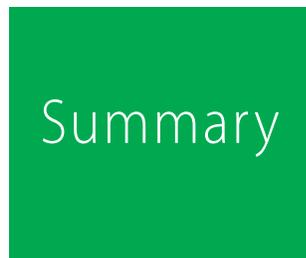




Profiles of partnerships between tribal education departments and local education agencies





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Summary

February 2012

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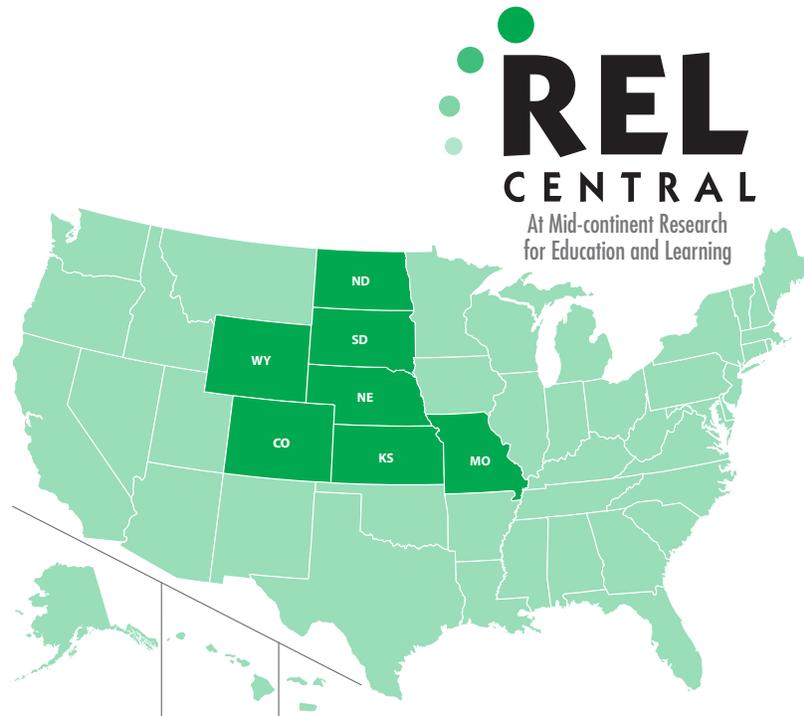
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Profiles of partnerships between tribal education departments and local education agencies

This study examines nine voluntary working relationships or partnerships between tribal education departments and local education agencies supporting American Indian students. Individual profiles describe how each partnership works, focusing primarily on collaborative activities intended to improve education outcomes for American Indian students.

In 2008/09, American Indian students accounted for 1.2 percent (585,884) of all K–12 students (49,265,572) in the United States and 1.9 percent (53,058) of students in the Central Region (2,808,282; National Center for Education Statistics 2010). Some American Indian students excel in school, but many struggle, as evidenced by high dropout rates (Faircloth and Tippeconnic 2010; Freeman and Fox 2005; National Caucus of Native American State Legislators 2008); high rates of absenteeism, suspension, and expulsion (Freeman and Fox 2005); and low academic performance (Freeman and Fox 2005; Grigg, Moran, and Kuang 2010; National Caucus of Native American State Legislators 2008; Nelson, Greenough, and Sage 2009). Indeed, improving the academic performance of these students is a national and regional concern.

Chief state school officers in the Central Region requested this study so that they can better

understand how tribal education departments (TEDs)—organizations overseeing American Indian education—work with local education agencies (school districts) to improve education outcomes for American Indian students. Responding to their request, this study examines nine voluntary working relationships or partnerships between TEDs and local education agencies supporting American Indian students, both in the Central Region and in other areas of the country. In individual profiles, the study describes how these partnerships work, focusing primarily on collaborative activities intended to improve education outcomes for American Indian students.

To produce the partnership profiles, interviews were conducted with representatives from the TEDs and their local education agency partners, and documents establishing or describing each partnership were analyzed.

Key findings include:

- All the TEDs received tribal funds for their partnership activities; all but one received federal or state funding as well.
- Interviewees for all the partnerships mentioned that face-to-face meetings were important for building and sustaining their partnerships.

- All the partnerships offered students a cultural or tribal language program; five partnerships also offered academic support in core subjects.
- Five partnerships focused on discipline or social and behavioral issues, such as truancy and student safety and behavior.
- Four partnerships offered an opportunity for participation in dual enrollment or early college programs.
- Three partnerships focused on parent involvement or support.
- In seven partnerships, the TED used memoranda of understanding, parent waivers, or releases to obtain data from local education agencies on student performance and behavior.
- In four partnerships, the stakeholders mentioned overcoming discrimination, mistrust, or rivalry in order to set and work on mutual goals for American Indian student success.

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