School Climate Transformation: Using a PBIS Model in Indian Country

...transforming the social culture.

Goal
To fully implement a culturally-grounded and culturally-appropriate Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI) in schools that serve primarily tribal areas.

Partners
• Tribal Cultural Advisors
• Target Schools
• MBI and Indigenous Consultants
• Montana OPI American Indian Youth Development Coord.
• Project SOARS - Montana’s School Safety and Mental Health Initiative

Montana Schools
• 144,500 total students
• White: 79% of school-age population
• American Indian: 11% of school-age population
• Special Education rate is 3.5% higher for American Indians than Whites

Participation
Quaglia Student Voice participation for SCT Schools:
Secondary - 1514  Staff - 209
Elementary - 579  Parent/Families - 167

Changing Adult Behavior
• Build and grow decision making systems
• Encourage positive interactions with children
• Engage students, families and cultural advisers in problem solving
• Align multiple programs into a “paradigm”

Challenges
• Extensive staff and administration turnover
• Tension between “Native” ways and “White” ways
• Staff availability for training (substitute teachers are not available)
• Too many programs in high need schools
• Inconsistent data and decision making infrastructure
• Target schools average 280 miles from SEA
• Inconsistent Internet availability

An effective school represents the community it’s a part of. The school must be a reflection of community values and traditions.”
– A Tribal Elder from the Fort Belknap Reservation (2015)