

**FLANDREAU SANTEE SIOUX TRIBE  
EDUCATION OFFICE**



August 29, 2023

Han Mitakuyepi!

Flandreau sits within the exterior boundaries of the Flandreau Santee Sioux reservation but is an incorporated town not affiliated with the Flandreau Tribe. The town of Flandreau operates three public schools (elementary, middle, and high school) which over 200 Native students attend. There are over 700 students in total attending Flandreau Public School. The school board is a non-native entity. 668 Flandreau Tribal members are living in and around the town of Flandreau and within Moody County on the Flandreau reservation. We also have students attending Colman-Egan Public School, Flandreau Indian School, and some students in the Sioux Falls district. FSST Education Department was developed to oversee the JOM program, BIA/AVT Tribal Higher Education Program, and the Adult GED Program. The Education Department also implements community outreach and educational programs.

**Current Challenges in Tribal Communities:**

Flandreau Public School does not offer Dakota Language/Culture in its curriculum. We have two qualified teachers to teach Dakota, but the school has not utilized them. The Dakota Language program is offering classes to youth and community members at the Wicoicaga Otipi Community Center. The Dakota Language Department also offers cultural/art night every Wednesday from 7:00-10:00 p.m.

Another challenge for Native students is College Readiness. Students are dropping out of universities because of no support system, don't know their resources, or how to ask for help, classes are too hard, financial literacy, and are homesick. Students end up dropping out and not returning to school. The students leave with bills that affect their credit and they are unable to transfer to another institution because of the bill. Some become ineligible for financial aid. We need to prepare the students for higher education so they can succeed.

The FSST Education Department administers the JOM program, the BIA/Tribal Higher Education program, and the Adult GED Preparation Program. The Education Department offers communication and youth education on a variety of topics.

- JOM- 173 students in the Flandreau Public School, Colman-Egan Public School, Flandreau Indian School, and Teachwell- Sioux Falls.
  - Incentives:
    - Walmart Gift card for supplies
    - FSP/FSST Meal
    - Perfect Attendance Gift card
    - Honoring
- Title VI- 242 enrollment (22-23), 34% enrollment in school

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- Higher Education- the Higher Education Committee approves or denies applicants. We currently have 6 approved applicants.
- GED- Two students have been attending online preparation classes. I plan to do more outreach to the community and offer one-on-one with students.
- Flandreau Indian Education Committee- There are five committee members. They would like more parental/guardian participation in meetings.

**Language and Culture:**

Flandreau Public School and Flandreau Indian School do not have a Dakota language program. FSST does have a Dakota/Cultural program with certified language instructors that is not being utilized by the schools.

**Teacher Recruitment and Training:**

Flandreau Public School has one Native staff which is the Title VII Director. There are no Native teachers or paraprofessionals in Flandreau Public School or Colman-Egan Public School. We plan to work with TCUs and universities to develop a teacher preparation program or mentorship. We need more Native educators!

**Community Engagement:**

The community has input on Education. We need more input from the community during our Flandreau Indian Education Committee. We need more engagement during school board meetings, we also need a Native American on the school board. The tribe and schools need to come together for the students.

**Success Tribal Initiative:**

**Demonstration Grant 2018-2019**

1. To ensure that Native students' needs concerning school academic, cultural, and social activities are implanted;
2. To ensure that the Flandreau School District school board, administration, staff, and teachers are provided professional growth training opportunities that incorporate appropriate;
3. To develop accredited Dakota Language classes and Dakota history/cultural curriculum.

The Demo grant was able to get more parent and student involvement. The Wicoicaga Otipi Community Center had an after-school program for the youth. We have not been able to continue the after-school program due to the end of grant funding, COVID-19, and lack of staff. The grant prepared the schools and tribe to work together to properly teach and care for our Native students. Since the grant ended, there has been no Native staff in the schools except the Title VII Director. There are no Dakota Language or cultural classes in the schools.

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Collaboration Opportunities:

Some great collaboration opportunities for the Tribal Education Directors and Legislatures to work on Tribal Education. Develop professional development/ cultural awareness training for school districts and non-Native staff and administration. They need to have a better understanding of and history of the tribal nations. Clear communication and support from legislators. Please continue to have open communication regarding tribal education.

Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe has a unique relationship with the Flandreau Public School. The tribe, the school, the parents, and the community need to work together for the betterment of the students. The Tribal Education Directors and Legislatures need to continue to meet. We all need to be on the same page when it pertains to tribal education.

Thank you all for playing an important role in tribal education. I look forward to working with everyone.

Wopila Tanka!

*Sarah Bad Warrior-Vrooman*

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Education Coordinator