



**CONTRACT #ED-06-CO-0023**

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
REQUEST FOR OMB APPROVAL OF  
AMERICAN INDIAN PARENT INVOLVEMENT  
DATA COLLECTION**

**PART A: JUSTIFICATION**

Final Updated Version

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This submission requests approval for a data collection plan for a study of American Indian parents' involvement in their children's education. The project is sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences within the U.S. Department of Education, and will be conducted by the Central Region Educational Laboratory (contract #ED-06-CO-0023) at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL).

## **JUSTIFICATION**

### **Circumstances that make collection of information necessary**

The primary mission of the Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) is to serve the educational needs of each region. The current authorization for the Regional Educational Laboratories program is under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Part D, Section 174, (20 U.S.C. 9564), administered by the Institute of Education Sciences' National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. The national priority for the current REL contract is to address the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). A key goal of NCLB is to close the achievement gap between children from diverse poverty levels, ethnicities, disabilities, and English proficiency levels. Prior research has shown that parent involvement in their children's education is associated with higher student achievement (Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Nye, Turner & Schwartz, 2006; Sanders & Herting, 2000; Shaver & Walls, 1998). Therefore, one strategy to close the achievement gap is to increase parents' involvement in their children's education — which is why NCLB calls for the identification of effective parent involvement strategies.

American Indian students' performance on state and national assessments lags behind that of their white peers (Ed Watch Interactive State & National Data Site, n.d.), and many schools perceive American Indian parents to be relatively uninvolved in their children's education (de Baca, Rinaldi, Billig, & Kinnison, 1991; Deyhle, 1991; Latham, 1989; Pavel, Curtin, & Whitener, 1997; Reyhner, 1992). On the other hand, some parents of American Indian students perceive communication from schools to be nonexistent or negative (Cockrell, 1992), and they also fear that the influence of the school will undermine their culture (Deyhle, 1991).

The seven states in the Central Region (Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming) fall within the top

24 states in terms of the size of their American Indian populations. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming are among the eight states with the highest percentage of American Indians (Ogunwole, 2002). Schools in these states need assistance in involving parents in their children's education in order to overcome cultural impediments to achievement (Mid-continent Regional Advisory Committee, 2005).

American Indian parents in particular need to know how to better interact with schools, and schools must work to overcome a history of mistrust (E. Kubinski, Region VI Comprehensive Center, personal communication, August 23, 2005). Research on parent involvement for American Indian families has lagged far behind research on school involvement of other minority groups (Boethel, 2003), and even that work is becoming dated (John, 1998). Knowing more about the keys to encouraging parent involvement among American Indians will help district decision makers, principals, and teachers implement community outreach strategies that will ultimately help close the achievement gap for American Indian students. This study, funded under the Central Region Education Laboratory contract, responds to one of the goals of NCLB by exploring: 1) the ways in which American Indian parents and families become involved in the education of their children; 2) the barriers to their involvement; and 3) strategies that have helped these families get involved in their children's education.

### **How, by whom, and for what purpose is the information used?**

This study will explore the following research questions: 1) In what ways do American Indian parents and families become involved in their children's education?, 2) What barriers do American Indian parents and families encounter when getting involved in their children's education?, and 3) What school strategies have helped these families get involved in their children's education? To respond to these research questions, the design of this study calls for data to be collected from American Indian parents and families. Our focus is on the American Indian parents of schools in North and South Dakota with a high percent of American Indian students. Given the random selection of parents from within the school the tribe/nation representation of the parents from each school will be represented among the participants.

Researchers who have worked with American Indian populations repeatedly stress the need to earn the trust of community members in order to successfully collect data (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Harala, Smith, Hassel, & Gailfus, 2005; Robertson, Jorgensen, & Garrow, 2004; Sobeck, Chaplesk, & Fisher, 2003; Wax, 1991). Because of exploitative and unethical research methods employed in the past by non-

American Indian researchers, American Indian communities are often wary of people wishing to conduct research; the researchers' motives must be determined first, as must the potential benefit of the research to the community (Deloria Jr., 1991; Lomawaima, 2000; Mihesuah, 1993; Wax, 1991). Establishment of trusting relationships is an integral part of many traditional American Indian ways of transferring knowledge; important information is passed on orally from elders to younger tribe members only when the elders deem the younger members ready (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; McAvoy, Winter, Outley, McDonald, & Chavez, 2000). Because it is the holder of the knowledge who determines the appropriate time for sharing, asking direct questions can be seen as intrusive and presumptuous in many American Indian cultures (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Jurich, 2000). A relationship must be established first; then, the person with the desired knowledge decides what information is to be shared, and at what time. People asking too many direct questions may be shut out or given inaccurate information. Because of these cultural norms, the use of qualitative, in-person modes of data collection is recommended. A face-to-face encounter that allows for flexibility in the data collection process and interaction between researcher and informant is likely to be the most effective method for gathering information. Involving a competent American Indian person to conduct the data collection is more likely to produce the trusting relationship needed to access this hard-to-reach minority community.

Focus groups will be the most effective means of collecting American Indian parents' opinions on school involvement because this will facilitate the interaction with American Indian participants and because we are looking for respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, and experiences, data which could not feasibly be collected with other collection methods (e.g., surveys). Focus groups are useful in helping to identify what participants think of a given topic, as well as why they think that way. A deeper level of understanding can be gained through the explicit interaction among session participants. A American Indian consultant will facilitate the focus group sessions to encourage parent participation. The American Indian consultant will develop the level of trust necessary to collect and appropriately interpret the data for this study. Given that not much is known about how American Indian parents get involved in the education of their children (John, 1998), focus group sessions facilitated by a American Indian person will help in the exploration of this important topic.

Forty American Indian parents will participate in this study. Four focus group sessions will be conducted, with ten participants attending each session. We have chosen to recruit participants from North Dakota and South Dakota because these Central Region states have the highest

percentages of K-12 American Indian students in the region (8.5% and 10.8% respectively<sup>1</sup>). We will contact school and district administrators with high concentrations of American Indian students in order to identify families to participate in the study. Participants will be selected from K-12 public schools. It is likely that American Indian parents display various degrees of involvement in their children's education (e.g., attend parent-teacher conferences, attend non-academic events at school, participate in fund-raising events, volunteer as teacher aides). A special effort will be made to recruit participants who fall within a wide range of school participation. The study team will ask school administrators for a list of all parents of American Indian students as potential participants (see Exhibit A.). As long as we are able to maintain a sample representative of parent engagement level, we will not need to determine individual parents' levels of engagement in advance. Determining the level in advance would necessitate masking that level from the focus group leader to avoid introducing unwanted bias. A more difficult task is successfully encouraging the majority of parents contacted to participate. Our goal is an 80% acceptance rate for parents contacted to participate in the study. We will ask refusals to rate themselves on a simple engagement rating scale. The recruiter will not identify the parent on the rating form. We will then ask focus group participants to rate themselves using the same scale, with all replies remaining anonymous. For each school/focus group we will compare the distribution of engagement among participants to the degree of engagement among refusals. If the distributions vary, this will be included in the findings and the potential introduction of bias will be discussed.

From the list of prospective parent participants, the American Indian consultant will, using a simple random selection process, contact parents to encourage them to participate in the focus group sessions (see exhibit B). All aspects of the study will be explained during these conversations, including time required to participate, benefits of participation, and the manner in which the data will be analyzed, summarized, and reported. Participants will be assured that their responses to this data collection will be used only for statistical purposes. The reports prepared for this study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate responses with a specific district or individual. We will not provide information that identifies them or their district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

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<sup>1</sup> North Dakota data retrieved, August 11, 2006: <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/bat> for school year 2003-2004. South Dakota data retrieved, August 11, 2006: <http://doe.sd.gov/publications/annualreport/2005/RaceEthnicity.asp> for school year 2004-2005.

Each focus group session will follow a scripted focus group protocol (see Exhibit C) that will address the following four topics:

- Understanding of what parent involvement is. This first topic will address questions about what it means for parents to be involved in their children's education.
- Ways in which American Indian parents and other family members become involved in their children's education. Questions in this topic will refer to how participants and other family members participate in the education of their children.
- Barriers to parent involvement. These questions will be posed to identify things (e.g., school personnel's practices and/or attitudes) that discourage or prevent parents and families from participating in their children's education.
- Facilitating parent involvement. Questions in this topic will address parents' and families' experiences in the schools that have helped them be more involved in their children's education.

The information collected in this study will be summarized, analyzed and disseminated as a research brief to educators in the Central Region. It is expected that the results of the study will provide educators with ideas of strategies to increase parent involvement within American Indian communities.

### **Use of information technology to reduce burden**

This study will not use any type of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques. Data collection will be conducted through face-to-face sessions between the data collector and study participants.

### **Efforts to identify and avoid duplication**

The data collection planned for this project will produce data that is unique and targets the study's research questions. While other studies have been conducted on parent involvement of minority and low-income communities, no study has been conducted on how American Indian parents and families get involved in their children's education and the barriers they find in their involvement. The information to be collected, not available elsewhere, will represent the American Indian parents' perspective and is needed to improve school relations with American Indian communities with the ultimate purpose of helping to close the achievement gap for American Indian students.

## **Impacts on small businesses and other small entities**

No small businesses or entities will be involved in this study. All focus group participants will be recruited from schools with high percentages of American Indian students.

## **Consequences to federal programs or policies if data collection is not conducted**

This study has been designed as a response to the Central Region's need to improve the academic achievement of ethnic minority students. Without the findings of this study, schools with high concentrations of American Indian students will not be able to identify and remove the barriers that impede parent involvement within American Indian communities.

## **Special circumstances**

There are no special circumstances related to the data collection for this project.

## **Solicitation of Public Comments and Consultation with People Outside the Agency**

A 60-day notice was published in the Federal Register on December 12, 2006, with an end date of February 12, 2007 to provide the opportunity for public comment. Consultations on the research design, instrument development, data sources and needs, and study reports have occurred during the design phase of the study and will continue to take place throughout the study. The purpose of such consultations is to ensure the technical soundness of the study and the relevance of its findings, and to verify the importance, relevance, and accessibility of the information sought in the study. For the most part, consultations were conducted internally at McREL but also included an external American Indian consultant. Consultants for this study include:

- Dr. Zoe Barley, Senior Research Fellow, Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, Denver, Colorado
- Dr. Jean Williams, Vice-President for Research and Evaluation, Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, Denver, Colorado
- Ms. Dolores M. Riley, Educational Consultant, Prairie Riley Group, Midvale, UT  
(American Indian Consultant)

## **Payments or gifts to respondents**

No payment will be provided to study participants.

### **1. Confidentiality assurances**

All data collection activities will be conducted in full compliance with McREL's Institutional Review Board regulations to maintain confidentiality of data in the protection of human research subjects. Research participants will be informed about the nature of the information that will be collected and the protection of their confidentiality. The following process will be used to assure confidentiality:

- During initial contact, prospective study participants will be informed of the voluntary nature of their participation. They will also be informed that, as study participants, they will have the right to not respond to certain questions if they so decide.
- During focus group sessions, and before any questions are asked of participants, they will be informed of the nature of the information to be collected and assured that data will be reported only in aggregate form. Participants will be assured that their responses to this data collection will be used only for statistical purposes. The reports prepared for this study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate responses with a specific district or individual. We will not provide information that identifies them or their district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.
- During the focus group sessions, participants will be provided with a written consent form (see Exhibit D). The session facilitator will read and explain the consent form and will provide time for participants to ask for clarifications on the study, their rights, and the consent form. Participants will be asked to sign consent forms if they understand their rights and agree to participate. There will be no negative consequences to those who decide not to participate or not to answer questions.
- Participants will also be asked to consent to the audiotaping of the session. Sessions will be audiotaped only if all participants in that session provide written consent. In addition to, or in lieu of the audiotape, written notes will be taken during the focus groups.
- Verbatim transcriptions of audiotapes will be performed. All participants' names and/or identifying information will be removed from transcriptions and written notes. Once transcriptions and notes have been checked for accuracy, the tapes will be destroyed.



- Reports will not contain names or participants' identifying information and consent forms will be stored in a secured location in the McREL premises.

The Principal Investigator will monitor compliance with the confidentiality procedures identified above and report the status of compliance annually to McREL's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

### **Justification for data collection of a sensitive nature**

No sensitive questions will be asked during this focus group. Also, participation in the focus group is voluntary, and participants may choose not to respond to any of the questions.

### **Estimate of hour burden of data collection**

This study's data collection plan is crafted to create the minimal feasible burden on participants. Four focus group sessions will be conducted in locations accessible to participants (e.g., school, recreation center, church, public library, etc.). We expect to recruit 8-10 American Indian parents per focus group session. Each focus group session will last between 60 and 90 minutes, for a maximum of 60 total burden hours on the public. We intend to contact principals or school contacts to obtain school participation and request the list of American Indian parents. We are estimating 20 minutes for this contact and expect to contact 3 schools to obtain agreement to participate from one. Contacts will also be made with the random sample of parents in order to enlist their participation in the study. We will require approximately 20 minutes of their time so that we can explain the study and the focus group. At an anticipated 80% agreement rate, we would need to contact at least 12.5 parents in order to recruit 10; therefore, to recruit a sufficient number of participants for four focus groups, we would need to contact a total of 50 parents. We have increased this estimate to 15 parents per group for purposes of estimating burden. Scripts for both types of contacts are included in Exhibits A and B. The estimate of burden for contacting schools and parents is included in the tables below.

### **Estimated Respondent Burden**

#### **Estimate of cost burden to respondents**

There are no direct monetary costs to respondents other than their time to participate in this study. There are no start-up costs.

To estimate hourly wages for parents, we used the average salary for residents of South Dakota as calculated by the Bureau of Labor

Statistics (BLS). To estimate the hourly wage for principals (school participation), we used the BLS May 2005 estimate for principals.

<b>Data collection activity</b>	<b>Number of respondents per data collection</b>	<b>Number of data collections</b>	<b>Time per data collection</b>	<b>Hourly Wage (BLS)</b>	<b>Cost for 1.5 hours for 40 participants</b>
School participation	3	4	20 min	\$33.38	\$133.52
Recruiting Parents	15	4	20 min	\$14.18	\$283.60
Parents' focus group	10	4	1.5 hours	\$14.18	\$850.80

### **Estimate of annualized cost to the federal government**

The estimated cost to the federal government of conducting the study of Strategies for American Indian Parent Involvement is approximately \$97,020 total across the entire course of the study, broken down as follows:

Personnel	\$ 45,659
Consultants	\$9,200
Travel	\$11,864
Facilities and Resources	\$10,385
Indirect cost	\$19,912

### **Reasons for changes or adjustments in burden**

This request is for a new information collection.

### **Tabulation, analysis, and publication plans and schedule**

The timeline for this study is presented in Table 1. The study will begin with recruitment of American Indian parents during August-September of 2007. Focus group sessions will take place in September of 2007, followed by transcription of audiotapes, member checking, and content analysis of the data collected during September-October 2007. The primary product of this study will be a research report describing the

findings of the study as related to the research questions. A draft of the report will be prepared in October of 2007. The study will undergo a quality assurance process in October of 2007. A final research report will be delivered to the Institute of Education Sciences in January 2008 and disseminated to practitioners via the National Laboratory Network website.

Once the Institute of Education Sciences has approved a final version of the research report, it will be submitted for presentation at an appropriate professional conference (i.e., American Education Research Association).

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Time period</b>
Recruitment of participants	August-September 2007
Focus group sessions	September 2007
Data preparation	September-October 2007
Data analysis	September-October 2007
Draft research report preparation	October 2007
Quality assurance process	October 2007
Final research report delivered to Institute of Education Sciences	January 2008

### **OMB expiration date**

The agency plans to display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection on the focus group protocol.

### **Exceptions to the certificate statement**

There are two exceptions to the certification statement as follows:

**(i) *It uses effective and efficient statistical survey methodology***

The methodology used for data collection in this study is focus groups. Focus groups provide data that are qualitative in nature. Data will be analyzed via content analysis according to the research questions and will not involve statistical procedures.

The facilitator of the focus group sessions will be a American Indian consultant who will develop the level of trust necessary to collect and appropriately interpret the data for this study.

**(j) *It makes appropriate use of information technology.***

Data for this study will be collected via focus group methodology. Focus groups are a face-to-face method of data collection that does not involve the use of technology.

## REFERENCES

Boethel, M. (2003). *Diversity: School, family & community connections. Annual synthesis 2003*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.