

## **Strategies for Success with Urban Indian Students**

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### **Introduction**

The Indian Community School of Milwaukee, Inc. is a private school with 350 elementary American Indian students in Wisconsin. The school's thirty-year history provides the basis for integrating academic standards into Woodland culture typically found in the northern Midwest. The school serves Milwaukee descents of federally recognized tribes; six are indigenous to Wisconsin. American Indian/Alaska Native students in urban areas have been disenfranchised since the late sixties when federal programs to urban areas were eliminated. In her keynote speech at the NIEA annual meeting in Billings, Mt. Secretary of Interior Norton noted that Indian Community School was one of the top three schools in the country serving Indian students; Deputy Secretary William Hansen visited the school this summer and noted it was the "best" he had visited.

ICS serves only American Indian students, however, The Urban Indian Education Research Center focuses on research and practice in schools throughout the country. Urban Indians are the fastest growing minority in this country, according to recent Census counts. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) estimates that they serve only about ten percent of the American Indians/Alaska Natives in BIA funded schools.

### **Urban Indian Research Center**

The school is home to the Urban Indian Research Center, established in Spring 2000, to further research and collaboration with agencies, tribes, and organizations serving urban American Indian/Alaska Native populations. The Center has a national advisory board and hosts an Urban Indian Summit each year. The Center collects and distributes research reports and articles on urban Indians which can be accessed at their web site: [www.urban-indians.org](http://www.urban-indians.org)

## **Objectives or Purposes**

The purposes of this presentation are to provide classroom strategies for instructors who serve American Indian/Alaska Native students. The presentation will review the processes used at the Indian Community School to create and sustain a culturally relevant classroom approach.

The philosophy of the curriculum is based on seven core values and four primary relationships. This philosophy is illustrated in the daily practices at the school. Examples of how teacher performance appraisal forms, budget format, employee performance, strategic plans, curriculum development and materials review, as well as student discipline are integrated into a culturally appropriate, value-driven curriculum will be discussed.

The presentation will provide participants with a CD ROM version of *Won in the Classroom*. This set of guidelines was developed at the school and has been distributed nationally. Guidelines for the selection of culturally appropriate classroom materials for American Indians/Alaska Natives which includes the following five parts.

- Part 1 reviews selection criteria.
- Part 2 includes organizational structure.
- Part 3 emphasizes student experiences.
- Part 4 describes teaching strategies.
- Part 5 analyzes assessment procedures.

## **Summary**

This presentation is designed to solicit participation in the Urban Indian Education Research Center's annual Summit, as well as to collect research based articles, manuscripts, and presentations which focus on urban Indian students.