

National Indian Education Association  
Annual Convention  
Virtual Presentation

OMAHA, NEBRASKA  
October 2021

# HINONO'EITIT

*BIE-St Stephen's Indian School  
Dual Language Immersion School:  
SUCCESSSES AND SURPRISES:*

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- Dr. Burnett Lee  
Whiteplume, PhD  
(1946 – 2019)

**Nowoo3 (Left Hand):  
“...because it is right.”**

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# Four Partners



Northern  
Arapaho Tribe



College of Education  
Literacy Research  
Center and Clinic



- Abstract
- Introduction
- History / Background
- Year 1
- Year 2 and Beyond
- The Program (Physical and Virtual)
- The Teachers.( Physical and Virtual)
- The Students (Physical and Virtual)
- School Day and Week (K-1 and Grade 1)
- Teacher Certification and Endorsement Objective
- Families and Community (Funds of Knowledge
  - The Curriculum (Standard and Arapaho as Second Language)
  - Arapaho Language and Culture
- English Language Oral and Written (Literacy)
- Research (Process Documentation) Component Project Assessment Plan and Timeline
- Summary

# Presentation Outline

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## St. Stephens Indian School --

- Frank No Runner, PhD, SSIS Superintendent
- Ronald Oldman, SSIS School Board
  
- Northern Arapaho Tribe --
- William C'Hair, Chairman, Northern Arapaho Language / Culture Commission
- Marlin Spoonhunter, President, Wind River Tribal College, (Core Project Team)
  
- University of Wyoming
- Cynthia Brock, PhD (Core Project Team)
- R. Timothy Rush, PhD (Core Project Team)

# **Core Project Team - CPT**

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- Hinono'eitiit (Our Arapaho Language) THE BIG PICTURE
- A permanently funded, comprehensive, dual language (Arapaho / English) kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and beyond, Immersion School, envisioned by the late Dr. Burnett Whiteplume.
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- “We didn’t do it because we had to. We did it because it is right,” (Burnett Lee Whiteplume, PhD). We didn’t ask permission. Permission was volunteered by those in authority. But, we did have proof that the Arapaho community believes that their culture and language should be at the heart of their children’s education. The PhD dissertation of our late friend, Dr. Burnett Lee Whiteplume, Sr., gave us this evidence. Like most elders of his tribe, Doctor Whiteplume believed that revitalization of the Arapaho language was the key to revitalization of his tribe.
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- Our first year, JUNE 2019 TO JULY 2020, we collected essential information on successful programs in our region.
  - We prepared to hire a fluent elder to work with a master teacher and student teacher in a classroom of 8 to 12 kindergarteners and plan the curriculum of the St. Stephen’s program.
  - The first year of actual classes was planned to begin in August 2020.
  - Collection of evidence of the effectiveness of the immersion program began immediately in October 2019.
- COVID-19 restrictions forced major changes to our plans. Virtual “home school” methodologies replaced physical face-to-face instruction and produced startling results for students and families.
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- The BIE St. Stephen’s Indian School immersion grant is so important because:
  - it shows, through research, that culture-based education enhances student achievement in every way. The project provides process models (virtual and physical) for indigenous education across Indian Country and around the world.

# Overview

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- Hinono’etiit is the Arapaho word for Arapaho Language. Hinono’etiit: The Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) St. Stephen’s Indian School Kindergarten through 16 (K-16) Arapaho Language Immersion School (Hinono’etiit’) will revitalize, maintain, and enhance Arapaho language and culture in a BIE school once dedicated to their extinction. Longstanding policies and programs of the Northern Arapaho Tribe have addressed the goals and priorities of the 2019 BIE Native Language Immersion Grant:
- The Northern Arapaho Education Code (2006) requires that our culture and language be the core of the public-school curriculum studied by our children, kindergarten through grade twenty. Since the late 1980’s, we have maintained an Arapaho Language Immersion pre-school for two- to four-year-old children. After two years of immersion education, children know the cultural essentials and are able to converse in Arapaho.
- In BIE St. Stephen’s Indian School (SSIS), all students start the school day a prayer, the Pledge of Allegiance and Flag Song in fluent Arapaho. The Hinono’etiit will enable the Arapaho people to establish a solid infrastructure for expansion of the overall language immersion curriculum to include kindergarten, elementary, secondary grades, and post-secondary levels. We will begin implementation using a 50/50 Dual Language Immersion (DLI) model that integrates Arapaho and English Language usage. Both languages will be employed to master Arapaho language and culture standards, Wyoming Indian Education for All standards, Common Core State standards, and standards of the BIE SSIS School Improvement Plan.
- To assure the maintenance and health of the Arapaho language, and the culture it conveys and supports, we will engage classroom teaching teams that include an Eminent Elder of the tribe as language-culture mentor, a Wyoming certified teacher, and a language-novice student teacher for each grade level. This triad at each grade level will employ Family Funds of Knowledge (FFOK) curriculum and methods. FFOK assures engagement of families in the BIE Hinono’etiit’ Arapaho Language Immersion School. The project will directly develop and enhance the Northern Arapaho Tribe’s capacity to provide instruction and support to its children in at least ten ways.

# Context

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- Historically, since earliest colonial times, concerted government efforts have attempted to extinguish American Indian languages and replace them with English only.
- Twenty-first century research summarized by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages shows that knowledge of multiple languages is correlated with verified positive effects on the learning and thinking of children and adults (ACTFL, 2019).
- Indigenous scholars reiterate it's time for the Indian youth to take the lead in restoring the sense of family, clan, and community responsibilities that undergird the traditional practices.” (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, p.46).

# History and Background

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- Long term purposes of this project are to establish a new infrastructure and to implement a permanent language immersion school within a BIE SSIS Tribal Grant school called “Hinono’etiit”.
- The BIE SSIS has partnered with the Northern Arapaho Tribe (NAT) and the University of Wyoming (UW), and the University of South Australia to reinvigorate the Arapaho language and the culture it conveys.

# Purpose

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The Northern Arapaho Education Code (2006) requires that our culture and language be the core of the public-school curriculum studied by our children, kindergarten through grade twenty (Northern Arapaho Code, Title 8 Education, *Language Policy Declaration*, p.5 & 21).

**NA Education Code is  
Honored**

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The BIE SSIS Hinono'eitiit Immersion School will demonstrate how language/culture-based education can be made central in the curricula at a school serving Indigenous peoples' children. The BIE SSIS Hinono'eitiit Immersion School will serve as a model for indigenous peoples around the World who wish to preserve their language and culture.

# **International Model**

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- The Member Classroom Teams:
  - Fluent Elder.
  - Master State-Certified Teacher committed to Arapaho fluency.
  - Novice committed to fluency and state certification.

# **Teacher Certification and Fluency**

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- Team visits to successful Dual Language Immersion

# **Study of Best Practice in DLI**

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- Blackfeet - Cuts Wood School, Browning, MT
  - Salish / Nkwusm School, Arlee, MT
  - Ojibwe - Red Lake, MN
  - DLI programs in Casper and Jackson, WY
  - Red Cloud School, SD

## **Research to Best Practice Schools – Our Original Plan**

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- University of Wyoming leads planning, collection, and analysis of data (through UW – LRCC and University of South Australia)

**Program Research to  
Document Our Success.**

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## Year 1

During Year 1 of the project we formed the Core Project Team (CPT) consisting of representatives of the three partners (SSIS, NAT, UW).

The CPT developed a **strategic plan** which included site visits to successful language and culture immersion schools to ensure that best practices in language and culture immersion programming are adopted at SSIS.

The CPT coordinated with the BIE SSIS School Leadership Team on the Title I School Improvement Plan.

The CPT rolled out professional development activities to the teaching staff during planned district Professional Development days.

Began recruitment, preparation and professional development of Eminent Elder of the Arapaho Tribe, classroom teacher, and novice teacher.

# Year 1

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- The Program
  - The Setting:
  - BIE St. Stephen's Indian School (SSIS) Elementary School

# **The Program**

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- The first-grade class of 2021 who speak English as their first language, will begin the program at the start of the 2021-2022 school year.

# **The Students**

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- Three adults per classroom starting with kindergarten during Year 2 of the grant, adding in first grade during Year 3, and so forth– One Eminent Elder language-culture mentor, One Wyoming State Certified classroom teacher (already hired by the school district), One Novice-Student Teacher (Northern Arapaho Tribal member) (selected by a candidate from the University of Wyoming).
- The Eminent Elder will be a fluent speaker of the Arapaho language and an enrolled member of the Arapaho Tribe. Each Eminent Elder will also have several years of experience working with children, in Arapaho immersion programs, for example. Eminent Elders are not required to hold Standard teaching certificates, but are certified by the Tribe and State of Wyoming to teach Arapaho language and culture.
- A Master State Certified teacher will be one of the three adults in each classroom. Master teachers will work with novice student teachers to meet professional State and Arapaho standards for teacher certification.

# The Teachers

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- Teacher certification and endorsement, lesson planning, unit alignment, and assessment will be built into program.
- Novice-student teachers will be given credit towards Teacher certification in Elementary/Special Education..
- The Wyoming State Certified Master teacher will have the opportunity to obtain an endorsement from the State of Wyoming through the University of Wyoming called the Teachers of American Indian Children certificate. ( These courses will be provided through Wind River Tribal College, Central Wyoming College, and the University of Wyoming.)
- In-person and online courses have been created to enable delivery to place-bound students, including our master teachers and the Arapaho novice student teachers on the WRR.

# Teacher Certification

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- The importance of family, community, and culture is well documented (Gonzales, Moll & Amanti, 2008) as vital to school success.
- Family Funds of Knowledge (i.e., FFOK) brings language, culture and pride in heritage to school experience. A recent study of a professional development experience in using FFOK (Rush, Bialostok, and Whiteplume, 2013) showed that Native and non-Native teachers acquired powerful insights about what and how to teach their Arapaho students when they, the teachers, teamed up to visit and build relationships with their families.
- We will employ the procedures illuminated by Bialostok and Whiteplume (2013) to build bonds between and enlighten both teachers and families/communities.

# **Families and Community**

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- **The Curriculum:**
- Arapaho Language and Culture
- Northern Arapaho standards and procedures, endorsed by the Northern Arapaho Language and Culture Commission, are currently implemented at BIE SSIS.
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- English Language Oral and Written (Literacy) & Standards
- The BIE SSIS adheres to all standards at the national, state, local and tribal level such as; Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English language and literacy, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), Wyoming Indian Education for All (IEFA), and the NAT Language Culture Commission. Our project will extend and apply these standards through formative (every day) and summative (annual) assessments to all grades K-12 in Hinono'etitii.

# Curriculum

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- A HOME-SCHOOL MODEL
    - VIRTUAL LESSONS
    - FAMILY AS TEACHERS **AND** STUDENTS

# **A Major Shift in Response to COVID-19**

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- Focus on First Grade
  - State Certified Teacher
  - Novice -- with Arapaho Capital
  - Elder Consultant
- Virtual Curriculum –
  - Language for Teachers (functional School Arapaho)
  - Arapaho Labels for “everything”

# 2021 Refinements

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- Absence of research documentation has kept successful programs from long-term continuation (Jaime & Rush, 2012).
- This program will employ UW CPT members, Professor Cynthia Brock and Professor Dana Robertson and internationally renown contractual experts in qualitative and quantitative research to plan, execute, and report BIE SSIS immersion school assessment.

# Research Documentation

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- The BIE SSIS Immersion School will directly develop and enhance the Northern Arapaho Tribe's capacity to provide instruction and support to its children in at least ten ways:
- Expansion of existing Arapaho Language Immersion Programs (pre-kindergarten) to include primary grade bilingual dual immersion in Arapaho and English using state-of-the-art best practices;
- Develop Novice-student Teachers (NAT) to WY State Certified classroom teachers;
- Development of Arapaho language fluency and cultural expertise in elementary and secondary classroom teachers who are currently State of Wyoming certified;
- Demonstration of a Triad (Eminent Elder, Certified Teacher, and Novice in Arapaho language and culture as well as Teaching) model of team-teaching in Arapaho and English. While sharing contributions, each of the three members of the teams will benefit from the presence of the others;
- Creation of curriculum links and measures across and between multiple grades. This model will be expanded upward through the post-secondary as well as school grades (K-12) over the course of the proposed project;
- Demonstration of the long-term viability of dual immersion Arapaho and English curriculum programming;
- Development of Arapaho/English curriculum materials and a model for their creation, which will be shared with other AI/AN peoples;
- Extend and further refine the Northern Arapaho Language curriculum (C'Hair, 2012), developed for university students, as a public-school curriculum;
- Integrate Arapaho language with the existing school curriculum in science, mathematics, social studies and English;
- Assess and report the effects of the dual-immersion program's innovations.
- Along with the awarded funding proposal, sources of long-term funding are already being solicited through donor and State funding by the University of Wyoming. The objective is to **find permanent funding** outside short-term grant funds in an effort to assist in research development of Indigenous language immersion programs. **Longitudinal studies** are crucial to documentation of curriculum improvements for American Indian/Alaska Native students (Jaime & Rush, 2012). The current proposal is a partnership that includes a prestigious University, The Tribe and the BIE school. This proposal includes a letter of support from the University College of Education, Office of the Dean, Dr. Ray Reutzel, Ph.D. This proposal obtained BIE SSIS school board approval on May 14, 2109. The Tribal board has also approved this proposal on their board actions of support for the project.
- COVID-19 adaptations of the immersion model, to emphasize home / family involvement, have begun, with highly positive feedback from teachers and community.

# Summation

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