

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

HEARING TYPE: ___X___ ACTION

DATE: November 2, 2007

SUBJECT: **TRIBAL MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT**

SERVICE UNIT: Edie Harding, Executive Director
 State Board of Education

PRESENTER: Dr. Kathe Taylor, Policy Director
 State Board of Education

Honorable Karen Condon
Councilwoman, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

BACKGROUND

In 2006, the Board signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Tribal Leader Congress on Education and agreed to:

- Initiate the process to formally consider the inclusion of Tribal history, culture, and government as a graduation requirement by December 1, 2006;
- On or before December 1, 2006, begin meetings and active consultation with the Tribal Leader Congress on Education and the Washington State School Directors Association on the inclusion of Tribal history, culture, and government as a graduation requirement; and
- Reach a decision on including Tribal history, culture, and government as a graduation requirement by December 1, 2007.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Because the Board has extended its comprehensive review of high school graduation requirements into 2008, staff recommends that the Board renegotiate the MOA to move the deadline for a decision on this issue to December 1, 2008. The additional time will give the Board an opportunity to consider this specific request in the context of overall graduation requirements.



Tribal Leader Congress on Education UPDATE

BACKGROUND

In 2005, the legislature introduced a bill¹ on tribal history and culture that amended a statute² pertaining to the Board's authority. The new language (in italics) read:

- (a) Any course in Washington state history and government used to fulfill high school graduation requirements *shall consider including* information on the culture, history, and government of the American Indian peoples who were the first inhabitants of the state.

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UPDATE

Board members met with Tribal representatives in 2006 to initiate discussion. When the Board decided to review and revise high school graduation requirements, a decision on whether to include Tribal history, culture, and government was folded into that comprehensive review.

¹ SHB 1495

² RCW 28A.230.090

In the past few months, individual Board members have engaged directly in conversations with Tribal representatives about Tribal interests in graduation requirements. Dr. Bernal Baca attended the August 2007 meeting of the Tribal Leader Congress (TLC) on Education to listen to concerns.

Staff met with Tribal representatives in October 2007 to hear the current recommendation of the TLC on Education. Those attending were Suzi Wright (Policy Analyst for the Tulalip Tribes), Keri Acker-Peltier (Director of Education, Suquamish Tribe, and Advisory Committee member for the Meaningful High School Diploma), Rob Purser (Suquamish Educational Liaison), and Darlene Peters (Educational Specialist, Suquamish).

The Tribal members reported that the Tribal Leader Congress on Education had discussed the graduation requirements at its meetings in Quinault and Tulalip and had decided to request that the Board consider a .5 credit of local tribal history, culture, and government as a graduation requirement. They pointed to the new language defining Basic Education as support for their request, and expressed hope that the language would inform the Board as it rethinks graduation requirements.

In earlier conversations, there had been some indication that the TLC on Education was less interested in a stand-alone graduation requirement and more interested in a sovereignty curriculum being developed by the Office of Indian Education at OSPI. However, because the sovereignty curriculum is intended to be incorporated into existing curriculum, rather than be a stand-alone requirement, the feeling now is that such a requirement would be insufficient to address the interests of the Tribes.

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