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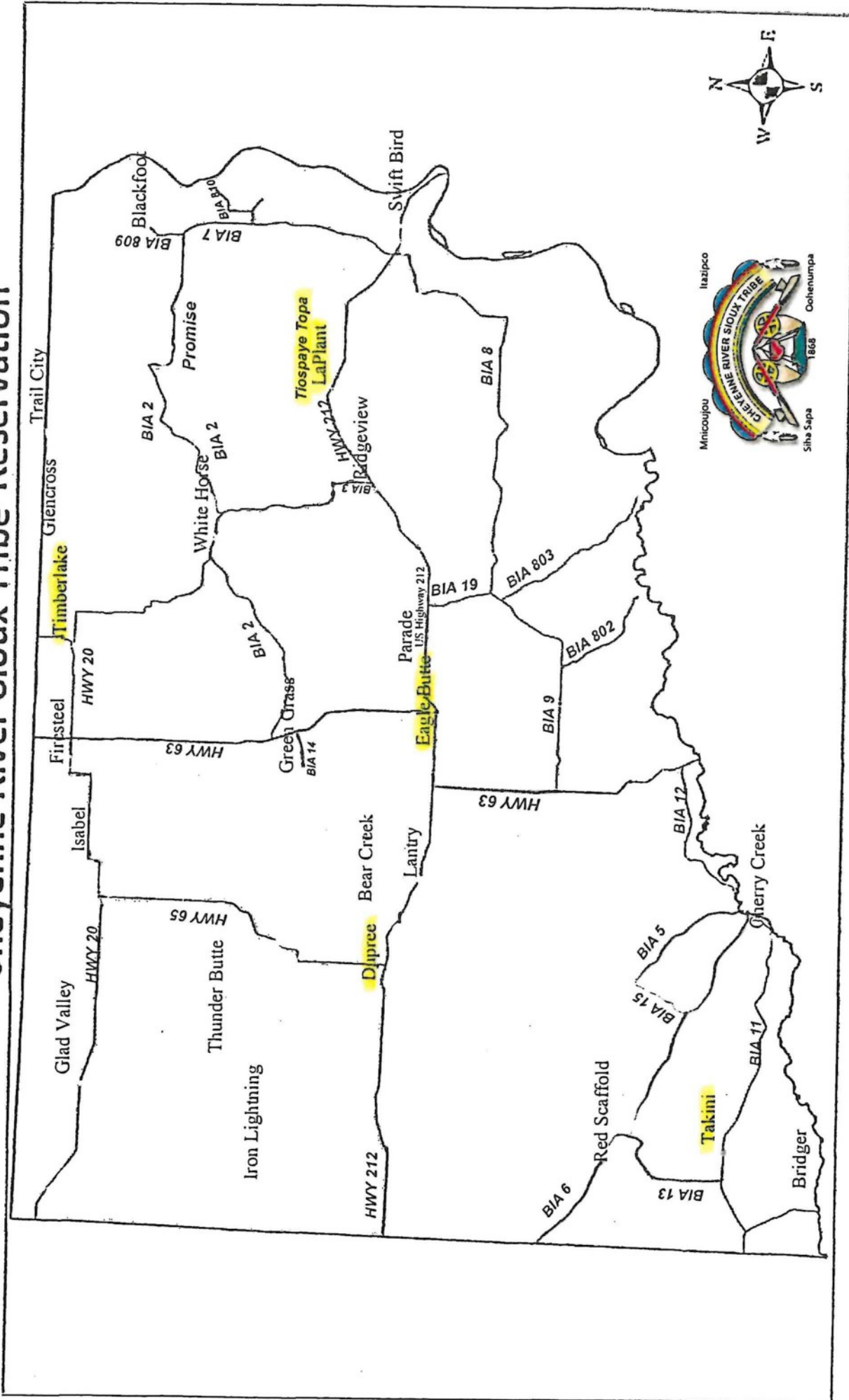
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Cheyenne River  
Tribal Education Agency  
Report 2023

# Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Reservation



Size - 2,806,913.95 acres (similar to the size of Connecticut)  
 Tribal enrolled members on Cheyenne River - Approximately 8,500

## Cheyenne River Report August 31, 2023

### I. Introduction:

- A. Anpetu Waste. Thank you, legislators, and Tribal Relations committee, for inviting the Tribal Education Directors to meet with you. My name is Dr. Cherie Farlee. I am the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Education Agency Director. I am an enrolled member of the Tribe and graduated from USD in 1982. I have 41 years of educational experience. The Tribal Education Agency staff consists of one Financial Analyst and one Administrative Assistant.
- B. The importance of this day is to provide the committee with an overview of education on the Cheyenne River reservation and to improve our state and tribal relationships for all students.

### II. Background:

- A. The CRST Tribal Education Agency (TEA) was established by CRST Resolution #336-2011-CR on August 4, 2011. The purpose of this Resolution was to establish a Tribal Education Department that would implement the Tribal Council's directions and provide the Council with recommendations on all aspects of education to ensure that it is effective, appropriate, and relevant to preparing students for their future, and to assist the Tribe in exercising self-determination and self-government consistent with its heritage. The Cheyenne River Sioux established the Tribal Constitution and By-Laws to organize and to promote the welfare of its tribal members. The Indian Self-determination Act of P.L. 93-638 furthered this need by allowing the tribe to operate certain BIA programs through contracting. It is the policy of the Federal Government per 25 CFR 324(a)(3) to "Ensure that Indian Tribes and Alaska Native entities fully exercise self-determination and control in planning, priority, setting, development, management, operation, staffing and evaluation in all aspects of the education process." Thus far the tribe has contracted certain education programs which are Johnson O'Malley, Title I, Higher Education, Employment Assistance Grant Programs, and the School Board. Contracting (P.L. 93-638) the Takini School was by the Cheyenne River Tribal Council. Later the Tribe granted (P.L.100-297) the Takini School and Tiospaye Topa School. Education on Cheyenne River is complex as there is also a BIE operated/Cooperative School at the Agency headquarters. The Cheyenne-Eagle Butte School is a K-12 which is operated on two campuses with commingled Public school and BIE school employees. Each operation manages their determined student count and budgets. This operation was the

result of the Cheyenne Agency being relocated to Eagle Butte when the Oahe dam was built. The school opened in 1962. Therefore, to further develop self-government and by tribal authority per the constitution, a Cheyenne River Sioux Education Agency was formed.

- B. The challenges the reservation face is the lack of highly qualified certified teachers, para educators, lack of funds for school building operation and maintenance resulting in unsafe buildings, inadequate classrooms, staff housing, positive community involvement and support, student attendance, drug/alcohol and mental health support and treatment. The PRAXIS test requirement has impacted the desire for graduating seniors or para educators to pursue education degrees.

### III. Current Education Landscape:

- A. The Tribal Education Agency is responsible for Ordinance #82, CRST Education Code, and works closely with the Tribal Education Committee. They administer the tribal education programs, facilitate a school consortium for schools/programs on the reservation and promote education for all students from Infant/Toddler through post-secondary. The consortium of schools is made up of 2 Grant schools, 1 BIE operated school, 3 Public schools, 1 Private school, 5 JOM programs, 1 Higher Education program, 1 Head Start program with 7 Centers, 1 Title I program, 1 Infant/Toddler program and the CR OLC Center. The network is a collaborative sharing of information, identifying, and reviewing education issues, partnering and monitoring education concerns and progress. The Tribal Education Agency also operates 2 TECA grants that promote Lakota Language and Culture and Book studies. The TEA provides the tribe information on current State/Federal legislation which may affect the tribe. Data is gathered from the schools and programs to prepare an Annual State of Education report for the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. The Tribal Education Agency works closely with Tribal/State/Federal government agencies on the implementation of educational programs for students, act as a liaison between the Cheyenne River Schools/Programs and the Tribal Education Committee. Key State and Federal education issues that affect tribal students are identified and the TEA assists with drafting testimony or position statements for the Tribe. The TEA works with the Tribal Education Committee and Tribal Council the governing and oversight bodies for the Tribe's education programs, prepares, and presents budgets, monitoring reports and tribal needs for revised budgets. The TEA currently serves on the Cheyenne-Eagle Butte School steering committee working on the design of a new K-12 funded school, dormitory, athletic field, and quarters. The Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) provided substantial funding to assist with building the school. The most recent educational undertaking was assisting

the tribal schools to welcome and provide mentoring to the 12 International teachers.

- B. The NWA test scores indicate that Native American students are not achieving on the same level as the other reservation students. Native American students do not know their language and culture. For the students who live in high poverty, they have no connection to what they could do with their future. The students come from generations of poverty with limited Native American role models. The mandated school curriculum does not address the need to teach the Lakota Native American culture or language. The model is middle class American curriculum. There is a lack of successful Native American role models in our communities. The work force has limited skills and not all of the Native American students want to attend a higher education institution. Our reservation schools need a strong Career and Technical education curriculum so Native American students can step into the work force upon high school graduation.

#### IV. Key Issues and Recommendations:

##### A. Funding and Resource Allocation:

- 1. Inadequacies: The funding level for the BIE schools is based upon an Indian School Equalization Formula (ISEF). Funding is allocated each year from Congress to the BIE. A formula to fund all schools utilizes a 3-year rolling average student count. If the enrollment fluctuates from year to year, the funding also fluctuates and the funding is always in competition with other Bureau of Indian Affairs departments. The state does not provide funding for Native American students in BIE schools. The public schools receive Impact Aid (P.L. 874) in lieu of taxes. Often times the public schools receive more through the State tax base and Impact Aid than the BIE schools receive under ISEF.

##### B. Cultural and Linguistic Preservation:

- 1. Native Language and culture has been on the decline for decades. Our elders were fluent speakers, but the non-Indian world took the language and culture away from the Native American students as they were put in boarding and day schools that did not allow the language to be spoken. In the 1950's the language began to disappear as many of the elders who were fluent speakers and knowledgeable began to enter the spirit world. The Native American Language Act provided grants to the native communities to reverse the loss and teach young Native Americans how to speak the language and learn about their culture.
- 2. The State of South Dakota began to develop the State standards with no mention of learning the language and culture. If we lose the Native

Language, we lose our Native American identity and the long-fought battle to remain sovereign. There have been many attempts to include the Oceti Sakowin standards in the state curriculum and accreditation requirements. Native American Tribes are a part of South Dakota history. All citizens of the state should know about their neighbors.

C. Teacher Recruitment and Training:

1. The BIE schools on the reservation face a teacher shortage. Education on the reservation is not supported as an important need. The reservations have attempted to recruit Native Americans to enter local colleges and prepare to be educators and role models. The interest has waned over the years, as the profession lacks comparable pay to other professions, the PRAXIS test seems impossible for Native Americans to pass. The BIE background check for government educators has taken months to clear, prospects move on to a job where they can gain employment within days.
2. The state of South Dakota needs to provide funding for Grow Your Own teachers, offer University programs funded and dedicated to training Native American educators, administrators, academic and mental health counselors, elementary and secondary teachers to fill the shortages. The State of South Dakota needs to abolish the PRAXIS test. It appears to have limited value as to the success of teaching capabilities.

D. Infrastructure and Access:

1. There is a movement to install internet access to all areas of the reservation. The reservation schools still do not have reliable access. Homes are also lacking in connectivity and knowledge to use internet connectivity. During the COVID pandemic, students were provided with wifi, hot spots and tablets to attend virtual classes. The process was there even though sporadic, but our students do not have the guidance and discipline and often parental support to complete a virtual lesson. The students are more successful if they are in a classroom setting with a virtual teacher and a classroom monitor. The road conditions to the BIE grant schools and public school bus routes are deplorable. The roads are somewhat graveled, and any type of moisture makes them a safety hazard. The BIA and county government do not have funding to keep the substandard bus routes properly maintained. The Bureau schools have GSA buses which assist them in a more reasonable cost than owning their own buses.
2. The public school facilities are in great shape and size due to the ARPA funds that were used for facilities repair. The facilities are hard to maintain as they are now over 20 years old and need adequate and timely funding

for repair and maintenance. The main BIE operated campus at Eagle Butte is 61-years-old and in shockingly bad condition for the past 20 plus years. The BIE CEB School is a complex school operating 2 campuses, a BIE school and Public school, under a Cooperative Agreement. The BIE School was finally approved for a new campus partially funded by the Great American Outdoor Act and is now in the 20% design phase. One of the critical concerns for recruitment of staff at any of the schools on the reservation is the shortage of housing.

E. Community Engagement:

1. History supports the fact that Native American people were never allowed to participate in their education. They were taken away to boarding schools or enrolled in reservation boarding schools and told how they were going to participate in their education. The language and culture of the students was not allowed in the educational curriculum. Over time there has been limited changes in the dictation of what will be taught to the Native American student. The educational system has failed the Native American student. Now, legislation allows Native American community involvement in the school curriculum and activities. Community engagement supports strength, resiliency, and positive identity. It assists native people to uphold and support their tribal sovereignty. Native people can now participate and feel a sense of direction and success in determining their education pathway.
2. The Tribal Education Agency established a Consortium of Schools in 2014 encouraged by CRST Ordinance #82 Education Code. The schools and programs, including the OLC campus meet twice a year to collaborate and discuss common education concerns and discuss ways the consortium could support one another in the education endeavors of all students on the reservation. Goals are established each year, collaboration and problem solving are shared. It is also an avenue for every administrator to gain a better understanding of the uniqueness of each school.

V. Success Stories:

- A. The Tribe passed CRST Ordinance #82, Education Code which has provided a guiding document for Cheyenne River Education. The TEA office promotes Lakota Language and Culture through Tribal Lakota Language and Book Study grant. We assist schools and programs with Lakota culture activities and have offered 3 successful semester Lakota Book studies for college credit. School Board training on various subjects has been held on roles and responsibilities, budget formulations, federal Indian education laws and regulations, and fiscal audit responsibilities. The Cheyenne River Tribal Education Agency (TEA) is involved in the South Dakota Indian Education

Summit, the South Dakota Indian Education Advisory Council, National Indian Education Association, South Dakota Indian Education Equity Coalition, North Dakota/South Dakota Tribal Education Directors group and the Cheyenne River Schools Consortium. The TEA is recognized by the Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association (GPTCA) for the purpose of focusing on all educational matters and issues that affect native students in the Great Plains area. The groups have brought exposure to the problems facing Native American reservations and schools. The group is very active in national education issues, national legislation and state legislative issues and proposed legislation that impact Native American students. The lessons learned are that all citizens of South Dakota do not know reservations, do not know Indian Education, and do not have an understanding of the importance of teaching about the Oceti Sakowin and training teaching staff across the state to understand the importance of Native American history and culture with focused training across the state for better understanding and teaching methodology and strategies.

- B. The schools are in great need of additional staff. An initiative was implemented to bring Philippine teachers to the reservation for the 2023-2024 school year. There are 7 at the Takini School and 4-5 to arrive in mid-September to Tiospaye Topa. The TEA department wanted to support the arrival of the teaching staff, so have employed a Philippine community member to mentor the staff, assist them in their adjustment to reservation culture and isolation.

VI. Collaboration Opportunities:

- A. The Tribal Relations committee is a potential avenue for collaboration and sharing is encouraged when the committee meets. SD ESSA offers another opportunity to meet and collaborate at Tribal Consultation.
- B. The education challenges are many but joint efforts to address those challenges and improve outcomes can take place by meeting with the South Dakota Indian Education Advisory Council. At the current time, the council is only involved in the OCETI Sakowin standards, and that input is limited. The South Dakota Indian Education Summit is another opportunity to meet and share educational concerns. The Tribal Relations committee could be invited to meet with the Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association to collaborate and work together on SD educational concerns and initiatives. Partnerships and collaboration often yield positive outcomes.

VII. Conclusion:

- A. Cheyenne River Tribal Education Agency was established in August 2011. There is a need for all South Dakota citizens to understand Native American history, not just the Battle of Little Big Horn. Working together for the betterment of all SD students is a desired outcome. There is no equity in funding between the State and BIE. Cheyenne River student test data depicts low test results except for one public school. There is a need to support legislation for the inclusion of Native American history in the social studies standards. There is a need to jump start teacher preparation programs through local colleges on the reservation or State Universities. There is a need to provide funding to train administrators, teachers and staff in leadership, curriculum development, social and emotional health. There is a need to work in collaboration with the SD DOE and SD Tribal Relations to identify Native American student needs and priorities. The SD DOE needs to resume the ESSA Tribal Consultation process with the Tribes.
  
- B. The Cheyenne River Tribal Education Agency would like to express our gratitude for being invited to meet with the Tribal Relations Committee. It is our hope the concerns brought forth will be given thought and consideration to improving education for the Native American students across the state of South Dakota. We are all state citizens and working to improve education across the state.

VIII. Attachments:

- A. The SD statistical data is not attached. The Cheyenne River BIE schools state report card does not indicate a positive learning outcome on state assessments. There is one public school that is scoring above average. The majority of the public schools have high populations of Native American students.

IX. Contact Information:

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## Enrollments 2022

### **Eagle Butte Cooperative School**

BIE total 469

20-2 Public 362

Total Enrollment: 831

### **Timber Lake Public School**

Total Enrollment: 362

Native American: 194

### **Dupree Public School**

Total Enrollment: 415

Native American: 328

### **Takini School**

Total Enrollment: 145

### **Tiospaye Topa School**

Total Enrollment: 166

**State Assessments:** All school were well below average, except for the Timber Lake Public School, they were above average.