

**April 1, 2026**

**To:** Native American Parent Advisory Committee (NAPAC)

**From:** St. Cloud Area School District 742 Board of Education

**RE:** Board Response to NAPAC Non-Concurrence Vote – American Indian Education Program

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Dear Members of NAPAC,

The Board of Education acknowledges receipt of your Resolution Document and the vote of non-concurrence presented on February 18, 2026, regarding the District's American Indian Education Program.

We are grateful for your advocacy on behalf of American Indian students and families. The concerns and recommendations shared reflect a deep commitment to belonging, cultural affirmation, and academic success. We recognize that the perspectives offered in your resolution represent the lived experiences and hopes of families, and we take seriously our shared responsibility under **Minn. Stat. §124D.78** to work in partnership to improve outcomes for American Indian students.

Pursuant to statute, this letter serves as the Board's written response to your recommendations and outlines our determinations and next steps.

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## **1. Data Sharing and Program Review**

**NAPAC Recommendation:** Increase access to student data and program information to support meaningful review.

**Board Determination:** Concur.

The Board affirms its commitment to ensuring NAPAC has the opportunity to effectively review and share views on all aspects of the American Indian Education Program, as required under Minn. Stat. §124D.78.

### **Action Steps:**

- Administration will provide disaggregated data (including attendance, academic achievement, and graduation rates) to NAPAC on a regular schedule.
- Program updates and budget information will be reviewed collaboratively at scheduled meetings.

- Opportunities for dialogue regarding data interpretation and program impact will be incorporated into future agendas.

We believe in transparent data sharing, which strengthens our partnership and supports informed decision-making.

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## 2. Staffing and Leadership Structure

**NAPAC Recommendation:** Increase staffing to a minimum of three positions, including a leadership role and dedicated Cultural and Educational Liaisons.

**Board Determination:** Partially concur.

Over the past year, the District added one additional American Indian Education position to strengthen program capacity and student support. At this time, however, available funding - which is largely driven by completed 506 forms and state allocations - does not support the addition of a third position.

### Action Steps:

While we are unable to commit to an additional position at this time, the Board directs Administration to:

- Continue reviewing program structure, roles, and reporting lines to ensure clarity and effectiveness.
- Evaluate staffing needs annually in alignment with enrollment, 506 form completion, and available funding.
- Continue outreach efforts to families to ensure accurate 506 form participation.

We recognize that staffing capacity directly impacts student support, and we remain committed to reassessing needs as funding allows.

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## 3. Academic Support and Tutoring

**NAPAC Recommendation:** Expand tutoring and academic supports to address achievement disparities.

**Board Determination:** Concur.

Administration is actively establishing tutoring partnerships with St. Cloud State University and the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University to provide targeted support for middle and high school students. Implementation details (in-school or after-school scheduling) are being reviewed in consultation with families and staff.

**Action Steps:**

Funding sources are being evaluated to ensure the sustainability of these services for the 2026–27 school year and beyond.

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#### **4. Cultural Programming and Student Engagement**

**NAPAC Recommendation:** Assign the cultural liaison position to work directly with K–12 students on cultural identity needs to help eliminate overlap in positions.

**Board Determination:** The Board affirms the importance of culturally grounded programming and recognizes the work already underway, including:

- Ribbon Shirt workshops, moccasin making, and storytelling events
- Ojibwe and Navajo literacy recordings
- Integration of Ojibwe culture and language in our curriculum
- Cultural resource materials and future cultural learning events

**Action Steps:**

The Board supports continued expansion of these opportunities as integral components of belonging and identity development for American Indian students.

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#### **5. Academic Incentives**

**NAPAC Recommendation:** Provide culturally meaningful incentives (including beadwork or smudging kits) tied to grades and attendance.

**Board Determination:** Modify.

The District remains committed to celebrating student achievement in culturally meaningful ways. We will continue to provide Star Quilts for graduates and expand culturally relevant recognition options based on student preferences.

**Action Steps:**

Regarding incentives tied strictly to grades or attendance, the District has concerns about unintended consequences, including equity implications and sustainability. Administration will work with NAPAC to explore recognition approaches that:

- Affirm cultural identity,
- Encourage engagement,
- Support long-term student success,
- Align with districtwide practices.

We welcome continued advice to identify strategies that are both culturally affirming and educationally sound.

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### **Commitment to Continued Partnership**

The Board recognizes that a vote of non-concurrence signals concern. While there may be differences in perspective regarding specific strategies or resource limitations, we remain united in our goal: ensuring that American Indian students experience our schools as places of safety, belonging, cultural dignity, and academic opportunity.

The Board directs Administration to:

- Continue structured collaboration with NAPAC,
- Report progress on the action steps outlined above,
- Revisit staffing and program needs during annual budget development.
- Launch additional communication tools to strengthen family engagement, including a dedicated American Indian Education social media presence and a recurring newsletter highlighting student achievements, program updates, and cultural learning opportunities.

Respectfully submitted,

St. Cloud Area School District 742 Board of Education

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Dr. Laurie Putnam  
Superintendent

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Shannon Haws, Chair  
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