Nevada Department of Native American Affairs

Stacey Montooth
Executive Director

Joe Lombardo
Governor

5500 Snyder Ave, Building #3 Carson City, NV 89701

Indian Education Advisory Committee (IEAC)
Meeting Minutes 10/15/2026
Microsoft Teams | Called to Order: 1:05 PM | Adjourned: 3:08 PM

Committee Member	Seat Filled	Present	Absent
Chair – Fawn Hunter	Washoe County School District (WCSD)	X	
Vice Chair – Lance West	Schurz Elementary School	X	
Margaret Gunshows	Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Child Division (ITCN)		X
Kari Emm	Tribal Students College of Agriculture, Biotechnology & Natural Resources University of Nevada	X	
Fredina Drye-Romero	Nevada Department of Education (NDE)		X
Richie Savage	Indian Education Clark County School District	X	
Sara Hoferer (Twiss)	Walker River Paiute Tribe (WRPT) Education	X	
Kyle Ethelbah	UNLV		X

Department of Native American Affairs (DNAA):
Kadie Zeller, Management Analyst
Melanie Smokey, Education Curator, Stewart Indian School Cultural Center and Museum

Other Attendees:
Fran Maldonado, ESSA Program, NDE
Lynn Manning-John, Owhyee Combined Schools
M-Ache Martinez, NYCP Program, NDE

Roll by Taken by Chair Hunter
Quorum met, established at 2:41 PM

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I. **Invocation**

II. **Welcome by Fawn Hunter, Introductions by all attendees**

III. **Initial Public Comment**

a. Kadie Zeller shared that feedback on the Nevada Department of Education's Statewide Plan for the Improvement of Pupils (STIP) is due October 21, 2026. She encouraged comments explicitly addressing Indian education and Native students, and offered to circulate the draft and feedback links.
b. Sara Hoferer reported Walker River Paiute Tribe education activities, including an active graduation survey, a UNR college and career visit, year-end scholarship reporting (51 higher-education students, 12 adult vocational training awards, and 15 enrichment awards), and continued NYCP college/career readiness support in Lyon and Mineral counties. She described plans to develop a scholarship-opportunity database and seek sustainable funding.
c. Kari Emm announced an October 17 Indigenous food sovereignty event at the Desert Farming Initiative led by a tribal student intern and offered to provide a flyer for distribution.
d. Fran Maldonado shared an inquiry regarding a proposed $1,000 donation for a Native student pursuing an education degree. Members discussed potential qualifying education organizations or departments; Fran planned to obtain details and follow up with committee members.
e. Lynn Manning-John, principal of Owyhee Combined Schools, reported that a new school building is expected to open in July 2027, along with workforce development efforts, a cultural conference, partnerships, and improved chronic-absenteeism results. She cited decreases in chronic absenteeism in elementary (49% to 31%), junior high (41% to 23%), and high school (61% to 45%).
f. Fawn Hunter reported Washoe County School District activities, including the October 18th college fair at UNR, student cultural workshops, tribal consultation and professional development, and a planned student trip to Owyhee.

IV. **Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 25th –** Minutes were reviewed once quorum was convened. Sara Hoferer requested correction to spelling of her name ("Sara" without an

"h"). Lance West motioned for approval of the minutes with the added correction, Sara Hoferer (Twiss) seconded and the motion was passed unanimously by the committee.

V. **Follow up on IEAC individual responsibilities and subject areas**

- **a. Native American Fee Waiver – Kari Emm**
  - i. Kari reported participating in a National Indian Education Association session on Native American higher-education fee waivers and related research. She planned to coordinate with Kyle Ethelbah on existing materials and develop a strategy ahead of the 2027 legislative session.
- **b. MOU's and FERPA Based Information Sharing Arrangements – Sara Hoferer**
  - i. Sara discussed continued work on agreements with school districts, including planned annual reviews with Lyon and Mineral County School Districts. She expressed interest in statewide presentations and follow-up on previous Indian Education Summit feedback. Fawn reported an MOU arrangement involving Washoe County School District and Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, noting its continued reliance on parental FERPA releases. Members discussed sharing example agreements and approaches.
- **c. Improving Survey Tools for Better Data – Lance West**
  - i. Lance planned to reconnect with committee members and subcommittees to develop improved survey tools. He suggested aligning the survey with the NDE STIP priorities, including attendance and graduation outcomes. Kadie recommended submitting Indian education feedback by October 21 so that Native student perspectives could inform both the state plan and future survey development.

VI. **New Business: Churchill County High School Native American Studies Course – Kadie Zeller**

- a. Kadie reported that Churchill County High School approved a Native American Studies elective course for the current school year. Community contributors are assisting teacher Andrew Campbell with topics, instruction, and resources, drawing in part on the developing statewide curriculum. She described guest presentations and weekly Shoshone and Paiute language contributions by the local cultural/language program. Kadie plans to gather course information and available data at the end of the semester and bring findings back to the committee.

VII. **New Business: Stewart Indian School Cultural Center and Museum – Kadie Zeller & Melanie Smokey**

a. Kadie and Melanie Smokey outlined an in-development "Basket-Mind Thinking" curriculum adapting the museum's cultural and educational activities into sensory- and play-based lessons. Activities emphasize cultural knowledge, relationships to land, appropriate behavior in different settings, and age- and ability-responsive participation. The team is mapping lessons to Nevada educational standards and preparing them for review and are specific to Stewart Indian School.

VIII. **Final Public Comments**

a. Kadie shared a call for presenters and vendors for the Nevada Afterschool Network "Every Connection Matters" conference, seeking increased participation by tribal communities. Sara noted her staff had submitted an NYCP afterschool tutoring proposal and expressed interest in an additional MOU session.
b. Richie Savage proposed developing brief, age-appropriate introductory materials for schools hosting tribal cultural presenters, covering respect for guest presenters, Great Basin tribal context, and appropriate audience behavior.
c. Fran confirmed the 2027 NDE Indian Education Summit for March 25–26, 2027, at the University of Nevada, Reno, with related tribal leader activities anticipated on March 24.
d. Kadie and Fawn discussed reviewing committee bylaws, quorum provisions, possible proxies, vacant or changing seats, and committee membership language at a future meeting.
e. Kadie offered support on Indian education project development and to distribute information on Children's Week, Tribal funding opportunities, and relevant legislation.
f. The group noted that the 84th Nevada Legislative Session begins February 1, 2027, and discussed tracking relevant bill draft requests and reconvening the fee-waiver subcommittee before the session in the event any updates are needed.

IX. **Adjournment by Fawn Hunter at 3:08 PM**

VIII. **Future IEAC Meeting Dates, Frequency and Times for 2027 are TBD.**