

**Boozhoo - Educators:**

As engaged and concerned citizens of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Minnesota, and the United States, we come to you, in partnership, regarding the future education of our children in your school systems. We are writing to encourage you and your staff to form partnerships to create and implement a curriculum that includes an important mutual area of concern; the history of traditional tribal governance forward to modern government structures of Ojibwe-Anishinaabeg peoples.

**Who are we?**

We are a group of Tribal members that are working to revise the Constitution of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT). We also discuss sovereignty as it relates to the reservation today. The delegates meet with representatives from all six MCT reservations monthly to discuss the changes that we can agree upon to reform our current (outdated) Constitution. Meetings are open to the public. We want the input of all affected MCT people, enrolled and descendants, elders to young children.

**How can we help you meet the new State Standards in History and Government?**

Considering the new State Standards Draft 3 in Social Studies dated 12/14/2021, we offer our assistance in helping your school district learn about and incorporate the traditional tribal governance of Ojibwe-Anishinaabeg peoples. For example, we are currently working on a tribal governance review that will assist your school district in meeting Social Studies State Standard 6 for grades 6 – 8. The anticipated time to implement the new standard is the school year 2026/27.

6	1. Citizenship and Government	2. Democratic Values and Principles: Explain democratic values and principles that guide governments, societies, and communities, and analyze the tensions within the United States constitutional government.	6.1.2.1	Explain how the Constitution of the State of Minnesota and a tribal nation constitution reflect democratic values and principles. Locate a democratic principle embodied in the Constitution of the State of Minnesota or in one of Minnesota’s tribal nations’ constitutions. Summarize the concept of federalism and describe the relationship between the powers of the federal and state governments.
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We are aware that with the ratification of the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), that the educational standards of all our children have changed in every curricular area across America and in Minnesota. Standards have changed to not only educate our Native American population about their own histories and ways of life, governance, science, art, language but also educate and better inform non-native peoples. We share educators' belief that expanded education for all is overdue. With the change in educational standards, all may learn about the treaties that made America and that are still a legal standard today.

### **Who you are:**

Public, Private, Tribal, and Charter Schools now have the major opportunity of offering a curriculum that includes the government structure of Native Americans in Minnesota. Such tribal history has been largely absent from standards and curriculum. Our Native American children are students in your institutions and incorporating tribal history and Native American Student Councils is expected to create a better understanding of Indigenous culture between all students who have the opportunity to learn curriculum created under the new educational standards with input from the Minnesota tribes.

### **What you can do:**

- ❖ Recognize that the current government structure that exists and is applied to the membership of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe is NOT a traditional structure, was not created by us; but for us, by the United States Government during the Indian Reorganization Act era. Under the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) - we have a right to self-government and to reorganize however we choose, which is the purpose of the revision of the MCT Constitution review now taking place.
- ❖ We are encouraging you to plan professional development days with tribal colleges and Native American Professionals that can help guide teachers, Indian Education staff, and others in how best to bring about these changes in standards to best meet the needs of our students and communities.
- ❖ We are encouraging you to ask the State Curriculum professionals/developers for their help and involvement in getting something comprehensive and locally based together. Please discuss a Tribal Government class that could help teach traditional tribal governance and the history of changes in Tribal governance because of Treaty, Acts of Congress, and Policy changes throughout time.
- ❖ We are asking you to start Native American Student Councils to meet on their own and with your regular student councils. We have Native American people serving on our Reservation Business Committees and on Cloquet and Duluth City Councils, as well as holding state and federal seats. We can start building city-tribal relations earlier and stronger than before.
- ❖ We are encouraging conversations with our delegates to constitutional reform - how can we help? When can we have zoom meetings with the kids to educate them about this process? Who are your contact people that we may communicate with to set up regular information sessions?

## **We are asking for action today!**

- ❖ Review the resource page attached; it will help you familiarize yourself with much-needed information.
- ❖ Reach out to us and your local tribal colleges and universities for help in creating a curriculum to accommodate these recent changes.
- ❖ The more your school can engage our Native students in their own tribal histories and future, the more likely they are to engage themselves in your school and in our community.
- ❖ Find your local partners; start a conversation and open dialogue with teachers, administrators, Indian Education Staff, Indian Parent Committees, and grant writers and gather their questions for Native Educators regarding the development and organizational structure of a Native American Student Council.
  - Students can create The Native American Student Council with guidance on creating their membership requirements and bylaws.
- ❖ Native American Student Councils could designate a member to sit on the Local Indian Education Parent Committees and be a more organized voice of Native American Students.
  - Students can learn about Robert's Rules of Order during this process as well.
  - Students can work to plan community service projects and deal with student/school issues and advocacy of students and Native American programs.
- ❖ We all need to gather information from Native American Students. What do they know? What do they need to know? What kind of government do they want? What do they want their constitution to say? How might Indian Education Staff or History teachers be able to help facilitate this?

As engaged and concerned citizens of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Minnesota, and the United States, we come to you offering partnership regarding the future education of our Native American children in your school systems.

We have appended resources that may help with the foundational understandings needed about our tribe and what is happening.

Miigwech. Thank you. We look forward to hearing from you and hearing your thoughts. Reach out anytime. Our committee is available to meet via Zoom. We look forward to working together for the next generations.

Respectfully,

Fond du Lac Constitutional Convention Delegates & Community Members  
Grand Portage Constitutional Convention Delegates & Community Members

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Please see the resources in the attachments.

## Resources

[www.fdlconstitution.org](http://www.fdlconstitution.org) - Fond du Lac Band's Constitutional Convention Delegate Webpage  
email Fond du Lac delegates directly at [delegate@fdlconstitution.org](mailto:delegate@fdlconstitution.org)

<https://zaagibagaang.com/> - "Zaagibagaang is a grassroots effort focusing on governance and nation building within the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT), designed to encourage everyone to share their gifts and work towards mino-bimaadiziwin by empowering people to GET INFORMED and GET INVOLVED in the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe."

This website has a delegate toolkit that may be helpful in creating a Youth delegation of the MCT Constitutional Convention.

This website has links to bring you to each of the bands' websites for each reservation. Each website has a great deal of tribal information and tribal contact information within them.

<https://www.mnchippewatribe.org/> - Minnesota Chippewa Website - more helpful background information about the tribe and its governance and structure. **You can find Reservation specific websites for Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, White Earth, and on this website.**

[https://www.mnchippewatribe.org/constitution\\_convention.html](https://www.mnchippewatribe.org/constitution_convention.html) - MCT Tribal Delegation Information – for all six bands- for the constitutional change we are working together for.

Helpful MDE Webpages:

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/indian/teach/> -American Indian Education Resources

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/stds/> -MN Academic Standards - Review to see addition of American Indian Standards - K12 across all subject areas - will help find talking/planning points with Tribal Colleges and Native Educators and within curriculum committees.