

2018-2019 Annual Report on Curriculum, Instruction, Student Achievement, and Staff Development: Our Fifth Year



	Page
Table of Contents	
Overview of the 2018-2019 School Year	3
Mission	3
Overview of the School	3
Vision	3
Improve Student Achievement	3
Increase Learning Opportunities	3
Highlights of 2017-2018	4
Students	4
Enrollment	6
Enrollment: Future Plans	7
Program	7
School's Instructional Philosophy and Focus	7
Academic Performance	8
Overview of Each of the World's Best Workforce Goals:	8
Current Goals	9
Q Comp Goals	10
Management and Board	10
Board of Directors	11
Staff	11
Finances	13
Financial Performance	13
Contact Information	14
School	14
Authorizer	14
Addendum 1: Tenets	15

## Overview of the 2018-2019 School Year

### 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 languages and cultures.

### Overview of the school

At Bdote, all learning activities 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.
- 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, FAST, MTAS and ACTFL data and set goals to improve student achievement.

#### Increase Learning Opportunities

Bdote Learning Center increases learning opportunities for pupils through:

- a rigorous language immersion experience
- place-based education that fosters learning in and with community, working together to solve problems important to the community, and helping students experience the relevance learning has to their daily lives.

## 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.

- partnerships with the Division of Indian Work (DIW) in Minneapolis, MIGIZI Communications, the University of Minnesota, Dream of Wild Health, AISES (American Indian Science and Engineering Society), Sheridan Story, Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center, the University YMCA, the Science Museum of Minnesota, Twin Cities Lacrosse, InterCity Tennis, the Minnesota Historical Society, the Bell Museum, Minnesota Academy of Science, and others.
- optional intersession activities provided in the areas of art, nutrition, science, reading, culture, math and physical activity.

### **Highlights of 2018-2019**

Bdote was founded on the basis of eleven tenets. During the 2018-2019 school year, 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 over 80% of students enrolled from fall to spring met their oral language goals. Students in grades K-2 spent 80% of their day in immersion. Students in grades 3-5 spent 70% of their day in immersion. Grades 6-8 spent around 50% either in immersion or learning the language in other ways.

#### **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.*

Students at Bdote learn in the classroom and in the community. Middle school students learned about horses and took trips to Bunker Hill where they learned to care for horses and to ride. Students learned about harvesting and visited local farms to learn about indigenous foods and how they were historically planted and farmed. Multiple walks were taken to the river to learn about the fish and bugs, build small boats, and construct a bark house.

#### **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 21 community partners, including a variety of groups such as Science Museum of Minnesota, Dream of Wild Health, the University of Minnesota YMCA, MIGIZI Communications, Nawayee Center School, South High School, the University of Minnesota, Augsburg College, Wicoie, Mille Lacs Urban Office, Prairie Island, Division of Indian Work, Minnesota Academy of Sciences, and many others volunteered hundreds of hours to offer activities to students during the regular school day or during quarterly intersessions.

Although Bdote Learning Center does not use ethnicity as a part of the hiring process, over 70% of Bdote staff identify as Native American.

With help from an ANA Esther Martinez Language Immersion Grant, Bdote held four well-attended community events. The Bdote powwow in May of 2019 was the largest we have ever had with over 400 people in attendance.

**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 fifth school year included several events to regularly engage families and community members in the life of the school. Bdote hosted an open house, a fall feast, winter music event, quarterly mini-powwows, a language celebration in March, fall and spring conferences, a large powwow in May, and quarterly recognition events. Parents and community members were issued an open invitation to these events that generally included a meal/feast and cultural as well as educational activities. The active parent committee met the first Wednesday of each month. Other committees met on different days and times.

**Individualized Learning Goals:**

- *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.*

Bdote staff worked diligently to continue to utilize the new ILP for every Bdote student. The ILP included test scores, but also language goals, strengths, learning styles, interests, dislikes, and social skills.

**Students**

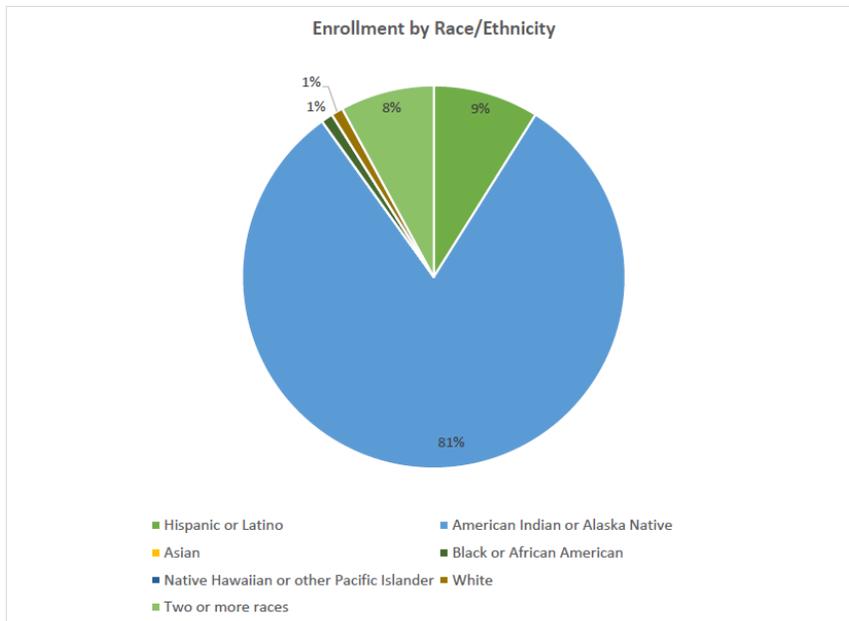
## Enrollment

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

**Figure 1: 2018-19 Student Demographics<sup>1</sup>**

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>American Indian / Alaskan Native</i>	82	81%
<i>Two or more Races</i>	8	8%
<i>Hispanic</i>	9	9%
<i>Black, not of Hispanic Origin</i>	1	1%
<i>White, not of Hispanic Origin</i>	1	1%
<i>All Students</i>	101	100.0%

**Figure 2: Enrollment by Ethnicity**



**Figure 3:  
2018-19 Student Membership and Attendance**

Average Daily Attendance	85%
Habitually Truant	32%
95% attendance	15%

**Figure 4: Attendance Goals**

Bdote Attendance Goal	2018-2019	
	Goal	Actual
Percent of all students attending 90% of the time	50%	46%

**Student Demographics – Special Program Populations**

- 91.3 % Free and Reduced Lunch
- 18 % Special Education
- 2% English Language Learners

Bdote was able to maintain between 98 and 108 students throughout the year. However, 32 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.

**Enrollment: Future Plans**

Bdote struggled with enrollment during its first year and throughout the second year as well. The third year showed stronger growth, but still lower than expected. Adjustments to the planned school growth are as follows. Bdote will add one grade per year according to the following schedule.

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
FY15	22	15	8	12						57
FY16	14	21	7	6	13					61
FY17	12	13	21	7	9	16				78
FY18	15	12	15	22	7	10	16			97
FY19	15	15	12	15	22	7	10	8		101
FY20	15	15	15	12	14	21	6	10	8	110

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

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**Program**

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**School’s instructional philosophy and focus**

At Bdote, all learning activities 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 the languages of the two tribes native to this land.

Commented [sk1]:

## 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. However, Bdote has a partnership with the preschool immersion program Wicoie Nandagikendan to provide a clear pathway for indigenous immersion students in Minneapolis.

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

**Figure 5: MCA Testing:**

	2018-20019	
	Goal	Actual
Bdote Goal #2 Minimum academic MCA requirements	30%	N/A
Schoolwide MCA Reading- % of students proficient		

During the 2018-2019 school year, almost all families opted their students out of the MCA-III tests. Families listed that they believed it was setting students up for failure to take a test in English so soon after students started being taught in English and that the tests are western based and designed to keep our kids down. For the 2018-2019 school year goals are all tested in the Ojibwe and Dakota languages, the way we are actually teaching students.

27% of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students tested at grade level on the FAST aReading Assessment in English. The goal was that 30% of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students will test at grade level on the FAST assessment in Reading. We did not meet this goal at that time, but they are now in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and

over 30% of them are at grade level in reading as measured by the Fall 2019 FAST assessment in Reading. So, this goal is partially met.

For 2019-2020 our goal is for 50% of our students to test at or above 80.0 in Dakota or Ojibwe reading assessment. During the 2018-2019 the test was piloted with other immersion schools throughout the Midwest and Canada.

**Figure 6: 2019 spring Reading scores—Pilot Year**

Years of Immersion	Ojibwe	Dakota
1	11.6	77.87
2	31.53	87.27
3	25.38	87.7
4	78.22	84.13
5	86.12	92.14

Development of the assessments in Ojibwe and Dakota were funded by a two year grant from the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council. A total of 11 immersion schools and an additional 13 schools/programs participated in the development and/or piloting. Our first data shows a climb in reading level. There is a huge increase in grade 3—the 4<sup>th</sup> year of immersion. Goals for the 2019-2020 school year are measured according to this assessment.

**3) All achievement gaps between students are closed.**

25% of students in grades 3-7 were at grade level in English reading and 22% in English math in 2018-2019 as measured by the FAST assessments. The goal of 25% in reading and 20% in math were both met. In the fall of 2019 (we measure fall to fall and not fall to spring) the goal was surpassed in double digits for both reading and math.

There is not a proficiency gap at Bdote. By raising up our Native students' test scores we will help eliminate the state achievement gap. We expect to continue to see lagging test scores in English for our students until they catch up to their English only peers in middle school.

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

Bdote does not have any high school students or alumni. Our goal for 2018-2019 was to take the middle school students on college visits and work on post-secondary plans. They went to visit the University of Minnesota, Dunwoody, and MCTC and worked with college student mentors from the University of Minnesota on a variety of science projects.

**5) All students graduate from high school.**

Bdote does not have any high school students or alumni.

## 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.

2018-2019 was the second year of Bdote's Middle School Curriculum Project, a federal grant through the Administration for Native Americans. This funding allowed curriculum at the middle school level to be translated or developed and streamlined.

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## Q Comp

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Quality Compensation law (Q Comp) was enacted in the Minnesota Legislature in July of 2015. This voluntary program allows schools to work on their own advancement options, professional development, evaluation, and alternative salary schedule.

2018-2019 was the third year Bdote was a Q Comp site. Adrian Liberty acted as Teacher Coach and worked with Bdote immersion teachers on improving teaching. Weekly Professional Learning Community meetings occurred every Thursdays from 4-5 PM led by Beth Brown and Angela Papenfuss. Two different PLCs took place—one for Ojibwe teachers and one for Dakota teachers. Teachers worked on improving instruction as well as immersion techniques. Our school-wide goal was that 60% of students would meet their MAP growth goals. Two classrooms were able to meet this goal in English. All classrooms met language proficiency goals. All teachers met at least 75% of their individual professional goals.

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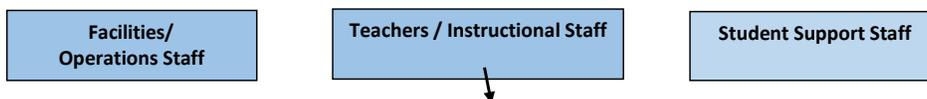
## Management and Board

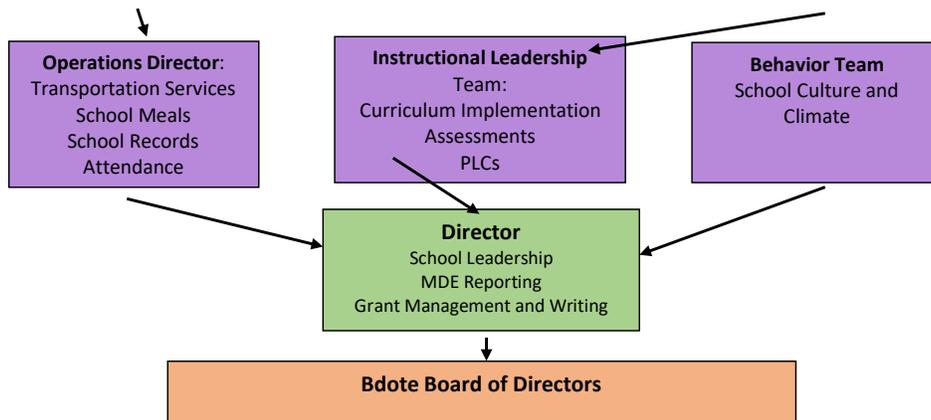
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### Management

The Bdote management of Dr. Cindy Ward-Thompson as the Director was stable over the 2018-2019 school year. The Board of Directors still contains three founding members.

### Organizational Structure:





**Board of Directors**

Name	Position	Term Expires
Louise Matson	Chair	10/30/2021
Graham Hartley	Treasurer	10/30/2020
Jenn Hall	Member	10/30/2021
Autumn Dillie	Co-Chair	10/30/2021
Sheila Zephier	Member	10/30/2019
Beth Brown	Member	10/30/2019
Michele Fluhr Fraser	Member	10/30/2020
Joseph Rice	Co-Chair	10/30/2020
Mary Abraham	Member	10/30/2019

**Staff**

In the 2018-2019 school year Bdote staff grew and showed its continued stability. By the end of the school year all teachers were licensed with a regular license  
 Over two-thirds of Bdote staff identify as Native American.

**Figure 10: Staff**

Name	Position	Returned for 2019-20 year	Years at Bdote as of 6/19
Cindy Ward-Thompson	Director	Yes	3.5
Iva Bunker	Administrative Assistant	Yes	5

Beth Brown	Dakota K-2 Teacher	Yes	5
Jarydd Boston	Dakota 3-4 Teacher	Yes	5
Dustin Peyton	Dakota SpEd Paraprofessional	Yes	1
Monica Briggs	Ojibwe K-1 Teacher	Yes	4
Liz Collin	Ojibwe 4-6 Teacher	No	4
Emily Schwarting	Office Assistant	Yes	2.5
Veronica Peterson-Briggs	Ojibwe 2/3 Teacher	Yes	3.5
Liz Cates	Project Director	Yes	5
Michele Fluhr-Fraser	Special Education Teacher	Yes	4
Caley Pieper	SpEd Paraprofessional	Yes	2.5
Elisa Waukazo	Technology Support Specialist	Yes	3.5
Laura Potter	Reading Coach	Yes	4
Elizabeth Sullivan	Social Worker	Yes	2
Anastasia Pinney-Valtierra	ADSI Dean of Students	Yes	3
Robert Callahan	1:1 SpEd Paraprofessional	Yes	1.25
Julie Kunze	SpEd Paraprofessional	Yes	1.5
JayColette Herald-Gordon	SpEd Paraprofessional	Yes	2.5
Korissa Howes	Curriculum Coordinator	Yes	1
Irene Zamora	American Ind Liaison/SpEd Teacher	Yes	1
Tony Frank	SpEd Paraprofessional	Yes	1
Victoria Morris	ADSI Math Coach	Yes	2
Hinhan Loudhawk	SpEd Paraprofessional	Yes	1
Katie Vigness	Special Education Teacher	Yes	2
Dennis Gilbert	Special Education Paraprofessional	Yes	1
Bill Kunze	Lunch Assistant	Yes	1
Carlie Anderson	SpEd Paraprofessional	Yes	1
Kate Stemper	SpEd Paraprofessional	Yes	1
Barry Frantum	Dakota Language Teacher	Yes	1
Grayson Pangburn	P E Teacher	Yes	2

Bdote teachers teach in a new and unique way. Prior to the start of the 2018-19 school year, Bdote leadership provided 10 days of training in teaching methods and this training also occurred over 9 additional days during the school year. Q Comp allowed for teachers to meet in weekly Professional Learning Communities for feedback, coaching, and curriculum discussions/meetings. Some key elements of teaching include:

- Lessons will be taught through Dakota/Ojibwe languages and ways of knowing. Elders and cultural experts are involved in the teaching of students. Oral tradition and storytelling are 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 is the 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 is generally 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 and Zones of Regulation. 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. (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

	FY 19	FY18	FY17	FY16	FY15	FY14
Total revenue	2,726,961	2,311,725	1,645,111	1,628,185	1,447,180	235,632
Expenditures	2,728,866	2,218,595	1,771,069	1,602,183	1,421,001	235,517
Excess (LOSS)	(1,905)	93,130	(125,958)	26,002	26,179	115
Ending Fund Balance	(45,865)	(43,865)	(131,436)	22,196	26,294	
Audit findings	none	Negative Fund Balance, but not SOD	SOD	none	none	none

Bdote ended the year with a negative fund balance. A plan for 2019-2020 was made to ensure Bdote came out of the red and was able to maintain a fund balance.

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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:	Cindy Ward-Thompson, EdD
Phone number:	(612) 729-9266
Website:	<a href="http://www.bdote.org">www.bdote.org</a>
Grades served:	K-7
Number of Students over the past three years: (Oct. 1 count)	2013-2014: Not Open 2014-2015: 59 2015-2016: 61 2016-2017: 77 2017-2018: 82 2018-2019: 101

**Authorizer**

Year school charter was granted:	2013
Authorizer:	Innovative Quality Schools
Authorizer contact information:	PO Box 40219 St Paul MN 55104 651-234-0900 <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.