Minutes for January 30, 2020 Native American Education Committee

The January 30, 2020, meeting of the Native American Education Committee was held in the Neshoba Central High School Library/Media Center, with seven members in attendance.

After a welcome from Jamie Calvert, Dr. Hill distributed copies of the NCSD Strategic Plan 2018-2020. She highlighted the following areas from the plan:

* Increased ACT scores in the district as compared with previous years (NCDS average higher than state average)
* Increased graduation rate as compared with previous years (NCSD rate higher than state average). The NCSD Native American graduation rate is 92%.
* School ratings: NCES-A, NCMS-B, NCHS-B
* Reminded committee members that all decisions, budgets, school board meetings and agendas must be related to the NCSD strategic plan.

She also presented data showing the number of Native American students participating in extra-curricular activities and noted that Native Americans make up 13% of the student population in the district. Committee members requested the numbers of student in each school in the district, and will have access to that information at the next meeting. Committee member Lanisha Bell requested information re: protocol to start a Native American Club at the high school. Committee members employed by the school suggested forming a student caucus to meet with principals, followed by approval from the district superintendent and possibly the Mississippi Department of Education.

Rachel Keipe, NCHS librarian, discussed dispersal of monies from a NOVO Foundation grant that she received. The grant, which focused on social and emotional learning, was used to fund the following:

* Year 1: a Cultural Fair led by Native Americans who demonstrated beading, dancing, story-telling, native languages, and stick ball
* Year 2: the compilation of information (from the cultural fair, research, and the history of the Tribe) to create a book that was distributed to all students in the high school.
* The grant also funded the acquisition of artifacts (baskets, regalia, beadwork) which are displayed in the library/media center

Other topics discussed that were pertinent to the committee included the following:

* Continued request for display of the Choctaw flag on campus
* Ways to incorporate Native American history into existing curricula or how to create a special Native American curriculum. School employees suggested contacting MDE and recommended ways to incorporate the information into existing curricula. The librarians will talk with ELA teachers during regular PLC meetings to encourage use of informational text about indigenous peoples and will provide resources.
* Possibility of providing Native American presenters to the middle school and high school, patterned after speaking engagements previously held in the elementary school.
* Probability that 2020 is the 75th anniversary of the Choctaw Constitution. If so, NCSD will try to recognize this achievement in the classrooms.

The meeting was adjourned.