Minutes for October 8, 2019 Native American Education Committee

The October 8, 2019, meeting of the Indian Education Committee was held in the Neshoba Central Middle School Library, with ten members in attendance. Committee members introduced themselves and gave pertinent information re: their jobs, education, and association with Neshoba Central School District.

The purpose of the committee and an explanation of both Impact Aid and Title VI Indian Education Grants were provided by Assistant Superintendent Dr. Penny Hill. The Indian Policies and Procedures were reviewed and committee members were presented with statistics re: Native American student participation in school athletics and activities. A discussion ensued re: lack of participation in band and student council. Possible reasons included financial barriers and lack of information about roles of students on student council. Data will be provided at the next meeting concerning Native American involvement in the new junior FBLA and FFA programs, as well as cross country.

Rachel Kiepe, NCHS librarian, was not in attendance, so there was no report of events in the high school library/media center.

Jamie Calvert, NCMS librarian, reported that Impact Aid money was spent on Native American books (specifically about the Choctaw nation), classroom sets of books, and folders that students use as library cards. She also reported that November is Native American History Month and that she sets up a display of Choctaw information for the month. She will have Choctaw books on display for the next meeting.

The members voiced concerns/recommendations including, but not limited to, the following topics: flying the Choctaw Nation flag on the school flag pole, avoiding Native American stereotypes, incorporating Choctaw information in school-wide social studies curricula, using the term Native American or Indigenous People rather than Indian (the committee agreed to change the name of the committee to the Native American Education Committee), possibility of students receiving excused absences for Native American Day and Nanih Waiya Day, allowing students to bead graduation caps, the need for a high school Choctaw tutor, possibility of school supplementing tutor salary, creating a focus group of students to suggest issues for committee to address, and the establishment of a Native American Club for students of all ethnicities.

The discussion of future meeting dates was tabled until the school calendar can be reviewed.

A drawing was held for a door prize (Halloween book).

The meeting was adjourned.