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## **Appropriately Funding Indigenous Education for All**

Report to the Legislature

As required by Minnesota Statutes, 2024, section 120B.021, subdivision 5

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As requested by Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 3.197: This report cost approximately \$9780.00 to prepare, including staff time, printing and mailing expenses.

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## Legislative Charge

Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 120B.021, subdivision 5. The commissioner of education must consult with Tribal Nations located in Minnesota and Minnesota's Tribal Nations Education Committee about the need for additional funding necessary for each Tribal Nation located in Minnesota to continue developing resources for Indigenous education for all students. By February 15, 2025, the commissioner must provide links to the materials developed by the Tribal Nations on its website and submit a report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over education highlighting the materials that have been developed and documenting the need for additional resources. A consultation under this section does not replace or limit any consultation required under section 10.65.

## Executive Summary

Indigenous Education for All (IEFA) is legislation for all Minnesota students to learn from Tribally endorsed, culturally relevant, community-based, contemporary, and developmentally appropriate resources. IEFA was created because the contributions of Tribal Nations have been largely excluded from K-12 education.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) surveyed Tribal Nations Leadership and the Tribal Nations Education Committee on their needs to develop IEFA materials within the parameters of the law (Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 120B.021, subdivision 5). MDE facilitated monthly IEFA Leadership meetings and met with Tribal Nations individually. The survey of Tribal Nations revealed a need for increased funding and support to realize IEFA to its fullest potential. For IEFA to be successful, MDE works within the statute to collaboratively develop tribally endorsed educational materials, to provide professional development to Educators, and to align all resources with the required academic standards.

Currently Tribal Nations are absorbing approximately 93% of costs associated with resource development. Minnesota should not be asking Tribal Nations to fill this funding gap. To paraphrase Tribal Leadership, MDE would never ask Germany to fund German language classes for Minnesota students. Tribal Nations have stated that appropriate funding will lead to a stronger relationship with Minnesota. Investment in Tribally-endorsed resources for all subjects and grade levels, coupled with effective professional development, will improve educational outcomes for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. By investing in IEFA, Minnesota will be a national leader in Indigenous education, fostering a greater understanding and respect for Indigenous cultures, histories, and contemporary realities.

Historically, public education has caused harm to the Dakota and Anishinaabe Peoples. Educational policies were designed to assimilate them and destroy their cultures; Indigenous people have lost so much through the adoption of those ill-informed educational policies. Tribally endorsed educational materials were far from the minds of those policy makers. The Indigenous experience was excluded from the curriculum. Minnesota can do better; IEFA, when appropriately funded, can be part of the remedy to that harm.

## Recommendations

- Increase the funding per Tribal Nation to \$1,373,320.
- IEFA is Minnesota Law. Tribal Nations should not be paying for it. Increase the funding to levels equitable with other state-wide educational programs:

<b>READ Act</b>	<b>Indigenous Education for All</b>
Total investment \$34,750,000	Total investment \$450,000
\$76.00 per student	\$0.52 per student

- IEFA has strong language supporting the Tribal Nations in Minnesota. MDE recommends the state continue to strengthen these government-to-government relationships by supporting IEFA.

## Introduction

While Minnesota consistently ranks as a top state to live and work, this is not true for everyone, and these inequities threaten our long-term competitiveness as a state. To ensure Minnesota is a top place to live, Minnesota needs to focus on preparing the next generation of Minnesotans to work and lead in a rapidly changing world. This means we need public education centered around our children and their families so that Minnesota is the best place for every child to grow up.

Indigenous Education for All (IEFA) is legislation for Minnesota students in Minnesota's public education system, designed to authentically integrate Indigenous perspectives and knowledge across all grade levels and subject areas. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 120B.021, subdivision 5, addresses the historical underrepresentation of Indigenous voices and historic Indigenous perspective in Minnesota's required academic standards. A comprehensive needs assessment of Tribal Nations and their Education representatives has revealed a significant funding gap for IEFA implementation. The survey found that Tribal Nations require an average of \$1,372,320 per nation annually, totaling \$15,095,526 across the 11 Tribal Nations to effectively implement IEFA statewide. However, current funding stands at only \$450,000 annually, or \$40,909 per nation—just 3% of the necessary amount to adequately carry out this important work mandated by statute. IEFA is built on a foundation of collaboration between the Minnesota Department of Education and the Tribal Nations within the state of Minnesota. It encompasses the development of culturally relevant, historically accurate, and Tribally-endorsed educational resources, as well as comprehensive professional development for educators. This approach ensures that, when all the IEFA materials are taught with fidelity, all students and educators in Minnesota will learn about the rich histories, cultures, and contemporary realities of the Dakota and Anishinaabe peoples.

This study focuses specifically on the funding requirements for full IEFA implementation across all standard content areas and grade levels, K-12. Through extensive collaboration with Tribal Nations and the Tribal Nations Education Committee, resource needs have been identified, as well as challenges and opportunities in areas such as curriculum development, professional training, and ongoing collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Collaboration between the Tribal Nations and MDE involves regular meetings to develop IEFA materials, establish Tribal endorsement processes, and create high quality professional development. The following analysis details the findings offers recommendations for legislative action. By addressing the identified needs and providing adequate funding, Minnesota will set a national standard for Indigenous education and improve educational outcomes for all students.

Indigenous Education for All (IEFA) will transform the Minnesota public education system by integrating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in all subjects and grade levels. This comprehensive effort is built upon three foundational pillars: strengthening relationships with the Tribal Nations within Minnesota, developing high-quality educational materials, and implementing professional development for educators. IEFA aims to create a more inclusive educational environment that benefits all students, while specifically addressing the historical underrepresentation of Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum.

## Analysis

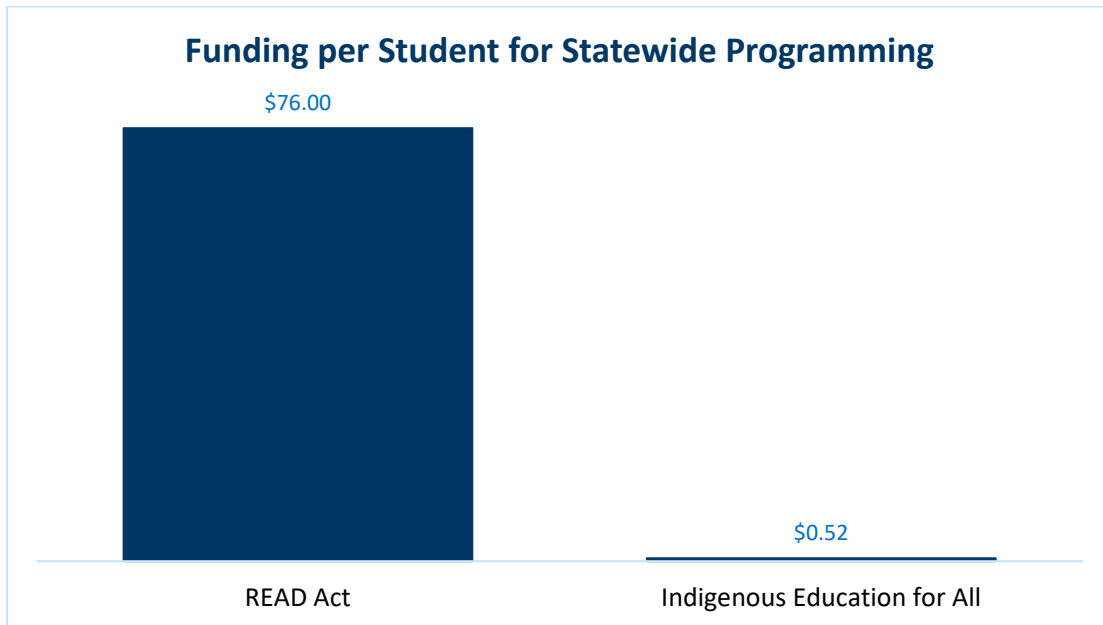
### Materials Developed

Currently three of the nine Tribal Nations have submitted Indigenous Education for All materials. One Tribal Nation has submitted a booklet documenting a broad overview of their nations' history and contemporary experience. The second Tribal Nation has submitted lesson plans related to a major historical event relating to the founding of their nation. The third Tribal Nation has submitted an interactive map with placenames identified in both Ojibwe and English. Two of the resources have academic standards aligned to them. Professional development is being created for all resources. At the time this report was drafted the materials have not been published on the IEFA website.

### Needs Assessment Results for Indigenous Education for All Legislative Report, 2024

The Tribal Nations are committed to creating educational materials that meet the needs of both educators and students, recognizing the importance of Indigenous education for all Minnesotans. They are enthusiastic about IEFA and view it as an opportunity to foster understanding and respect for Native cultures and histories. Robert May, District Representative of the Red Lake Nation, emphasizes the value of this work, stating, "As a licensed teacher, and as an enrolled member of the Red Lake Nation, this work gives me hope that we can create a better Minnesota, a better future for all, and a better world for the next seven generations." IEFA is not just for Native students; it aims to educate all Minnesotans about the true history of the state. However, without adequate funding, this work falls on the shoulders of American Indian communities as a financially unsupported statute. To truly support the development of IEFA materials, it is essential to provide funding that reflects the scope of this statute, enabling Tribal Nations to create effective educational materials that benefit everyone in Minnesota.

## Inequities in Funding for Similar Initiatives



Funding for the Indigenous Education for All is crucial and should be allocated at a level comparable to that of the Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) Act, as both involve extensive efforts to develop educational resources across all grade levels and subjects. The creation of a comprehensive curriculum for Indigenous education is a significant undertaking that requires substantial investment; however, the current funding levels for Indigenous education are insufficient, as they do not even cover the salary of one dedicated staff member per Tribal Nation. In contrast, the READ Act has received \$34.75 million<sup>1</sup> for literacy programs and an additional \$31.375 million specifically for teacher training, reflecting its commitment to evidence-based curriculum and professional development aligned with educational standards.

Given that Indigenous Education for All serves every student in Minnesota across every grade level and subject in their K-12 education, it is imperative that appropriations for Indigenous education reflect this scale of work. Currently, funding for the READ Act stands at \$76 per student, while Indigenous Education for All funding is only \$0.52 per student. To ensure equitable support for all students in Minnesota, both initiatives deserve similar funding levels to effectively meet their goals and enhance educational outcomes.

## Methodology of the Needs Assessment

The needs assessment for Indigenous Education for All (IEFA) involved collaboration with Tribal Nations and the Tribal Nations Education Committee (TNEC). A comprehensive survey was designed to gather insights on the

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<sup>1</sup> [Senator Erin Maye Quade Celebrates READ Act Teacher Training Funds](https://senatedfl.mn/senator-erin-maye-quade-celebrates-read-act-teacher-training-funds/#:~:text=PAUL%2C%20Minn.,for%20completing%20READ%20Act%20training).) (https://senatedfl.mn/senator-erin-maye-quade-celebrates-read-act-teacher-training-funds/#:~:text=PAUL%2C%20Minn.,for%20completing%20READ%20Act%20training). [Supplemental education finance bill would provide \\$33 million to READ Act](https://www.house.mn.gov/sessiondaily/Story/18289) (https://www.house.mn.gov/sessiondaily/Story/18289).



needs of each Tribal Nation located in Minnesota to continue developing resources for Indigenous education for all students. This survey was sent to elected Tribal leaders, TNEC representatives, and the IEFA Leadership Committee. Data collection included an online survey with both multiple-choice and open-ended questions, allowing for quantitative and qualitative analysis.

To arrive at these figures, MDE first calculated the individual average for each Tribal Nation's responses, noting outliers but not including them in the average. This approach ensured that each Nation's input was weighted equally, factoring in the difference in the number of responses each Nation provided. The results were then calculated as an average of averages to determine the overall average across all Tribal Nations and then added together for each category (personnel, resource development, technology, and collaboration) to calculate the total cost annually.

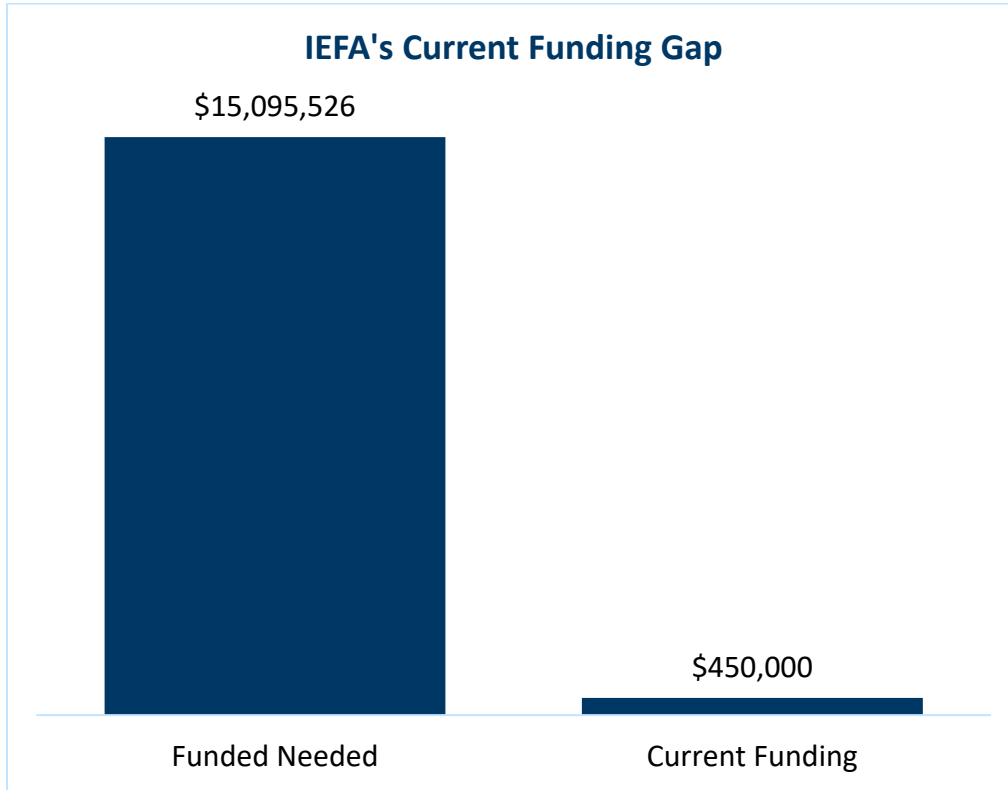
Responses were gathered from 46 participants across 10 Tribal Nations within Minnesota. This qualitative and quantitative data collection involved a mixed-methods approach, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the needs related to Indigenous Education for All (IEFA).

The analysis focused on costs related to personnel, resource development, technology, and collaboration. For questions with set ranges, responses were categorized accordingly, and percentages were calculated based on total respondents. Data analysis included calculating the mean, median, and mode for each Nation's responses while ensuring equal representation regardless of response volume.

Thematic analysis identified key funding needs and challenges for Indigenous Education for All (IEFA). By integrating quantitative and qualitative data, we enhanced the validity of our assessment through triangulation, revealing essential financial resources required for effective IEFA implementation across Tribal Nations.

## Key Findings and Context

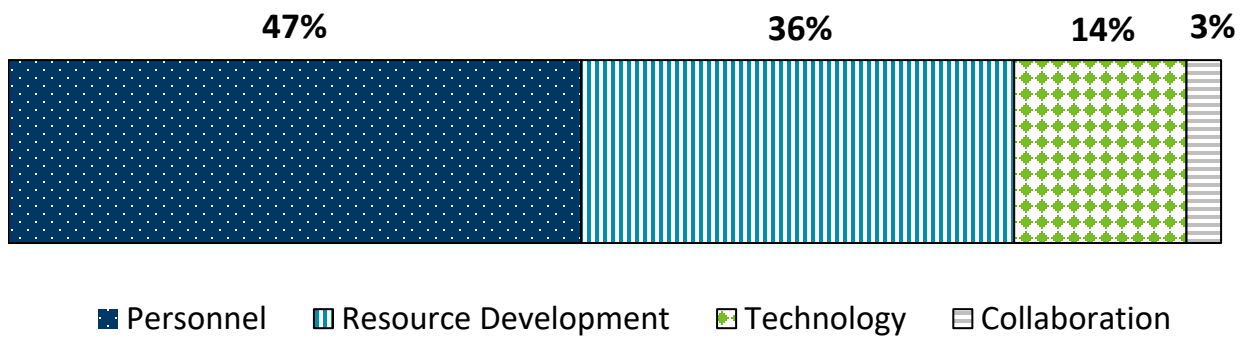
### Total Funding Annually



Based on a comprehensive analysis of responses from Tribal Nations regarding the total annual funding needed for Indigenous Education for All (IEFA) initiatives, the following summary has been compiled. The Tribal Nations require an average funding of \$1,372,320 per nation. This is a total of \$15,095,526 needed annually for all the Tribal Nations to effectively implement Indigenous Education for All (IEFA) statewide across all subjects and grade levels. However, the current funding available through MDE is only \$450,000 annually, which breaks down to \$40,909 per nation—just 3% of what the Tribal Nations require to adequately carry out this important work mandated by statute Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 120B.021, subdivision 5.

**Key Takeaways:** The results consistently indicate a substantial annual funding requirement for IEFA initiatives, with the most frequent response when asked what the total amount of funding your Tribal Nation needs annually to fund the work of Indigenous Education for All was "More than \$2 million." Despite some variations, there is a clear consensus that significantly higher financial resources are necessary to effectively implement and maintain Indigenous Education for All. This analysis provides a foundation for understanding the financial requirements of IEFA initiatives across Tribal Nations. It highlights the need for substantial and sustained funding to support this critical educational work effectively.

## The Total Funding Needed for all 11 Nations Annually to Develop Indigenous Education for All is \$15,095,526.

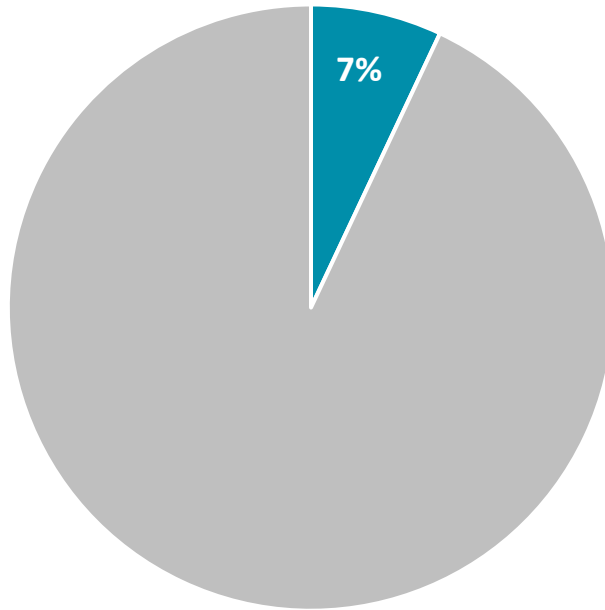


### Personnel Costs

It is crucial to emphasize the significant role of personnel costs (full-time, part-time, and contracted) in the overall annual funding of IEFA. Labor represents the highest expense (averaging 47% of total cost) in effectively implementing Indigenous Education for All, as skilled individuals—such as curriculum developers, content experts, and knowledge keepers—are essential for developing quality curricular resources. Investing in these roles not only ensures high-quality educational outcomes but also honors the cultural knowledge they bring.

Janis Fairbanks, who serves on the Fond du Lac Language Advisory Board shares, “Ojibwe Speakers paid as contracted services for 16 hours a week with 4 contracted service slots at a rate of \$200 per hour. This is the minimum going rate for these valuable, rare, and irreplaceable services from these speakers. Ojibwe language speakers are based mainly in the United States and Canada. There is no other country to travel to where this language can be learned, such as French (travel to France or Canada) and Spanish (travel to Spain or Mexico). Ojibwe speakers are here, and it is a well-known fact that Ojibwe is an endangered language.” Below is a breakdown of personnel costs by Nation, highlighting the importance of these investments for the success of IEFA.

**IEFA's current funding covers only 7% of the estimated requirements for personnel to develop curricular resources.**



Based on the needs assessment, current funding to the Tribal Nations for Indigenous Education for All (IEFA) covers only 7% of the estimated requirements for full-time, part-time, and contracted workers. With an annual budget of just \$450,000 allocated to all Tribal, this limited funding can only support a fraction of the educational needs across K-12 grade levels and all subjects. Consequently, because Tribal Nations are funded at only 7% of what is needed to do this work, we can expect to achieve only 7% of the desired educational outcomes for our students.

**Personnel funding needs by Tribal Nation:**

- Bois Forte: \$304,086
- Fond du Lac: \$536,467 (Outlier: \$10,000,000 and \$750,000,000)
- Grand Portage: \$100,000
- Leech Lake: \$450,000
- Lower Sioux: \$2,000,000 (Outlier: \$10,000 and \$147,000)
- Mille Lacs: \$300,000
- Prairie Island: \$1,254,599
- Red Lake: \$162,500
- Upper Sioux: \$100,000
- White Earth: \$1,275,000 (Outlier: \$3,000,000)
- Average funding need per Tribal Nation: \$648,265
- Annual personnel funding for all Tribal Nations: \$7,130,915

#### Personnel Plan by Tribal Nation:

- Fond du Lac: One project coordinator and an assistant, along with personnel for technical support, graphic design, and curriculum writing. The plan emphasizes cultural and language support, featuring four staff members for IEFA meetings, an eight-member language and culture board, and 10 elders providing guidance. Additional roles include two photographers/graphic artists, three language translators/editors, and five historians. Community engagement is also prioritized, with staffing for district meetings that includes meals and incentives.
- Grand Portage: Full-time IEFA coordinator and curriculum contractor(s)
- Lower Sioux: 25 positions needed to fully implement IEFA
- Mille Lacs: Five contracted people to meet twice monthly
- Prairie Island: 10 full-time education positions, three full-time and five contracted Dakota Language positions, three full-time and two part-time/contracted Tribal Historic Preservation Office positions
- Red Lake: Additional positions include elder consultants, historians, and administrators
- Upper Sioux: One full-time and one part-time Tribal staff
- White Earth: "At least three full-time staff plus contractual staff for graphic design, videography, or editing thereof - anything relating to the final product's presentability and appropriateness, and consultations on an as-needed basis with community advisory groups (elders, leaders, educators) and curriculum specialists. The full-time staff will be devoted to coordination, recording, editing, research, collections, scope, sequencing of materials to formulate units, mapping, economic input, advocacy, digital and physical archiving as needed, etc." (Dana Jean Goodwin Williams)

#### Key Takeaways:

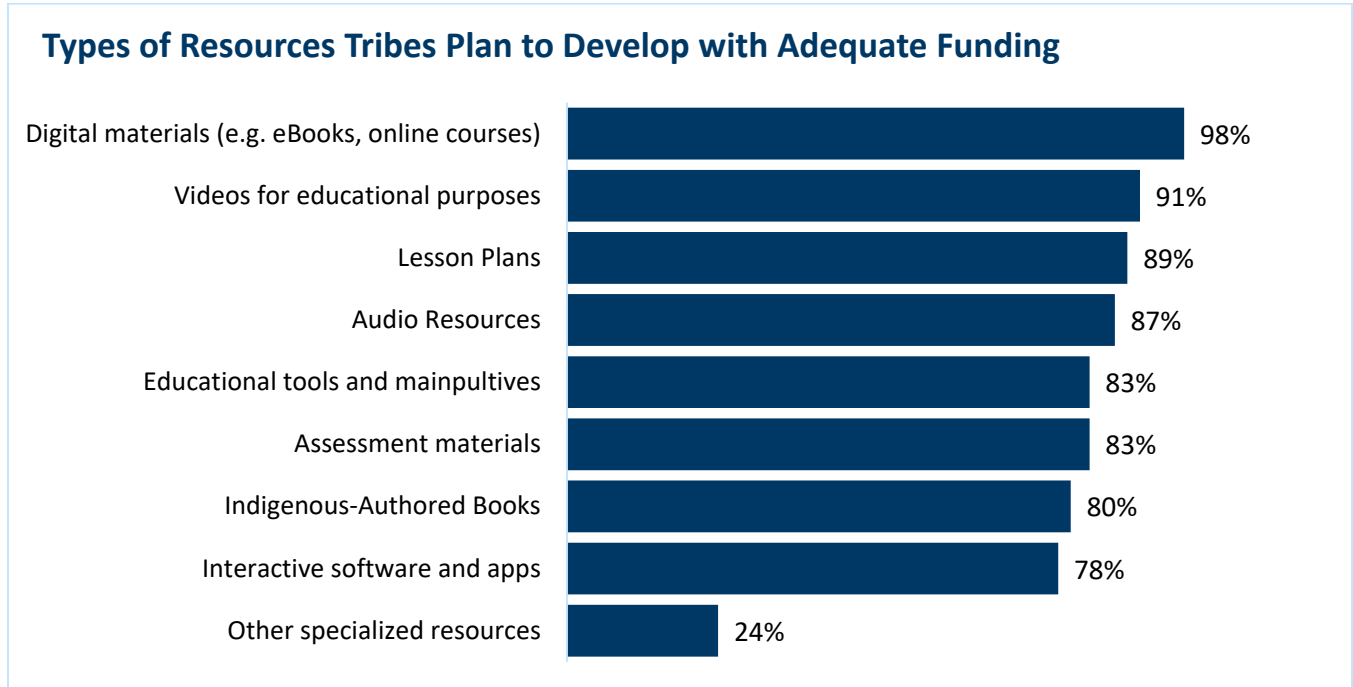
- Each Tribal Nation has unique requirements, reflecting diverse cultural and educational priorities.
- Comprehensive IEFA implementation requires a multifaceted approach, including full-time staff, specialists, and community involvement.
- Language preservation and cultural education are critical components, requiring significant investment.

At the current annual funding rate of 7%, it would take over 14 years to reach the full 100% funding required for personnel costs. This means that work that could be completed in a single year with adequate funding would instead take over 14 years due to the current budget constraints. This prolonged timeline significantly delays the completion of essential tasks and impacts overall efficiency and effectiveness. This means that an entire generation of students, from those just entering kindergarten to those graduating high school, may complete their K-12 education without experiencing the full benefits of this legislation.

To effectively implement IEFA and honor the state's commitment to Indigenous education, a substantial increase in funding is crucial. The current allocation falls far short of meeting even the most conservative estimates of Tribal needs. Increased funding would enable Tribal Nations to develop comprehensive educational resources, preserve languages and cultural knowledge, and ensure that all students in Minnesota receive a rich, culturally inclusive education.

## Resource Development and Associated Costs

Below are the types of resources Tribal Nations would develop with sufficient funding, along with the percentage of respondents indicating a need for each:



Responses for “Other specialized resources” included artwork depicting Indigenous people, role models, and local historical figures, Tribal language resources, Tribal archives, digital repository for Indigenous content, and the maintenance of cultural facilities that house Tribal history including Buffalo, Medicine Garden, and Birchbark lodges.

**Key Takeaway:** A diverse range of curricular resources is needed to effectively implement IEFA, with digital materials, multimedia content, and resources for educators being high priorities. The strong desire for Indigenous-Authored books underscores the importance of authentic, culturally relevant materials in the curriculum.

Based on the needs assessment responses from Tribal Nations, the estimated annual costs for developing IEFA resources vary:

- Bois Forte: Did not respond
- Fond du Lac: \$517,488
- Grand Portage: \$20,000
- Leech Lake: \$500,000
- Lower Sioux: \$206,786
- Mille Lacs: \$50,000 per resource
- Prairie Island: \$1,740,000
- Red Lake: \$225,000

- Upper Sioux: \$20,000
- White Earth: \$1,122,500
- Average resource development funding need per Tribal Nation: \$490,096
- Annual resource development funding for all Tribal Nations: \$5,391,062

Key observations:

- The wide range in cost estimates reflects the diverse needs and capacities of different Tribal Nations.
- Some Tribal Nations estimate higher initial costs that may decrease once initial resources are developed
- Some respondents provided detailed breakdowns of costs for specific resources, while others gave overall estimates.

Current funding of \$450,000 for all Tribal Nations addresses only 3% of the needs for implementing Indigenous Education for All (IEFA), leaving a 97% funding gap. The average annual cost for resource development is \$490,096 per Nation, nearly equal to the total budget allocated for all Nations combined. With total estimated costs for resource development across all responding Nations at \$5,391,062, this funding shortfall significantly effects the creation of educational materials and does not include the critical expenses such as staffing, technology, and community engagement vital for successful IEFA implementation.

The cost of curriculum development for educational companies and organizations that create resources for an entire state can be substantial, often requiring millions of dollars to ensure comprehensive coverage across all grade levels and subjects. For instance, companies may charge districts significant amounts for site licenses and instructional materials. [Functional Phonics + Morphology](#)<sup>2</sup> is considered a highly aligned curricula and is an allowable use of READ Act Literacy Aid and Literacy Incentive Aid curriculum, which costs \$5,000 for a one-year site license for 30 users. This equates to \$9,590,500 in curriculum cost for all teachers in Minnesota for only one year and does not cover all the standards. In contrast, Tribal Nations possess unique expertise and deep cultural knowledge that is essential for developing Indigenous curricula, yet they currently receive inadequate funding to create these vital resources. While companies may charge districts upwards of \$10,000 for multi-year licenses, Tribal Nations are seeking funding that reflects their specialized knowledge and the extensive costs associated with developing culturally relevant educational materials. The average annual cost for resource development per Tribal Nation is approximately \$490,096 to develop curricular resources for every student and every teacher in the entire state of Minnesota, which starkly contrasts with the limited financial support they receive. This disparity highlights the need for equitable funding to empower Tribal Nations to share their expertise effectively and ensure that all students benefit from a well-rounded education that includes Indigenous perspectives.

Additional considerations:

- Initial development costs may be higher, with potential decrease in subsequent years.
- Flexibility in funding is crucial to accommodate varying production levels and expectations.
- Some Nations emphasized the need for cultural resources, such as elders' involvement and facilities for traditional practices to create authentic, high-quality materials for students.

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<sup>2</sup> [Functional Phonics+Morphology - Shop](#)

**Key Takeaway:** The significant variation in cost estimates underscores the need for flexible, substantial funding to support comprehensive IEFA resource development across all Tribal Nations. The average annual cost of \$1,372,320 per Tribal Nation indicates that current funding levels do not meet the diverse and extensive resource development needs for effective IEFA implementation.

This underfunding significantly limits the ability of Tribal Nations to create the comprehensive, culturally appropriate educational resources necessary for effective instruction for all students in Minnesota. It's clear that to honor our commitment to Indigenous education and ensure the success of all students in Minnesota, a substantial increase in funding is not just desirable—it's crucial.

### **Annual Cost of Collaboration with Tribal Nations**

The IEFA Leadership Committee is comprised of representatives from each Tribal Nation and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) staff responsible for advancing Indigenous Education for All (IEFA). This committee facilitates collaboration by sharing updates, addressing challenges, and working on action items crucial to the success of IEFA. Regular in-person meetings on Tribal lands are essential for fostering strong relationships, enhancing communication, and ensuring that the work remains grounded in Indigenous culture. These gatherings allow for focused discussions and provide an opportunity for MDE to offer immediate support while gaining clarity on the needs of the Nations.

Attendance at these meetings is critical for equitable participation among all Tribal Nations. Representatives who cannot take time off from their jobs may miss important updates and collaborative opportunities, which can hinder their ability to engage effectively with other Tribal Nations and MDE on IEFA. These meetings are essential for building relationships and advancing the goals of IEFA.

Currently, the IEFA Leadership Committee meets monthly and nearly every committee member needs to drive over one hour to attend the meeting. There is not sufficient funding to provide hotels for all committee members to attend these events. This year, the average cost per meeting has been \$1,432, totaling \$17,184 annually for one meeting per month. This only accounts for the cost of the meeting room and lunch, covering only 4% of the needed funds for collaboration. This does not cover salaries/stipends, mileage, lodging, technology and equipment, or substitute teachers for educators in attendance. These hinderances severely limit the number of committee members who can attend meetings regularly.

To effectively engage and participate in IEFA Leadership meetings, the following needs have been identified by respondents:

- Salaries/Stipends (for meeting attendees and participants): 87%
- Travel Costs (in-person meetings, lodging, meals, etc.): 87% also expressed the necessity for funding to cover travel expenses for in-person meetings.
- Technology and Equipment (to facilitate virtual participation): 70%
- Additional Needs (substitute teachers for educators, board and steering committee members): 13%

To effectively engage and participate in meetings related to Indigenous Education for All (IEFA), it is crucial to address the financial needs of participants. The following data outlines the average costs associated with



meeting participation across various Tribal Nations, highlighting the significant investment required to ensure effective involvement.

Average cost for meeting participation by Tribal Nation based on needs assessment responses. (Outliers noted but not calculated in the average):

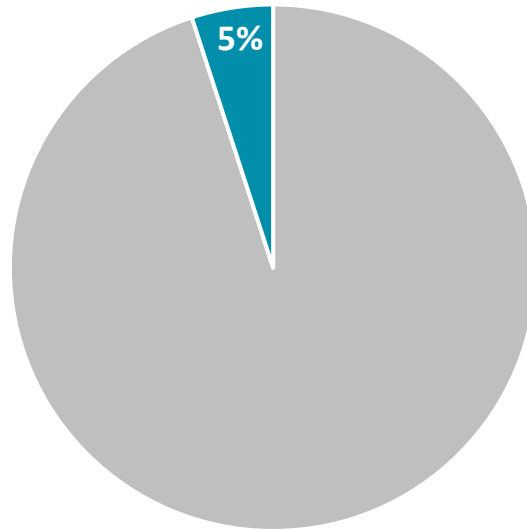
- Fond du Lac: \$62,147 (Outlier: \$1 million)
- Grand Portage: \$10,000
- Leech Lake: \$50,000
- Lower Sioux: \$25,000
- Mille Lacs: \$39,900
- Prairie Island: \$48,000
- Red Lake: \$57,000
- White Earth: \$20,067 (Outlier: \$3 million)
- Average collaboration funding need per Tribal Nation: \$39,014
- Annual collaboration funding for all Tribal Nations: \$429,154

Comments from Tribal Nations:

- Jennifer Murray, Tribal Nations Education Committee (TNEC) Representative for Fond du Lac: A budget of \$25,000 would cover the cost for 12 meetings for 2-3 people, including stipends for participants, travel expenses (mileage, lodging, meals), and technology for virtual participation.
- Raina Killspotted, TNEC Representative for Mille Lacs: A stipend of \$30,000 for an IEFA team of five members, with additional funds for mileage and lodging.
- Johnny Johnson, TNEC Representative for Prairie Island: Estimated costs include \$24,000 for salaries/stipends for meeting participation, \$12,000 for travel costs to in-person meetings, \$7,000 for technology and equipment needed for virtual participation, and \$5,000 for additional expenses, noting the importance of adjusting to market values as actual costs may fluctuate.
- Dana Jean Goodwin Williams, TNEC Representative for White Earth: Two-day meeting costs approximately \$1,720 per person annually for mileage, lodging, meals, stipends, and substitute teachers.
- Robert L. May, District Representative for Red Lake: Each participant should be compensated adequately for their time and effort in attending meetings, including the work they have to miss in their community to attend meetings.

Key Takeaways: The current IEFA budget of \$450,000 translates to approximately \$39,014 per Tribal Nation annually when divided among 11 Nations. However, with this cost just for meeting participation, this funding would consume 95.5% of each Nation's annual budget. This leaves only \$1,895 for all other expenses.

**Meeting costs take up 95% of each Nation's current budget, leaving only 5% for other IEFA expenses.**



Consequently, the Tribal Nations currently do not have sufficient funds to attend these meetings, hindering collaboration and leaving little to no budget for developing vital educational resources. This critical shortfall underscores the need for increased funding to support meaningful participation and resource development for Tribal Nations in the IEFA initiative. Legislators must recognize this urgent need to ensure that these Nations can achieve their educational goals.

### **Annual Cost of Technology Licensing and Purchases**

The annual costs associated with purchasing or licensing technology for Indigenous Education for All (IEFA) initiatives varies among Tribal Nations. The following is a summary of the estimated costs based on survey responses:

- Less than \$10,000: 2%
- \$10,000 - \$50,000: 26%
- \$50,001 - \$100,000: 7%
- \$100,001 - \$250,000: 22%
- \$250,001 - \$500,000: 15%
- More than \$500,000: 20%
- Other: 2%
- Did not answer: 6%
- Average technology funding need per Tribal Nation: \$194,945
- Annual technology funding for all Tribal Nations: \$2,144,395

**Key Takeaway:** Over half (62%) of respondents estimated costs exceeding \$100,000, highlighting the potential financial burden on Tribal Nations seeking to implement effective educational technologies. The varying estimates for technology costs underscore the need for adequate funding to support the acquisition and

effective implementation of educational tools. As Tribal Nations aim to enhance their educational offerings through technology, it is crucial that they receive sufficient financial support not only for purchasing or licensing these tools but also for ensuring that users are adequately trained to utilize them effectively. One respondent from Fond du Lac emphasized that any technology purchased should come with comprehensive training for users. They noted that without proper training, expensive software often remains unused, resulting in wasted resources. This investment is essential to maximize the benefits of technology in supporting Indigenous Education for All.

## Additional Costs

Based on the results from the needs assessment, the Tribal Nations detailing the additional costs required for managing and administering the work.

Additional Costs for Managing and Administering IEFA Work:

- Hosting Community Forums or Listening Sessions: 98%
- Conducting Surveys or Focus Groups: 85%
- Translation Services: 76%
- Scheduling and Coordinating Meetings and Events: 89%
- Taking and Distributing Meeting Notes/Summaries: 80%
- Managing Communications Between Tribal Representatives and MDE: 93%
- Advocacy: 70%
- Other: 17%

Respondents also provided detailed estimates of additional costs that should be considered in the budget for this work. The following are the comments from each Tribal Nation, highlighting a range of needs.:

- Fond du Lac: "Space for archives and travel costs to view records stored out of state."; "Meeting costs for community forums and collaboration with other Ojibwe nations."; "Childcare budget for participants' children during meetings, meals for children, and food/beverages for participants."
- Leech Lake: "Budgeting \$40,000 for food costs during gatherings."
- Lower Sioux: "Additional equipment expenses may be necessary."
- Prairie Island: "Estimated costs of \$50,000 for facilities, technology, meetings, communications, etc., plus \$110,000 for technology and communications personnel."
- Red Lake: "Costs include food, recognition awards, IT/hardware (laptops/tablets/phones), marketing/public relations/documentary production for success stories."
- White Earth: "Time and meetings to coordinate lessons on treaties, origin stories, impacts of legislation—this will require monthly meetings online."; "Facilitators will be needed to keep discussions on track. This includes costs for note-takers, lesson material developers, and research coordination."; "\$500,000 to \$600,000 needed to ensure accurate representation of history across Dakota and Anishinaabe nations."

Key Takeaways: The feedback from Tribal Nations highlights the extensive additional costs necessary for effectively managing and administering IEFA initiatives, including personnel, community engagement, and technology requirements. To ensure successful implementation of IEFA programs, it is crucial to recognize these

diverse needs and allocate sufficient funding. This investment will support the administrative aspects of the initiative and enhance collaboration among Tribal Nations in providing culturally relevant educational resources.

### **Impact on One Minnesota Goals**

This work supports the [Due North](#) goal of creating a safe and nurturing learning environment. Faron Jackson Sr., Chairman of Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe states, "Acknowledging students for who they are is very important to bringing up their self-esteem and well-being. Feeling welcomed." IEFA will improve the lives of all Minnesotans by working collaboratively to implement curricular resources and professional development for educators that achieve results for all students. Minnesota should be the best state in the country for children to grow up in - those of all races, ethnicities, religions, economic statuses, gender identities, sexual orientations, (dis)abilities, and zip codes. When American Indian students feel like their culture is welcome at school, they are more likely to thrive both personally and academically.

### **Impact of Indigenous Education for All**

All Minnesotans deserve accurate and truthful knowledge of the first inhabitants of what we now call Minnesota. Prior to this legislation, required standards have not included this learning, and the legislature recognized this through the passage of the Indigenous Education for All legislation in 2023. Robert L. May, District Representative for the Red Lake Nation noted, "It's important because for far too long [our] history has been ignored or not even been told. As Tribal Nations, we have sacrificed so much for Minnesota and America; to be here and to have false narratives being taught to students across the state is wrong and it only contributes to the overall continued racism, prejudice, and mistreatment of Native Americans throughout the entire state."

Students, parents, and teachers in Minnesota need an educational environment that honors the inherent sovereign status, dignity of American Indian Nations and communities. Minnesota schools will be able to center the lived experiences of Minnesota students, and to incorporate American Indian or Indigenous studies across all course disciplines and grades, particularly for Dakota and Anishinaabe cultures.

### **Impact on All State Agencies**

Indigenous Education for All (IEFA) will transform Minnesota by fostering a more just environment and understanding of Tribal Nations. Adam Savariego, Tribal Secretary for Upper Sioux Community, emphasizes, "Being in Tribal Leadership, there is always a gap of knowledge we have to explain to outside 3rd parties. They seem to always be playing catch up to what a Tribal Nation and what a Tribal Nation is capable of. If what a Tribal Nation is can become general knowledge, it would ease the emotional burden Tribal Leaders constantly have to tackle when interacting with outside agencies." IEFA will close this knowledge gap between Tribal Nations and all Minnesotans. Every Minnesotan will have a foundational knowledge of Indigenous people in the state.

Minnesota state government is the state's third largest employer, with over 50,000 employees across more than 100 agencies. Minnesota's K-12 graduates that find work in state government will have a solid understanding of the Tribal Nations within Minnesota. This means future employees can foster positive Tribal-state relations and effectively serve all Minnesotans. Increased funding for IEFA promotes awareness of Indigenous contributions

while equipping future state employees with essential insights into Indigenous cultures. IEFA will lead to improved governance and services for all residents. It will create a more inclusive Minnesota that recognizes Indigenous history as integral to the state's narrative.

### **Impact on Children and Families**

Improving the access to curriculum that is inclusive of the Tribal Nations in Minnesota will benefit all Minnesotans. Indigenous Education for All will enable greater self-awareness and compassion, and can provide positive reinforcement, support identity development, while also upholding the Tribal sovereignty of the 11 Tribal Nations in Minnesota. As Dana Jean Goodwin Williams, the Tribal Nations Education Committee representative for White Earth Nation states, "All non-indigenous people coming through or working in a Minnesota K-12 setting will hold Indigenous people of Minnesota in higher regard because they will better understand our beauty, plight, and how the want of land and resources impacted us so greatly." When American Indian students feel like their culture is welcome at school, they are more likely to thrive both personally and academically.

### **Impact on All Educators in Minnesota**

Curriculum development remains a significant hurdle, with many educators feeling unprepared to integrate Indigenous content into their teaching practices. The cost of curriculum development is one of the major costs associated with this work. To best support educators and relieve stress of meeting standards, there is a demand for high quality resources that meet all of the standards, including those that include the contributions of American Indians in Minnesota. Adequate funding for Tribal Nations empowers teachers with essential classroom materials and professional development opportunities. This support enhances their ability to teach effectively, reduces stress, and promotes job satisfaction, ultimately benefiting both educators and students.

IEFA is a framework of support for educators. Montana's Office of Public Instruction published an Indian Education for All Evaluation which states, "IEFA is not viewed as competing with other academic priorities, such as reading or math, but as a means of enhancing those areas. Teachers in schools with high implementation often reported being encouraged to take instructional risks and were supported in efforts to obtain additional grants and to establish outside partnerships. Many staff members underscored the importance of collaboration for preparing effective IEFA lessons and for working through uncomfortable or controversial content in the classroom. For some, IEFA also provides a framework for collaboration. A staff member commented, 'IEFA helps our staff as we collaborate and make decisions daily about our curriculum. We intentionally make it part of our dialogue and are confident that any challenges we face are within our ability to meet. We support and encourage each other in our implementation of IEFA.'"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [Montana Indian Education for all Evaluation](#)

## Minnesota as a National Leader

Adequate funding and support will provide Minnesota the opportunity to become a national leader in education. The successful implementation of IEFA would serve as a model for other states looking to authentically integrate Indigenous perspectives into their educational systems.

In Montana's Indian Education for All Evaluation, the report states, "The work of IEFA has impact well beyond Montana's education system and has moved OPI into a leadership position in Indian Education. Within the state, OPI IEFA staff have responded to requests for presentations to improve understanding and cultural sensitivity for other professional communities, including bus drivers, state troopers, and career training programs. Montana's innovation and leadership is also evidenced by interest from other states seeking to implement similar initiatives modeled on IEFA and by contacts outside the United States, as with the Aboriginal Studies Department of Australia's Murdoch University."<sup>4</sup>

Comparative analysis with programs in other states show that dedicated funding is crucial for successful implementation. Sustained financial support for Montana's Indian Education for All Act has allowed for the development of comprehensive curricular resources and professional development programs. According to Montana's Indian Education for All Evaluation, the report states, "Another positive IEFA impact frequently reported in focus groups and interviews were the effects of IEFA funding, which has provided training, opportunities for collaboration, support for lesson development, and opportunities to interact with the American Indian community through guests and field trips."<sup>5</sup>

As Robert L. May, District Representative for Red Lake Nation states, "This work would incorporate the truth into the state standards and it would ultimately lead to Minnesota continuing to lead the way across the country when it comes to recognizing the true history of this country, which would in turn create a more inclusive, harmonious, and equitable society for our future generations."

## Impact on Tribal Nations

This work is crucial for preserving and sharing the authentic history, culture, and identity of Tribal Nations. It provides an opportunity to correct historical inaccuracies, combat stereotypes, and ensure that Indigenous perspectives are accurately represented in education. Laurie Harper, the Tribal Nations Education Committee (TNEC) representative for Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, emphasizes the significance of IEFA by stating, "The IEFA work is important to [Leech Lake Nation] LLN as it tells our story through our own lens. It empowers our people of [Leech Lake] LL." This sentiment is echoed by Jodie Lockling, a member of the IEFA Leadership Committee and Ojibwe Language Teacher at Fond du Lac Ojibwe School who adds, "This work is important to preserving the Ojibwe Language and Culture for generations to come. If this work is not done the Ojibwe people will be nothing more than a page in history or a display in a museum."

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<sup>4</sup> [Montana Indian Education for all Evaluation](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Montana Indian Education for all Evaluation](#)

This work is vital for empowering Indigenous youth, fostering understanding between communities, and acknowledging the ongoing presence and contributions of Tribal Nations in Minnesota. In conducting this needs assessment, we have received responses and feedback from 10 out of the 11 Tribal Nations expressing the impact of increased funding for Indigenous Education for All. The Tribal Nations in which we received responses from include:

- Bois Forte Band of Chippewa / [Zagaakwaandagowininiwag](#)
- Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa / [Nahgahchiwanong](#)
- Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa / [Gichi Onigaming](#)
- Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe / [Gaa-zagaskwaajimekaag](#)
- Lower Sioux Indian Community / [Cansa'yapi](#)
- Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe / [Misi-zaaga'iganiing](#)
- Prairie Island Indian Community / [Tinta Wita](#)
- Red Lake Nation / [Miskwaagamiwi-Zaagaiganing](#)
- Upper Sioux Community / [Pezihutazizi Oyate](#)
- White Earth Nation / [Gaa-waabaabiganikaag](#)

Respondents from the Tribal Nations emphasized the importance of authentic representation and sharing Indigenous perspectives in educational materials. They highlighted that this approach benefits both Native and non-Native students and teachers. Laurie Harper, the Tribal Nations Education Committee representative for Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe states, “This work is about centering non-native students and teachers and the work will be empowering to our community as we share our lifeways and histories through another point of view.” Julia Lintgen, a member of the IEFA Leadership Committee and staff member of the Fond du Lac Ojibwe school shares, “Having accurate curriculum will help all teachers and students understand our history and who we are as relevant people of today. My hope is that by sharing our contributions to both the past & present, we will break down some of the barriers our people encounter daily.”

The analysis demonstrates that while there is significant support for IEFA across Minnesota, substantial barriers remain—primarily related to funding, which directly impacts resource availability for students and educators. Addressing these challenges through targeted financial support will not only enhance educational equity but also promote cultural understanding among all students in Minnesota. By investing in IEFA at the levels requested by Tribal Nations, Minnesota can ensure that all students receive an education enriched with Indigenous perspectives that honor cultural heritage and foster respect within diverse communities.

## Conclusion

Current levels of funding for Indigenous Education for All (IEFA) will cause a delay in meaningful impacts in education for all Minnesotans. Tribal Nations have been asked to bear the brunt of costs to develop materials to meet the statute. The state of Minnesota must do better to keep up its' end of the promise. Funding for other statewide programs runs in the tens of millions, the state has set aside a small fraction of that to support IEFA. The actions of the state must match the words in the statute if we want to see full implementation of Indigenous Education for All. Tribal Nations are experts in their histories, languages, and cultures. Minnesota must honor their expertise by fully funding Indigenous Education for All. MDE recommends increasing the funding per Tribal Nation to \$1,372,320. Students deserve to learn about the Indigenous people that share geography with Minnesota. It is vital to understanding who they are as Minnesotans.

## Bibliography

### Appendix A: Needs Assessment Questions and Their Importance

The recent needs assessment included critical questions aimed at understanding resource needs, funding requirements, and curricular resource development challenges faced by Tribal Nations. Each question is essential for ensuring successful integration of Indigenous perspectives into Minnesota's public education system and fulfilling Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 120B.021, subdivision 5.

- Question 1:
  - *Full Name*
    - Purpose and Funding Rationale: This question identifies the respondent, ensuring accountability and allowing for follow-up if needed. Accurate identification of respondents is crucial for validating the survey data used to justify funding requests.
    - Key Findings and Context:
      - The needs assessment survey was sent to 114 individuals across the 11 Tribal Nations within Minnesota.
      - A total of 46 responses were received from 10 of the 11 Tribal Nations.
      - The average time spent completing the survey was 148 minutes, indicating thoughtful and thorough responses.
      - The survey was distributed via email and presented to the Tribal Nations Education Committee (TNEC), Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC), and Indigenous Education for All (IEFA) leadership committee.
      - Multiple reminders were sent, and contact lists were reviewed and confirmed by TNEC to ensure comprehensive outreach.
- Question 2:
  - *I am completing this survey on behalf of:*
    - *Asabiikone-zaag'igan (Bois Forte Band of Chippewa)*
    - *Nagaachiwanong (Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa)*



- *Gichi Onigaming (Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa)*
  - *Gaa-zagaskwaajimekaag (Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe)*
  - *Cansa'yapi (Lower Sioux Indian Community)*
  - *Misi-zaaga'iganiing (Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe)*
  - *Tinta Wita (Prairie Island Indian Community)*
  - *Miskwaagamiwi-Zaagaiganing (Red Lake Nation)*
  - *Mdewakanton (Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community)*
  - *Pezihutazizi Oyate (Upper Sioux Community)*
  - *Gaa-waabaabiganikaag (White Earth Nation)*
- Purpose and Funding Rationale: This question determines which Tribal Nation the respondent represents, allowing for analysis of needs specific to each community. Different Tribal Nations may have varying resource requirements and funding needs. This information helps in allocating funds equitably based on each nation's specific circumstances.
- Key Findings and Context:
  - Respondents included elected Tribal leaders, councilmembers, TNEC representatives, and IEFA leadership committee members from the Tribal Nations.
  - An average of 10 people per Tribal Nation were invited to participate.
  - Response methods varied: some Tribal Nations had one leader complete the survey on behalf of the entire Nation, while others collaborated or submitted individual responses.
  - The survey was available online through Microsoft Forms and as a paper copy presented to MIAC during their meeting on November 22, 2024.
  - Contact information was provided for questions, and the survey design was reviewed by TNEC and the IEFA leadership committee to ensure relevance and clarity.
- Question 3:
  - *People Needed: Please include number of people (full-time, part-time, contracted, consulted) and their associated costs annually. Please share your best estimate.*
  - Purpose and Funding Rationale: This question assesses the human resource requirements for implementing Indigenous Education for All (IEFA). Staffing is a critical component of IEFA implementation. Accurate estimates of personnel costs are essential for budgeting and ensuring adequate funding for the labor of this work.
  - Key Findings and Context:
    - On average, Tribal Nations reported needing X full-time, Y part-time, and Z contracted/consulted positions
    - Estimated annual personnel costs ranged from \$[lowest] to \$[highest] per Tribal Nation
    - [Highlight any significant trends or outliers]
    - Substantial investment in human resources is crucial for effective IEFA implementation across all Tribal Nations.
- Question 4:
  - *What types of resources need to be developed? (Select all that apply)*
    - *Digital materials (e.g. eBooks, online courses)*
    - *Lesson plans*
    - *Educational tools and manipulatives*

- *Videos*
  - *Audio resources*
  - *Interactive software and apps*
  - *Assessment materials*
  - *Indigenous-Authored Books*
  - *Other (Fill in the Blank)*
- Purpose and Funding Rationale: This question identifies the specific curricular resources required for IEFA implementation. Developing diverse educational materials is crucial for effective IEFA implementation. Each type of resource has associated costs, and this information helps in allocating funds for resource development.
- Question 5:
  - *What are the associated costs for each of these resources annually? Please share your best estimate.*
  - Purpose and Funding Rationale: This question quantifies the financial requirements for developing curricular resources. Accurate cost estimates for resource development are essential for budgeting and securing appropriate funding. This information helps justify funding requests to support IEFA implementation
- Question 6:
  - *What funding is needed for timely and meaningful collaboration with MDE to participate in meetings for Indigenous Education for All? (Select all that apply)*
    - *Salaries/stipends for meeting participation*
    - *Travel costs for in-person meetings*
    - *Technology and equipment for virtual participation*
    - *Other (Fill in the blank)*
  - Purpose and Funding Rationale: This question identifies the specific costs associated with collaboration and leadership meetings. Effective collaboration is crucial for IEFA success. Understanding these costs helps in allocating funds for travel, technology, and compensation, ensuring Tribal Nation participation in decision-making processes.
- Question 7:
  - *What are the associated costs for these meetings annually? Please share your best estimate.*
  - Purpose and Funding Rationale: This question quantifies the financial requirements for collaboration and meetings. Accurate estimates of meeting costs are necessary for budgeting and ensuring adequate funding for ongoing collaboration between Tribal Nations and the Minnesota Department of Education.
- Question 8:
  - *What is the annual cost of purchasing or licensing technology to do this work? Please share your best estimate. (Examples: lesson creation software, online course creation tools, video/audio tools, apps, assessment tools, interactive content platforms)*
    - *Less than \$10,000*
    - *\$10,000 - \$50,000*
    - *\$50,001 - \$100,000*
    - *\$100,001 - \$250,000*

- *\$250,001 - \$500,000*
    - *More than \$500,000*
    - *Other (Fill in the blank)*
  - Purpose and Funding Rationale: This question assesses the technology costs associated with IEFA implementation. Technology is crucial for developing and delivering IEFA content. Understanding these costs helps in allocating appropriate funds for necessary tools and platforms
- Question 9:
  - *What additional costs are required for managing and the administration of this work? (Select all that apply)*
    - *Hosting community forums or listening sessions*
    - *Conducting surveys or focus groups*
    - *Translation services*
    - *Scheduling and coordinating meetings and events*
    - *Taking and distributing meeting notes/summaries*
    - *Managing communications between Tribal representatives and MDE*
    - *Advocacy*
    - *Other (Fill in the blank)*
  - Purpose and Funding Rationale: This question identifies other administrative and management costs associated with IEFA implementation. Comprehensive implementation of IEFA requires various administrative activities. Understanding these costs ensures that funding covers all aspects of the program, including community engagement and coordination
- Question 10:
  - *What additional costs should be considered in the budget for this work? Please provide your best estimate.*
  - Purpose and Funding Rationale: This question allows respondents to identify any other costs not covered in previous questions. This open-ended question ensures that all potential costs are considered, providing a more accurate and comprehensive funding estimate for IEFA implementation
- Question 11:
  - *What is the total amount of funding your Tribal Nation needs annually to fund the work of Indigenous Education for All? Please select your best estimate.*
    - *Less than \$50,000*
    - *\$50,000 - \$100,000*
    - *\$100,001 - \$250,000*
    - *\$250,001 - \$500,000*
    - *\$500,001 - \$1 million*
    - *\$1,000,001 - \$1.5 million*
    - *\$1,500,001 - \$2 million*
    - *More than \$2 million*
    - *Other (Fill in the blank)*

- Purpose and Funding Rationale: This question provides an overall estimate of the annual funding required for each Tribal Nation. This comprehensive estimate helps in understanding the total financial needs of each Tribal Nation, allowing for more accurate budget planning and funding allocation
- Question 12:
  - *Why is this work important to your Tribal Nation?*
  - Purpose and Funding Rationale: This question allows Tribal Nations to express the significance of IEFA to their communities. This information provides crucial context for understanding the importance of adequate funding and its potential impact on Tribal communities.
- Question 13:
  - *What long-term impacts would investing in this work have on all students and educators?*
  - Purpose and Funding Rationale: This question assesses the potential long-term benefits of IEFA implementation. Understanding the long-term impacts helps justify the investment in IEFA, demonstrating the value of allocating funds to this initiative for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students
- Question 14:
  - *Additional Comments*
  - Purpose and Funding Rationale: This open-ended question allows respondents to provide any additional information or context not covered by previous questions. This question may reveal unforeseen funding needs or provide additional justification for funding requests, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of each Tribal Nation's financial requirements for IEFA implementation.