Yosso). CRT is transdisciplinary and relies on many approaches to link theory with practice, scholarship with teaching, and the academy with the community (Yosso).

Yosso (2005) explained, “CRT shifts the research lens away from a deficit view of Communities of Color . . . and instead focuses on and learns from the array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged” (p. 69). The CRT approach to education involves a commitment to develop schools that acknowledge the strengths of people of color in order to serve a larger purpose of struggle toward social and racial justice (Yosso).

#### *Critical Race Theory and Education Administrators*

Parker and Villalpando (2007) believe Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a valuable lens for education administrators to use in the development of policy and procedures in schools desiring to establish and maintain social justice. Stovall (2004) wrote, “CRT can

be used as a tool to aid the school leader in developing praxis to confront issues of race and racism” (p. 9). Stovall asserted that schools are often viewed as contested environments where principals and administrators become easy targets. The dilemma for school leaders, they are expected to meet the needs of the students and demands of the bureaucracy as well as address the challenges of race and racism in a school environment heavily populated with students of color (Stovall). Schools whose population is predominately students of color are generally surrounded by racially isolated communities filled with low-income families (Stovall).

In creating an agenda for social justice, Larson and Ovando (2001) believe that “relationships with minority communities cannot be based on the same assumptions of trust guiding relationships with majority communities or communities that share educators’ social, racial, and ethnic roots” (p. 64). The relationship building initiatives are different and the failure of school leaders to have adequate knowledge of and contact with school communities often leads to what Larson and Ovando referred to as “difference blindness” (p. 64). School leaders assume a neutral position because they believe the differences between communities is irrelevant in addressing the educational needs of students and communities (Larson & Ovando).

Critical Race theorists would argue that the future of Critical Race Theory in educational leadership will depend on the exploration of possible connections to “life in schools and communities of color” (Parker & Villalpando, 2007). School leaders must confront the issue of trust/mistrust between school staff, students of color, and their families and communities if they are to achieve racial equity (Parker & Villalpando).

### *Tribal Critical Race Theory*

Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) emerged from the growing popularity of Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT expanded into race theorizing and the development of theoretical approaches that addressed the specific issues and experiences of particular racial/ethnic groups in the United States (Bartlett & Brayboy, 2005; Yosso, 2005). The development of TribalCrit by Brayboy (2005a) addresses the issues of Indigenous people and creates a theoretical framework to address the complex relationships between American Indians and the United States. Brayboy concluded that TribalCrit is rooted in the commonalities of the epistemologies and ontologies that exist within and between communities and individuals. TribalCrit places value in narratives and stories as important sources of data in the development of theory (Brayboy). According to Brayboy, there are nine tenets of TribalCrit:

1. TribalCrit is based on the notion that colonization is endemic to society.
2. TribalCrit recognizes that U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.
3. TribalCrit believes Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.
4. TribalCrit is rooted in a belief in and desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.
5. TribalCrit problematizes the concepts of culture, knowledge, and power and offers alternative ways of understanding them when viewed through an Indigenous lens.

6. TribalCrit recognizes that governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples have been oriented toward the goal of assimilation.
7. TribalCrit emphasizes the importance of Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.
8. TribalCrit honors stories and oral knowledge as real and legitimate forms of data and ways of being. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory.
9. TribalCrit believes theory and practice must be connected in such a way as to generate movement towards social change (p. 429-430).

### *Storytelling*

Brayboy (2005a), like many Critical Race Theory (CRT) scholars, believes in the value of experiential knowledge as a way to inform thinking and research. Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) values narrative and stories as important sources of data (Brayboy). Solorzano and Yosso (2002) posited that storytelling can serve as a method of sharing the experiences of marginalized groups of society whose experiences might not normally be heard, and counter-storytelling can serve as a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the dominant discourse on race and racism. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) referred to the use of “voice” as a component of CRT to communicate the experiences and realities of the oppressed, for example, “the voice of people of color is required for a deep understanding of the educational system” (p. 14). Ladson-Billings (1998) concluded that stories provide the necessary context for understanding, feeling,

and interpreting. Cleary and Peacock (1997) asserted that many American Indian people learn their way in life through stories.

Brayboy (2005a) discussed the use of storytelling and voice as legitimate forms of data and ways of being. Indigenous peoples have strong oral traditions that are used as methods of oral transfer of cultural traditions, spirituality, and experiences in order to protect the existence of their tribes (Becker, 1997). Leaders and elders within tribes shared their knowledge among those respected tribal members for sharing with future tribal generations. Oral tradition among tribes also provided education and entertainment (Becker). Cajete (1994) stated, “the cultivation of all one’s senses through learning how to listen, observe, and experience holistically by creative exploration was highly valued” (p. 33).

Brayboy (2005a) believes that stories are an important source of data and in order to collect these data the stories must be heard. Strong evidence to support this belief is best illustrated in a study by Krumm (1997) who stated, “The value of this study is that it gives voice to the participants, enabling them to tell their stories in their own words” (p. 157). Brayboy wrote, “There is a difference between listening to stories and hearing them, this is central to TribalCrit” (p. 440). Brayboy suggested that listening to stories is about engagement and allowing individuals to talk, while hearing stories places value in them which gives credibility and understanding to the authority and meaning of the story. The ability to use language through storytelling, oratory, and song was highly regarded by all tribes as a primary tool for teaching and learning (Cajete, 1994). Brayboy concluded that oral stories serve as reminders of our origins and as lessons for younger

members of tribal communities as well as providing direction for elders and other policy-makers in tribal communities.

### *Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education*

While Critical Race Theory (CRT) serves as a framework in and of itself, it does not address the specific needs of tribal peoples (Brayboy, 2005a). Recently, Brayboy extended CRT and developed an emerging analytical frame called Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) to address the singular legal and political status of American Indians as sovereign tribes. Brayboy contended that aspects of TribalCrit could be taken up by scholars and applied generally; however, his focus is on education and the specific educational experiences of American Indians.

Deyhle and McCarty (2007) stated, “As Bea Medicine predicted, a theme that has emerged in educational research framed by CRT/TCRT is that racialized education policies and practices produce resistant, resilient, and determined Native students who assert their rights to claim and create their lives, languages, and futures” (p. 212).

Indigenous scholars such as Brayboy (2005b), Kaomea (2003), Manuelito (2005), and St. Denis and Schick (2005) have exposed racism “. . . in the very fabric of instructional practices, curriculum content, and education policies, toppling the myth that assimilation is a means to achieve academic success” (Deyhle & McCarty, 2007, p. 212).

Tribal Critical Race Theory holds the power of explanation and to better serve as a theoretical lens through which to view and describe the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples (Brayboy, 2005a). TribalCrit has the potential to serve as a lens for addressing the educational experiences of American Indian students, educators, and researchers in the areas of classroom participation, language revitalization, lack of Native students

graduating from high schools and colleges, multiple literacies, overrepresentation of Native students in special education, pedagogy, teacher-training, and many other educational areas (Brayboy, 2005a). The future of TribalCrit as a theoretical lens for addressing the issues and experiences of Indigenous peoples is to develop a way to better understand the needs of indigenous communities and to create change in the educational system that benefits American Indian peoples (Brayboy).

### *Tribal Critical Race Theory in Leadership*

Much of the literature about Critical Race Theory (CRT) is articulated in Black vs. White terms (Yosso, 2005). Over the years, people of other cultures, including American Indians, struggling for equality and who have experienced racism and other forms of oppression have joined the family of CRT frameworks (Yosso). Parker and Villapando (2007) stated, “CRT calls for the legitimization of narratives of discrimination, and the power of the law used against persons of color and the importance of these counternarratives are key aspects of CRT and have implications for educational leadership and policy” (p. 520).

Deyhle and McCarty (2007) assert that the application of CRT to educational research “shifts the researcher’s gaze from a deficit view of persons of color to a critical view of white privilege and the discriminatory social practices that differentially advance or limit people’s educational and life opportunities” (p. 212). Brayboy (2005a) wrote that while CRT is a framework in and of itself, it does not address the specific needs of indigenous peoples.

### *Tribal Critical Race Theory and Education Administrators*

The development of Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) as Brayboy (2005a) contended, offers an analytical lens in which to view or examine the lives or experiences

of tribal peoples in a distinct cultural way. TribalCrit provides a theoretical framework to address educational issues facing American Indian communities including educational leadership (Brayboy).

There are a number of tenets within Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) that may be applied individually or linked together to describe the educational experiences of the school district leader (superintendent) or the leader of a school (principal).

Specifically: the fifth tenet, provides alternative understandings of the concepts of culture, knowledge, and power; the seventh tenet, emphasizes “the importance of tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future; it honors the adaptability of groups and recognizes the differences within individuals and between people and groups” (p. 439); the eighth tenet, “honors stories and oral knowledge as real and legitimate forms of data and ways of being” (p. 439); and the ninth tenet, emphasizes the need to take action toward connecting theory and practice (Brayboy, 2005a).

Brayboy (2005a) believed that the use of Tribal Critical Race Theory as a lens to conceptualize the educational leadership of indigenous leaders in indigenous communities must “expose structural inequalities and assimilatory processes” (p. 440).

Additionally, Brayboy believes TribalCrit must work “to create structures that will address the real, immediate and future needs of tribal peoples and communities”.

Ultimately, TribalCrit must lead indigenous peoples “away from colonization and assimilation and towards a more real self-determination and tribal sovereignty” (pp. 440-441).

### *Summary*

The review of the literature revealed a history of educational experiences of the American Indian unlike that of any other cultural group in the United States. The ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness promoted through public education has formed the foundation of a democratic society in the United States. Throughout history, these ideals have been more relevant for some more than for others.

The history of public education has not been without clashes of cultural values and constantly changing ideologies. The ways American Indians view the world are based on their particular cultural traditions, norms, and values. Federal-Indian relationships, often structured by treaty rights and responsibilities, subjected American Indian people to policy changes and federal legislative mandates which have impacted educational practice and opportunity.

Formal education in the early history of the United States either excluded American Indians or was used as a means for changing them. The cultures of the various American Indian tribes differ from that of the dominate culture of American society. American Indian children were forced into educational settings that failed to recognize, understand, or tolerate the culture and values which shaped their character in a sovereign tribal nation.

Eventually, the federal policy toward American Indians changed to one of self-determination. Individual American Indian tribes are more in control of the way their children are educated. The essential need now is for American Indian leaders and educators to facilitate these tribal education programs.

The use of storytelling through voice is a primary tenet of Tribal Critical Race Theory and an accepted method of communication among American Indian tribes. This research study focused on the educational experiences of an American Indian educational leader who worked in a public school district within an American Indian community. In Chapter Three, the research design and methodology will be presented along with the research questions, population sample, data collection methods, and data analysis. In Chapter Four, the analysis and results of the data collected will be presented. The findings, conclusions, recommendations and implications for future research will be discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER THREE  
RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

*Introduction*

The civil rights movement of the 1960s helped bring about an increased awareness and voice by American Indian tribal leaders in opposition to existing federal Indian policies (Grande, 2004). Tribal leaders concerned about Indian rights and other concerns began advocating for a policy of self-determination or “letting Indian people determine their own destiny through their tribal governments” (Reyhner, 2004, p. 251). As a result, the passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act in 1975 provided American Indians with more control over how their children would be educated (Grande, 2004). The belief of Indian people was that culturally responsive education was a way to help them maintain their identities and shape their future through education (Manuelito, 2005). The self-determination legislation represented a shift in federal Indian policies and created numerous challenges for American Indian tribes, people and communities concerned about the quality of the education of their children (Van Hamme, 1995). The opportunity for American Indian tribes to define Indian education on their own terms can be achieved only if Indian people become more involved in Indian education at all levels (Hampton, 1993) and Indian educators take advantage of opportunities to assume educational leadership roles in the administration of schools (Lynch & Charleston, 1990).

This study focused on the leadership experiences of an American Indian education leader of a public school system serving predominately Indian students on an American Indian reservation. Through the use of participant narrative or voice, the range

and variation of experiences of the Indian leader was examined through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory.

While there is extensive research and literature on educational leadership, there is a paucity of research and literature on American Indian education and leadership. This study will add to the research and available knowledge about American Indian education leadership and to the development of knowledge of American Indian education. Using case study methodology, this researcher was guided by the following over-arching question: How do the experiences of an American Indian education leader of a public school system serving predominately Indian students on an American Indian reservation contribute to the development of Indian education as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?

Presented in Chapter Three is an overview of the problem and purpose of the study, the rationale for use of a case study approach, and a description of the population and sample. Additionally, a discussion of the data collection and instrumentation, and methods of data analysis is included.

#### *Problem and Purpose Overview*

The history of the education of American Indian young people in the United States has been best described as a means of changing or assimilating the American Indian into the dominant society (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002). The lack of Indian involvement and participation in the development of Indian education has left the defining of Indian education to non-Indians utilizing non-Indian methods (Hampton, 1993). If Indian education is to be defined on terms that tribes set forth, Indian teachers and school leaders are necessary for the future of Indian education (Hampton). Thus, the

purpose of this study was to examine the leadership experiences of an American Indian education leader of a public school district serving predominately Indian students on an American Indian reservation through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory.

### *Research Questions*

Within the context of this study, the following research questions guided the researcher:

1. What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to Indian students and faculty as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?
2. What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to an Indian community as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?
3. What impact does an American Indian education leader have on empowering faculty to address the issues that come from giving Indian students a voice?
4. How has an American Indian education leader enhanced the learning of Indian students by giving the Indian community a voice?
5. Who is defining Indian education in the twenty-first century?

### *Rationale for Use of a Case Study*

Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that there seems to be little agreement about what constitutes a case study. Stake (1995) stated,

A case study is expected to catch the complexity of a single case. The single leaf, even a single toothpick, has unique complexities—but rarely will we care enough to submit it to case study. We study a case when it itself is of very special interest. We look for the detail of interaction with its contexts. Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances. (p. xi)

Creswell (2003) defined case study as a strategy “in which the researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals” (p. 15).

Merriam (1988) defined case study as “an intensive, holistic, description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 21). Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991) defined case study as an “in-depth, multifaceted investigation, using qualitative research methods, of a single social phenomenon” (p. 2). Case study allows an observer “to record people engaged in real-life activities” (p. 7).

According to Stake (1995), the qualitative researcher “emphasizes episodes of nuance, the sequentiality of happenings in context, the wholeness of the individual” (p. xii). Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991) asserted that cases of interest in education are usually about people. Case study research “provides a way of studying human events and actions in their natural surroundings . . . [and] enables the observer to record people engaged in real-life activities, the experiment is an artificial construction of life” (p. 7). Therefore, this researcher chose a qualitative case study approach to establish understanding of the unique experiences of an individual American Indian education leader serving a public school district within the context of an American Indian community.

According to Merriam (1998), qualitative case studies are widely used in the field of education and focus on what it is that the researcher wants to know. The use of the case study approach in this study, as Merriam (1998) suggested, will be to focus more on the processes of understanding the experiences of the Indian education leader through the identification of the leader’s abilities to give voice to stakeholders while defining Indian education within a tribal context.

Merriam (1998) suggested the use of case study is most beneficial “to describing a phenomenon rather than predicting future behavior” (p. 32). It is the best design for addressing the problem or answering the questions being asked. Merriam stated,

The case study offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon. Anchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon. It offers insights and illuminates meanings that expand its readers’ experiences. These insights can be construed as tentative hypotheses that help structure future research; hence, case study plays an important role in advancing a field’s knowledge base. Because of its strengths, case study is a particularly appealing design for applied fields of study such as education. Educational processes, problems, and programs can be examined to bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice. (p. 32)

The focus of this case study was to describe and understand the phenomenon of American Indian education leadership.

American Indian people have “strong oral traditions, which are used as vehicles for the transmission of culture and knowledge” (Brayboy, 2005a, p. 439). This case study was viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit), which recognizes and values storytelling as a legitimate means of communication. Delivery of the information in the words and from the perspective of the participants will lead to a better understanding and meaning of their experiences (Seidman, 1998). The use of qualitative methodology with the theoretical framework of TribalCrit complements the case study approach in giving voice to the participants as they describe and seek to understand the leadership experiences of the leader.

Merriam (1998) asserted that case study research is often used when “specific issues and problems of practice can be identified and explained” (p. 34). The federal government provided little opportunity for Indian involvement and control of the

education of Indian children until Congress enacted the Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act in 1975 (Tippeconnic, 1999). This shift in federal policy helped to create educational reform and improvement in Indian education with greater control by Indian tribes. Additionally, the need for Indian professionals became a new development. Lynch and Charleston posited that “Indian control of schools had meaning only if administrators who were Indian were ready to assume the administration of schools with largely Indian enrollments” (p. 7). Collins and Noblit (1978) purported that case study research is ideal if a goal of the study is to effect change.

Creswell (2003) stated, “specific issues needed to be addressed that speak to important social issues of the day, issues such as empowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression, and alienation” (p. 10). As such, Creswell believed in order to create an action agenda to help marginalized people, critical research “needs to be intertwined with politics and a political agenda . . . research should contain an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher’s life” (pp. 9-10). Creswell asserted, “The ‘voice’ for the participants becomes a united voice for reform and change. This advocacy may mean providing a voice for these participants, raising their consciousness, or advancing an agenda for change to improve the lives of the participants” (p. 10).

Moreover, the use of a case study approach becomes necessary when the phenomenon being studied occurs within a “bounded context” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 25). The goal of this case study is to describe and understand the leadership experiences of an individual American Indian education leader serving predominately American Indian students in a public school system on an American Indian reservation.

Merriam (1998) stated, “By concentrating on a single phenomenon or entity (the case), the researcher aims to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon” (p. 29). There are, however, limitations to a case study approach (Merriam, 1998).

The leader being investigated in this case study has recently retired from his leadership position. While this situation may be considered a possible weakness or limitation, the researcher views it as an opportunity for the leader to be more open and objective about his experiences. Because the leader is no longer associated with the school district, another possible limitation may be the accessibility of needed documents or data for analysis to support the study. This limitation was addressed with the current school district administration.

Another concern in research is the sensitivity and integrity of the researcher. Merriam (1998) asserted, “The researcher must be sensitive to the context and all the variables within it, including the physical setting, the people, the overt and covert agendas, and the nonverbal behavior. . . . Finally, the researcher must be aware of any personal biases and how they may influence the investigation” (p. 21). The researcher is American Indian and is aware of the existence of potential bias when conducting research with participants of a different Indian tribe and community. Patton (2002) believed qualitative inquiry requires that the “investigator carefully reflect on, deal with, and report potential sources of bias and error” (p. 51). Since the role of the researcher is to analyze and interpret data through the researcher’s personal lens, reliability and validity may come into question. Multiple methods of data collection were used to triangulate the data (Creswell, 2003). Additionally, the researcher’s contribution to the research setting

can be useful and positive rather than detrimental (Locke et. al., 1987). The researcher's interest in, and knowledge and perceptions of American Indian education leadership have been shaped by personal experiences. From August 1980 to June 1998, the researcher served as a high school administrator at Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding high schools, both on and off reservation and is acquainted with the case study participant and worked closely with him for seven years within a reservation setting. Thus it is the belief of this researcher that these experiences provides a depth of understanding of the context and role of the participant and assisted in establishing a forthright working environment with the participant during this study. Conversely, because of the researcher's previous experiences with the participant, certain biases needed to be recognized in this study. Every effort was made to ensure objectivity and as the data was analyzed the potential for these biases to influence the understanding of the data collected, as well as the interpretation of the leader's experiences was kept in the forefront of all analyzes in the attempt to minimize the effect.

### *Participants*

A single case study approach was used to describe and understand the experiences of an American Indian education administrator who served in a leadership role in a public school system serving predominately American Indian students on an Indian reservation. Merriam (1998) determined, "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). Therefore, the criteria for selection of participants and sites should reflect the purpose of the study and help to identify information to inform the study (Merriam).

Given the study's purpose, the leader and his experiences are of particular interest (Patton, 2002). The researcher purposefully selected (Creswell, 2003) the Indian leader participant because he is an enrolled member of the tribe and community he served; and the public school district he led is located on the reservation he calls home. In addition, the leader participant was selected for his knowledge of Indian education and his vast leadership experiences in working in Indian education programs at local, regional, and national levels. The researcher knew of the leader participant through his own leadership experiences and interactions and from having worked with him for seven years.

Lastly, the leader participant was chosen not only for his education leadership in the local school system, but also for his active involvement in the Indian community and engagement in his culture. The belief of the researcher is that the past and current experiences will greatly benefit the study by providing greater insight into Indian leadership, Indian education, and the success of Indian education programs and students. The background and lived experiences of the leader participant combined with his commitment to Indian education and Indian people makes him a very logical choice for the study.

Secondary participants in the study were: a) faculty members who are teachers/school leaders (n=5); b) former high school graduates who are least 18 years old (n=5); and c) tribal leaders/community members (n=5). These participants were American Indian and identified stakeholders of the school district who participated in reform efforts and program development during the tenure of the leader.

The faculty members, the high school graduates, and the community leaders were asked to participate in one of three focus groups. One focus group was comprised of the

teachers/school leaders. The former high school students comprised the second focus group and the tribal leaders/community members made up the third focus group. Focus groups and the leaders' interview were held on site. The students were randomly selected from the ranks of those student leaders who were involved in student government activities (e.g., class representatives, officers and student council members) during the leader participant's tenure. Faculty participants were randomly selected from a list of those currently employed in the school district and who were also employed during the leader's tenure. The Tribal and community leaders were purposefully selected for their particular knowledge of the leader participant and his influence on the community.

Finally, this investigation was conducted on site at the public school district where the leader worked. This school district is located in a central plains state and the school district is located within the boundaries of an American Indian reservation and serves predominately American Indian students.

#### *Data Collection and Instrumentation*

Ethical issues in data collection obligate the researcher to respect the rights of all participants (Creswell, 2003). To ensure the rights of participants were protected during data collection, the researcher used informed consent forms (see Appendices A & B). The following elements were included in the consent form: a statement of the rights of the participants, participation is voluntary with the right to withdraw at any time, they have the right to ask questions and to receive a copy of the results, and their privacy will be respected; the purpose of the study; the procedures of the study; the benefits of the study to the participant; and the signatures of agreement from the participant and researcher (Creswell, 2003). Other ethical considerations included the need to contact the tribe to

secure gatekeeper permission to perform the research study on their reservation and the utilization of tribal and community members as well as to secure permission from the school district to perform the research study on their site and the utilization of school staff (see Appendices C & D). A sponsor from each organization was identified to provide oversight to the research project; which insured protection of individual rights. Creswell (2003) reminded researchers of the need to “be cognizant of their impact and minimize their disruption of the physical setting” and to actively seek the involvement of research participants throughout the research process (p. 65).

After obtaining the gatekeeper’s permission the leader participant was contacted and agreed to participate in the study. The researcher secured formal agreement of participation. The leader participant was provided information about the research study that included a basic description, the purpose of the study, and a description of how other participants would be involved (see Appendix E).

Interviews are an extremely useful method of collecting data as they allow the participants to tell their own stories in their own voice. The researcher was aware that his presence might affect the participant’s responses (Creswell, 2003); therefore, he reassured them of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses. The researcher paid special attention to locating a place where the participants would feel comfortable in sharing their thoughts and views. The researcher provided the participants with the transcription of the interviews for their review; participants were instructed to contact the researcher to make necessary corrections.

### *Interview Protocol*

Before the interview began, the leader participant completed a brief biographical questionnaire (see Appendix F) to provide descriptive details of his life (McCracken, 1988). The researcher conducted two initial semi-structured face-to-face one to two hour audio taped interviews with the leader participant at a site most comfortable and convenient to the leader. An interview protocol (see Appendix G) was used for all interviews (McCracken). Open-ended questions were developed by the researcher and framed around the review of the literature to create understanding of the topic and provide answers to the research questions (Frankel & Wallen, 2003). A pseudonym was provided to keep the leader's name confidential with only the researcher and dissertation supervisor knowing his identity. The leader participant was provided an informed consent form which explained the purpose of the study and that his role was voluntary. The leader participant was not compensated for his participation in the study. Finally, the leader participant was asked if there are any personal documents he maintained throughout his leadership experience in the school district that he was willing to provide for review and analysis.

### *Focus Group Protocol*

The researcher used focus group interviews "to record fully and fairly as possible that particular interviewee's perspective" (Patton, 2002, p. 380). Three focus group interviews of approximately ninety minutes each were conducted for the district faculty participants (n=5), community and tribal leader participants (n=5), and student participants (n=5). Participants purposefully selected to participate in the focus group interviews were those individuals identified as stakeholders of the school district during

the tenure of the leader and people who possessed valid information about the leader (Patton). Potential focus group participants were contacted by letter and invited to participate (see Appendix H); they also received an informed consent form that explained the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, that their role was voluntary, and that no compensation was provided. Participants who were willing to participate in the focus group interview were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities.

The focus group interview questions (see Appendices I, J, K) were framed around the review of the literature regarding Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit), characteristics of giving voice, and the defining of Indian education as seen through the lens of TribalCrit. Questions of all participants were similar with some modification for each group. The conversations of the focus groups were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher at a later date. Focus group interviews were scheduled on site. Finally, the triangulation of data was accomplished by reviewing rich descriptive interviews, interview observations, field notes, documents, and artifacts for identification of recurring themes (Creswell, 2003; Frankel & Wallen, 2003; Merriam, 1998).

### *Data Analysis*

Data analysis occurs simultaneously with data collection in qualitative research (Creswell, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Merriam, 1988). Stake (1995) stated, “There is no particular moment when data analysis begins” (p. 71). However, Merriam (1998) suggested analysis begins with the first interview, the first observation, or the first document read. As suggested, the researcher collected and analyzed data concurrently, only pausing to fill any data gaps that prevented the most holistic view. The data

collection process ended when the researcher determined that the data was repetitious or no longer provided for the emergence of additional viable themes (Merriam, 1998).

The researcher began the coding of data into categories based on those described by Bogdan and Biklen (1998). In qualitative research, research questions generate coding categories, as well as theoretical approaches suggest coding processes (Bogdan & Biklen). Coding categories come during and after the collection of data. Examples of coding categories suggested by Bogdan and Biklen are: setting/context codes that provide a general description of the research site and of the participants; relationship codes include the identification of formal and informal relationship structures and patterns of behavior; and activity codes that identify the behavior and activities that occur on a regular basis (pp. 165-172).

The analysis of data collected from interviews, focus groups, documents, artifacts, field notes, and observation of interview notes generated codes. The researcher identified codes based on his own perspectives and the way he made sense out of the data. These data provided a rich description of the leader participant and the cultural context in which he worked. The identified codes were analyzed to identify recurring themes. Emergent themes within the various cultural contexts helped to anticipate exhibited behaviors. The researcher reviewed all data to ensure consistency and reliability, and for triangulation (Fowler, 2004).

#### *The Researcher's Biases and Assumptions*

Creswell (2003) wrote that in qualitative research “the role of the researcher as the primary data collection instrument necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions, and biases at the outset of the study” (p. 200). The interpretive nature of

qualitative research requires the researcher to explicitly identify biases, values, and judgments (Creswell, 1994). Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman (2000) believed that contributions of the researcher to the research environment can be useful and positive rather than detrimental.

The researchers' perceptions of American Indian education and leadership were shaped by personal experiences, which included cultural and cross-cultural experiences as a citizen of the United States and as an enrolled member of the Muscogee Creek Nation of Oklahoma. Beginning in August 1980 to June 1996, the researcher served as a secondary school administrator at schools both on and off American Indian reservations. The uniqueness of this experience involved working with predominately American Indian students from many different cultures, tribes, and reservations in public schools and schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. From August 2000 to April 2004, the researcher served as the school leader for an inner city alternative high school funded by the Kansas City, Missouri School District. The school maintained an enrollment of approximately 80 students from diverse cultures, with 95% of those students representing African-American and Hispanic cultures.

As a school leader and member of the superintendent's administrative team, the researcher was involved in many top level activities and decisions and worked closely with school district administrators, board members, faculty and staff, community leaders, and tribal leaders. In addition to reporting to the superintendent, the researcher worked closely with the leader being studied for eight years. This experience provided the researcher with an understanding of the context and role of the leader and enhanced the researcher's awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity to the challenges the leader faced.

Within this context, the researcher believed these experiences allowed for greater assistance in working with the leader in this study. Conversely, due to previous leadership experiences in public and Indian education and having worked closely with an American Indian education leader, the researcher brought certain biases to this study. These biases may have affected the way the researcher viewed and understood the data collected as well as the interpretation of the leader's experiences. However, the researcher made every effort to ensure conclusions made from data were objective and accurate through triangulation of data.

### *Summary*

Included in this chapter was the rationale for and use of a case study to examine the experiences of an American Indian education leader serving in a leadership role in a public school district of predominately Indian students on an Indian reservation. The chapter began with a discussion of the impact of equal opportunity on American Indian education and leadership and the dearth of American Indians in education leadership positions in both tribal and public school settings. Subsequent sections addressed the research questions, followed by a rationale for the use of a case study. The researcher then discussed the population and sample, data collection and instrumentation, data analysis, and researcher biases and assumptions.

Chapter Four will include a description and analysis of the data. A summary of the findings, the limitations of the study, recommendations, and the implications for future research will be included in Chapter five.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Presentation and Analysis of Data

#### *Introduction*

The passage of the Indian Education Act in 1972 and the Indian Education and Self-Determination Act in 1975 provided for greater involvement of Indian people in the education of their children (Swisher, 1997). Historically, the education of American Indian people has been largely uninfluenced by Indian people themselves (Lomawaima, 1996). With the changes in federal policy toward self-determination, Indian people now have a stronger voice and influence in defining Indian education with hope of creating greater opportunities to achieve success in schools and communities (Swisher). Additionally, the need has been created for Indian education leaders who are knowledgeable and understand the special needs of the Indian reservation in which they serve (Tippeconnic, 1984). They must be leaders with the ability to turn influences into experiences that can and will define Indian education.

The purpose of this research study was to add to the knowledge base of understanding the education experiences of an American Indian education leader serving Indian students in an Indian community. Presented in this chapter is a review of the study design, data collection methods, conceptual underpinning, research questions, and process of data analysis. In addition, a description of the reservation setting and an introduction of the faculty, community, and student participants will also be discussed.

The study was viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit). A key tenet of TribalCrit is the use of storytelling that allows the research participants the opportunity the use of their own “voice.” Therefore, in keeping with that

concept, the researcher will present the data, when appropriate, using the participant's own words.

### *Study Design*

This single case qualitative study, conducted at a public school district serving predominately Indian students on an American Indian reservation, examined the educational experiences of one American Indian education leader who served as the superintendent of a public school district. The leader participant was purposefully selected (Creswell, 2003) because of his achieved level of education, years of experience as an Indian education leader, and knowledge of and commitment to Indian education as well as his experience and knowledge of working on Indian reservations. Lastly, the leader participant was chosen because he is an enrolled member of the tribe he serves, and the reservation where he works is also his home.

Participants on the faculty, student, and community/parent/tribal focus groups were enrolled members of federally recognized tribes; the majority of the participants were enrolled members of the local tribe. All participants were identified as stakeholders of the school district and participated in reform efforts and program development during the tenure of the leader. The students, who are former graduates, were randomly selected from the ranks of those student leaders who were involved in student government activities (e.g., class representatives, officers and student council members). Faculty participants were randomly selected from a list of those currently employed in the school district who was also employed during the leader's tenure. The Tribal and community leaders were purposefully selected for their particular knowledge of the leader participant and his influence on the community.

### *Data Collection Methods*

Prior to beginning the onsite interviews, the researcher secured permission from the superintendent of the local public school district (Appendix D) and the president of the local tribe (Appendix C) to conduct the research and to have access to the participants selected for interview. The superintendent and tribal president were provided information about the purpose and extent of the study, and each gave their approval to serve as a representative sponsor for their organization. After securing Institutional Review Board approval from the University of Missouri-Columbia, the researcher traveled to the research site to begin collecting data. Informed consents were signed by the leader participant (Appendix A) and focus group participants (Appendix B) prior to the conducting of interviews. Interviews of the leader participant and focus group participants were conducted at locations convenient to the participants. For example, the leader participant interviews were conducted in his office at the tribal college where he is employed; the student focus group interview was conducted in the library at the tribal college; the community/parent/tribal focus group was conducted in the office of one of the participants on the campus of the tribal college; and the faculty focus group was conducted in the conference room in the school district office. Following the interview, each participant received a verbatim transcript of their interview and was provided the opportunity to modify and/or clarify their recorded responses.

The open coding process was used during analysis to identify categories and themes. The data were then triangulated through on site audio recorded interviews of the leader and focus group participants, cross checking emergent themes and categories between data provided by the leader and the focus groups, examination of documents

such as the district newsletter and other school documents found on the school district website, and field observations maintained during the process of data collection.

### *Conceptual Underpinnings*

During the process of analysis, categories emerged and when viewed through the analytical lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit), themes began to develop.

According to Bartlett and Brayboy (2005), there are nine tenets of TribalCrit developed to directly address the educational experiences of American Indian people. Various tenets within TribalCrit may be applied individually or linked together to describe the educational experiences of the school district leader. Specifically, the fifth tenet provides alternative understandings of the concepts of culture, knowledge, and power; the seventh tenet emphasizes “the importance of tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future; it honors the adaptability of groups and recognizes the differences within individuals and between people and groups” (p. 439); the eighth tenet “honors stories and oral knowledge as real and legitimate forms of data and ways of being” (p. 439); the ninth tenet emphasizes the need to take action toward connecting theory and practice (Brayboy, 2005).

Brayboy (2005) wrote,

TribalCrit emphasizes that colonization is endemic to society while also acknowledging the role played by racism. Much of what TribalCrit offers as an analytical lens is a new and more culturally nuanced way of examining the lives and experiences of tribal peoples since contact with Europeans over 500 years ago. This is central to the particularity of the space and place American Indians inhabit, both physically and intellectually, as well as to the unique, sovereign relationship between American Indians and the federal government. My hope is that TribalCrit can be used to address the range and variation of experiences of individuals who are American Indian. Furthermore, TribalCrit provides a theoretical lens for addressing many of the issues facing American Indian communities today, including issues of language shift and language loss,

natural resources management, the lack of students graduating from colleges and universities, the overrepresentation of American Indians in special education, and power struggles between federal, state, and tribal governments (p.430).

### *Research Questions*

Based on the conceptual underpinnings, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to Indian students and faculty as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?
2. What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to an Indian community as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?
3. What impact does an American Indian education leader have on empowering faculty to address the issues that come from giving Indian students a voice?
4. How has an American Indian education leader enhanced the learning of Indian students by giving the Indian community a voice?
5. Who is defining Indian education in the twenty-first century?

After the leader participant and focus group participant's interviews, document analysis and field observations, the data were analyzed to determine themes and categories.

### *Process of Data Analysis*

All data were examined and assigned the following codes: leader participant (LP); focus group participants: faculty focus group (FP), (n= 5), faculty participant 1 (FP1) and so forth; student focus group (SP), (n= 5), student participant 1 (SP1) and so forth; community/parent/tribal focus group (CP), (n= 5), community/parent/tribal participant 1

(CP1) and so forth, district documents (distdoc), tribal documents (tribdoc), state documents (statdoc), website document (webdoc) and field observation (FO).

*Setting: North Ridge School District*

This case study was conducted at the North Ridge School District (pseudonym) located on the Great Plains Indian Reservation (pseudonym) in the upper Midwest United States. The North Ridge School District office is located in the small town of Learner (pseudonym). It is important to note that the North Ridge School District, which consists of thirteen schools, is a public school district operating on an American Indian reservation serving predominately American Indian students. The school district covers an area of approximately 1400 square miles.

The researcher's return to the area to conduct the research was with great anticipation after having left ten years earlier. The researcher lived on the Great Plains for eight years and served as the high school principal under the leadership of Dr. Heart. The participants interviewed for this research project are people that the researcher worked with and were former students. While the researcher is American Indian, he is not a member of the Great Plains Tribe, but always felt welcome. The researcher was always mindful of the need to be respectful of the customs and traditions of the Great Plains people and communities.

The researcher arrived at the Great Plains Reservation on a Saturday in mid December was dampened on Sunday by a blast of winter. The weather forecast was correct, and the blizzard conditions moved in. Although the first interviews were to take place on Monday, the weather threatened their postponement with bitter cold and wind chills significantly below zero. The researcher hoped he would be able to conduct the

interviews as scheduled with all participants able to attend. The first day of the interviews, the weather was clear, although breezy and bitterly cold. The drive from the tribal casino and motel to the North Ridge School District in Learner takes about a half hour. The terrain of the reservation is flat and one can see for miles; there is a certain beauty about it.

The researcher's arrival to Learner did not reveal a great deal of change, at first. The middle school is the first school building that is visible coming into Learner from the south. However, the school that the researcher was anxious to see was the high school, a former place of employment. As the researcher approached the high school from the back entrance, he was stunned to see it had changed from how he last remembered; the school now had an eight to ten foot royal blue (school color) fence around it. Stopping short of making judgments or having an opinion, the researcher immediately thought, "What is up with this?" As the researcher later discovered from comments made by several interviewees, there were varying opinions about the fence, most not so positive. Although specific questions about the fence were not asked during the interviews, the most vocal about it were members of the community. Comments ranged from "I don't think we need something like that."; "What does it teach our kids?"; "I have nieces and nephews that go to school there and they refer to it as a prison"; to "That's engraining something in their head, but at least they cut off the two foot spear points off the top of that fence. I mean it was a prison fence, with two foot long sharp spear point." Community concern over the fence made its way to the tribal council. Dr. Heart commented that he believed the main issue with the fence was due to a lack of communication with the community about the need for the fence.

Although the North Ridge School District is a public school district and is expected to meet the demands of the state department of education as well as federal policies and guidelines, the district is challenged with meeting the needs of a tribal community and people. In many instances, state and federal bureaucracies only seem concerned about their guidelines and policies being addressed. Additionally, the Great Plains tribe has its own tribal education department and code that outlines specific needs and concerns that they feel need to be addressed. Finally, there are a small number of non-Indian people who reside on the reservation with children who attend schools in the North Ridge School District. As the leader of the district, Dr. Heart is faced with difficult challenges and decisions that require specific knowledge and abilities necessary to meet the cultural and educational needs of the twenty tribal communities and people that the school district serves.

*Setting: Great Plains Indian Reservation*

The Great Plains Indian Reservation (pseudonym) is located in the south central part of a state in the northern tier of the United States. The over 900,000 acres and 1,442 square miles of tribal lands consists of lakes, river valleys, woodlands, rolling hills and is primarily used for agriculture, forestry, and grazing. As the researcher recalled, the climate can be a bit harsh, especially the winters. Although the researcher is not a historian, there is a tremendous aura of history that engulfs this reservation. One can only imagine, and almost see what it once was when established by signed treaties with the United States in the late 1800s.

As a sovereign nation, the Great Plains tribe has the right to elect their own government officials, regulate their own territory, manage tribal affairs, and create their

tribal laws. The tribal council consists of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Sergeant-At-Arms, and twenty council members elected by tribal members. The twenty council members represent the twenty recognized communities of the tribe. The Great Plains tribe also has the authority to approve the enrollment and membership into the tribe. There are over 24,000 enrolled members and more than 20,000 reside on the Great Plains reservation.

In addition to the North Ridge School District, the educational needs of the Great Plains people are met by the St. Vincent Indian School (pseudonym). A former mission boarding school operated by Jesuits, the school is now controlled by a tribal school board. The higher education needs of the Great Plains reservation are addressed by the local tribal university that offers programs at the baccalaureate and master's level in education, helping to address the need for Indian teachers. The university also provides strong programs in language and culture for the purpose of strengthening and preserving individual and tribal identity.

The Great Plains tribe is constantly working collaboratively with tribal members and non-tribal members toward building a stronger economy. The schools, tribe, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Indian Health Service provide the majority of employment. The tribe also operates a casino and motel as well as a tribal ranch, and there are a number of other commercial businesses operated by private owners.

The Great Plains Nation, like many tribal societies as well as other societies in the United States, faces difficult social issues, for example: suicide, poverty, and unemployment. The desire of the tribe to become increasingly self-sufficient, to preserve

its traditions, and maintain its culture is evident in the development of new economic opportunities with a vision for the future.

### *Participants*

#### *Leader: Dr. Heart*

For the purposes of this study, the leader participant will be referred to as Dr. Heart. Dr. Heart was born on the River Bend Indian Reservation and is an enrolled member of the Great Plains Tribe (pseudonym). Dr. Heart's wife is the director of student services for the tribal university. His two sons are employed by the North Ridge School District; one is the director of technology for the district, the other is an elementary teacher. He takes great pride in his cultural heritage and ethnic background. Throughout his career of thirty-two years—the last sixteen years at North Ridge School District— as a leader in education and working with predominately American Indian people in Indian communities, Dr. Heart has solidly developed his beliefs and values about what it takes to define Indian education. He has a desire to do all that he can for the success of the school district, and this is further exhibited by his leadership style. Those who have worked with Dr. Heart will identify him as a large imposing individual with a long, black mixed with gray, braided pony tail that he wore for many years. As the leader of the North Ridge School District, Dr. Heart had a keen awareness of the tribal people and communities he served. As a reflection of his belief and value in communication, he always chose to avoid the more professional attire of a coat and tie, opting for the more casual, but appropriate appearance of a leader whose desire was to make those he served or who worked for him feel comfortable and that he was approachable. Although Dr. Heart can

be very businesslike and takes his job very seriously, at appropriate times he has a way of injecting a dose of Indian humor into conversations that puts people at ease with him.

One of 10 siblings, 7 boys and 3 girls, Dr. Heart was raised as a Catholic and attended a mission boarding school beginning in the first grade. He recounted,

They sent me and my siblings to mission school, run by the Jesuits and the Franciscan nuns, and besides the strict academic standards that they had, we also learned discipline and that we could get things done. I was the 7<sup>th</sup> of ten siblings. When they sent me in first grade to the boarding school, I had my family there. [Of] Course, I had all kinds of cousins, you know. I wasn't that lonely or anything, for mom and dad, 'cause I had so many relatives there. I actually went to the boarding school for twelve years—made some good friendships there—with the Franciscan nuns and the scholastics, the priests, if you were doing well academically, then they would just keep pushing you. I think that helped me quite a bit.

Dr. Heart developed strong family values and beliefs from a mother and father who worked all of their lives and raised ten children. He shared,

I graduated May of '65 and they moved back to the reservation, so I was always teasing about that, but when they moved back, my mom and dad, they both actually started working for the school again. He was a carpenter, and she went and cooked for the Franciscan nuns. Eventually the Jesuit Priest started going over in there—we called it the girls building—because Mom cooked up there. When she did work, she usually worked as a cook in all the restaurants, and then besides raising ten children, she was a house wife. My dad was a carpenter all of his life at the school, and he worked for the Tribal Housing Authority.

Dr. Heart gives tremendous credit to his mother and father for having the greatest influence on him and for the things he has been able to accomplish in his life:

I spent a lot of time with my dad. When I first went to college and I came back, I lived with him and worked on construction. He always got me a job somewhere to work, and we would spend a lot of time visiting. He always wanted one of his kids to graduate from college. My older sister had finished a two year program up in North Dakota to be a nurse, but he said he always wanted somebody to at least finish college. He said, "I always wanted to do that; your mom always wanted to do that. But, we never did get around to doing that." He always encouraged me; he didn't encourage me in front of the family, he loved them all, so he didn't want to embarrass them or embarrass me. He always encouraged me; my mom

always did too. That was kind of a personal thing with me. They would encourage me.

As an American Indian education leader working among his tribal community and people, Dr. Heart always exhibited a certain level of confidence in who he was. However, Dr. Heart admitted that he was not raised in a traditional way. He admits to being somewhat uncomfortable in not being able to speak his tribal language. He stated,

My parents were both Great Plains speakers, my mom was way better than my dad, and for some reason—I never asked them this, I don't know why—they didn't teach us to speak the language. My oldest sister and probably two older brothers weren't too bad in speaking the language, but somewhere after that, my parents stopped talking it at home. So the rest of us siblings, we never did get to learn the language. And I don't know what it was. When we came to the boarding school, the kids still talked it and everything, but I was kind of at a loss then.

Language is viewed as an important key to tribal identity, both as an individual and as a member of the tribe. Since returning home to work at North Ridge School District and to serve his people, Dr. Heart has learned that many of the values and virtues he possesses are similar to those in his tribal culture. This was explained to him by two respected faculty members that are tribal members and are more familiar with the culture. Dr. Heart commented, “After they explained that to me, I guess I didn't feel bad anymore.”

#### *Faculty Participants*

Faculty participants in the focus group consisted of six individuals who were enrolled members of the tribe and were employed in the school district during the tenure of Dr. Heart. Four faculty members were able to attend the interview, while the weather prevented two faculty members from participating. These two faculty members were given the opportunity to respond to the questions in writing and submit them to the researcher.

Although the faculty members participated in the focus group in their role as faculty, it is important to stress that their perspectives sometimes overlapped because in addition to being faculty members, they were also community members, they were parents with students enrolled in the school district, and they were also tribal members. Faculty positions represented in the focus group were teachers, school principals, program directors. While employed at North Ridge School District, each participant was involved in school reform efforts and program development within their respective departments directed at supporting the school district's statement of beliefs, mission, learner outcomes/goals, and vision. The North Ridge School District statements of belief, mission statement, learner outcomes/goals, and vision statement document were a significant accomplishment of the school reform efforts under the leadership and tenure of Dr. Heart. The documents were the result of a collaborative effort achieved through the cooperation of all stakeholders within the school district.

Faculty expressed a strong commitment to their role as educators in the North Ridge School District, although there was some concern about the conflict between mandated federal policies and the district beliefs, mission, learner outcomes/goals, and vision document. One of the statements of belief, "We believe that cultural studies – including its language, art, history, sovereignty and spirituality—will develop in our children a respect for self, others and the world community," was not always stressed by teachers in their respective curriculums. Although viewed as a positive, the belief was not taken as seriously as it perhaps should have been. Since the majority of the staff, teachers and principals, are non-Indian, the perspective taken was one that they (non-Indian staff)

were not comfortable teaching from a cultural perspective. One of the former program directors stated,

We native educators have tried to instill cultural values into the school system since 1970. We wanted cultural activities; we wanted an integrated cultural curriculum and cultural awareness in-service training for the teachers. We had the support from some administrators, but many times it was an uphill battle. Although the student population is more than 95% native, many of the elementary principals gave cultural integration lip-service but never enforced it or evaluated the teachers in this area. I personally heard from new teachers that they were at the school to change the “Indian” student so they could go out into the world and be “somebody.” We natives realize that an American education is important, but just as important to the students is their identity and confidence in their place in American Society.

The current director of the linguistics and culture program shared a story of similar frustration related to her efforts to integrate cultural studies. She commented,

I was thinking about the NCLB. At first when the state, the federal government said you do this, this, this, this, or here are the sanctions that’ll happen, Dr. Heart talked with us about how we needed to balance that, and he always talked about our vision and our mission that we have on the wall, of course, those things he said that were more important than the compliance issue. I felt we were comfortable then, in saying well, he’s supporting those values and what we have on the board, you know, those documents and so then I felt better in saying okay, we’ll do the compliance not just for compliance sake, but we’ll do that, but that’s not as important as what those documents say. So, I felt like his values came through on those really strongly. As far as curriculum went, I think it was an expectation that we made sure that they understood what North Ridge was all about.

While there was a sense of struggle to achieve the outcomes and goals of the district, many of the teachers throughout the district placed value in the need to develop cultural activities within their curriculum. One such teacher stated,

Oh, there’s been different attempts to, I guess, the cultural values of the community to bring those in. They have tried to do it through curriculum as much as possible. They have staff on hand that are supposed to teach that and tribal language. For example, we have tribal history and culture class; we have other various classes to that effect tribal law classes and so on. We have had cultural groups like drum groups, just things like that.

We've had a lot of our assemblies and gatherings using cultural music, played at that time. Trying to get in a lot of leaders from the community to come in, speaking with the kids, talking about cultural values. That happens a lot. Anytime there's a topic at hand, they try to get someone in the community to address the kids—they're respectful of that. There's been a push to try to get in there—to try to get culture into the classroom. We have to try to reflect that in our lessons, the cultural strand in our lessons also.

### *Student Participants*

Six former students, four female and two male, gave their consent to participate in the focus group interview. The interview was held in the library on the campus of the tribal university. The weather conditions prevented two of the students from participating. One student took advantage of the opportunity to submit written responses to the researcher.

The students were all enrolled members of the tribe and graduated from North Ridge High School. Students were selected because of their involvement in student government, as well as other school activities while enrolled at the high school. The students were active in school reform efforts and program development during the tenure of Dr. Heart. The hope was that their involvement in school had given them some familiarity and knowledge of what went on around the school and the impact of curriculum and programs on not only themselves, but other students.

The students have transitioned well to becoming members of the community. Three of the students are married, and two of the female students have children in the North Ridge School District. Three of the ladies became educators; two of them are teachers in the North Ridge School District, and one is working on her master's degree. A fourth student is employed by tribe as a computer technician/supervisor at the casino. The

male participant is employed as a salesman for a private office products business located in Learner.

It was interesting to note that the student participant responses were not as lengthy as the older and more experienced faculty and community/parent/tribal participant responses. However, the student responses were as much to the point.

#### *Community/Parent/Tribal Participants*

The researcher was more than pleased that three of the six participants, two men and one woman, braved the weather conditions to get to the interview. After a delay of about an hour, the participants and the interviewer were able to gather for the interview in the office of the cultural language program director on the campus of the tribal college. Three other participants were unable to make it, but were given the opportunity to submit their responses to the interview questions in writing. The researcher was able to conduct a separate interview of a fourth participant at another school location. One of the two remaining participants submitted responses in writing. The five participants that served on the community/parent/tribal focus group were members of different communities as well as parents who had children or grandchildren in the school district during the tenure of Dr. Heart. All five participants were enrolled members of the tribe. The participants represented jobs ranging from Cultural Language Program Director for the tribal university, Library Technician/Cataloger for the tribal university, Manager of the tribal Bison Ranch, school counselor, and director of a Bureau of Indian Affairs peripheral dormitory.

The researcher was honored by the participation of all the community/parent/tribal participants, especially that of the Cultural Language Program Director. First of all,

he is a respected elder and spiritual leader in the tribe and community. His daughters graduated from high school during the researcher's eight year tenure as principal. One of the many cultural events that are held at the end of the school year is the Senior Honoring Wacipi (Pow Wow). This event is hosted by the Indian Club to honor the graduating seniors and their families. During the Wacipi, many of the families of the seniors have a Give Away in honor of their graduates, and gifts are given to special people that the family chooses to recognize for their support of their graduating senior. After the gifts are distributed, the host drum group is asked to sing an honoring song for the senior and his family as well as for those who received gifts. During the song, everyone is invited to dance in honor of the graduating senior.

Using the data set and the designated codes, the researcher analyzed all interviews. The following themes emerged: 1) experiences that construct cultural identity. 2) educational experiences that create indigenous knowledge.

### *Cultural Identity*

The first theme to emerge from the data centered on the experiences that construct cultural identity. The development of cultural identity in an educational organization within the context of Indian communities is affected by the lived experiences of the leader whose influences impact decisions and actions shaping the organization and those connected with the organization. Cultural identity development efforts focused strongly on the individual, tribe, community, and the school district. The North Ridge School District statements of belief, mission statement, learner outcomes/goals, and vision statement all had a very strong cultural emphasis. The district mission statement emphasizes the need for collaboration between the school district, families, the Great

Plains Tribe, and other education entities, their pledge being to prepare students for success academically, socially, culturally, and spiritually.

### *Importance of Emphasizing Culture*

Dr. Heart identified many of the leadership responsibilities he had as the superintendent of the North Ridge School District. He seemed passionate about all of them, but some he gave more attention to, such as the acquisition of technology and the integration of Indian studies specific to the Great Plains Tribe. Essential to his vision for the district in the implementation of programs and processes was the involvement of people. He laughingly admitted, “. . . especially people who are smarter than I am.”

In the fall of 1991, the North Ridge School District was one of six school districts in the state to be selected to participate in a state funded program for school reform and restructuring. Dr. Heart seized this opportunity to realize his vision of creating a strong cultural emphasis for the school district through the development of a district vision and mission statement. This document would not just be about the purpose of the district, but it would be about people having a vision of what the district should look like, and getting them involved in the processes of program identification and development. Dr. Heart commented,

I felt that my job was to make sure we got the best technology that we could for students, especially here on the reservation. I felt that—and I still feel that way—that it [technology] is kind of an equalizer for students on the reservation. So that is one thing I continue to push. And the second thing was the integration of Great Plains Studies on this reservation, using the word Great Plains, whereas I suppose if you were somewhere else you could just say Indian studies. So, those are the major things that I tried to push for all the time and made sure that any processes we had at the school—we worked on formulating a mission and vision, and we made sure that we had those two items in there—about the Lakota studies and about technology. That was something that all of the staff got involved in and we kept going back to those [mission and vision].

The vision statement stresses a need for collaboration and working together of all stakeholders. It states, “Our strength will be a collective strength – with students, families, communities, the Board of Education, teachers, support staff, administrators, local businesses, the Great Plains Tribe and the Tribal University all working together to improve learning and teaching in the North Ridge Schools.” One school administrator who is also a community member and tribal member commented,

I think pretty much that they [school administrators] were all open to helping each other to meet the school’s mission statement. I guess, that was the guiding message that we had to follow and try to deliver that to the other staff and students and the community members as well. Dr. Heart always tried to make sure that the school and community worked together to educate the children. I think that was one of the underlying things that were always impressed upon us as administrators.

The strength of the district vision and mission statements was not always in the development of programs and processes. The statements served as a means of clarifying the purpose of the district, especially in the face of the *No Child Left Behind* mandates.

The Director of Linguistics and Culture commented,

At first when the state, the federal government said, you do this, this, this, this, or here are the sanctions that’ll happen. Dr. Heart talked with us about how we needed to balance that. He always talked about our vision and our mission that we have on the wall. Those things, he said were more important than the compliance issue. I felt we were comfortable then, in saying; he’s supporting those values and what we have on the board, you know, those documents. So, I felt better in saying okay, we’ll do the compliance, but not for compliance sake, but we’ll do that, but that’s not as important as what those documents [mission and vision] say. So, I felt like his values came through on those [vision and mission] really strongly.

The district office and several high school classrooms exhibit visible evidence that the district documents are still the foundation for the cultural emphasis of the district, schools, and programs. Big blue and yellow posters with the dreamcatcher as a background display the district’s statement of beliefs, mission statement, learner

outcomes/goals and vision statement. School leaders considered the documents to be empowering; therefore, when teachers came to them with a question or concern about their program, the leaders reminded the teachers that the answer was in those posted documents.

### *Characteristics of the Leader*

The characteristics exhibited by Dr. Heart as a leader were borne out of the influences and experiences he had during his life and career. He attributed a lot of his influence to his culture, family, his attendance at mission boarding school, and his leadership experiences working with people, schools and organizations associated with American Indian education. Dr. Heart has very strong feelings about his cultural identity; he knows who he is. He is aware of the importance of young people learning to speak their tribal language and how it helps to strengthen their identity. He shared a situation that illustrates his sensitivity to not having been taught his tribal language:

I remember one time I sat down with two of my program directors; we were talking about—I think we were organizing a kind of tribal language symposium that school district was going to host. That wanted me to be there to make opening statements, and I told them that I felt uncomfortable because I wasn't brought up traditionally. They said that is not going to make any difference to these people, because they were all speakers and stuff, because they said the way you conduct yourself is the way that a lot of the traditional people do. And then I said, "Well, what do you mean? Explain that to me." And they talked about respect. Even though I was brought up with all the virtues that the catholic preachers and my family espoused to me, about the commandments and those type of things and they said the similarities in Great Plains culture are pretty close about sharing things and being respectful and looking out for other people and honor them when they give talks, especially with the elderly. When people give them a chance to talk, like at pow wows and different things that I was at and feeds, they always talk about making sure that elders get served first. You know some of the virtues of Catholicism and some of the virtues of the Great Plains way. I'm not sure that's true of most of the tribes in the United States. After they explained that to me, I guess I didn't feel so bad anymore about going to a lot of these different things. When I went to pow

wows and they always speak Indian at the pow wows, I always make sure I have someone there to translate for me. I can pick up a few words, but like I told you yesterday, I never learned how to speak even though my parents did.

The effectiveness of Dr. Heart's leadership, as well as any leader, may be measured in a variety of ways. Perhaps one of the most relevant ways to measure Dr. Heart's leadership is by his commitment to the district statement of beliefs, mission statement, learner outcomes and goals, and vision statement. These documents formed the foundation for his conduct as a leader and his inspiration for his decision making. He often spoke of cultural parallels that reflected his thoughts and ideas about being Indian, and the need for survival in two worlds. Dr. Heart stated,

I always advocated that I don't want people to disrespect the students, if I hear that people are doing that and I can prove it, I will be in their face myself. I don't like it when teachers single out students when they walk in the door and have been missing for a couple of days and make little statements like, "It's good to see you." I expect teachers to respect them and not alienate them any more than they already are. They already feel uncomfortable for missing a couple of days. So, I try to instill that in the administrators and have them do that with their teachers.

Dr. Heart also shared other leadership qualities he thought were essential:

I know yesterday I talked a little bit about trust. With trust, there is respect. The tribe has four virtues that they preach all of the time, about the sharing, respect, trust, charity—I'm going more than the four. These are things that I tried to practice as an administrator. People that I supervised, I gave them an opportunity to say something and try to be honest with them. I crossed over the line a couple of times with honesty, because I didn't think they needed to know everything that I knew, but give them an opportunity to at least to tell their side of the situation. They just said, "That's the way you conduct yourself." Sometimes the people that were on the board and even some of my fellow administrators at the school would get upset with me, because I would operate that way. And they said they want me to change my stripes and start chewing butt for different people to get things done, but I wasn't that way. I always—after 15 or 16 years I was there, people finally figured out that when I made a suggestion at an administrators or board meeting that I wanted people to do that. I would always say, "I think it would be a good idea if somebody

would do this and this and this.” I would back off to see if somebody would pick up what I was talking about and run with it.

Dr. Heart spoke very strongly about a leader needing to have open communication and being a good communicator with the community and other constituents of the district. He considered this to be one of the most important characteristics of a leader. He felt that communication gave voice to stakeholders and empowered them. The use of the media was an important method of communication. Dr. Heart stated, “We try to utilize our local newspaper as much as we could for information.” He further stated, “We had our own monthly newspaper that we called *The Dreamcatcher* that steadily, over the years, got to be quite an instrument for that communication with families and letting them know.” Although changes have occurred with time, Dr. Heart indicated the local radio station was a way of getting information such as school events, meetings and other school activities out to the community. A former staff member used to do a radio show specifically for the school district. Dr. Heart believes the characteristic of communication can give voice, and empowerment to those in the community. He explained,

I think another one of my little mantras with people was, “Did you talk to the community?” when they [schools] were going to make changes. We held up several things at the high school level until the semester, because I didn’t think the information was given out to the parents, or they were not given an opportunity to comment on it. I always felt it was important that when an administrator came up with something that they do some research, evaluating, and assessment of the community and see what they have to say. That was always something that I brought up to people when they wanted to try something—ask the community. Especially, when *No Child Left Behind* came out in 2002 and with schools going into school improvement and all the different things they had to do. Make sure you get parents there if you are going to propose some changes, make some changes, and talk about changes, you got to get those parents there. Parent committees were established for each one of the buildings as well as a lead teacher. Together, they were all supposed to establish and maintain communication with the parents, students, and staff. I was always a

believer that if you got along with the community and the parents knew what you were doing, then they would support what you were doing at the school and that would help you run a more successful school.

Students felt that under the leadership of Dr. Heart communication was not just top down, but horizontal. One student shared,

You [administrators] communicated across the lines and consulted with people and that is what our culture is about. There is not one person making all the decisions and mandating to everybody else. Everybody participated in decisions and had a say. I think that the leadership showed our cultural values.

The leadership of Dr. Heart involved communicating locally with district constituents such as the local tribe and departments within the tribe as well as regional and national organizations that he served. He commented,

We had to deal with the tribal council or the tribal education committee, depending on which group they wanted us to have our communication with. At times, we would maybe send them too much information. We would get calls and they would ask us what different things were, but I just always thought it was better to get them the information rather than try to keep it in the school system. We sent them our school board minutes, our budget information, and my secretary would automatically send our agendas for the board meetings. We sent them all tribal council people. We actually sent them to each one of the twenty-one communities on the reservation. Each community had what they called a community chair person, so we sent it to them too. While we would get calls from them too, I made sure they got the information anyway. We always invited them to the meetings, so we tried to keep that communication open with them. I always thought that was important.

Dr. Heart's leadership also involved his participation in regional and national organizations. He was very active in the state and national impact aid associations and served as their president. He felt his involvement was good for the school district. He explained, "I ran the organizations the same way I ran the school. I let people have a chance to say things . . . give them all a chance to talk."

Two other characteristics of Dr. Heart's leadership were the high expectations he had for his staff and the support he provided to ensure they had opportunities for development and improvement in areas of their need. A teacher of sixteen years at North Ridge stated,

I think in particular, Dr. Heart made us feel valued. The input that the staff was able to provide—accepting that. And still, with him, I use the example of being a good educator; he still had high expectations of us, too. He wanted us to work hard on becoming better teachers, but was tolerant that that was a learning process—that that was a process that isn't going to happen right away; it's going to be a gradual process. Make yourself better every day, every year. Make yourself a better teacher. He gave us many opportunities and tools to do that through what he accomplished as a superintendent. The district has always been able to provide us trainings, allow us to go places to get the education. He was making sure that we had that. He was very tolerant of the educational process. He was very tolerant of what we had to deal with on a daily basis, teaching in a culture of poverty. But he still had high expectations for us to try to make that as best as possible for our students and for our community.

A faculty member who was a guidance counselor stated,

I think that's one area [staff development and training] in our system where every administrator felt supported. His door was always open to communicate and get that support from him and try to be successful in what his administrators did and the school as well. I think it was a system that worked well for that time.

When asked about ways that Dr. Heart supported opportunities for staff development and improvement to get to the next level, two program directors shared a variety of situations. Para-professionals, who are mostly American Indian, had their credits paid for and were provided time off of work to attend class, providing they made the time up. For fear of a shortage of school counselors, Dr. Heart, somewhat of a visionary, sought help from one of the state universities to come to the district and offer counseling classes to staff who were interested in becoming certified counselors. The Director of Technology and Alternative Instruction stated, "He's the one who got me in

that University of Nebraska-Lincoln program, he was supportive and talked me into it and even, you know, I could take time off work whenever I needed to go down there.”

Finally, the Director of Linguistics and Culture shared,

One time I remember, that was when one of the tribal elders was teaching a doll making class, but she was only teaching during the day. So I went in and visited with him. I said I really want to make that doll making class—she offers it Tuesdays at 9:00am to 11:00am or something, and he said, “Well, why don’t you go ahead and take it, but you gotta make sure you make that time up.” He was willing to let me go take a doll making class. Just because I knew that the teacher was an elder and she wasn’t going to be with us that much longer. She’s gone now, but she offered those classes. But he was really understanding about that. He didn’t say, “Well, that’s silly.”

Of primary importance to Dr. Heart is the building of relationships. He believes that the building of relationships is paramount in achieving the outcomes and goals of the vision and mission statements. He commented,

Probably the last five years or so at North Ridge, my mantra, as I talked to people about developing your relationships with these kids, if they trust you and if they respect you, then they’re going to come to school. So, you need to get that done. I was criticized a lot of times because people would always say, I’m sure you heard a lot of times in your position, “We are not entertainers; we’re not suppose to make this easy for these people that come here.” I say to them, “You can still do that if you develop relationships with these students, know about them, know what they like, know what their family situation is like, what they have to come through to get to your class, do they have siblings in school, do they have siblings out of school, who actually in their life influences them.” It should be you as a teacher, but if it’s not, then you need to find out who does, and try to make that connection. I think that was very important, even though we advocated for years and years until we got going with choice theory. . . . The big thing was developing relationships. We started training a small cadre of staff from all of our schools, about 20 and then we gradually sent them on to be trainers of trainers and then we started with another twenty. So, we were kind of on a five year plan, I don’t even know if they are doin’ that anymore. I would spend a lot time talking about that—relationships not only with the student, but their families and with colleagues. They advocated to having little work shops recommending all kinds of different programs they could use and processes they could use. The high school was really getting into it. I was surprised at some of their staff that volunteered after about the third year to take some of the

workshops and stuff, but I don't know what they are doing with it now, but I think it's really key.

### *Individual Identity*

The development of cultural identity is a progressive process that establishes a shared meaning of who one is as an individual within tribal society and as a citizen of a larger global society. It is a process that is important to building self-esteem in order to recognize and understand cultural differences, to recognize and respect one's own cultural values and those of other cultures, and to provide individuals with the ability and resiliency to function in a diverse society. The district vision statement supports the development of cultural identity in their schools with the following statement,

In our vision, we see students as both ambassadors of their culture and as global citizens. In our schools, students learn about Great Plains history and culture while they learn the content and skills they will need to be self-sufficient and responsible world citizens—whether they choose to remain on the reservation or go elsewhere.

Dr. Heart spoke of the parallels between the two societies and often referred to the paths native individuals must follow. He explained that the school has to become the students' families and give them the skills to be resilient:

I think we have to be aware of that, and if it's not traditional tribal way, we have to be aware of their families, what their families want them to do, if they even have families. We have to be their family, we're going to be their families—that whole thing about resiliency. If you did any research into resiliency—that's another R word that we become responsible for at the school, to teach those students that don't have that opportunity to have a strong academic road and a strong Red Road, or whatever you want to call it. We have to pick that up and teach them those resiliency skills that research talks about from having a sense of humor—I think Indian kids have a pretty good sense of humor—that you have to advocate and keep with that, so they can maintain even though the family situation is falling apart. Give them opportunity, give them some responsibilities, some little responsibilities in the classroom to make them feel like they're welcome. I used to know quite a bit about resiliency about ten years ago, in fact I was a trainer, but I kind of lost track of it all. But it has some good stuff that you can help students with and help adults with in training them. They all

have circumstances in their community that they need resiliency skills to make them successful, but again, it all ties back to relationships, that is a key word—I keep pushing that.

One student participant stated,

I think because our school culture was based around everybody—Native American culture—we were challenged to step up and take leadership roles. And I think that definitely the experiences I had in high school, whether it was looking up to someone like you [principal], or someone like Marie (pseudonym), definitely helped me to develop some strength as a leader, and then going outside of that and going somewhere else, being able to feel confident enough in myself, having already been in those types of situations, to step forward and be first to do something instead of being timid. I just think that our school community really helped me as far as becoming a leader, stepping up to the plate, taking the extra initiative to do whatever I needed to do, whether it be here, in our community or elsewhere.

Classroom teachers and program directors were aware of the expectation that they were to include cultural activities into their curriculum and instruction. While the expectation of faculty was to integrate cultural activities in their curriculum and instruction in the classroom, this was not always a comfortable situation for faculty who were non-Indian. Although resource materials and assistance were available for all staff, the process of integrating cultural concepts and ideas was sometimes resisted. Dr. Heart commented at length about the integration of cultural studies:

When I came to North Ridge, I had to sit and observe. Being from here, I knew a little bit about what was going on; I had to tread lightly in trying to get people to develop curriculum that focused on culture. We had a tribal person as our Indian Studies Coordinator and at that time if they did anything having to do with culture, it was pullout. We advocated, because we were 90 - 95% American Indian, you should be doing all of this in your class. So, that is when we gradually changed the position. We did it kind of subtly; we changed it over to a Lakota studies integration coordinator; then we developed standards that people could use in their classrooms for Indian studies. I think the first two summers I was here we had groups working on that and the Indian Studies Director took that information and went around to the schools visiting with teachers saying this is something that you need to put into your activities as a teacher. Here are some ideas from Pre-K all the way up through the 12<sup>th</sup> grades. It

was a little bit tough with math, as they got into the upper areas, but it was a little bit better for Language Arts. Science wasn't too bad. The coordinator had enough information to help out Science areas with the Herbs and that kind of medicine and stuff.

I said that was part of this other road we were talking about. Students see that their teachers are trying to do that and we realized that non-Indian staff were going to feel uncomfortable and we always tried to emphasize that don't be embarrassed by it, because the students know that you're trying, just make sure you ask the right questions of the program coordinator. We made sure we had an individual at each one of the school sites that could act as a local resource person, so teachers could questions, so they don't really go in and embarrass themselves and do something that would embarrass them in the community. We didn't want them to go in and just teach them how to count in Indian and if they are going to do that, don't count beans, count feathers or something [laughter]. Try to do that. The coordinator came in once really upset. Some teacher at one of the schools was teaching the old way about Thanksgiving. She said, "We don't need to do that, that wasn't even our traditional way, that was some other tribes. So, I had to talk to the principal. They had all these turkeys up and all this other things; we need to go in and change all that. We subtly tried to change all that and I think we were doing pretty good, she spent a lot of time going around visiting the schools and visiting the individual school resource people in trying to help them. We started collecting data after about four years. We just started collecting how many requests we received for assistance and who they came from. It always came down to the high school teachers; they were not using the program as much as everybody else. I kind of can't blame them. I can't imagine George White getting a lot of help from the coordinator in his Chemistry class, but there were some things she could do to research and find some things for him to talk about. They knew about the silver and the gold and the different types of minerals that they could utilize, maybe not right here locally, but with Native Americans in general. They had to try and I think the students felt good about that when they would get that kind of information. Just walking into class and having the four directions symbol painted on the walls. I don't know if you remember in the Library, the librarians re-did the whole library with just something simple like painting those types of things on the wall. I don't know if it has anything to do with culturally responsive curriculum, but I think it makes student feel comfortable. The principal, when I left was going to expand some of that into the hallways—start painting pictures in the hallways. When I was high school principal at the mission school, the old building they tore down, I had the students do projects in the hallways and paint different things on the walls and she was starting to do things like that and then I ended up leaving. So, she didn't go very far after that, in fact she didn't even stay for half a year, they got rid of her. Those are the things that need to happen. Like I said, we lost certain people, we went through one, two, three, like four different

people after her, I don't think they had the patience she did especially with a lot of the non-Indian teachers. They had all the curriculum and all the information and would get research for all the teachers. I think they still felt uncomfortable since they were not use to dealing with that. At one of the elementary schools, we have predominately non-Indian teachers and you go in there with a non-Indian principal who feels they feel uncomfortable and I think they pick that up. There are some ideas you can use in your classroom and when you get into that whole discussion on line authority, like a consultant coming and telling you these things, but they can't tell you to do it, it has to come from the principal. We have two Indian principals who wouldn't have any problem with that, but at other elementary schools with non-Indian principals they would have a little bit of problem with that, even though she had been here most of her life, her adult life anyway. It is their responsibility; it has to come from them—the leadership in the building.

Two social influences that affected Dr. Heart and how he conducts his business in the construction of Indian education are suicide and poverty. The reservation is currently dealing with a successful suicide rate that has become epidemic. He stated, "We had a big issue here, I don't know if you read some of our newspapers lately with suicides." Dr. Heart teaches classes at the tribal university and explained,

One of my students in one of my classes wrote a paper and did a little bit of research on suicides and he was told in the last three years there have been thirty-six successful suicides, here on the reservation. A lot of them have been young men, although there have been a few young women. That is staggering for out here.

Seeking solutions and responding to these kinds of concerns take time, and does not offer much consolation when it is a district student. Dr. Heart shared such a situation:

There was a young girl from the middle school. Her singing group sang in the morning and because the weather was kind of bad, all of the singers couldn't get in. But she and two of the boys sang the Flag Song and an honoring song in the morning on Friday. Saturday morning she killed herself; she had hung herself. They called me and told me about it on Sunday. It was just surprising as Hell! I thought she was one that was on this parallel path and she was doing well in school; she was a straight "A" student, plus culturally, she was working. There were things going on in her family that we found out later. Somehow, we didn't get her involved or her family involved with what was going on in school. She was doing a cultural thing here at school and she was doing an academic thing here at

school, but none of us paid any attention to what was going on at home nor did she tell us. That's an example of somebody we lost here somehow. And all of us—the principal didn't know; her assistant principal didn't pick up on it; the teachers didn't pick up on it. It shocked everybody. We thought we were, like I said, doing those two paths together, but we forgot the third path, keeping the family involved there.

Another social issue that affects the performance of the schools and their programs as well as the student's self-esteem is poverty. Dr. Heart expressed concern over the ability of some of the schools in the district to meet the mandates of the state and *No Child Left Behind*. He stated,

I don't know if they're ever going to make the average yearly progress mandate, just because they are more traditional communities. These communities are in isolated areas out there, and there is nothing for the families. The poverty is unbelievable in those areas, and you drive out in those communities, you can just see it and wonder. I'm always amazed at how we even get kids to school from those communities.

One of the teachers suggested that education is not really viewed as important in some communities. He stated, "I don't think it's something that's stressed, so a lot of kids don't take school seriously. Kids in poverty areas sometimes have self-esteem issues. That takes away from them coming to class ready to learn." Teachers of Indian students in areas of culture and poverty have to be well-rounded and ready to make those adaptations in the classroom or socially with their students.

### *Tribal Identity*

The belief in the North Ridge School District is that all aspects of tribal life affect the education of their children. When the community members were asked how parents and communities work to validate and foster a sense of tribal identity among Indian children, one community member stated,

One thing that I'm doing is trying to practice; I'm trying to live the traditions, ceremonies. Traditions of being a Great Plains Indian and what that is. I'm quite involved in spiritual ceremonies along with tribal laws,

state laws—you know that you have to live with. Maintain your own traditions and philosophies also. So, I think if community members can do that, it will show Indian kids they can be Indians and still do what they need to do.

Another community member stated,

While growing up, mainly my mom and dad spoke our language on a daily basis, but they did not teach us. We understood a lot of things and I understood our language, but I just didn't talk it. Now, my son is a police officer and he knows the state laws, the federal laws. He's learning on his own, because when he goes to houses, they mainly speak the tribal language and it is difficult for him, but he is picking it up and he's learning from an elder. He's trying to learn as much as he can. I try to teach my kids they can be Indian and they can also survive. My mom and dad thought we couldn't survive if we knew our language, if we practiced our ways, but, I'm going back to our traditional ways. I have a hard time still understanding our language. I had some medical problems and that really kind of halted me learning our own language, but kids can still learn their language and they can still participate in the culture. They can learn their traditional ways and still survive in this world. My kids are trying. I have a couple that don't really want to or they are kind of scared, but I have a couple that really do.

There are twenty-one communities on the Great Plains reservation. Some communities and parents are more traditional than others. In other words, they speak the language and practice more of the traditions than others. This may cause concerns with identity or self-esteem among students all coming to one school and being expected to interact with one another. At the elementary level, the students were able to attend school within their community. When they move in grades to the middle school and high school, they have to leave their communities and interact with other students from other communities. One of the high school teachers expressed,

We have the kids that we have coming to our school being bused from different communities. I guess you would say there's a little bit of a rivalry there. Kids they don't know. I think there's a little bit of a community rivalry there, and if you tried to get them all, that causes some problems in our school, the community rivalry, and a lot of it is family—family rivalry that we get into. Sometimes with discipline issues there's a history with some families, they don't function well together, and we have to try to

make that work here. Sometimes, too, I think it's tough for a kid who's coming in from an outlying school, an eighth grader, having to come in and blend into a larger population in a big school, a high school. For them, our school is a big school, for other schools looking at us, 400 kids is not very much, but that's a lot of people to have to function with. So, we try to create an atmosphere of togetherness as much as possible, and get along in a high school setting like we have here. As far as tribal, just things that we did to educate them about the tribal things that they have in common for education, and try to get them to understand that part of it.

Dr. Heart is adamant about making sure that the district and schools make every effort and attempt to get as much parental involvement as possible. Parental involvement is viewed by the district as a priority, but getting parents involved remains a struggle. Dr. Heart talked about one of the elementary schools possibly establishing a school uniform policy:

I remember at one of the elementary schools, the principal was pushing for school uniforms and decided to go forward with it. She started having these meetings with their parent council at first and encouraging them to bring more people to the next meeting. So they were meeting every week talking about it. She and I thought that maybe we could use their school as an example and go ahead try. We had talked to the tribal council because the tribal council was giving out clothing orders. I don't know how much money they gave out. We felt if we could get some money from the tribe, we could buy enough nice shirts for the girls to wear; but it seemed that the parents that came were voicing their opinion, and they didn't want to try it. So, it was—I don't know what they call it now, the distributive leadership, the people that it is going to affect, you get them involved with the decision and the parents kind of made it clear to us, the ones that would show up, we couldn't get to the others. We would invite them and have feeds, and she had a couple of meetings out here at the college's multi-purpose building over here to get away from the school. There is basically some people that showed up all of the time; we couldn't get to the grass roots people. We wanted to see what they would say, because in the reading and research that we did, this is who it was going to benefit. They didn't have to worry about competing with the parents that could afford to buy nice sweaters, hoods and that kind of stuff for students. The ones we wanted to hear from, but we couldn't get the word back from them, even though we came out to the community. One time, we chose twenty parents and grandparents that we never had much connection with; they didn't come to the parent/family nights. We sent special letters; we had a meeting just for them. I think about three of them showed up. They were a little embarrassed about being there, so we just told them what we wanted.

Actually, that group, three were excited about trying it. We didn't have enough support at the other meetings, so we just kind of backed off.

The impact of the school district on families and communities can be seen in many situations. The connections the district tried to make with the communities sometimes occurred at unscheduled moments. The benefits of the technology Dr. Heart worked to acquire did not always occur within the walls of the school or classroom. Dr. Heart clearly enjoyed telling this story:

I always told the story about the police officer who was making his rounds at one of the elementary schools and there was a car parked there. Probably this time of year, the windows were all fogged up, but he could see colored lights going off in there. So he parked behind the car and went up and knocked on the window, and one of the community parents rolled his window down. The police officer said, "What are you doing?" And the parent said, "Well, my daughter got her new computer from the school." And it was all wireless and he wanted to email his son who was overseas someplace, so she said, "Well, let's go up to the school, we can get on my computer." They couldn't do it at home because they didn't have the wherewithal to do it. So they drove up to the school; she got on her wireless internet and they could send some wireless information over to his son, her brother. I always thought that was kind of a heart wrenching story to tell people.

### *Cultural Identity in the School District*

The district statements of belief, mission, learner outcomes/goals, and vision formulate the purpose of the district. Following the creation of these documents or any amendments to these documents, the school board gives their approval of them. Subsequent to board approval, the responsibility of overseeing and ensuring that the documents are being adhered to or followed belongs to the superintendent and his leadership team.

According to the state department of education, the annual fall enrollment data reflects the American Indian student population of the North Ridge School District is 95% or higher. Although listed as a public school district, the North Ridge School

District is located on the Great Plains Indian reservation. The Great Plains reservation is home for Dr. Heart. He was born on the reservation and is an enrolled member of the tribe. As an American Indian education leader working in a predominately Indian student population in an Indian community, Dr. Heart's push to have a cultural emphasis in the education of the young people on the Great Plains reservation was be strongly justified.

This position was not always supported by the school board. The primary reason for this was that of the five member board, three members (majority) were non-Indian and represented the smaller percentage of the non-Indian population on the reservation.

Dr. Heart explained,

Several times I began a discussion with the school board because part of the vision in there, we made a statement about trying to get our students to be—by the time they graduate—be bilingual in the Great Plains language. Every time we get a new board member and usually it was one of the non-Indian one's, they would question that. "Why do we have that in there? We're not doing it!" I told them we need to leave it in there because it is something we have to strive for. So, it was challenged a few times, but we always managed to leave it in there. . . . That was something that I insisted on, even though I worked for the board, but the seventeen years I was there, they did keep it in there and we still strived for that. I made sure we had enough instructors, and made sure we always had a position on staff for integration of Indian studies.

The efforts the school district has made to validate and foster a sense of tribal identity since Dr. Heart became the superintendent is visible. The Director of Linguistics and Culture asserted,

I've seen more students that really feel good about who they are and they're okay, they're going to be alright. I think that's half there. Before, probably, maybe ten years ago, fifteen years ago, I saw our kids who more assimilated do well, but I'm not seeing that anymore. I'm seeing our kids being more acculturated, feeling that they're okay in their culture and in the other culture. I'm finding that balance—they don't have to give up their culture, to be successful. I feel our kids moving more in that direction, which is really interesting. I think what we have done since Dr. Heart's been here has caused that to happen, feeling good about themselves, validating culture.

Dr. Heart led by example. His belief in the mission and vision of the district was the basis for his decision making. One program director stated,

Everything he did, he said we're not going to it unless it's part of our vision. And we turned down programs. I remember Reading First; there was a grant and they said, well, North Ridge should be part of this grant, but it wasn't what we were about. It wasn't what or where we were going with balanced literacy. It was all phonetic and teacher directed. So he said, no, we're not going to go there, even though it's thousands of dollars or something. But everything he—we talked about—and we talked about it in a group. Anytime we talked about any big decision that would affect our school district, we talked about it around the circle. We were all involved in that discussion. And it always came down to our vision statements and our outcomes, because, if we didn't believe it, we were not going to go there. The federal programs director did the same thing with his grants. He wrote his grants based on our documents [vision and mission]. If they didn't fit, then we weren't going to go there. So, if there was anything single that gave us direction, I think it was our founding document—I mean our mission statement and vision because those things drove us. We always look back to that.

### *Indigenous Knowledge*

The second theme to emerge from the data focused on the educational experiences that created indigenous knowledge. There were two identified forms of knowledge: 1) cultural knowledge and 2) academic knowledge. These forms of knowledge are context specific and provide for the creation of Indigenous knowledge that defines Indian education on the River Bend Reservation.

### *Cultural Knowledge*

The district statement of beliefs clearly indicates the desire of the district and its stakeholders to validate and foster a sense of cultural identity by including the teaching of Great Plains culture and various aspects of tribal life in the education of their students. The belief is that students will develop a respect for themselves and others as well as develop a stronger self-esteem about who they are as an indigenous person and as a member of their tribal community. The development of cultural knowledge context

specific to the twenty-one communities on the River Bend Reservation lends itself to the defining of Indian education. In support of this effort, Dr. Heart was adamant about the involvement and utilization of parents in all aspects of program and curriculum development.

Dr. Heart identified one of his major responsibilities as the integration of Indian studies into the programs and curriculum of district schools. The high school principal explained the changes in curriculum:

A group of us worked together to develop the Indian Studies Standards, which all faculty were to incorporate in their curriculum. We incorporated many cultural courses to the course listings and made some of them requirements for graduation. The purpose was so that all students would have some familiarity with the local government and culture where they lived and attended school. We also had the students participating in service learning activities in the community to make our students appreciate their community and the communities have more respect for our youth. Our graduation ceremony always was reflective of the local culture, including a wacipi (pow wow). Our students held forums before tribal elections and also did mock tribal elections in the school. Of course, we had surface culture which included art work around the building.

Many tribes, including the Great Plains tribe, take great pride in the fact that so many of their people participate in the military. Dr. Heart believes in the importance of honoring Indian veterans:

You advocate as much as possible for things to make them proud of their culture. I always insisted that the schools do some kind of a program to honor veterans on Veteran's Day. No matter what it was, as you know, the Native American, per capita, people that volunteered for the services was always way higher than any other group in the United States. I said you need to honor those people, and so I always made it mandatory that the schools have some kind of a program, no matter what it is, to honor them. And there were some pretty good ideas from having a feed or having them come in and talk to the different classes, or people would bring in their dads and their grandpas into the school system like the week before and then have a big get together on Veteran's Day. That was an example of the way I thought they honored Native American vets.

Further evidence of cultural activities in schools was expressed by one of the classroom teachers, who stated,

In addition to instructional activities within the curriculum, the school and staff support the student cultural organizations and drum groups. We have had a lot of cultural assemblies and gatherings using cultural music. For example, the tribal Flag Song is sung before each home athletic event. The school brings in a lot of leaders from the community to speak to the students—sometimes about cultural values. That happens a lot. Anytime there is a topic at hand, they try to get someone from the community to address the students—they're respectful to that. There has been a push to try to get that in there—to try to get culture into the classroom. We have to try to reflect that in our lessons, the cultural strand in our lessons.

Although noting that there was evidence of more activities and events with a cultural focus, one of the students felt that the board was not always supportive of the events.

I think there was more school wide or district wide events that were held that were based on the culture. I think it did give students more of an individual chance to be more individual. I am trying to think back to how it was then. I know the administration was supportive, but I don't think the board was too supportive of it at the time.

The need for cultural activities in the schools is apparent throughout the community and to many of the community people. Those who are in positions or jobs where they feel they have something to offer in the area of teaching culture are especially aware of this need. The Director of the tribal bison ranch explained,

I teach classes in land management, and bison management and ecology for the university. I teach from a tribal perspective, that these plants are what we need and what our animals need. These animals, if you look at animals and you watch them closely, they have a social order that is very strictly adhered to. I tell these kids this is the way it is. The tribe and the bison were the same level of independence and the same level of being. We followed them and they did it right. They have survived through centuries and centuries of destruction and still kept this orderly thing. That order has to be adhered too. You find some kids now, the little guys are doing way better than they use to, but there's a group of kids—from 7<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup>. They are lost in this world. They are disrespectful, they have no social structure, and they have no manners. I've been somewhat

working with that group, taking them out and I developed a program called social structures. I take kids out, kids that are having a real hard time and stuff to the buffalo pasture. If you stay with those animals for a 12 to 18 hour cycle and watch what they do and how they do it. It kind of gives you a little insight on how you are supposed to do things. I want to turn this into a full time educational thing. There are some of the kids, like I said, they are lost, and I think that's one way of finding their way back to being in Indian education or tribal structure. How would you say that? I think some schools are working on that a little harder than others. Schools invite me into their classrooms in the early fall and late spring. I'm over there one day a week talking to different classrooms about the thing. After two or three sessions, we bring them over to the buffalo pasture and kind of conclude our adventure, our talk on what all [of] this means.

The validation of culture in schools through the creation of cultural activities and events and the utilization of tribal elders and leaders require the involvement of the community. There must be a trust relationship built on respect between the schools and communities as well as the families who reside within the communities. The desire to meet the needs of the community and ability to create involvement or establish a connection can be difficult or slow in developing due to tension or barriers.

When asked about the involvement of the parents and communities in the school programs and functions and activities, one faculty member stated, "Not as much as we would like them to be. I mean, it's better, but not as much as we'd like them to be."

Another faculty member commented,

I can't put my finger on it, because I know the schools are still trying. They're still sending out invitations, they're still going out and trying to get the parents to come. But maybe it's just harder, it seems like the times are more stressful or something. They're just not involved. I don't see parents participating like they did in the past. I can't put my finger on it. Because the policies are there and the schools are still trying to do it, so I don't understand why it's not happening, and the only thing I could see is that it's more stressful in the communities with all the suicides and all that. I don't know.

Parent and community involvement continue to be a priority concern in the district and efforts to improve involvement will continue. The Director of the Linguistics and Culture Program explained past efforts to involve parents and community:

We brought 4 or 5 different facilitators from the community and we trained them as facilitators. We went to all the communities and asked – we had focus groups. We divided them into groups and we had specific questions, and we had really good participation at some of the outlying communities. When we came into Learner, we didn't have anything. So we thought well, maybe they didn't feel comfortable at the school. So we moved it out to the university; we still didn't have good participation. But at one of the outlying schools, we had more participation than we did here. But it seemed as if the outlying communities wanted to participate more than here in Learner when we did go out, which is really strange. They were just focus groups, we asked them about education—general things about education. What I found was really interesting. In one community a lot of the elders said that they only went to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, so they said it was okay if their children only went to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. So they didn't think that we should be pushing them so much for high school, which I was really shocked at because they just came right out and said it. That was one thing that came out. Some of our schools that are going through restructuring we meet with the community. Just last year, we got the same kind of feedback. I want to keep my kids here in this little community. I don't want them go—like they even saw Learner as white, they called it a white community. It's really a different way of looking at it. So, I want them here, I don't want them there. So, I think we need to spend more time with the community and get down to their thinking, with how they feel about it.

The idea of barriers between the community and the schools that prohibit parents from getting involved is something that is always thought about. More importantly, the question is, “How can these barriers be eliminated?” A program director attributed the lack of involvement to the trust the parents have in the school:

I used to think about that all the time. Because, that's one of the things, it's trying to get your parents so involved in your school. I was always thinking, if there was *one thing* that we could do to get them in here, we would have found it by now, because look how many years we've been trying. And to me, it just seems like that parents just trust us with their kids. They trust what we're doing, until they find out there's something we're not doing and then that's when we're gonna see them. But you know there is—I tried every way I could to get one hundred percent participation. The schools I worked at, I only got it a couple times and I

tried everything. That's the only thing I could think of is that people just trust us with their kids. They trust what we're doing. At least, that was what I told myself. I must be doing all right with their kids, because they're not over here jumping down my throat or anything. But if there was one sure way to get those parents to be involved in the education process, that would be so good. But, I don't know if it will ever happen.

### *Academic Knowledge*

Academic knowledge is knowledge that is acquired through the education provided by the North Ridge School District. The efforts of the district have been to coordinate academic knowledge with the integration of cultural knowledge. This has sometimes created a competition between what is viewed as Indian and non-Indian education and differences between the communities and the schools. Meeting the educational needs of Indian students by creating a more culturally relevant curriculum is further complicated by the mandated guidelines, regulations and policies of the state and federal bureaucracies.

### *Curriculum*

Dr. Heart and the district have felt the impact of the data driven mandates of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation and the state's process of implementation. His belief is that NCLB created a conflict with the district statement of beliefs, mission statement, learner outcomes/goals, and vision statement." Dr. Heart stated, "NCLB made a big change in what we were trying to do more than anything else here. Dr. Heart expounded on the impact of NCLB:

They were taking a snapshot of our students once a year—these tests. Then we had to respond to that and all of their recommendations. The state kind of dictated what our process was to go through school improvement. I'm sure you are familiar with data driven workshops we had to have and to come out where everything just seems to be like second place for us on different recommendations that we had to come forward with. That kind of changed what I thought we were a little bit freer flowing with the communities. I think they got a little upset, too, because we said this is the

process we have to go through. We have to invite parents to come in, and this is the process that the state chose to do. Each state had their own system on how they dealt with school improvement and we had to do a data retreat, come up with a school improvement plan. It was all screwed up, because our test scores we never got back, many times until school started. So then, we had that whole year to plan for next year and for some reason, we had a couple of those instances where your school did make school improvement, then you just developed a plan for the next year and then the next year. They tell you, "Well, you don't have to do it now." So, we kind of got messed up in there. Some of our schools, I don't know if they're ever going to make AYP just because they are more traditional communities. There is nothing out there for the families. The poverty is unbelievable in those areas out there, and you drive out in those communities, you can just see it and wonder. I'm always amazed at how we even get kids to school from those communities, realizing some of the things that are going on in those houses at night. NCLB I think, in fact, that was kind of one of the things that ran me out of administration, because I felt we were doing a disservice to a lot of our Native American students here, even though the state was pushing it and the school board was getting tired of hearing about our test scores. And I just kept saying, "I think we got other issues here, we just need to worry about just getting our kids to school and getting them a meal and keeping them warm and once we get that done, then maybe we can teach them something, but we got to deal with that first." They [the board] said, "Well, no we got to worry about our test scores." We did all those things for the state and it was just year after year it just became a routine. I think they are basically going through the same thing now that, by the end of November you have to have your data retreat done for your school and you have to come up with a plan for school improvement. You have to present it school committees and eventually propose it to the board by the end of March for the following year. They have to accept it. Then you have to send it up to the state department, and they have to accept it. Then you go through, and then the scores come back again. So then you go into the second year and go through the whole same process again. It kind of doesn't leave a lot of openings for some thinking, some wide open thinking about some things that you want to try.

Dr. Heart consistently reaffirmed his support of the district vision and mission statements, despite the demands of NCLB and state requirements. Everything the district continues to do to educate their students is based on the district statement of beliefs, mission statement, learner outcomes/goals, and vision statement. The district has also defined what success should look like for their students.

One of the former students who is now a teacher emphasized the importance of a culturally relevant curriculum: “I just think that if we had more culturally relevant classes, it could help them feel more empowered by who they are and what they are. And I think that’s something that our kids definitely need now.” Another former student, also a teacher reiterated a similar belief:

I know there were a couple of classes that we could take, and it’s the same way now at the high school. I think if we had required classes, required curriculum that was set to get us on track with language, so that by the time students graduated from high school, they’d be fluent or at least along with American history have to take tribal history classes, or more specifically Great Plains history classes. It’s something that people have pushed for in the past and haven’t really had too much success. I know when we were students, it was something that the students would have bought into, and they would buy into it now, too. Not that it needs to be a sold program, but it’s something that they would feel necessary to help them with their identity.

A former Coordinator of Indian Studies who is now retired believes that a more culturally relevant curriculum affects the success of Indian students. She wrote,

I gave many workshops on the relevance of culture for our children in education. I used my education as an educator to voice my opinions on the importance and relevance of Indian Studies. Culturally relevant curriculum would give students validation to their place in this world. It would teach them that tribal values, language and traditions define who they are and that they can succeed as a tribal member. They would learn to live in a multicultural society, yet have validation and self-esteem in who they are. It would teach them appreciation for other cultures.

### *Personnel Issues*

Developing and implementing a culturally relevant curriculum can be viewed as a step forward in defining Indian education on the River Bend Reservation. Dr. Heart went to great lengths to provide funding and training for the development of culturally specific curriculum and educational methods. Positive gains were made in the areas of curriculum; however, an over shadowing concern remains and that is the lack of Native

teachers and administrators. This issue can sometimes cause ongoing concerns if not properly addressed through orientation, in-service, or staff development.

Dr. Heart is aware of the need for Native teachers and administrators. Although not always available, his next concern was “making sure I find people who are smarter than I am. And give them a chance to put their intellects to work. But I think it’s to make sure I had good people.” He sought to find teachers who possessed “intelligence, enthusiasm . . . and something that the students can see that there’s that care there, that respect and that trust.” Whether Indian or non-Indian, local or national, Dr. Heart took advantage of what options he had available to find the best teachers. He explained the process he utilized to acquire teachers:

I don’t know how familiar you are with the Teach for America program. We had probably 6 years ago this young man came to see me about this Teach for America program. We were just having some difficulty in recruiting teachers to come not only to the state, but to come work on the reservation. We use to go to the different teacher fairs in the state and in other states. We wouldn’t have any problem getting all kinds of elementary teachers and even secondary teachers. We wouldn’t have a lot of problems recruiting because people wanted to go into the teaching profession, but that kind of changed 5 to 7 years ago. This guy came in and saw me and he said, “Do you know anything about Teach for America?” We go out and we recruit from all the top colleges in the country and we find people, it is kind of like the Teacher Corp, we find them and ask if they want to come and commit themselves to work and teach for a couple years in high poverty areas. They didn’t only do reservations, but they did like Appalachia and some of the real bad urban areas in some of the bigger cities. They came and talked to us, we’ll do all of that and you just let us know what positions you want and then we’ll try to go out and find you some people. So, I finally convinced the board after 3 or 4 meetings to go ahead try this. The problem was and it is still the problem, by the time we came up with our list of what we needed their recruitment was pretty much done already, so we just kind of had to luck out and get these individuals. So the first year we got maybe ten of them. And they do come from—they have the data—students that apply are usually in the top 10% of the colleges, you know from Michigan, Oregon State, and Harvard, DePaul and a lot of these places. Once they go through their process, they come with the information, so they already have been

weeded out once, then they come to us, and we can make a selection of the individuals that we think we can utilize.

Teachers must possess knowledge, and they must also possess the abilities to acclimate themselves to the situations or circumstances where they work and who they work with. The measure of their effectiveness will be evaluated by the results of those interactions based on the qualities and characteristics that they exhibit.

One student spoke of the need to be able to identify with the teacher:

I think the most important quality as a teacher, native, non-native, is somebody you can identify with, whatever kind of level. You know, as a woman, as anything, as somebody who is from the same culture that you are or somebody who is on the same street as you are. I think it's just having that respect and being able to connect with them on any sort of level makes them that much more powerful in affecting your life, reaching you. Showing you that once they can get you to open up for whatever reason, then they have the power to show you a lot more than if they didn't take the time to open you up.

Another student focused on the need for teachers to be fair and non-judgmental with students:

It was the teachers who really were fair with the students, who took the group of students that they had and worked with them and pushed them as much as they could. I'm thinking of my favorite classes, like choir—the teachers that we had in there who weren't native, but really made an impact on the students then and then there were a few native teachers, too, who were from here, and then it was easy to identify with them. But it was, I mean the characteristics were those who were willing to take whoever they got and go with them. They didn't judge you when you walked in the door.

A third student spoke of the need for teacher to be respectful, supportive, and caring:

I think the teachers that really kind of sit up and you know, they're ones that I'd see them in the store now and they don't get a "Hi," they get a hug. The ones that really stand out and a lot of it comes down to respect. They respect you as a student and they really reached out and just what you did mattered. I guess they just grabbed hold of you and not shake you till you got it, but just kind of encouraged you and were there, supportive. The choir teacher was awesome. English teachers, most of them were

awesome. They were there and they cared. They didn't just say here's a book, read this, read that. They really pushed you and cared.

The former Coordinator of Indian Studies who is a member of the Great Plains tribe identified some visible qualities or characteristics of culturally responsive teachers without regard to being Indian or non-Indian. She stated,

Culturally responsive teachers are those who succeed with our students. They are the teachers who are open to changing their views and accepting others for who they are. They are the teachers who the students go to for help and who the students like. They are the teachers who do not lower their expectations/standards and they convince the students that they can succeed. They are encouraging and give student's confidence. They are the teachers who do not lose their students before the end of the semester. I remember teachers who lost over 75% of their students before the end of the semester. These teachers, of course blamed the parents, community and student – they never looked at themselves and their attitudes, their prejudices and the way they taught and related to students.

A former principal of the high school, who is a community and tribal member, believes culturally responsive teachers are teachers who are “caring, concerned, tolerant, friendly, welcoming, and non-judgmental, and they do not come with pre-conceived thoughts about how the students are (i.e. bad, violent, can't learn etc.)” A former assistant principal said culturally responsive teachers are “teachers who see children as they would any other child, who is sensitive, wants to learn, sometimes needs to learn trust, and wants to be respected.” In response to what qualities or characteristics do culturally responsive teachers exhibit, one of the high school teachers stated,

They have a good blend of how to be accepting of cultural differences, but at the same time not lowering their expectations. Their expectations still remain high; they still want the kids to attain as high educationally as they can. Still want them to value learning. And at the same time, I guess tolerant to some of those things I mentioned before. Culturally—not only do we have a tribal culture here, but we also have a culture of poverty, so be responsive to that, also. But at the same time, too, still having high expectations for those kids, wanting them to succeed, making sure that they stay focused on what they need to get accomplished.

The Director of Linguistics and Culture shared her view of what qualities and characteristics culturally responsive teachers possess. She stated,

I don't think we are there yet. I think we have a lot of teachers that are culturally sensitive and aware, but I don't think we have any that are proficient. We have some that are there. As a whole we want to get there. My new goal is to have every teacher become bi-cultural. They have to know their own culture as well as ours. I can do that by going to one teacher at a time and so I am starting at one of the schools and then going to the outlying schools before I come into these schools. I think it has to be comfortable, being reflective, finding out about the culture. Because I don't think our teachers really think about that. With all the pressures we have with NCLB, they're more likely to drill and kill or more apt to present something so they will get the test results, be up there, so they make AYB. And so they are not thinking about what might be, how they can do it differently, so once they realize that if they tie it to their culture, the children are going to achieve. That the children are grounded in their culture and they are going to achieve. But I don't think we are there yet. Hopefully, we can get there before I retire (laughter). You know I have gone, I think we really have some good people, and I think we really try hard. But I think our kids are hurting by what's happening outside of school sometimes. And I think it's really difficult for them to put all that aside and go forward.

### *Defining Indian Education*

The term Indian education has different meanings to different people. With over 561 different tribes, each tribe will have their own definition that is context specific to the culture of their reservation or communities. For the people on the River Bend Reservation, their definition of Indian education will take into account their cultural values, traditions, and beliefs. Dr. Heart and the North Ridge School District must consider those values, traditions, and beliefs in order to create a culturally relevant education that is responsive to the needs of the people. This effort may lead to a definition of Indian education on the reservation. When asked to define Indian education, Dr. Heart stated,

I think it's probably on a couple levels. I think something very simple to make sure the students who come through your secondary and elementary

programs are able to compete for college scholarships like anybody else or compete for jobs out in the public sector like anybody else, or the other option for them is to get into the service and have an equal opportunity as everybody else does. Saying that, then there's another level that has to do with the cultural part of it. To make sure that you in no way defame what a lot of them have grown up knowing in their homes, that you don't allow that to happen, that you don't break their hearts or take that spirit away from them. Somewhere in your system, elementary or secondary, you advocate as much as possible, things to make them proud of their cultures. I think when you talk about Indian Education and if you find a person who comes through your system, someone who kept that side of the culture along with going out on the academics and competing there in different places. Those are the ones you ought to be proud of. I think the tribal university helps contribute to that, 'cause they try to pick it up after the elementary and secondary program, I think they try to carry the same things out. The more I sit out here and work, the parents are always critical of the university and the academic programs that they have; they felt they still needed more. I am not going to argue with that. Send your kids to Harvard, Notre Dame and some of those bigger places to get a better education, but there's still a whole group of students here that the university gives an option. If we can do a better job of recruiting those students out here. I looked at their data; the age of the typical student is going down right now it's like twenty-four, I think, but if we can get that down where we can pick up a lot more of the graduates—I think that's what the office that my wife's in right now that is kind of their responsibility is to those students that aren't going to go off to other colleges, that we try to get them to come in here. Her program is—they offer a kind of transition year into the college. They test them and if they don't pass these academic tests then they can enroll in their classes that they teach. They teach the four basic areas Math, Science, Social Studies, English. They can sign up for those classes, they don't get credit for them, but they can get financial help and stuff—to help them for a year any way. Then, into their freshmen year we are trying to reach some of those students that would probably never go on anywhere else.

The students were each given an opportunity to define Indian education utilizing their own voice, a voice they feel they have earned through the development of their cultural or tribal identity and an understanding of their place in community. While each definition is unique, the common strand in all is culture. The first student's definition emphasized that Indian Education extends beyond the reservation and is sensitive to the students' history and family background.

I think Indian Education involves not only working on a tribal reservation, but dealing with Native American students no matter where you are and being sensitive to the history and background of those students. It is the view toward education, that might come from history or from the families; it's more of a mainstream education topic than people think—it doesn't just involve reservations or people who grew up on reservations, I think it's broader than that.

Another student defined Indian Education as the future and survival, the balancing of two different cultures:

I think Indian Education for me, when I hear that Indigenous people as a whole, you know, we have so much—different issues out there, not just different issues, but values—and we're at this really—and I don't know how long it's going to be for us to be at this level, but we're trying to reeducate ourselves. Right now, our language is about gone. Myself, I'm not a fluent speaker and that's something I want; that's something I want for my kids. I think the biggest thing when I think about Indian Education as a parent – that's a big one 'cause there's so much to that. It's not just the culture, it's the future, and it's like survival. We're at this point where we need to keep moving forward; we need to find about where we come from—we can't forget that. We have to hang on to language, preserving it. Also the biggest thing I can define it as is letting them know that it's okay to be where you're at—be who you are. Me, I was—most of us here, you have two different cultures in your household—try to balance them. Letting yourself know you're comfortable there and encouraging it.

The critical need for Indians to educate themselves in order to preserve their culture was emphasized by another student:

It's a critical time, because even within my own family, the generation who knew anything about Native American culture is gone. So this is a make or break time, we've got to start fostering Native American culture in our education, respecting the cultural values and get away from assimilating to western culture, and getting out there, educating ourselves, because I'd be the first to admit that I do not know enough. So I've got to practice what I preach and get out there and learn from people.

Finally, Indian Education was seen as respect for knowing “who we are”:

My definition of Indian Education is basically it comes down to respect, respecting the individuality of a person. Not necessarily their culture—I think the main thing is, it's hard to separate our culture here because it's everywhere, it's everything, it's who we are. Indian Education to me is the

fostering of that—the fostering of people feeling worth for who they are, respecting that, encouraging that.

The community/parent/ tribal participants shared their perspectives on how they define Indian Education. One definition was simply related to respect; there needed to be a respect for people, culture, language, and the traditions; there needed to be more parent involvement in the education of children and a teaching of the tribal ways. Other definitions of Indian education focused on social structures and social involvement: “We learn to take care of ourselves and each other. It is a social order type of thing.” The elder of the group provided a historical perspective of Indian education, people becoming totally dependent with no ability to make decisions on their own without consent. Indian education is about making the Indian totally dependent. Another definition was that Indian people should honor the past generations and prepare future generations to be responsive to preserving their role as protectors and good relatives of the earth. “Indian education is having an understanding of who you are and where you come from. It is our beliefs as tribal people and this is how we learn.”

Members of the faculty who were program directors, school administrators and teachers offered their definition of Indian education. The first program director used a historical perspective to define Indian education:

When I think of Indian education, I think historically of course, and what was done to us. Going back to boarding school, Carlyle, going back to assimilation—all those things that school was supposed to do to make us like America. To me, that was Indian education. So now we’re at a point where we need to take over and say “This is what Indian education is, this is what it looks like.” And what I think what we have done here at North Ridge or tried to do is Indian education. When we look at our documents, we look and say, “Well we want you to be a self-directed learner,” to me, that is not looking at that child. We’re looking at that child as an adult, so let’s give them those skills so that you can be a self-directed and so when you’re a tribal council member, you’re going to be making good decisions for the people. To me, I think, if I’m thinking about Indian education at

North Ridge, I'm thinking about it as those outcomes, and they're 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, if you think about what 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are. They are the same things that we said years ago about outcome education, outcome education was a bad word then, but you know those are the same things. Those are like problem-solvers, self-directed learner, and good communicators, all of that, those are 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. For Indian education then, those are where we want them to be, so they can do whatever they want to do, and make the good choices. But, when I think of Indian education, when you just say Indian education, I really get a bad feeling, because it's what has been done to us, what has been done to us in the past. And I hope that's going to change. It's probably changing. So, that's my response.

A former program director offered her belief that Indian education must teach children to live in two societies, with a strong cultural identity:

I always defined Indian education—teaching. I think that the Indian communities have not yet defined Indian Education. This is the problem. I would like to see the school and community get together, maybe have some forums on what the communities want for their children when it comes to education. I think that some of us are still in the boarding school mode where we had no choices and could not articulate the type of education we wanted for our children. Indian Education would teach our children that they must learn to live in two societies, but they must above all have a strong foundation in their cultural identity. In my case, I step into white man's world to work but when I come home I am HOME – in my tribal world.

One of the teachers from the high school offered this definition, focusing on the teacher role in Indian education:

I don't know, when I think about that—it's a type of, maybe, adaptations you have to make to maybe what you call non-Indian education. You have to make adaptations to be able to teach a Native American or in an Indian area that you might not have to in other areas—areas of culture, areas of poverty. There are all kinds of adaptations you have to make, so I think Indian Education is to be well-rounded and ready to make those adaptations in the classroom or socially with your students.

The need to teach the “whole child” so they can survive on and off the reservation was how another Program Director defined Indian education:

To me Indian Education is teaching the whole child—the whole child, emotionally, spiritually, educationally. We need to reach the whole child

instead of all these different things that we're teaching them all the time. The kids are trying to put this together here at school as to what's going on in their community/home, whatever. If I could win a million dollars, I would build my own school and teach it the way where no one else could tell me you have to do this, you have to do that, you have to do that, I would just teach the whole child—whatever it took to fix that or help that child. So they could survive on the reservation or off the reservation. They will have that capability to fit in anywhere. That is what I think is Indian education.

Through an analysis of the interviews, field and interview logs and documents, the cultural experiences that constructs cultural identity and the educational experiences that created Indigenous knowledge emerged as themes of this qualitative inquiry. Dr. Heart, faculty participants, student participants, and community/parent/tribal participants, through their stories and in their own voices, assisted the researcher in presenting the data.

### *Conclusion*

The study design, data collection methods, conceptual underpinning, research questions and process of data analysis were discussed in Chapter Four. In addition, a description of the school and reservation setting and an introduction of the participants were also discussed. In Chapter Four, the use of the Tribal Critical Race Theory tenet of storytelling and the use of the participant's voice were presented. Discussed in Chapter Five are the findings and conclusions based on the data analysis. In addition, presented in Chapter Five are the implications for practice and recommendations for future study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### *Introduction*

This single case study examined the leadership experiences of an American Indian education leader working in a public school district serving predominately American Indian students on an American Indian reservation. The data were triangulated by comparing the participant interviews, interview observations, field notes, documents, and artifacts for identification of recurring themes. From the data, two themes emerged that identified the cultural experiences that construct cultural identity and the educational experiences that create Indigenous knowledge. A summary of the findings of the inquiry and conclusions based on the data analysis will be discussed in Chapter Five. Additionally, the implications for practice and recommendations for future study will also be discussed.

An essential element of this study was the use of storytelling and voice in the collection of data. Stories were told by individuals who were members of the tribe, members of their communities and a part of the reservation on which they live. Brayboy (2005) posited that central to Tribal Critical Race Theory is the difference between listening to stories and hearing them. Listening to an individual is acting engaged and allowing them to talk. Hearing an individual acknowledges the value attributed to them and the authority and distinctness of their stories and because the listener understands.

Therefore, this researcher determined that a case study approach would allow the researcher to obtain the language, or voice of the participants (Creswell, 2003). Since the goal of this inquiry was to understand the actual experiences and beliefs of the

participants, the researcher placed emphasis on the participants' personal voice to present the data.

### *Summary of Findings*

The overarching questions guiding this qualitative inquiry are “How does one American Indian education leader describe his experiences?” and “How does the leader influence or give voice to his constituents?” The study was viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit). According to Brayboy (2005), there are nine tenets of TribalCrit that address the range and variation of experiences of individuals who are American Indian:

- 1) TribalCrit is based on the notion that colonization is endemic to society;
- 2) TribalCrit recognizes that U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain;
- 3) TribalCrit believes Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of their identities;
- 4) TribalCrit is rooted in a belief in and desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification;
- 5) TribalCrit problematizes the concepts of culture, knowledge, and power and offers alternative ways of understanding them when viewed through an Indigenous lens;
- 6) TribalCrit recognizes that governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples have been oriented toward the goal of assimilation;
- 7) TribalCrit emphasizes the importance of Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but also illustrates the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups;
- 8) TribalCrit honors stories and oral knowledge as real and legitimate forms of data and ways of being. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory;
- 9) TribalCrit believes theory and practice must be connected in such a way as to generate movement towards social change. (pp. 429-430)

The following themes related to the cultural and educational experiences of the American Indian leader emerged as data were analyzed: construction of cultural identity and creation of Indigenous knowledge. The researcher sought to answer the following questions:

1. What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to Indian students and faculty as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?
2. What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to an Indian community as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?
3. What impact does an American Indian education leader have on empowering faculty to address the issues that come from giving Indian students a voice?
4. How has an American Indian education leader enhanced the learning of Indian students by giving the Indian community a voice?
5. Who is defining Indian education in the twenty-first century?

The researcher summarized the data presented in Chapter Four that addressed each research question. In addition, interpretations of the data were guided by the literature review.

*What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to Indian students and faculty as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?*

The relevancy of the leadership behaviors exhibited by Dr. Heart are best categorized by those who have a deep understanding of the North Ridge School District statement of beliefs, mission statement, learner outcomes/goals, and vision statement. Shortly after his arrival to the North Ridge School District in 1991, the district became engaged in a process of restructuring and reform, a monumental task that would require direction and the involvement of all stakeholders of the district. During the interview, Dr. Heart stated, “We worked on formulating a mission and vision. We made sure that we had those two items, technology and Indian studies, in there. That was something that all

of the staff got involved in, and we kept going back to those.” Dr. Heart is strongly committed to these documents and his leadership behaviors were predicated on the achievement of the learner outcomes and goals. Furthermore, he recognized his Indian heritage and the importance of his presence as an Indian education leader working on an Indian reservation. He understood that the education provided by the North Ridge School District needed to have a strong cultural emphasis.

Because of Dr. Heart’s strong commitment to the district documents, his expectation was that all stakeholders of the district have the same commitment. The vision clearly defines the responsibility of all stakeholders to work collectively and collaboratively to improve the quality of education and the social well-being of the students. This includes being involved in making the critical decisions that impact the programs in the district and schools. Therefore, having an understanding of the documents and the purpose of the district validates all stakeholders, creating a feeling of empowerment and giving voice to all stakeholders, including students and faculty.

Dr. Heart’s leadership style has been described as a traditional tribal style, which means he has proven himself as a leader who serves the needs of the community with a commitment to working together to improve the quality of life on the reservation. His long braided pony tail and beaded bolo tie were trademarks of his appearance as well as a representation of his pride in his cultural heritage. During the interview, Dr. Heart exhibited a very respectful, friendly, supportive, and caring manner. His willingness to have face to face communication and desire to listen to people was a behavior noted by faculty and students. They also liked his open door policy that he always made people feel comfortable and that he was approachable. My personal recollection of my visits

with Dr. Heart was that as busy as he was, he always made himself available—most times without appointment.

Dr. Heart's leadership style was not one of "being a power monger" or a "control freak." He trusted those who worked for him and made people feel empowered. His belief in the district vision and mission statements supported these behaviors. He had expectations that all stakeholders understood the district vision and mission statements, therefore creating a feeling of empowerment and having a voice while working toward achieving the outcomes and goals. Opportunities for participation by faculty and students were provided through regularly scheduled faculty meetings and department meetings when time was provided for restructuring and reform efforts. Students were often invited to attend department meetings to discuss changes and provide input. Students took advantage of other opportunities that gave them voice, such as participating in the Indian Club, Student Council, National Honor Society, and individual class organizations. Students shared that they felt confident in attending school board meetings if they had concerns.

Based on supportive documents and participant interviews, the behaviors exhibited by Dr. Heart illustrate his desire to achieve the outcomes and goals of the district vision and mission statements. The cultural emphasis needed to achieve these outcomes and goals adhere to the fourth tenet of Tribal Critical Race Theory that focuses on the desire of Indigenous people to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.

*What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to an Indian community as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?*

Dr. Heart validates and fosters a sense of tribal identity by being a member of the tribe, a community member, and a part of the reservation that he serves. Although not raised in a traditional manner, he understands what being Great Plains means. He readily admits not being a speaker of his tribal language makes him uncomfortable at times. During a planning session to discuss a language seminar that the district was to host, he was asked to make some introductory remarks to those in attendance—many would be elders. Dr. Heart indicated how uncomfortable this would make him since he was not a speaker. However, his program directors put his mind at ease by letting him know that those in attendance would not care, because the traditional values and respect for the culture that Dr. Heart exhibits are the values of the Great Plains tribe.

Dr. Heart maintained an open door communication policy with parents and the community. He was insistent that North Ridge staff show respect to parents, especially when visiting in their communities. He saw communication along with trust and respect as key ingredients in building relationships with parents and the community.

Dr. Heart believes that communicating with and involving parents and community leads to their support for what the schools are doing. This was especially apparent during the district's restructuring and reform efforts, along with the mandated plan of improvement needed to satisfy the *No Child Left Behind* law. Program and curriculum changes that may be necessary and their implementation is best supported by parents and community when they were involved.

The North Ridge mission and vision statements emphasize the need for parental involvement when considering possible changes in programs and curriculum or anything that affects the education of the students. Establishing a process of communication and sharing of information with district stakeholders was crucial to their involvement and voice in making important decisions. Dr. Heart sent information about budget, programs, board meeting agendas and board meeting dates as well as other important district information to the tribal council, tribal council members, and community representatives for each of the twenty-one communities.

As part of the restructuring and reform efforts, parent committees were established in each of the district schools. Each school was expected to create a lead teacher to provide some oversight of reform activities and involve staff, students, and parents. Individual buildings had the autonomy to identify in-service needs related to program and curriculum changes. Minutes of all meetings were recorded and sent to Dr. Heart. This kind of communication was designed to keep everyone informed about what was going on in the district and schools in addition to attendance of athletic events. Schools were expected to find ways that would get parents into the schools and develop an effective school/parent/community relationship. For example, the high school principal, along with staff and students, organized a Family Night for families to come to the school and have fun and participate in games and activities developed by student organizations, class organizations, and staff. Many of the activities were instructional, but fun and age appropriate. These events helped to build trust, strengthen relationships, and create positive connections with the parents and communities. These activities helped to

break down barriers and ease any tension about parents not feeling comfortable in coming to the school.

The district vision and mission statements emphasize the need to establish a more culturally relevant curriculum. This creates more opportunity to generate more cultural activities into the schools. One of the elementary schools sponsored a wacipi (pow wow) for the young ones. The high school librarian painted the tribal virtues on the walls of the library to show respect for cultural values. The high school teacher of the tribal government class brought in the tribal president to speak to students about tribal government and tribal law. At athletic events, drum groups sing the national anthem (Flag Song) of the tribe. The use of tribal people and elders in schools is necessary to provide cultural instruction about tribal beliefs, traditions, and customs.

The North Ridge School District is unique in that it is a public school district located on an American Indian reservation. The district-wide Indian student population exceeds 95%. In most school districts, the establishment of a vision and mission statement gives purpose to the district in addressing and meeting the educational needs of the students and community. Similarly, the North Ridge School District is guided by their efforts to establish culturally relevant programs and curriculum in addressing the needs of the students and tribal community. Giving “voice” to the Great Plains people and communities helps to create an understanding of their beliefs and customs that illustrate their individual differences and their ability to adapt among tribes.

*What impact does an American Indian education leader have on empowering faculty to address the issues that come from giving Indian students a voice?*

Giving voice to students is a genuine form of communication that lends support to students understanding of their place in school as well as in their respective communities and in their own lives. Student expectations focused on having a culturally relevant curriculum and culturally responsive teachers. Student participants expressed a variety of ways they were given “voice.” Students felt respected as individuals and were encouraged to speak. Teachers and administrators challenged students to set and achieve goals and to speak out about ways that would help them to achieve them. Students felt they were valued and supported; their teachers took a genuine interest in their cultural needs and concerns as well as in their academic needs and concerns. Communication was open, and teachers were easy to talk too. The students felt supported by faculty.

The student expectations (issues) of culturally relevant curriculum and culturally responsive teachers are challenges that Dr. Heart and the North Ridge School District faculty are faced with as they work to develop Indigenous knowledge that defines Indian education and address the requirements of the state and the mandates of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB). The district is feeling the impact of the data driven NCLB law on the cultural emphasis of the education provided by the North Ridge School District. Dr. Heart expressed this situation strained his relationship with the school board, because their concern seemed only focused on addressing the issues of NCLB—somewhat overshadowing what the district was already doing. In addressing this issue with faculty, Dr. Heart affirmed the need to find a balance, but not at the expense of forgetting the purpose of the district established by the mission and vision statements. The issues of

compliance to NCLB would be addressed, but within the vision and mission set forth by the district.

The emphasis of integrating Indian culture in the curriculum created a need for faculty to become more culturally responsive through the acquisition of knowledge of the Great Plains culture and traditions as well as to acquire the ability to acclimate themselves to a variety of community settings and situations. According to former students, a culturally responsive teacher is someone the students can identify with and respect. Culturally responsive teachers are fair and not judgmental; they believe all students can learn and are willing to work with every student. The former high school principal stressed the importance of recognizing cultural differences and having high expectations of students.

Dr. Heart's leadership can be characterized by the high expectations he had for faculty and staff. He supported opportunities for development and improvement in identified areas of need or professional initiative. A high school teacher reflected on some of the opportunities Dr. Heart provided in support of them becoming better teachers: district trainings, opportunities to attend conferences or training at other locations, staff in-services, bringing in professional speakers, tribal elders, and other cultural speakers with expertise. Other opportunities involved the support of paraprofessional staff by paying for credits and allowing time release from work to attend class—providing the time was made up. The current Director of Linguistics and Culture asked and received release time to attend a cultural doll making class offered by a tribal elder. A current program director shared Dr. Heart's support for her attendance to a major university to work on her doctoral program. Because of a concern over the shortage of counselors, Dr.

Heart sought help from one of the state universities to offer onsite counseling courses to faculty who were interested in becoming certified counselors. Each faculty and staff member had the opportunity to develop a professional development plan that included goals and specific opportunities it would take to achieve these goals; it also included any necessary funding resources. Any district sponsored opportunities that the faculty and staff participated in became a part of the plan.

Dr. Heart supported his expectations for professional growth as well as the expectations of the faculty and staff for professional growth. The primary aim of professional growth was to enhance the knowledge and abilities of faculty and staff in the development of a culturally relevant curriculum and culturally responsive teachers. As viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory, these efforts represent social change by creating a more culturally relevant curriculum and culturally responsive teachers to address the real, immediate, and future needs of tribal people and communities.

*How has an American Indian education leader enhanced the learning of Indian students by giving the Indian community a voice?*

Dr. Heart identified communication as his most important responsibility as the leader of the North Ridge School District. He believes that open communication and being a good communicator with the community gave “voice” and empowered them.” His belief was that if faculty and staff communicated with parents and communities and let them know what the schools were doing, they would support what the schools were doing and that would help to create a more successful school. Dr. Heart indicated that one form of communication used by the district is a monthly newspaper, *The Dreamcatcher*.

The newspaper has become a very effective tool in communicating with parents and communities because of its many stories about school activities, functions, and events along with the abundance of pictures of students.

Along with communication, essential to the Dr. Heart's vision for the school district was the involvement of parents and communities. Several former student participants commented they had parents from home that pushed them. They commented further that a more culturally relevant curriculum would help students to feel more empowered about who and what they are. Dr. Heart understood the need for collaboration and working together with parents and communities to integrate Indian studies and create a more culturally relevant curriculum. Another student commented that when she came to school, it was a positive place. She had a voice and when parents came in with a concern, they were listened to, so the community really had a part in education. One school administrator who is also a community and tribal member said, "Dr. Heart always tried to make sure that the school and community worked together to educate the children."

Important to Dr. Heart is the building of relationships. He believes that building relationships with parents and students is founded on trust and respect—parents will become more involved and students will come to school if there is a school/community connection. There was general feeling that communication and involvement led to a shared decision making because parents felt valued and they had a "voice."

School/community connections provide an avenue for listening and hearing about tribal beliefs, values, and traditions. A faculty and community member believes that school/community connections help to ease some of the tension and eliminate barriers that exist between the schools and communities. These connections are important for

validating and fostering cultural identity activities and cultural knowledge for inclusion in school programs. A program director at the tribal university, who is also a parent and community member as well as a respected spiritual leader and elder, stated that he practices and lives the tribal traditions and ceremonies. The tribal elder and community member indicated that this type of modeling “will show Indian kids they can be Indians and still do what they need to do.”

Through the involvement and “voice” of the community, the North Ridge School District worked to strengthen the cultural emphasis of their programs and curriculum. The vision and mission statements adopted by the school board established the purpose of the district and provided the guidance and direction for the development of more culturally relevant programs and education. The former Coordinator of Indian Studies and community/tribal member believes that a more culturally relevant affects the success of Indian students. She stated,

Culturally relevant curriculum would give students validation to their place in the world. It would teach them that tribal values, language, and traditions define who they are and that they can succeed as a tribal member. They would learn to live in a multicultural society, yet have validation and self-esteem in who they are. It would teach them appreciation for other cultures.

The North Ridge School District recognizes that their students learn in different ways; therefore, the education provided by the district is culturally relevant for the population of students attending district schools. Through the communication, involvement, building of relationships, and connections with parents and communities, the North Ridge School District has created more culturally relevant programs, activities, and curriculum. It is the belief of the district and its stakeholders that the learning of students is enhanced when programs, activities, and curriculum reflect the culture of the

Great Plains Tribe. The education provided by the school district validates the culture of the students and strengthens their self-esteem about who they are as tribal people and communities. It validates their place in their culture and other cultures. When the term Indian is used to describe a style of education, the concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on a new meaning.

*Who is defining Indian education in the twenty-first century?*

The Great Plains people are members of a sovereign nation. As such, the Great Plains nation has the inherent right to self-govern, self-determine, and self-educate. As previously stated, the North Ridge School District is a public school system located within the boundaries of the reservation and serving the twenty tribally recognized communities. Having an American Indian student population of 95% or better district wide, the district recognized the importance of having a culturally relevant curriculum in order to address the present and future needs of the tribe and communities. Although the tribe exercises no actual control of the North Ridge School District, their involvement as well as the involvement of the people and communities is necessary in defining Indian education.

The term Indian education has different meanings to different people. With over 561 federally recognized tribes, each tribe will have their own definition that is context specific to the culture of their reservation or communities. For the people on the River Bend Reservation, their definition of Indian education will take into account their cultural values, traditions, and beliefs. Dr. Heart, as a member of the Great Plains tribe and leader of the North Ridge School District, has to consider the self-determination approach of the

Great Plains tribe as well as their values, traditions, and beliefs when creating a culturally relevant education responsive to the needs of the students, parents, and communities.

The North Ridge School District defined their purpose through the development of vision and mission statements that include a statement of beliefs and learner outcomes and goals. In order to achieve the district mission, the North Ridge School District clearly recognizes the Great Plains Tribe as a partner. This recognition is important in avoiding a power struggle between the two organizations in order to work collaboratively so a shared decision making process can exist with the tribe, parents, and communities. The defining of Indian education on the Great Plains reservation is a collective effort—with students, families, the Board of Education, teachers, support staff, administrators, local businesses, the Great Plains Tribe, and the Tribal University.

Indian education is the development of a culturally relevant curriculum with culturally responsive teachers that fosters the creation of Indigenous knowledge. The development of Indian education is an expression of tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification. The effort of the North Ridge School District to work in partnership with the Great Plains Tribe, people, and communities is based on the recognition by the district of the sovereignty of the tribe. This connection is essential to the inclusion of all aspects of tribal life in the education provided Indian children and to the defining of Indian education.

### *Conclusions*

The qualitative approach provides a holistic perspective of the phenomenon under study (Frankel & Wallen, 2003). Stake (1995) asserted that researchers “study a case when it itself is of very special interest” and provide “detail of interaction with its

contexts” (p. xi). Patton (2002) suggested that qualitative data “capture and communicate someone else’s experience of the world in his or her own words” (p. 47). Merriam (1998) stated that with qualitative research, it “is not whether findings will be found again, but whether the results are consistent with the data collected” (p. 206). As a result, the following conclusions are based on the study findings that describe the impact of the experiences of an American Indian education leader.

The Great Plains people are a proud people, and the River Bend Reservation is engulfed in a history of proud tradition and cultural heritage passed on by the generations before them. The earliest form of Indian education was Indian tribes and Indian communities teaching Indian children the traditional practices of survival, both as individuals and as a tribe. Since the invasion of the colonialists to this continent, the journey of Indian education has faced a variety of shifts in policies and practices with little to no involvement or voice from or by Indian people. However, the early ’70s brought a shift in federal policy that resulted in Indian tribes and communities having a choice and authority to self-determine the kind of education they want their children to receive. The interactions between Dr. Heart, as an American Indian education leader, and the Great Plains Tribe illustrate support for self-determination. This study revealed several themes germane to the leadership experiences of Dr. Heart. These themes led to the conclusions that follow.

The idea of self-determination is the creation and implementation of education by and for Indian people. Dr. Heart is not only American Indian, but also a member of the Great Plains tribe and an education leader, he illustrates the importance of Indian leadership as an integral component to Indian self-determination in education. Dr. Heart

is a strong “voice” both for the district, and the tribe, the people and tribal communities in the implementation of the district’s statement of beliefs, mission statement, learner outcomes/goals, and vision statement. His knowledge of the culture and familiarity with the reservation and the organization of the tribe provide a greater opportunity to connect with parents and communities. The unique setting of the North Ridge School District on the River Bend Reservation means the district serves twenty culturally different communities and has an annual American Indian student population of 95% or more.

Dr. Heart attributed many of his leadership qualities and characteristics to the influence of his family, education, and culture. In his leadership, he exemplifies the virtues of his tribal people, including generosity, respect, trust, and compassion. Dr. Heart was assertive in his efforts to get things done. As the leader of state and national organizations, he allowed people to speak and respected their opinions, but he knew when to end the talking and make a decision. He attributed his assertiveness and knowing what to do to his parent’s Catholic upbringing and his understanding of his culture. He valued the importance of being honest with people. Dr. Heart’s belief in and commitment to the district’s vision and mission statements was his foundation for trusting faculty and staff to make appropriate decisions in establishing and providing culturally relevant programs and curriculum. His understanding of the culture and people strengthened his belief in the need to connect with parents and communities as well as his decisions about how to make connections. His expectation of faculty and staff was that if they did not always understand the cultural or tribal way, then they should connect with parents and communities to see what they think or want.

There is visual evidence of cultural identity throughout the reservation and in the North Ridge School District. Almost everywhere there are cultural symbols, designs, or names of businesses and vendors that reflect the culture of the Great Plains tribe. In school buildings, offices, and classrooms, there is visual evidence of identification with the culture. There are paintings on the walls, decorated bulletin boards in the hallways and classrooms, dreamcatchers and other cultural artifacts on display such as sage bundles. Whether Indian or non-Indian, from the reservation or not from the reservation, or a visitor passing through, it is difficult for one to not identify with the culture.

The former students shared their beliefs that students need to have a cultural identity, and they need it now. Although the schools helped to foster their cultural identity, several students said their parents pushed them toward identifying with the culture. Dr. Heart expressed his belief that not all of the students receive that push from home or from parents to identify with the culture; therefore it is the responsibility of the schools to work with parents and provide opportunities to create cultural identity. Two members of the community, former school board members, recognized the need for the school district to do more to validate cultural identity. Both stated that conflicts with what the state requires and what the district needs have an impact on the ability of the school district and schools to address the needs of the students, parents, and communities. While discouraging at times, the results of the district's effort to create cultural identity are still very evident. A member of the faculty and a program director indicated that she is seeing more students who are grounded in their culture. This faculty member further stated, "These students reflect a really good feeling about who they are and they know who they are—they're going to be all right." Another faculty member acknowledged that it has

been through the efforts of Dr. Heart, since he has been in the district that students are starting to feel good about who they are. One of the program directors associated students' having a cultural identity and feeling good about themselves with their ability to exist in two cultures, specifically stating, "They're okay in their culture and in the other culture."

Finally, many of Dr. Heart's leadership experiences focused on the development of Indigenous knowledge. The influences for these experiences were based on the mission and vision documents that support the purpose of the district. The documents include many statements that reflect cultural emphasis in the development of programs and curriculum. The documents serve as a means of empowering all stakeholders and giving them a "voice" in the creation of the kind of education of they want their children to receive. When Dr. Heart was asked about his leadership responsibilities, he specifically identified the integration of Indian studies as one of his most important responsibilities.

The integration of Indian studies was the foundation of building a culturally relevant curriculum. This continuous effort required the involvement of many stakeholders including students, teachers and school administrators, parents, and community members. Dr. Heart's vision included the establishment of processes to better communicate with parents, communities, and the tribe. His belief of keeping people informed of what was going on in the district created greater parental and community support. Dr. Heart expected school personnel to communicate with parents and communities through the establishment of parent advisory committees and curriculum

department committees each with a lead teacher. Minutes and reports of activities were required to be submitted to Dr. Heart.

Along with parental and community communication, Dr. Heart expected schools to encourage a greater involvement of parents and communities. Elders, parents, and tribal and community people are excellent cultural resources in the development and participation of cultural activities in schools; they help to validate the creation of Indigenous knowledge. A community member, who works for the tribe, teaches classes in land management, bison management, and ecology for the university commented that he was available to come into the schools. He said that some schools invite him into their classrooms in the early fall and late spring. His classes are taught from a tribal perspective with a focus on social structures; he culminates the experience with a visit to the buffalo pasture. One of the teachers from the high school invited the president of the tribe to speak to his Tribal Government class. Other activities in the high school that have a cultural emphasis are the graduation ceremony and the singing of the tribal Flag Song at all home athletic events. Many of these activities have supported creating a cultural emphasis in the schools and the involvement of parents and communities. They have also helped to breakdown some of the tensions and barriers that have existed in establishing a comfort zone for parents and the communities to visit the schools and make connections with staff.

Establishing a culturally relevant curriculum that supports the development of Indigenous knowledge requires teachers and staff to have some knowledge of the Great Plains culture. Among certified faculty in the North Ridge School District, American Indian teachers and administrators are a minority. This is not to say that it takes Indian

educators to work with Indian students; however, it does require special knowledge and skills. A former student asserted that one of the most important qualities of a teacher, native or non-native, is somebody students can identify with. The Director of Linguistics and Culture shared that teachers must know their own culture as well as the Great Plains culture. The former high school principal and community member believes that teachers need to be accepting of cultural differences. One of the program directors identified one of her goals was to make every teacher bicultural.

Dr. Heart is aware of the role teachers play in the development of a culturally relevant curriculum and Indigenous knowledge. He has gone to great lengths to provide funding and training for the development of culturally specific curriculum and educational methods. The lack of Native teachers and administrators creates an on-going concern because of the lack of cultural knowledge and development of special abilities in working with students of different cultures. In the North Ridge School District, this concern is addressed through orientation, in-service, and staff development.

#### *Delimitations and Limitations*

According to Creswell (2003), delimitations are used to narrow the scope of a study. This study focused on the leadership experiences of one American Indian education leader of a public school district on a specific American Indian reservation. Participants selected for interview such as the superintendent, faculty, and students came from the same school district and community/parent/tribal members came from different communities on the same reservation and were members of the same tribe.

One limitation of case study design is the issue of internal validity and reliability (Creswell, 2003). Creswell posited that the researcher, then, must be sure to address plans

to triangulate the data. In this study, the researcher used multiple forms of data collection, received feedback from the research participants through a process called “member checks” (Creswell, 1994, p. 158). The researcher assumed the forthrightness of the interviewees.

A second limitation concerns the external validity or generalizability of the study, because it focused only on one superintendent in one public school system on an American Indian reservation. Merriam (1988) stated, “generalizing from a single case study selected in a purposeful rather than random manner makes no sense” (p. 173). The intent of the researcher, using a case study approach, was to focus on the leadership of only one American Indian education leader in one public school district on one Indian reservation. Merriam (1998) concluded that traditional research views are that case study cannot be generalized and are regarded as a limitation. However, the triangulation of the data from multiple sources enhances the usefulness of the findings in this study.

The researcher discussed categories and themes that emerged from the data analysis. The data collected, while context specific, could be useful to college and university leadership preparation programs in preparing Indian and non-Indian leaders to work in Indigenous communities. Schools of Education may find the information useful as they prepare minority and non-minority faculty to teach the growing minority populations in a variety of settings. The data may serve resourceful in the recruitment and retention of Indigenous leaders and faculty as well as in enhancing the resiliency of Indigenous students.

Other factors that contribute to the limited generalizability may be the leader’s cultural experience and familiarity with the environment in which he served. Other

limitations of the study include that the population was limited to faculty, community/parent/tribal members, and students on an American Indian reservation. Lastly, the researcher limited the study to include only American Indian participants.

Because the researcher is responsible for interpreting and drawing conclusions about the data and views the information through their own personal lens, the issue of reliability and validity are of concern. Merriam (1998) suggested that the researcher must be sensitive to the context and all the variables within it—this includes the physical setting, the people, the overt and covert agendas and any nonverbal behavior. The researcher must be aware of any personal biases and how they may influence the investigation (Merriam). The researcher is American Indian and is aware of the existence of potential bias when conducting research with participants of an Indian tribe and community different than his own.

Patton (2002) believes qualitative inquiry requires that the investigator carefully reflect on, deal with, and report potential sources of bias and error. Because with qualitative research the researcher is the primary data collection instrument, it is necessary that the researcher identify personal assumptions and biases at the outset of the study (Creswell, 2003). This is particularly important in this case since the researcher is an American Indian education leader himself and has worked with the leader participant on the same reservation where the study took place. The researcher assumed that the development of culturally relevant education on an Indian reservation can only be achieved through Indian leadership.

Every effort was made to ensure objectivity. Additional safeguards designed to lessen personal biases included coding of the data, identified protocols for the study, and triangulation of the data.

### *Implications for Practice*

This inquiry could impact both K-12 and higher education institutions as they address the issues of working with American Indian students, educators, and their cultures. The study findings articulate the importance of cultural identity and Indigenous knowledge in creating a culturally relevant curriculum. It is not surprising to this researcher that the perspectives of defining Indian education focused on the need to exist or survive in two worlds—the Indian world and the white world. Specific to this study, the two worlds are often viewed as on the reservation and off the reservation. Dr. Heart referred to this idea of two worlds as “cultural parallels.” The findings revealed a need for individuals to establish and maintain a strong individual Indian identity as well as a cultural identity within the community where they live; this leads to an understanding of their place within the larger society of the tribe on the reservation. Therefore, the belief is, that the success of Indian students, to be successful regardless of where they go, on or off the reservation, is predicated on their cultural identity or their understanding of who they are as Indian people. The idea of K-12 institutions defining Indian education is not only an attempt to make a cultural connection of the concept of being Indian to the term education, but also an attempt by Indian tribes and communities to self-determine the education of their children based on their cultures and traditions. Indian education is not just “an Indian thing” on reservations. Many Indian people live off the reservation. K-12 institutions need to recognize the cultural differences presented by Indian students in their

systems and involve Indian people in their communities to ensure that the educational needs of Indigenous people are addressed. K-12 institutions need to include the engagement or practice of defining Indian education in their purpose. Higher education institutions are in the business of training educational leaders—many of them Indigenous. Leadership programs need to have a clear understanding of the differences in styles of education that make up the educational system in this country in order to prepare education leaders for the challenges they will face in any K-12 institution—this includes on an American Indian reservation. The findings also reflect a need for hiring and training American Indian faculty and leaders. Those K-12 and higher education institutions who speak the loudest about addressing the issues of diversity could serve themselves well to critically review the on-going assessment of their hiring practices and curriculum development processes as well as the assessment of how they prepare education leaders to insure that diversity is practiced and not just preached.

The study revealed the importance of and need for American Indian faculty and leaders. While not specifically addressed in this inquiry, the lack of American Indian educators is an issue. In many tribes, leaders are those respected individuals who recognize a need that is essential to the survival of the tribe, and they do their part to address that need. American Indian educators, no matter in what capacity they serve, are role models and provide visible evidence for young American Indian students that they can achieve and be successful. In the case of Dr. Heart, he is a member of the Great Plains tribe and is recognized as an educational leader by the people and communities he serves. Although Indian educators are a minority population in the North Ridge school district, comments by former students indicate they recognize Indian educators as being

tribal members or Indian and looked up to them. This is not to say that non-Indian educators were not respected; the findings indicated that non-Indian faculty exhibited many effective qualities and characteristics. However, students saw the employment of tribal members as a way of fostering tribal identity.

Another finding of the study pointed to the impact of a culturally relevant curriculum on cultural identity. The mission and vision statements of the North Ridge School District clearly documented a desire to establish a culturally relevant curriculum. The findings identified specific involvements of all stakeholders including students, faculty and staff, tribe, parents, and community members. Processes for involvement and methods of communication were created to give “voice” to stakeholders who desired to be a part of the decisions affecting programs and curriculum. The beliefs of establishing a culturally relevant curriculum supports the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge for the purpose of validating and fostering cultural and tribal identity.

Finally, the study emphasized a need to develop relationships; numerous times, Dr. Heart shared his belief in the importance of building relationships. Based on the findings, there was a need for all stakeholders to connect with each other in order to achieve the district outcomes and goals. For example, Dr. Heart mentioned that when he talked to faculty about building relationships with students, he reminded them that students will come to school or class if there is a foundation of respect and trust. Dr. Heart believes that building relationships with parents and communities helps to eliminate barriers so parents can feel comfortable about connecting with staff and schools and encourages parents to become more involved and supportive of the things being done in the schools to educate their children. Dr. Heart stressed that the ability of faculty to

build relationships requires knowledge of the culture and traditions of the Great Plains people as well as knowledge of students' families and what they want for their students. Relationship building requires an awareness of cultural knowledge by faculty; this knowledge combined with what faculty knows about the families of their students helps them to address student concerns.

The study findings indicate that cultural identity, Indigenous knowledge, the need for Indian educators and leaders, culturally relevant curriculum, and the building of relationships are key elements that challenge the leadership of Indian education leaders in defining Indian education. However, other questions were raised that suggested the need for future study.

#### *Recommendations for Future Research*

The first concern that needs further investigation is finding ways to create school, family, and community connections. The data suggested that schools involved in reform activities or going into school improvement because of the *No Child Left Behind* law seek to become actively engaged in the development of strategies to create more connections with school, family, and community. Questions that could be investigated are, "What are the most effective ways to make connections with school, family, and community?" and "What are the barriers to creating effective connections with school, family, and community?"

Additionally, there are questions concerning the effect of culturally relevant curriculum on the success of American Indian students. The data were clear on the importance of cultural identity and cultural differences. Questions such as, "What are the effects of having a culturally relevant curriculum on the success of American Indian

students?” and “What are the behaviors of a culturally responsive teachers and what impact do they have on the success of American Indian students?” need to be answered.

Further research needs to be conducted on the defining of Indian education. “What is Indian education and who defines it?” The data clearly indicate the defining of Indian education is not just a process, but a way of life for Indian people. Indian people want to be the ones to define Indian education. Indian education is about respect for Indian identity. Indian education is also about living in a multi-cultural or bi-cultural society.

A final avenue for further research is the need for theory in Indian education. “What are the approaches to defining and explaining Indian education?” Indigenous perspectives and ways of looking at things are essential to the creation of Indigenous knowledge. Non-indigenous theories are often inadequate simply because they come from non-Indigenous points of view. The above questions or concerns were beyond the scope of this investigation, but certainly merit further research, especially by Indigenous scholars.

### *Concluding Overview*

This single case study examined the leadership experiences of American Indian education leader of a public school district serving predominately American Indian students on an American Indian reservation. The findings of this inquiry suggest cultural identity and Indigenous knowledge were major influences on the leadership experiences of the Indian leader. Through interviews and the review of documents and artifacts, the researcher found the leader and his influences are important to the defining of Indian education.

Additionally, the data set showed that the validation of tribal culture through the creation of a culturally relevant curriculum contributed positively to individual, tribal, and community identity. Furthermore, culturally responsive teachers who are knowledgeable of tribal culture are important to that validation. The data revealed, however, that the lack of American Indian teachers and school leaders impedes the development of a culturally relevant curriculum and the integration of Indian studies. Students expressed a concern over the need to hire more American Indian faculty and leaders. This would help to create more role models for students as well as enhance the opportunity to build more positive relationships built on trust and respect.

The findings also revealed that there is a need to create more effective strategies for building school, family, and community connections. Although the school district makes a very concerted effort to involve all stakeholders in the development of the district's education programs, there does not appear to be an established connection between the schools and the parents and communities. This lack of parent and community involvement is significant enough that it has created a feeling that the district is not adequately addressing the needs of the reservation. Two of the program directors cited instances where the lack of parental involvement prohibited changes from being made, creating a situation that was not good for the students or the program. There was no consensus support from parents and community to make any decision about proposed changes. The involvement and utilization of parents, tribal elders, and community members in cultural activities within the schools is an important element in defining Indian education and validating the tribal culture.

Finally, the investigation found that cultural identity has an impact on the voice of the individual, tribe, and community. Having a voice is essential to feeling valued, respected, listened to, heard, and validated as American Indian people.

Therefore, based on the findings, what is the answer to the questions of “How does one American Indian education leader describe his experiences as a leader on an Indian reservation,” and “How does the leader influence or give voice to his constituents in the development of a culturally relevant education?” The answer to these two questions is that these are accomplished through the creation of cultural identity and the building of Indigenous knowledge. Hampton (1993) stated, “No aspect of a culture is more vital to its integrity than its means of education. As I have been taught, nourished, and sustained by my culture, so it is my duty and privilege to transmit it (p. 267). As an American Indian education leader of the North Ridge School District on the River Bend Indian Reservation, Dr. Heart embraced his culture, and as his duty and privilege, sought to transmit it.

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## Appendix A

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

#### Leader Participant

#### Dear Participant:

Thank you for considering participating in my research study titled *Leadership Experiences of an American Indian Education Leader Serving Indian Students in an Indian Community*. This study is part of my dissertation research for a doctoral degree in educational leadership and policy analysis from the University of Missouri-Columbia. The information gathered should be beneficial to K-12 and college and university officials responsible for devising and improving American Indian education and leadership programs. This study has been approved by the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board.

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this research is to describe and understand the experiences of an American Indian education administrator serving in a leadership role of a public school district serving predominately Indian students on an Indian reservation. The researcher will use a case study approach to examine the study's constructs.

#### **PROCEDURES**

If you agree to participate in the project, you will be asked to participate in two audio recorded interviews of two to three hours, and follow-up interviews as deemed necessary to complete data collection. The interviews will be conducted between     date     and     date     at an agreed upon location convenient for you. In the event that significant new findings develop during the course of the study, the researcher may ask you to participate in additional audio taped interviews, either in person or via telephone. In addition to being recorded, all interviews will be transcribed verbatim for use by the researcher; you will be asked to review the transcripts to ensure accuracy. The researcher may also ask you additional questions via electronic mail.

#### **PARTICIPATION**

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from participation at any time without penalty, including during the interviews or after they have been completed. Your consent to participate or refusal to participate will not affect your standing in any way. You may also decline to answer any questions that you feel are too uncomfortable to answer. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about your participation. You can call me at 816-719-7833. In addition, you may contact my dissertation advisor for this research study, Dr. Barbara Martin, who can be reached at 660-543-8823. If you have a question about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board office at (573) 882-9585.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE**

Tapes and transcripts will remain confidential and separate from any identifying information. You may select a pseudonym, or one will be assigned to you for use by the researcher. You will have the opportunity to verify the transcribed interview for accuracy of what was stated and what you intended. Edits, deletions, and clarifications will be made immediately to the transcript to comply with your rights to voluntarily release data. Only the researcher and the dissertation supervisor will have access to identifiable data. Collected data will be kept locked and destroyed three years after the completion of this study.

Your identity and your location's identity will be confidential in the reporting of results. I will not list any names of participants or the institution in my dissertation or any future publication of this study.

This research has been preauthorized by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Missouri-Columbia. If you have further questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Missouri-Columbia Campus Institutional Review Board at (573) 882-9585, or visit <http://www.research.missouri.edu/cirb/index.htm> or <http://orhp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm>.

## **INJURY OR ILLNESS**

The University of Missouri does not compensate human subjects if discomfort eventually results from the research. Nonetheless, the university holds medical, professional, and general liability insurance coverage, and provides its own medical attention and facilities if participants suffer as a direct result of negligence or fault from faculty or staff associated with the research. In such unlikely event, the Risk Management Officer should be contacted immediately at (573) 882-3735 to obtain a review of the matter and receive specific information. Related ethical guidelines about Protection of Human Subjects set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations "45 CFR 46" will be upheld. This statement is not to be construed as an admission of liability.

## **RISKS AND BENEFITS**

The risk of your participation is minimal. As stated above, the information gathered may be beneficial to K-12 and college and university officials responsible for devising and improving American Indian education curriculum and instruction and American Indian education leadership programs.

## **COSTS TO STUDY PARTICIPANTS**

There will be no cost to participate in the study other than your time.

**COMPENSATION**

There will be no compensation for participating in the study. If you choose to participate in this study, please complete the information below. A copy of this letter and your written consent should be retained by you for future reference. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Wayne Johnson  
Doctoral Candidate

**SIGNATURES**

A signed statement of informed consent is required of all participants in this project. Your signature indicates that you understand and voluntarily agree to the conditions of participation described above, and that you received a copy of this Form.

I agree to take part in this study. I have had a chance to ask questions about being in this study and have those questions answered.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Using language that is understandable and appropriate, I have discussed this project and the items above with the subject and/or authorized representatives.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Principal Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Principal Investigator

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

#### **Focus Group Interview Participants**

##### **Dear Participant:**

Thank you for considering participating in my research study titled *Leadership Experiences of an American Indian Education Leader Serving Indian Students in an Indian Community*. This study is part of my dissertation research for a doctoral degree in educational leadership and policy analysis from the University of Missouri-Columbia. The information gathered should be beneficial to K-12 and college and university officials responsible for devising and improving American Indian education and leadership programs. This study has been approved by the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board.

##### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this research is to describe and understand the experiences of an American Indian education administrator serving in a leadership role of a public school district serving predominately Indian students on an Indian reservation. The researcher will use a case study approach to examine the study's constructs.

##### **PROCEDURES**

If you choose to participate in the project, you will be asked to participate in one audio recorded focus group interview; the focus group will be comprised of four to six individuals. The interview will be 60 – 90 minutes in duration and will be conducted on \_\_\_date\_\_\_. In the event that significant new findings develop during the course of the study, you may be asked to participate in an additional audio taped interview, either in person or via telephone. In addition to being recorded, all interviews will be transcribed verbatim for use by the researcher; you will be asked to review the transcripts to ensure accuracy. The researcher may also ask additional questions of you via electronic mail. All interview participants must be American Indian, 18 years of age, and graduates of the school district or faculty who served during the tenure of the leader.

##### **PARTICIPATION**

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from participation at any time without penalty, including during the interviews or after they have been completed. Your consent to participate or refusal to participate will not affect your standing in any way. You may also decline to answer any questions that you feel are too uncomfortable to answer. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 816-719-7833 with any questions or concerns about your participation. In addition, you may contact my dissertation advisor for this research study, Dr. Barbara Martin, who can be reached at 660-543-8823. If you have a question about your rights as a research

participant, you should contact the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board office at (573) 882-9585.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE**

Tapes and transcripts will remain confidential and separate from any identifying information. A pseudonym will be assigned to responses for use by the researcher. You will have the opportunity to verify the transcribed interview for accuracy of what was stated and what you intended. Edits, deletions, and clarifications will be made immediately to the transcript to comply with your rights to voluntarily release data. Only the researcher and the dissertation supervisor will have access to identifiable data. Collected data will be kept locked and destroyed three years after the completion of this study.

Your identity and location will be confidential in the reporting of results. I will not list any participant names or their institution in my dissertation or any future publication of this study. This research has been preauthorized by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Missouri-Columbia. If you have further questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Missouri-Columbia Campus Institutional Review Board at (573) 882-9585, or visit <http://www.research.missouri.edu/cirb/index.htm> or <http://orhp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm>.

### **INJURY OR ILLNESS**

The University of Missouri does not compensate human subjects if discomfort eventually results from the research. Nonetheless, the university holds medical, professional, and general liability insurance coverage, and provides its own medical attention and facilities if participants suffer as a direct result of negligence or fault from faculty or staff associated with the research. In such unlikely event, the Risk Management Officer should be contacted immediately at (573) 882-3735 to obtain a review of the matter and receive specific information. Related ethical guidelines about Protection of Human Subjects set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations “45 CFR 46” will be upheld. This statement is not to be construed as an admission of liability.

### **RISKS AND BENEFITS**

The risk of your participation is minimal. As stated above, the information gathered may be beneficial to K-12 and college and university officials responsible for devising and improving American Indian education curriculum and instruction and American Indian education leadership programs.

### **COSTS TO STUDY PARTICIPANTS**

There will be no cost to participate in the study other than your time.

**COMPENSATION**

There will be no compensation for participating in the study. If you choose to participate in this study, please complete the information below. A copy of this letter and your written consent should be retained by you for future reference. Thank you for your time and consideration.  
Sincerely,

Wayne Johnson  
Doctoral Candidate

**SIGNATURES**

A signed statement of informed consent is required of all participants in this project. Your signature indicates that you understand and voluntarily agree to the conditions of participation described above, and that you received a copy of this Form.

I agree to take part in this study. I have had a chance to ask questions about being in this study and have those questions answered.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Using language that is understandable and appropriate, I have discussed this project and the items above with the subject and/or authorized representatives.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Principal Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Principal Investigator

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Administrative Permission for School Participation Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ grant permission for the designated faculty members to be contacted regarding participation in the study of Indian Education Leadership, being conducted by Wayne Johnson.

By signing this permission form, I understand that the following safeguards are in place to protect faculty choosing to participate:

1. All responses will be used for dissertation research and potential future publications.
2. All participation is voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any point in the study prior to submission of the survey.
3. All identities will be protected in all reports of the research.
4. Any consent or refusal to participate in this study will not affect the employment of participants in any way.

If you approve faculty participation in this research study, please complete the attached permission form and to Wayne Johnson in the provided return-addressed, stamped envelope. A copy of this letter and the written consent should be retained by you for future reference.

I have read the material above, and any questions that I have posed have been answered to my satisfaction. I grant permission for tribal and community members to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Tribal Authority

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix D

### **Administrative Permission for School Participation Letter**

Dear School Administrator,

I am conducting a research study titled, *Leadership Experiences of an American Indian Education Leader Serving Indian Students in an Indian Community*. This study is part of my dissertation research for a doctoral degree in educational leadership and policy analysis from the University of Missouri-Columbia. The research gathered should be beneficial to K-12 and college and university officials responsible for devising and improving American Indian education and leadership programs.

The purpose of this research is to describe and understand the experiences of an American Indian education administrator serving in a leadership role of a public school district serving predominately Indian students on an Indian reservation. The main informant for the study will be a school leader; however, information will also be provided by a focus group comprised of faculty members who worked with the leader during his tenure at (name of school district) \_\_\_\_\_. Focus group participants will be asked to participate in one session of 60 to 90 minutes.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. The participants may withdraw from participation at any time they wish without penalty, including in the middle of or after completion of the survey and/or interview. Participants' answers and the building's identity will remain confidential, anonymous, and separate from any identifying information. I will not list any names of participants, or the institution, in my dissertation or any future publications of this study.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about your participation. You can call me at 816-719-7833 or email [wj59b@missouri.edu](mailto:wj59b@missouri.edu). In addition, you may contact my dissertation advisor for this research study, Dr. Barbara Martin, who can be reached at 660-543-8823. If you have a question about participant rights, you should contact the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board office at (573) 882-9585.

If you approve faculty participation in this research study, please complete the attached permission form. A copy of this letter and the written consent should be retained by you for future reference.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Wayne Johnson  
Doctoral Candidate

**Administrative Permission for School Participation Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ grant permission for the designated faculty members to be contacted regarding participation in the study of Indian Education Leadership, being conducted by Wayne Johnson.

By signing this permission form, I understand that the following safeguards are in place to protect faculty choosing to participate:

1. All responses will be used for dissertation research and potential future publications.
2. All participation is voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any point in the study prior to submission of the survey.
3. All identities will be protected in all reports of the research.
4. Any consent or refusal to participate in this study will not affect the employment of participants in any way.

If you approve faculty participation in this research study, please complete the attached permission form and to Wayne Johnson in the provided return-addressed, stamped envelope. A copy of this letter and the written consent should be retained by you for future reference.

I have read the material above, and any questions that I have posed have been answered to my satisfaction. I grant permission for faculty members to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Administrative Authority

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix E

### Leader Participant Letter

[Date]

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (Name),

You are invited to participate as primary participant in a research study titled *Leadership Experiences of an American Indian Education Leader Serving Indian Students in an Indian Community*. This study is part of my dissertation research for a doctoral degree in educational leadership and policy analysis from the University of Missouri-Columbia. The information gathered should be beneficial to K-12 and college and university officials responsible for devising and improving American Indian education and leadership programs.

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this research is to describe and understand the experiences of an American Indian education administrator serving in a leadership role of a public school district serving predominately Indian students on an Indian reservation. The researcher will use a case study approach to examine the studies constructs.

The following questions guide this qualitative study:

1. What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to Indian students and faculty as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?
2. What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to an Indian community as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?
3. What impact does an American Indian education leader have on empowering faculty to address the issues that come from giving Indian students a voice?
4. How has an American Indian education leader enhanced the learning of Indian students by giving the Indian community a voice?
5. Who is defining Indian education in the twenty-first century?

Before you make a final decision about participation, you must know how your rights will be protected. The following statement explains those rights:

**- INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT FOR LEADER PARTICIPANT**

● Participation in the study is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time. If later you do not wish the data you provided to be used, inform me; your wish will be honored before culmination of the study. Your refusal to participate will have no adverse consequences. For any questions about your participation in this research, please contact me at (816) 719-7833, or by email at wj59b@mizzou.edu. You may also contact my dissertation supervisor Dr. Barbara Martin, at (660) 543-8823 or by email at bmartin@ucmo.edu.

● As interview participant your name will remain confidential; only my dissertation supervisor and I will have access to identifiable data. Your identity and employment affiliation will not be published. Any materials with identifiable data will be kept in a locked file cabinet and destroyed three years after the completion of this project. Data collected will be coded for qualitative analysis, and summarized for reporting. Results published in *Dissertation Abstracts* and in professional journals at any time will protect your anonymity.

● Your control as to how you choose to respond to interview questions insures that there will be no identifiable risk for you greater than that encountered in your everyday life. The University of Missouri does not compensate human subjects if injury or discomfort results from the research. Nonetheless, the university holds medical, professional, and general liability insurance coverage, and provides its own medical attention and facilities in the unlikely event that participants suffer as a direct result of negligence or fault from faculty or staff associated with this research. In such eventuality, the Risk Management Officer should be contacted immediately at (573) 882-3735 to obtain a review of the matter and receive further information. Ethical guidelines about Protection of Human Subjects set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations “45 CFR 46” will be upheld. This statement is not to be construed as an admission of liability.

● This research has been preauthorized by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Missouri-Columbia. If you have further questions regarding research participants’ rights, please contact the Campus Institutional Review Board at (573) 882-9585, or visit <http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm>.

If you elect to participate, please review the “Informed Consent Form” at your earliest convenience and return it to me, signed and dated. A return-addressed, stamped envelope has been provided, unless this letter was faxed. A second copy of the “Informed Consent and Permission Form” has been provided for you to retain. Your participation is very valuable; I appreciate your assistance in this endeavor. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Wayne Johnson  
Doctoral Candidate  
University of Missouri-Columbia

Appendix F

**BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE – LEADER**

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Birth Place: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_  
Religious Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Education: \_\_\_\_\_

**Previous Administrative Employment/Residence:**

\_\_\_\_\_ dates \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ dates \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ dates \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ dates \_\_\_\_\_

**Family:**

Ethnic background of mother: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ethnic background of father: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation of mother: \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation of father: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Siblings: \_\_\_\_\_ Brothers: \_\_\_\_\_ Sisters: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your Birth Order: 1<sup>st</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 4<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 5<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
Siblings' Occupations: \_\_\_\_\_

**Spouse:**

Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Children:**

name: \_\_\_\_\_ age: \_\_\_\_\_ gender: \_\_\_\_\_ occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
name: \_\_\_\_\_ age: \_\_\_\_\_ gender: \_\_\_\_\_ occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
name: \_\_\_\_\_ age: \_\_\_\_\_ gender: \_\_\_\_\_ occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
name: \_\_\_\_\_ age: \_\_\_\_\_ gender: \_\_\_\_\_ occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G

### Interview Questions – LEADER

#### Foundational Questions

1. What leadership roles and responsibilities have you held during your educational career?  
*Probe: Describe your involvement in any local, regional, and national organizations and programs.*
2. Describe your involvement in your tribe and local community.  
*Probe: What cultural activities do you participate in?*
3. What were your leadership responsibilities as a superintendent?

#### Interview Questions

#### Research Question(s)

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 4. What characteristics typify an effective superintendent of schools serving Indian students?   | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |
| 5. What were your most gratifying accomplishments during your administration?<br><i>Probe: What were the key things you did to facilitate these accomplishments?</i> | 1             |
| 6. What were the influences that affected your leadership?<br><i>Probe: What role did culture play in your leadership? Your family? Other leaders?</i>               | 1, 2          |
| 7. How do you describe or characterize your leadership style?  | 1, 2, 3, 4    |
| 8. What cultural beliefs and values form the basis for your decision making?   | 1, 2, 3, 4    |
| 9. What were your goals for the school district?   | 4             |
| 10. What strategies did you use to encourage students?   | 1, 3          |
| 11. What strategies did you use to encourage faculty and staff?  | 1, 3          |
| 12. What strategies did you use to connect the education of Indian students with the community?  | 2, 4          |

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 13. What strategies did you use to validate both the traditional and contemporary cultures of the students?        | 1, 2          |
| 14. How do you define Indian Education?  | 5             |
| 15. What is your vision for improving the quality of Indian Education?   | 5             |
| 16. Describe a culturally responsive curriculum.   | 1, 2, 3, 4    |
| 17. Describe the qualities and characteristics of an effective teacher for Indigenous students.                    | 3             |
| 18. What advice do you have for new school superintendents about to experience the reservation for the first time? | 5             |
| 19. What insights and advice can Indian superintendents offer to other educational leaders?                        | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |

## Appendix H

### Focus Group Participant Letter

[Date]

Dear Participant:

You are invited to participate in a research study titled *Leadership Experiences of an American Indian Education Leader Serving Indian Students in an Indian Community*. This study is part of my dissertation research for a doctoral degree in educational leadership and policy analysis from the University of Missouri-Columbia. The information gathered should be beneficial to K-12 and college and university officials responsible for devising and improving American Indian education and leadership programs. Your participation as a focus group participant has been approved by the appropriate official (school district or tribal governance). The focus groups will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes to complete.

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this research is to describe and understand the experiences of an American Indian education administrator serving in a leadership role of a public school district serving predominately Indian students on an Indian reservation. The researcher will use a case study approach to examine the studies constructs.

The following questions guide this qualitative study:

1. What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to Indian students and faculty as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?
2. What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to an Indian community as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?
3. What impact does an American Indian education leader have on empowering faculty to address the issues that come from giving Indian students a voice?
4. How has an American Indian education leader enhanced the learning of Indian students by giving the Indian community a voice?
5. Who is defining Indian education in the twenty-first century?

Before you make a final decision about participation, you must know how your rights will be protected. The following statement explains those rights:

**- INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT FOR FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS**

- Participation in the study is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time. If later you do not wish the data you provided to be used, inform me; your wish will be honored before culmination of the study. Your refusal to participate will have no adverse consequences. For any questions about your participation in this research, please contact me at (816) 719-7833, or by email at [wj59b@mizzou.edu](mailto:wj59b@mizzou.edu). You may also contact my dissertation supervisor Dr. Barbara Martin, at (660) 543-8823 or by email at [bmartin@ucmo.edu](mailto:bmartin@ucmo.edu).

- As research study participant your name will remain confidential; only my dissertation supervisor and I will have access to identifiable data. Your identity and employment affiliation will not be published. Any materials with identifiable data will be kept in a locked file cabinet and destroyed three years after the completion of this project. Data collected will be coded for qualitative analysis, and summarized for reporting. Results published in *Dissertation Abstracts* and in professional journals at any time will protect your anonymity.

- Your control as to how you choose to respond to questions insures that there will be no identifiable risk for you greater than that encountered in your everyday life. The University of Missouri does not compensate human subjects if injury or discomfort results from the research. Nonetheless, the university holds medical, professional, and general liability insurance coverage, and provides its own medical attention and facilities in the unlikely event that participants suffer as a direct result of negligence or fault from faculty or staff associated with this research. In such eventuality, the Risk Management Officer should be contacted immediately at (573) 882-3735 to obtain a review of the matter and receive further information. Ethical guidelines about Protection of Human Subjects set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations “45 CFR 46” will be upheld. This statement is not to be construed as an admission of liability.

- This research has been preauthorized by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Missouri-Columbia. If you have further questions regarding research participants’ rights, please contact the Campus Institutional Review Board at (573) 882-9585, or visit <http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm>.

If you elect to participate, please review the “Informed Consent Form” at your earliest convenience and return it to me, signed and dated. A return-addressed, stamped envelope has been provided, unless this letter was faxed. A second copy of the “Informed Consent and Permission Form” has been provided for you to retain. Your participation is very valuable; I appreciate your assistance in this endeavor. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Wayne Johnson  
Doctoral Candidate  
University of Missouri-Columbia

## Appendix I

### **Focus Group Interview Questions – FACULTY**

*Research Question 1: What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to Indian students and faculty as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?*

1. How do school officials communicate with you?
2. What interactions do you have with the school administration?
3. How does your school reflect the cultural values of the tribal communities?
4. With respect to culture, how does the school (students, staff, teachers, and administrators) respect individual differences?
5. How does the school district express support for validating and fostering a sense of tribal identity among Indian communities and students?

*Research Question 2: What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to an Indian community as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?*

6. How are parents and the community involved in school programs, functions, activities?
7. In what ways do schools demonstrate responsiveness to the communities?
8. What are examples of effective school/community/tribe partnerships?
9. How do schools get parents and communities to buy into the education system?
10. What are some barriers that limit collaboration between school and community? What is being done to eliminate them?

*Research Question 3: What impact does an American Indian education leader have on empowering faculty to address the issues that come from giving Indian students a voice?*

11. What are the characteristics of Indian students who do well in school?
12. How does the school support you in improving your teaching knowledge, skills, and abilities?
13. What programs have been created for staff that impact student performance?
14. How are ways the district and schools helping teachers to address sensitive cultural issues and practices exhibited or expressed by students?

15. How do Indian student's beliefs and values (e.g., self-esteem) affect education processes?

*Research Question 5: Who is defining Indian education in the twenty-first century?*

16. How would you define "Indian education"?

17. How do your beliefs and attitudes affect education processes?

18. Identify ways, if any, you were given a "voice" in defining Indian education.

19. How would a more culturally relevant curriculum affect student success?

20. Identify some visible qualities or characteristics of culturally responsive teachers.

## Appendix J

### **Focus Group Interview Questions – COMMUNITY/TRIBAL MEMBERS**

*Research Question 2: What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to an Indian community as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?*

1. How can the communities and parents work to validate and foster a sense of tribal identity among Indian children?
2. How are communities and parents made to feel their involvement is important to the quality of education for their children?
3. What are schools doing to get parents and communities to support the education system?
4. What is being done to educate and empower communities and parents to take responsibility for educating their children?
5. How do administrators, teachers and school staff members build relationships with the communities and parents to make them feel ownership in the school?

*Research Question 4: How has an American Indian education leader enhanced the learning of Indian students by giving the Indian community a voice?*

6. How do communities voice their concerns about the education system?
7. What indicators exist that demonstrate collaboration between communities and schools?
8. Are there language and culture activities that require involvement of the communities and parents?
9. Identify ways the schools are responding to the needs of the communities.
10. What efforts are being made to establish a culturally relevant curriculum?

*Research Question 5: Who is defining Indian education in the twenty-first century?*

11. How would you define “Indian education”?
12. Identify ways, if any, you were given a “voice” in defining Indian education.
13. How would a more culturally relevant curriculum affect your children’s success?
14. As a community member, how do your beliefs and attitudes affect education processes?

## Appendix K

### Focus Group Interview Questions – STUDENTS

*Research Question 1: What behaviors of an American Indian education leader give voice to Indian students and faculty as viewed through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory?*

1. How do school officials communicate with you?
2. What interactions do you have with the school administration?
3. How does your school reflect the cultural values of the tribal communities?
4. With respect to culture, how does the school (students, staff, teachers, and administrators) respect individual differences?
5. How does the school district express support for validating and fostering a sense of tribal identity among Indian communities and students?
6. In what ways has the knowledge gained through education helped you in your tribal society?

*Research Question 4: How has an American Indian education leader enhanced the learning of Indian students by giving the Indian community a voice?*

7. In what ways do schools demonstrate responsiveness to the needs of their communities?
8. How does your school involve parents and communities in curriculum and program development?
9. How does community and parent involvement in your school impact the learning environment?
10. How can we empower parents and communities to take responsibility for educating our youth?

*Research Question 5: Who is defining Indian education in the twenty-first century?*

11. How would you define “Indian education”?
12. Identify ways, if any, you were given a “voice” in defining Indian education.

13. How would a more culturally relevant curriculum affect your success?
14. Identify some qualities or characteristics of those teachers you felt you learned the most from.
15. How do student's beliefs and attitudes (e.g., self-esteem) affect education processes?

## VITA

Wayne Johnson, an enrolled member of the Muscogee Creek tribe of Oklahoma, was born at Wichita, Kansas. Following high school graduation and four years of service in the United States Navy, he enrolled in Haskell Indian Junior College in Lawrence, Kansas. He earned an associate degree and continued his educational pursuits at Baker University at Baldwin, Kansas, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in physical education. He began his teaching career at Flandreau Indian High School in Flandreau, South Dakota, an off-reservation boarding school operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs; he also taught at Riverside Indian School in Anadarko, Oklahoma.

After earning a Master of Education degree in Educational Administration at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford, Oklahoma, Wayne became principal at Oglala Community School in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. He served the Oglala community for one year and then accepted the position of principal at Flandreau Indian High School. Following eight years in administration at Flandreau, he accepted a new challenge and moved to Mission, South Dakota, on the Rosebud Sioux Indian Reservation, to serve eight years as principal of Todd County High School.

During his career in K-12 education, Wayne also served as principal at Pine Ridge High School in Pine Ridge, South Dakota; substitute teacher in Topeka Public Schools, Topeka, Kansas; and principal of Seton Center High School in Kansas City, Missouri. In 2001, Wayne earned his Educational Specialist degree at the University of Missouri in Kansas City, Missouri. Shortly thereafter, he began pursuit of his doctoral degree at the University of Missouri-Columbia. During his studies, Wayne served as an adjunct

instructor for Central Missouri State University, Missouri Southern State University, and Oklahoma State University.

Throughout his career in K-12 education, Wayne worked in schools serving predominately minority students: the students in Flandreau Indian High School, Pine Ridge Schools, and Todd County Schools are American Indian; those attending Seton Center High School are African American and Hispanic. As principal, he seized opportunities to expand his expertise and involvement in local, state and national education associations. He served as board member and presenter for the South Dakota LEAD Project, member of North Central School Accreditation teams, Federal Liaison for the South Dakota Principals' Association, and Chairman of the American Indian Heartland Cancer Network.

Wayne currently resides in Oklahoma. His passion is Indian education, and his desire is to promote the improvement of education for Indian people. His research interests include American Indian education, leadership, and theoretical frameworks that focus on American Indian education issues.