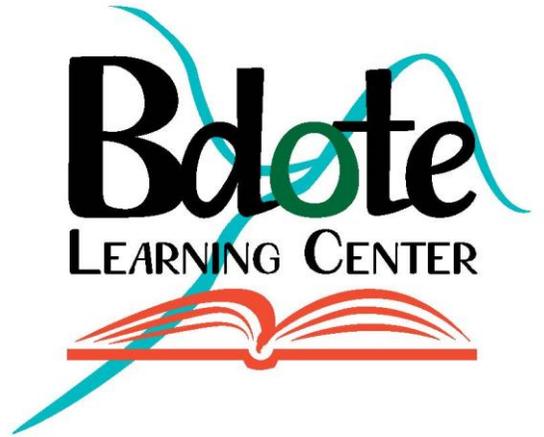




## Annual Report 2014-15



HAN/HAU!

BOOZHOO!

After years of planning, Bdote opened its doors to 55 students in August 2014.

GREETINGS!



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## Mission

The mission of the Bdote Learning Center is to develop culturally aware, successful, high performing American Indian students by providing them with an academically rigorous education that is place-based, and rooted in Native language and culture.

## Overview of the school

At Bdote, all learning activities will draw on the history, culture, languages, knowledge, values, needs and contributions of American Indian people of this region. A Place-Based Language Immersion Education model provides the best context for the school. In this model, students are immersed in rigorous, active and interdisciplinary projects often involving learning outside of school walls. Curriculum content is tied to the geographical surroundings of the school, the local history, landscape, ecology, Native languages and cultures as well as the concerns and aspirations of the present-day community and the families served. All learning is connected to the richness and complexity of the students' own place in the world.

## Vision

### Improve Student Achievement

The Bdote Learning Center will improve student achievement through:

- a belief that all children can learn and that staff will do whatever it takes for students to achieve.
- a year round learning experience that creates more frequent but shorter break times better ensuring student retention of knowledge and academic skills.
- an extended day program.
- intercession classes during break times for remediation and enrichment that offers small class sizes and better student/teacher ratios.
- project-based, problem solving and critical inquiry learning that puts more responsibility for learning in the hands of students and creates greater collaboration among students, teachers, family and community members developing pro-active citizens.
- multi-age classrooms to create continuous learning, deeper relationships, differentiated instruction and a focus on the whole child.
- alignment of the curriculum and instruction with MN State Standards.
- the utilization of the Growth Model to interpret MCA, MTAS and ACTFL data and set goals to improve student achievement.

### Increase Learning Opportunities

The Bdote Learning Center will increase learning opportunities for pupils through:

- a rigorous language immersion experience
- place-based education that fosters learning in and with community, working together to solve

## Bdote

### The Meaning

The junction of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers--known to the Dakota as Bdote--is a place of major social, cultural, and historical significance to all people inhabiting the region...It is a place of cultural importance to many Dakota people as a site of creation, as well as a historical gathering place.<sup>1</sup>

problems important to the community, and helping students experience the relevance learning has to their daily lives.

- a partnership with Worldviews, giving Bdote access to a portable dome and technology which will allow our students to interact with Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples all over the world. The UniView technology will allow students to learn both the western and Indigenous views of the sky but also by teaching about important issues such as climate change.
- a higher education program will be on site offered through Leech Lake Tribal College (LLTC) allowing for intergenerational learning to take place. Bdote students will participate in post-secondary during high school with the possibility of graduating from high school with a 2 year degree. LLTC will offer AA, AAS and Honorary Elders Degree offering intergenerational and lifelong learning opportunities to Bdote families and the community.
- an American Indian family involvement curriculum entitled Native American Pathways to Success, which will teach families how to support their child's academic success and college preparation.

## Highlights of 2014-15

Bdote was founded on the basis of eleven tenets (Addendum 1: Tenets). During the 2014-15 school year, three of these tenets were evidenced in practice.

### Language

- *Bdote utilizes curriculum and instructional practices that have been proven through practice and research to be effective in the education of American Indian/Indigenous students. We accomplish this by implementing an academically rigorous curriculum incorporating place-based, experiential lessons delivered in our indigenous languages. These three components have proven to close the achievement gap for indigenous people across the globe.*

Students are learning their languages. Observations at the end of the year noted that 90% of the teacher talking time was in either Ojibwe or Dakota. Additionally, students were recognizing and responding to the language. The majority of students began school without any knowledge of either Ojibwe or Dakota.



### Place-based Learning

- *Bdote reclaims our legacy of being caretakers of Bdote as well as the community surrounding Bdote. We accomplish this by incorporating place-based learning at our school.*

In addition to students learning in the classroom about the local history and experiences of the Ojibwe and Dakota people, the students got out to experience learning on location. Students visited Mounds Park to learn the Dakota creation story from Jim Rock while exploring the park that marks the location of the narrative.

In early spring, the students ventured to Sugar Bush to learn the skills of tapping trees to make maple syrup. Then, learned how maple syrup played a versatile role in food preparation.

### Community Connections

- *Bdote models and demonstrates the link between a strong cultural identity and academic success. We accomplish this by hiring American Indian professionals as staff and by teaching our children about past and current American Indians leaders.*

Bdote worked very hard to establish and nurture partnerships with a broad-base of community partners with a goal of expanding and enriching educational opportunities for Bdote students. A total of 12 community partners, including a variety of groups such as MIGIZI Communications, Inc., Division of Indian Work, Inner-city Tennis, Science Museum of Minnesota, and Dream of Wild Health, volunteered hundreds of hours to offer activities to students during the regular school day or during quarterly intersessions.

Elders from the community joined Bdote students to share their skills and experiences as part of the Dakota and Ojibwe tribes. Elders came to the school to teach students how to make and play drums and taught songs in both Ojibwe and Dakota. Additionally, an Elder worked with the teachers and students to design and sew clothes for the students to wear at the South High Pow-wow in May.



#### **Parent Engagement:**

- *sees parents, extended family, and school staff as a child's role models, and school as an integral part of its community, and it prepares students to interact during their lifetime in their local, national, and international communities. We accomplish this by incorporating service learning in our program.*
- *repairs lost trust among the students and families served, by showing that a school can respond quickly to students and community needs. We accomplish this by creating a student congress and parent council.*

Bdote's first school year included several events to regularly engage families and community members in the life of the school. Bdote hosted three open houses, a winter storytelling event, an Indian Month celebration, and several mini-powwows. Parents and community members were issued an open invitation to these events that always included a meal/feast and cultural as well as educational activities. Transportation was also provided to encourage greater participation.

## Students

### Enrollment

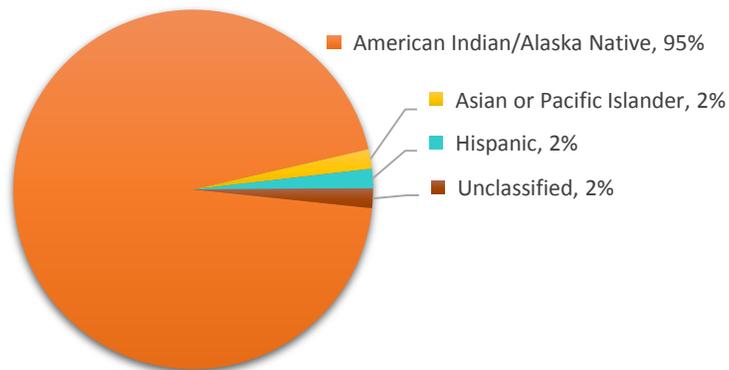
Bdote is an open to all students and recruits across all of south Minneapolis. However, due to the focus on indigenous languages, the school attracted a high percentage of students who identify as American Indian. However, as mentioned previously, while the students connect ethnically, most of the students do not have experience with either the Ojibwe or Dakota languages.

**Figure 1: 2014-15 Student Demographics<sup>1</sup>**

	Grade				Total %	Boys	Girls
	K	1	2	3			
American Indian/Alaska Native	35%	26%	14%	19%	95%	53%	42%
Asian or Pacific Islander	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%	0%
Hispanic	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%	0%
Black, Not of Hispanic origin	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
White, not of Hispanic Origin	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Unclassified	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%	0%	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>21%</b>		<b>56%</b>	<b>44%</b>

**Figure 2:**

### Student Enrollment 2014-15



**Figure 3: 2014-15 Student Membership and Attendance**

ADM	60.01
ADA	51.95
Attendance Rate	86.57%

**Figure 4: 2014-15 Student Attrition**

Starting Enrollment	55	
Attrition	(17)	31%
New Enrollments	21	
Ending Enrollment	59	

<sup>1</sup> Student Data from Bdote Student Information System, may not be the same as MDE October 1 student count

**Figure 5:**

<b>Bdote Attendance Goal</b>	2014-15	
	Goal	Actual
Percent of all students attending 90% of the time	50%	52.63%

**Student Demographics – Special Program Populations**

- 83.1% Free and Reduced Lunch
- 5% Special Education
- 0% English Language Learners

Bdote was able to maintain between 55 and 60 students throughout the year. However, 21 students starting at various points in the year meant teachers had many new students starting throughout the year. This was a challenge to both the language immersion program and the culture of the school. Low attendance further challenged the classroom teachers to maintain strong classroom environments. Prior to opening, Bdote set a goal of 50% of students attending school 90% of the time knowing that once the school is established and families feel connected to the school and the culture of the Ojibwe and Dakota, attendance will increase. Nationally, the Indian student attendance rate for 2014-15 was **34%** of students attending 95% or more of time<sup>2</sup>

**Enrollment: Future Plans**

Bdote struggled with enrollment prior to and throughout the first year and now into the second year. Adjustments to the planned school growth are as follows. Bdote will add one grade per year according to the following schedule.

	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Total</b>
FY15	22	15	8	12						57
FY16	14	21	7	6	13					61
FY17	22	22	20	15	15	10				104
FY18	22	22	20	20	15	15	20			134
FY19	25	25	20	20	20	15	20	20		165
FY20	25	25	25	20	20	20	20	20	20	195

In addition to the changes to the growth rate for the school, Bdote continues to be involved in the community and the board continues to fundraise.

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**Program**

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<sup>2</sup> Indian Education, Summative Data Report, October 2014; MPS Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Department

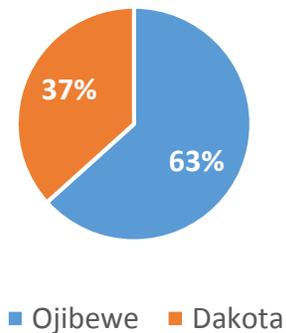
## School’s instructional philosophy and focus

At Bdote, all learning activities will draw on the history, culture, languages, knowledge, values, needs and contributions of American Indian people of this region. A Place-Based Language Immersion Education model provides the best context for the school. In this model, students are immersed in rigorous, active and interdisciplinary projects often involving learning outside of school walls. Curriculum content is tied to the geographical surroundings of the school, the local history, landscape, ecology, Native languages and cultures as well as the concerns and aspirations of the present-day community and the families served. All learning is connected to the richness and complexity of the students’ own place in the world.

By utilizing a place-based language immersion model, the Bdote Learning Center will improve student achievement. One of Bdote’s primary goals is to address the achievement gap left by mainstream public schools. The first American Indian school in the United States opened in 1611 preceding the birth of this nation and yet in 2010, Minneapolis Public Schools 4 year graduation rate for American Indian students was 20.27%. Non-Indians have had over 400 years to create educational institutions that work for American Indian children, but have not succeeded. For many years success was not the goal in these schools but rather assimilation or “cognitive imperialism” which denies people their cultural integrity by maintaining the legitimacy of only one language, one culture and one frame of reference. (Battiste, 2000)

Bdote has built an immersion program in two languages. Dakota because this is the Dakota homeland and the birthplace of the Dakota people. However, there are very few Dakota first language speaker left in MN. Ojibwe because the largest population of Native Americans in Minnesota is Ojibwe, so there is a demand for learning in this language.

**Figure 6:**  
Enrollment by Language



## Academic Performance

### Overview of each of the WBWF goals

- 1) All children are ready to start kindergarten.

Bdote does not provide any pre-Kindergarten services.

- 2) All third-graders can read at grade level.

### **Figure 7: MCA Testing:**

	2014-15		
	Goal	Actual	
Bdote Goal #2 Minimum academic MCA requirements			
Sch-wide MCA Reading- % of students proficient	30%	12.5%	Not Met
Sch-wide MCA Math - % of students proficient	20%	12.5%	Not Met
Bdote Goal #5 Comparison with Mpls district school Anishinabe			

Gr. 3-8 MCA: %points above in reading and math when Compared with Mpls sites with comparable demographics	10%	Math -8.4% Reading 5.2%	Not Met
Bdote Goal #6 Student performance in comparison with other MN sites			
Gr. 3-8 MCA: % points above in reading and math when Compared with sites in MN with comparable demographics	Same	Not Calculated	

During the 2014-15 school year, Bdote had sixteen third-grader students take the MCA-III tests. 12.5% of these students (2 students) tested at the proficient level. Due to the small number and the fact that this was their first year at Bdote, it is hard to say if these results are reflective of the learning at Bdote.

**Figure 8: 2015 spring MCA scores for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade**

MCA-III % proficient								
	All Students			American Indian/Alaskan Native				
	Bdote		State	Bdote		Anishinabe	Mpls. Public Schools	State
3rd Grade	# stu			# stu				
Math	16	12.5%	70.9%	14	14.3%	22.7%	20.9%	51.2%
Reading	16	12.5%	58.7%	14	14.3%	9.1%	21.9%	40.5%

Obviously, the numbers of third graders are fairly low at both Bdote and at Anishinabe Academy and the resulting proficiency percentages are significantly impacted by a single student achieving proficiency. Our intention of meeting the Metro Area proficiency levels in year one seem to have been met with Bdote slightly exceeding Anishinabe in reading proficiency percent and Anishinabe slightly exceeding Bdote in math percentage. The challenge with regard to meeting the State proficiency for demographically similar students remains.

3) All achievement gaps between students are closed.

MCA Testing: as seen in figure 8, the MCA scores do not indicate that the achievement gap is closing.

4) All students are ready for career and/or postsecondary education.

Bdote does not have any high school students or alumni.

5) All students graduate from high school.

Bdote does not have any high school students or alumni.

**Current goals (not addressed above)**

Figure 9:

Bdote Goal #1	2014-15	
	Goal	Actual
Are Students learning the skills needed in Kindergarten. % Meeting proficiency on the Mpls End of Year Kindergarten Assess (EKA)	58%	NA
	<i>BKA</i>	<i>EKA</i>
<i>Meets or Exceeds (80%+)</i>	<i>70.4%</i>	<i>NA</i>

Unfortunately, the End of year Kindergarten Assessment data completed in the Spring of 2015, did not include the passage reading measure. The passage reading is one component of the Total Literacy Formula. Therefore, it is not possible to calculate a total literacy score for the spring.

Additionally, both the BKA and the EKA are no longer being used by the Minneapolis Public Schools. Because of this change, Bdote will no longer use the BKA or EKA. Without MPS as a comparison, Bdote will be unable to address this goal as established with the authorizer. Bdote is in discussions with MPS and IQS to establish the best tool for meeting a similar goal.

#### *Growth data*

Bdote will use year over year data to track student growth. For the 2014-15 school year, there is no data to report.

### Immersion Curriculum

Many of the years leading up to the opening of Bdote were dedicated to figuring out how a school could educate students without materials written in the language of the classroom. Through the dedication of many people, lesson plans and materials in both Ojibwe and Dakota have been created and, now, taught. While this will be a continual challenge, there is now a solid foundation from which to build the rest of the school.

#### **Ojibwe Unit Lessons**

- 25 unit lessons in Science for K-1 Grades
- 15 unit lessons in Social Studies for K-1, 2-3 Grades
- 16 unit lessons in Science for 2-3 Grades
- Numerous unit worksheets and instructional materials

#### **Dakota Unit Lessons**

- 28 Unit lessons in Art
- 30 Unit Lessons in Music
- 15 Unit lessons in Science for K-1, 2-3
- 7 Unit Lessons in Social Studies for K-1, 2-3
- 45 Readers for K-1, 2-3 (translation of Bdote's Literacy Series)



## Management and Board

### Management

The school leader hired during the year prior to opening the school stayed for two months. In May of 2014, Mike Hearth became Bdote's Interim Director. He remained in that position until December of 2014 when he took on the role of Executive Director. In June 2015, both the Executive Director and the Director of Curriculum ended their roles at Bdote.

Currently, the Bdote Board of Directors is working with consultants to craft, recruit and hire the right leadership team.

### Board of Directors

Name	Position	Term	Term Expires
Elaine Salinas	Board Chair	1 year	9/30/2015
Graham Hartley	Treasurer	2 years	9/30/2016
Louise Matson	Vice-Chair	3 years	9/30/2017
Heather Reynolds	Secretary	1 year	9/30/2015
Laura Waterman Wittstock	Member	1 year	9/30/2015
Cindy Ward Thompson	Member	3 years	9/30/2017
Becky Beane	Member	2 years	9/30/2016
Tony Scallon	Member	2 years	9/30/2016
Joseph Rice	Member	3 years	9/30/2017
Roxanne Gould	Member	1 year	9/30/2015
Sheldon Wolfchild	Member	3 years	9/30/2017

Board Member Name	Date seated as Interim School Board	HR Policies & Practices (Booth & Lavauto)	Board Governance (CSP)	Financial Management (SBS)
Elaine Salinas	10/1/2013	1/11/2014	3/1/2014	7/22/2014
Louise Matson	10/1/2013	1/11/2014	3/1/2014	7/22/2014
Graham Hartley	10/1/2013	1/11/2014	3/1/2014	7/22/2014
Heather Reynolds	10/1/2013	1/11/2014	3/1/2014	7/22/2014
Cindy Ward-Thompson	10/1/2013	12/8/14	3/25/2014	7/22/2014
Joseph Rice	10/1/2013	1/11/2014	12/8/14	7/22/2014
Tony Scallon	10/1/2013	<i>Has previously completed all training</i>		
Laura Waterman Wittstock	10/1/2013	1/11/2014	3/1/2014	7/22/2014
Becky Beane	10/1/2013	12/8/14	3/25/2014	7/22/2014
Roxanne Gould	3/1/2014	1/11/2014	3/1/2014	7/22/2014
Sheldon Wolfchild	6/1/2014	-	-	7/22/2014
Jenni Eagle Man	11/21/14	-	-	-

Board Members	Name of Training	Training Date
Elaine Salinas	<b>Creating a High Quality Board Culture – CSP-UROC</b>	<b>4/16/15</b>
Graham Hartley	<b>Board's Academic Oversight – BoardOnTRack Webinar</b>	<b>4/23/15</b>
Heather Reynolds	<b>Board's Academic Oversight – BoardOnTrack Webinar</b>	<b>4/23/15</b>

Jenni Eagle Man is no longer on the board.

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**Staff**

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As previously noted, Bdote has experienced turnover in leadership. This instability effected the teachers during the year as well as whether they chose to return the second year. 53% of the Bdote staff left after the first year.

**Figure 10: Staff**

Name	Position	Returned for 2015-16 year
Mike Huerth	Executive Director	No
Angela Christian	Director of Operations	Yes
Deidre Whiteman	Director of Teaching and Learning	No
Iva Buckner	Administrative Assistant	Yes
Jamie Hepner	Social Worker	Yes
Beth Brown	Dakota Teacher	Yes
Jarydd Boston	Dakota Teacher	Yes
Jolene New Holy	Dakota Teacher	No
Katie Carlson	Ojibwe Teacher	No
Persia Erdrich	Ojibwe Teacher	No
David Butler	Ojibwe Teacher	No
Lisa Bellanger	Ojibwe Teacher	No
Liz Cates	Art & Music Teacher	Yes
Emmy HerManyHorses	Special Education Teacher	No
Alex Romano	Special Education Paraprofessional	Yes

Bdote teachers teach in a new and unique way. Prior to the start of the 2014-15 school year, Bdote leadership provided expensive training in teaching methods. Additionally, a full time Director of Teaching and Learning provided ongoing support as needed. Some key elements of teaching include:

- Lessons will be taught through Dakota/Ojibwe languages and ways of knowing. Elders and cultural experts will be intimately involved in the teaching of students. Oral tradition and storytelling will be an integral part of teaching through culture. Culture and language will not be separate lessons or classes but will permeate all curriculum and instruction at Bdote.
- TPR Storytelling will be a primary teaching method not only to teach language but also math, reading, science, etc. through Ojibwe and Dakota languages. TPRS lessons use a mixture of reading and storytelling to help students learn language. The method works in three steps: 1) the new vocabulary structures to be learned are taught using a combination of translation, gestures, and personalized questions; 2) those structures are used in a spoken class story; and finally, 3) these same structures are used in a class reading. Throughout these three steps, the teacher uses a number of techniques to help make the target language comprehensible to the students, including careful limiting of vocabulary, constant asking of easy comprehension questions, frequent reinforcement through comprehension checks, and very short grammar explanations known as "pop-up grammar." TPR Storytelling prioritizes the development of fluency over grammatical accuracy.

- Learning will be interdisciplinary, teaching students to understand the deep connections between all living things.

Staff were trained in the Responsive Classroom approach which emphasizes social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community. This practice acknowledges the presence of culturally diverse students and the need for these students to find relevant connections to the subject matter as well as with the tasks teachers asks them to perform. Teachers will recognize the different learning styles of their students and develop instructional approaches that will accommodate these styles<sup>3</sup>. (Teachers will not only need to be aware and accommodate for the learning styles of the different students, but also for the classroom management of these students. Five components essential to culturally responsive classroom management: 1) recognition of one’s own ethnocentrism and biases, 2) knowledge of students’ cultural backgrounds, 3) understanding of the broader social, economic, and political context of our educational system, 4) ability and willingness to use culturally appropriate classroom management strategies and 5) commitment to building caring classroom communities.

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## Finances

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### Financial Performance

	FY15	FY14	FY13
Total revenue	1,481,852	235,632	n/a
Expenditures	1,485,738	235,517	n/a
Fund balance (%)	-0.25%	+0.05%	n/a
	\$(3,771)	\$115	
Audit findings	none	none	n/a

Bdote ended the year a quarter percent in the negative due to low enrollment.

Bdote started the 2014-15 year using School Business Solutions (SBS) for accounting services. SBS went out of business at the end of August providing only one weeks' notice to clients. Consequently, Bdote changed accounting service providers to Clifton Larson Allen (CLA).

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## Contact Information

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### School

School name:	Bdote Learning Center
Address:	3216 E 29th Street Minneapolis, MN 55406
Name of contact person:	Angela Christian

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<sup>3</sup> Montgomery, 2001

Phone number:	(612) 729-9266
Website:	<a href="http://www.bdotelearningcenter.org">http://www.bdotelearningcenter.org</a>
Grades served:	K-3
Number of Students over the past three years: (Oct. 1 count)	2013-2014: Not Open 2014-2015: 2015-2016:

**Authorizer**

Year school charter was granted:	2013
Authorizer:	Innovative Quality Schools
Authorizer contact information:	6616 Brittany Road Minneapolis, MN 55435 <a href="http://www.igsmn.org">www.igsmn.org</a>

## **Addendum 1: Tenets**

Bdote's educational philosophy is rooted in the mission and guided by the following tenets. The Bdote Learning Center:

1. models and demonstrates the link between a strong cultural identity and academic success. We accomplish this by hiring American Indian professionals as staff and by teaching our children about past and current American Indians leaders.
2. reclaims our legacy of being caretakers of Bdote as well as the community surrounding Bdote. We accomplish this by incorporating place-based learning at our school.
3. holds the belief that children learn in different ways and that all children can succeed if given sufficient time and support. We accomplish this by developing an individualized learning plan (ILP) for all our students.
4. utilizes curriculum and instructional practices that have been proven through practice and research to be effective in the education of American Indian/Indigenous students. We accomplish this by implementing an academically rigorous curriculum incorporating place-based, experiential lessons delivered in our indigenous languages. These three components have proven to close the achievement gap for indigenous people across the globe.
5. demonstrates that all academic disciplines are important, and shows the connection between disciplines and the relevance of those disciplines have to the world today. We accomplish this with interdisciplinary projects as part of the curriculum.
6. selects faculty and staff who are best suited to the environment, mission and pedagogy of the school. This includes selecting teachers who are willing to make a commitment to work year round, remain at the school, and have a track record of success in promoting high standards in the education of American Indian and other students. We accomplish this by working with EdVisions Cooperative to help us develop best practices in hiring the teachers we need.
7. sets priorities for professional development and other resource investments that will help the team implement and improve the selected model with fidelity, over time, without interruption. We accomplish this by working with the University of Minnesota, MIGIZI Communications, EdVisions Cooperative and our Elders to create professional development and learning opportunities for our staff.
8. sees parents, extended family, and school staff as a child's role models, and school as an integral part of its community, and it prepares students to interact during their lifetime in their local, national, and international communities. We accomplish this by incorporating service learning in our program.
9. repairs lost trust among the students and families served, by showing that a school can respond quickly to students and community needs. We accomplish this by creating a student congress and parent council.
10. works with community partners who have a proven track record of meeting the needs of the American Indian students and families. Bdote leadership will be involved with Phillips Indian Educators, a group of educators and community-based agency staff with a proven track record of collaboration.
11. sets (and adjusts) its own periods of the day, days of the week and yearly calendar to respond to cultural, academic, programmatic and family needs. We accomplish this by working with families and Elders to create a balanced year round program.