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A Guide for Evaluating Indian Education Services, Products, and Materials

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A Guide for Evaluating Indian Education Services, Products, and Materials



The following qualifications and criteria are designed to assist school districts in their decision-making process for professional development, curriculum, and other needs (see lists below) that are related to Indian Education for All and student achievement issues. The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) offers this guidance to help schools sort through the variety of available educational services and materials so that the most effective and culturally relevant services and materials will be highlighted for use in Montana schools. It is up to each local district to make choices that meet its needs. We hope this process will help tailor professional development, curriculum, materials, etc. that districts provide to improve Indian student achievement and deliver appropriate instruction about American Indians to all Montana students.

This guide can also assist both organizations and individuals that have materials or information to share with school districts. This process, when completed thoroughly, can expedite the use and implementation of services and materials. Only those organizations and individuals that have met these minimum requirements should be given full consideration.

1) Criteria for Professional Development, Curriculum, and Instructional Models

General:

- What is the organization or company's background?
- What is the organization or company's experience in other schools/districts or communities?
Do schools/districts or communities recommend this organization or company?
- Has a summary of the product or service been provided and reviewed?
- Likewise, have the goals and expected outcomes of the product or service been provided and reviewed?
- Has accurate supporting data or research has been provided?
- Does the data or research address specific school or district needs?
- Does the service or product meet any needs that have been identified by a school improvement team/committee, five year plan team/committee, etc?
- What is the length of service or time commitment required?
- What types of activities will be included; i.e., summer institutes, on-site workshops, etc?
- What, if any, are the requirements or obligations of the school or district?
Are these requirements feasible?
- Cost?
- Contact name and information.

Cultural content:

- What is the organization or company's background in providing American Indian content to schools?
- Do the services or materials have a cultural component that is appropriate and will address the needs of Indian Education for All or for Indian student achievement?
- If so, has the subject been reviewed for cultural relevancy, authenticity, or bias? And by whom?
- If the subject includes tribally specific content or material, has it been approved by a local culture committee or other tribal organization?

2) Minimal Qualifications and Criteria for Speakers and Presenters

General:

- Speaker's/presenter's background – Is the speaker qualified to present information with American Indian themes or content?
- What is the speaker's experience in other schools/districts or communities?
Do schools/districts or communities recommend this speaker?
- Has a summary of the presentation topic been provided and reviewed?
- Likewise, have the goals and expected outcomes of the presentation or topic been provided, reviewed, and agreed upon by your district?
- Does the presentation, workshop, or service meet any needs that have been identified by a school improvement team/committee, five-year plan team/committee, etc?
- What are the costs?
- What is the length of workshop or presentation?
- What, if any, are other responsibilities or obligations of the school or district?
- Contact name and information.

Cultural content:

- Do the services or materials have a cultural component that is appropriate and will address the needs of Indian Education for All or for Indian student achievement?
- If so, has the presentation/workshop subject been reviewed for cultural relevancy, authenticity or bias? And by whom?
- If the subject includes tribally specific content or material, has it been approved by a local culture committee or other tribal organization?

3) Minimal Qualifications and Criteria for Materials and Texts

General:

- What is the age level that the material or text is directed toward?
- Is the material or text fiction or non-fiction?
- Who is the publisher and what was the publication date?
- Is the material or text readily available?
- What are the costs?
- Contact name and information.

Cultural content:

- Author information – is the author qualified to write a book dealing with the subject, specifically American Indian themes or content?
- Does the material or text have a cultural component that is appropriate and will address the needs of Indian Education for All or for Indian student achievement?
- Has been reviewed for cultural relevancy, authenticity, and bias:
 - Does it avoid stereotypes?
 - Does the material assist in establishing a positive image of American Indians?
 - Are both sides of the issue, event, or problem presented?
 - Are important facts included or omitted?
- If the subject includes tribally specific content or material, has it been reviewed by a local culture committee or other tribal organization. Or has it had input from a tribal leader, elder, or other qualified individual?

**For further textbook, DVD/video, and Web site evaluation, please review the "Evaluating American Indian Materials and Resources for the Classroom" document at www.opi.mt.gov/programs/IndianEd/IEFA.html (click on Resources, then Sundry) or the OPI Indian Education Division's "Indian Ed Literature and Resource Guidance" at the same site. Oyate.org also has a list of reviewed texts that have been evaluated for authenticity, relevancy and value.*

