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## Elementary And Secondary Teachers' Perceptions Of Native American Students' Academic Performances In North Dakota

Andrew Younkam Mangwa

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ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF NATIVE  
AMERICAN STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES IN NORTH DAKOTA

by

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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

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May  
2020

This dissertation, submitted by Andrew Younkam Mangwa in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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Date

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Title           Elementary and Secondary Teachers' Perceptions of Native American  
Students' Academic Performances in North Dakota

Department   Teaching, Leadership & Professional Practice

Degree        Doctor of Philosophy

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Andrew Younkam Mangwa  
February 27, 2020

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## **ABSTRACT**

Low academic performance among Native American students has been a problem for several decades. Some researchers like Bradbury et al. (2012) have studied issues related to education, but have not targeted elementary and secondary school students' academic performances. More needs to be done, specifically on Native American students' academic achievements, to understand the problem and provide data that could potentially ameliorate the situation. Data on state assessments from North Dakota's Department of Public Instruction has shown low academic performances for students from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grades in school districts with high Native American student enrollments (Insights.nd.gov, 2018). This quantitative study examined approximately 90 teachers' perceptions available within three school districts with high Native American student enrollment regarding Native American students' school attendance, student-teacher relationships, students' quality of life at home, and parental involvement with students' education in relation to students' academic performances. A survey with Likert-type questions or statements were used to survey teachers' perceptions. Out of 90 available teachers in the three school districts, only 48 or 53.3% responded to the survey. Results were summarized descriptively; one-way ANOVA and *t*-tests were conducted to compare perceptions of elementary, middle, and high school teachers on students' academic performances. Implications for improving student

academic performances were discussed in Chapter V, and recommendations for teachers, educational leaders, and further study were made.

*Keywords:* teachers' perceptions, Native American student academics

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Native Americans constitute 2% of the overall American population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Studies have revealed that the issue of low academic performances among Native American students is a cause for concern across the United States (Apthorp, 2016). Data from the U.S. Department of Education (2014) revealed that more than 70% of Native American students in 12<sup>th</sup> grade nationwide did not demonstrate proficiency both in reading and mathematics. The U.S. Department of Education data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS) involved children entering kindergarten. ECLS provided data on Native Americans, Whites, Hispanics, and African American children. Research using ECLS's data concluded that Native American children begin kindergarten with remarkably lower overall achievements in reading scores than White children or children from other ethnicities (Demmert, Grissmer, & Towner, 2006). The U.S. Department of Education (2014) also reported that only one out of six eighth-grade Native American students was proficient in reading, and one in seven was proficient in mathematics. Most Native American students performed significantly lower than white students on reading and mathematics assessments (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011a, 2011b).

In this study, academic performance was measured using data from the North Dakota State Assessments (NDSA) and National Assessment of Educational Progress

(NAEP). Mathematics, reading, and science NDSA data of school districts with high numbers of Native American students in North Dakota (ND) were obtained from the Insights.nd.gov (2018) web site. In 1969, NAEP was instituted as an agency to evaluate academic performance of schools in America. NAEP assessments are administered by NCES, which is a department within the Institute of Educational Statistics branch of the United States Department of Education. In the United States, NAEP is the only agency with a representative measure of students' academic performances in a range of academic subjects, including mathematics, reading, and science (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2018). The assessments are designed to judge performance of students at the national, state, and selected urban district levels; however, it is not designed to assess school level performance or teacher performance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has designed a tool to provide educators, school districts, parents, and citizens easy access to schools' and districts' information, test results, demographic information, and other relevant information related to education. This tool has been known as the Insights.nd.gov web site, also known as the State's Report Card.

According to the Insights.nd.gov (2018) web site, there were 109,525 students in ND during the 2016-2017 school year, out of which 10,952 (approximately 9%) were Native American students. North Dakota State Assessments (NDSAs) are standards-based tests that measure how well students have mastered North Dakota's state content standards. The assessments are administered to students in Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 or 11. Insights.nd.gov performance overview data on the NDSA presented that, 19%,

21%, and 21% of Native American students were proficient in the 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-2017 school years, respectively; while White students were recorded at 36%, 37%, and 35% of students being proficient in the same three school years, respectively. With respect to advanced placement, 6% of Native American students were recorded as advanced in the 2014-2015, 4% in 2015-2016, and 4% in 2016-2017 academic years, while White student advanced placement was 16%, 18%, and 16%, respectively. The Insights.nd.gov also indicates that during the 2014-2015 school year, 59.7% of Native Americans who entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade graduated on time; within 4 years, while 90.5% of White students graduated on time. With respect to students who finished high school in 7 years, in the 2014-2015 school year, the Insights.nd.gov web site has indicated that 62.4% of Native Americans who entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade obtained a high school diploma within 7 years, while the White students' graduation rate within 7 years was 91.7% (Insights.nd.gov, 2018).

High school dropout rates involve students who entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade and did not graduate within 4 years or did not transfer to another school. In the 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-2017 school years, Native American students had the highest high school dropout rates among all ethnic groups in school districts across North Dakota. In the 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-2017 school years, Native American students' high school dropout rates were 40%, 35%, and 33% respectively, while that of White students was 9% in all three academic years (Insights.nd.gov, 2018).

The Insights.nd.gov (2018) website also revealed similar academic performance trends across the state in public school districts with student populations consisting of



90% or more Native Americans. The academic performance of Native American students in these school districts was low as well compared to the state average.

There are several public school districts in or around Native American reservations (for example Solen, Dunseith, and Minnewaukan) across North Dakota. Approximately 90 teachers from three school districts with high Native American student populations were selected to participate in this study. These school districts are in or around three of the four Native American reservations in North Dakota.

Solen School District has an elementary school (PK-6), and a high school (Grades 7-12). The school district had 21 teachers in the 2016-2017 school year. It is located on the Standing Rock reservation and has 100% Native American student population. The 2016-2017 NDSA results revealed that 0% of the 203 students registered for the academic year were proficient in mathematics or science. In the English Language Arts (ELA) assessments, which include reading, speaking, writing, listening, and language, 12% of students demonstrated proficiency (Insights.nd.gov, 2018).

Dunseith public school has an elementary and a high school. It is located on the south west end of the Turtle Mountain reservation, but is not located on the reservation. In the 2016-2017 academic year, there were 41 teachers in the school district. NDSA results showed that, out of the 514 registered students in the 2016-2017 school year, 0-2% were proficient in ELA and mathematics, and 0-24% were proficient in science (Insights.nd.gov, 2018).

Warwick Public school is a K-12 school district with 23 teachers. It is located on the south end of Spirit Lake Reservation, but is not actually on reservation land. However, 99% of the students in the school district are Native Americans. Out of the 237

registered students in the 2016-2017 school years, 0% were proficient in ELA, 3% in mathematics, and 15% demonstrated proficiency in science (Insights.nd.gov, 2018).

New Town Public School District is on the Fort Berthold reservation and has 69 teachers. There are three schools in the district: an elementary (Grades 1-5), a middle school (Grades 6-8), and a high school (Grades 9-12). In the 2016-2017 school year, there were 939 registered students of which 90% were Native Americans. In the NDSA results, 14% were proficient in ELA, 5% in mathematics and 23% in science (Insights.nd.gov, 2018).

Minnewaukan Public School District has one PK-8 grade school, and a high school (Grades 9-12) with approximately 90% Native American student enrollment and 23 teachers. The school district is located on the north west end of the Spirit Lake reservation. Out of the 271 students registered in the 2016-2017 school year, the Insights.nd.gov (2018) web site indicated that 5-7% were proficient and 0-1% were advanced in mathematics. In science, 20-22% were proficient and 0-2% were advanced; while in ELA, 10-12% were proficient and 0-2% were recorded as advanced in the same school year (Insights.nd.gov, 2018).

State average academic performances in the 2016-2017 academic year in ELA, mathematics, and science were 33%, 25%, and 47% respectively. These 2016-2017 Native American students' performance in state assessments were similar to those of 2015-2016 and 2014-2015 academic years (Insights.nd.gov, 2018). Table 1 shows a summary of academic performances of Native American students' on NDSA tests in the 2016-2017 academic year in ELA, mathematics, and science.

Table 1

*Native American Students' NDSA Performance – 2016-2017 Academic Year*

School District	Number of Students (2016-2017)	Percentage of Native American Students	Performance			School Attendance Rate (2016-2017)	Drop Out Rate (2016-2017)	Chronic Absenteeism Rate (2018-2019)
			ELA	Math	Science			
Dunseith	514	97%	0-2%	0-2%	0-24%	90%	4%	33%
Minnewaukan	271	90%	14%	5-7%	20-22%	95%	None	31%
New Town	939	90%	14%	5%	23%	96%	10%	19%
Solen	203	100%	12%	0%	0%	86%	16%	43%
Warwick	237	99%	0%	3%	15%	92%	10%	52%
State Average			33%	25%	47%	95%	2%	12%

Data in Table 1 demonstrates that the issue of low academic performance in ND schools with high Native American populations has prevailed for a considerable amount of time. ND Native American students from kindergarten to Grade 12 perform poorly and record the lowest academic performances of students from all recorded ethnic groups. Both locally and

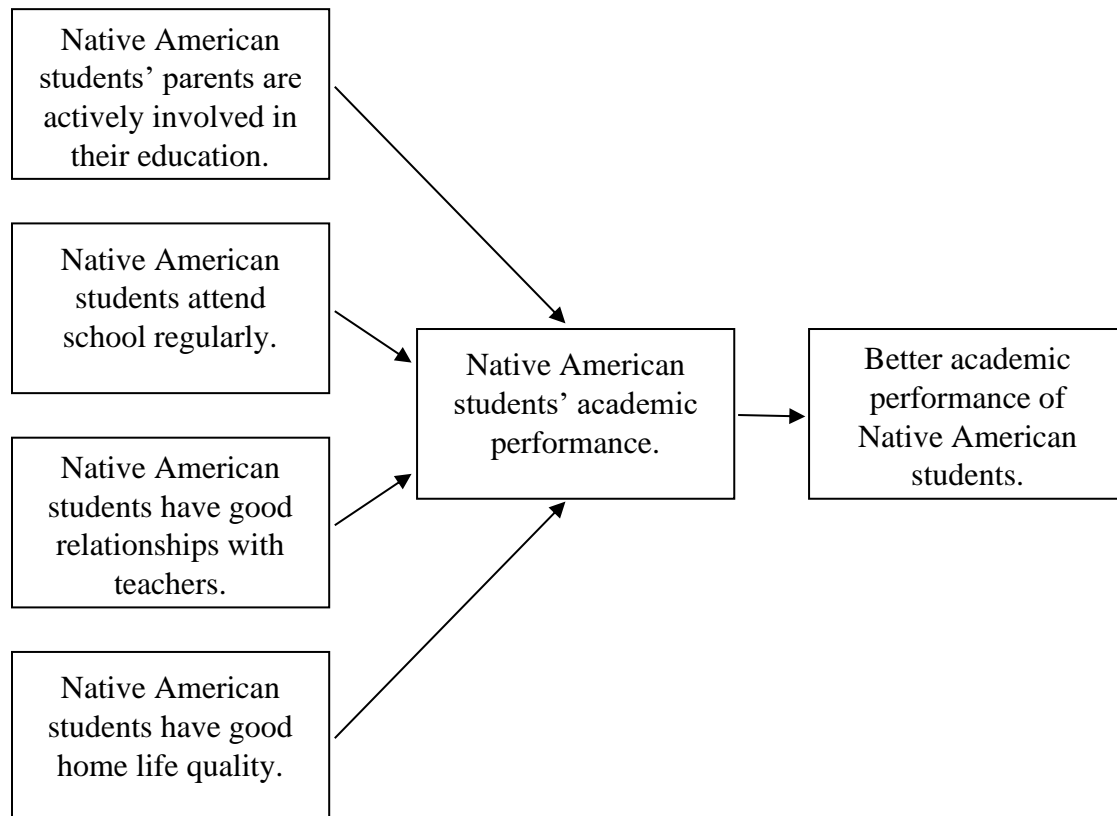
nationally, research such as Bradbury et al. (2012) has been conducted on issues related to student academic performance; however, more needs to be done specifically on Native American student academic achievement to understand better the variables surrounding their struggles. Furthermore, most research in Native American studies concentrates on qualitative methods, and few research studies have looked into factors impacting Native American students' academic performance (Akee & Yazzie-Mintz, 2011).

This study examined teachers' perceptions (in schools with high Native American students) regarding Native American students' school attendance, student-teacher relationships, parental involvement with students' education, and students' home life quality including family income and student behaviors, in relation to students' academic performance. These factors listed are what researchers believe affect students' academic performances as identified in a comprehensive study on education and related services, conducted on the White Earth Indian Reservation in Minnesota (Bradbury et al., 2012).

In this study, data from North Dakota's [Insights.nd.gov](http://insights.nd.gov) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) were used to assess academic performance of Native American students. The assessment was done by comparing Native American students' academic performances to that of White students and the average performance of students in North Dakota. By examining the factors influencing Native American students' academic performances (students' school attendance, student-teacher relationships, students' quality of life at home, and parental involvement with students' education), this research provides a better understanding of the continuing academic struggles Native American students face.

## Conceptual Framework

This study espouses the idea that several factors are related to Native American students' academic performance. These factors also impact the level at which students perform academically. The researcher assumes that Native American students' academic performance can be improved if they have good relationships with teachers, attend school regularly, have parents who are actively involved in their education, and have good home life quality (measured by having students' parents with adequate or higher income and students' behavior). Figure 1 shows the relationship between Native American students' school attendance, student-teacher relationships, students' home life quality, and parental involvement with student's education to the students' academic performance.



*Figure 1.* Relationships between variables and academic performance.

The illustration also indicates the impact the above-mentioned variables could have on Native American students' academic performance.

Research shows that when students have higher attendance, they also score higher on achievement tests (Lamdin, 1996; Myers, 2000). Also, schools with better rates of student attendance tend to have higher passing rates on standardized achievement tests (Ehrenberg, Rees, & Brewer, 1991). Pianta (2001) found that strong student-teacher relationships had a strong and healthy effect on student achievement from kindergarten up until eighth grade. Furthermore, students work harder in class when they like their teachers (Cornelius-White & Harbaugh, 2010).

Parents' income status is directly related to students' academic performance (McLoyd, 1990). Students perform better academically if they come from homes with parents' incomes above the poverty line. Children who come from homes with higher incomes have more materials like books and social resources available leading to better academic performance (McLoyd, 1990). Additionally, children's access to learning opportunities and material resources, such as the number of books in the home, constitute about one-third of the poor–nonpoor academic achievement gap (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005).

Research shows that academic performance of students greatly depends upon the extent to which parents are involved in students' academic activities. When parents are actively involved, students perform better academically (Barnard, 2004; Henderson, 1988; Shumow & Lomax, 2001).

Research also shows that there is a relationship between student behavior and academic achievement. Generally, positive academic outcomes have been associated with

positive student behaviors such as compliance with classroom expectations and rules, interest in learning, and actively participating in classroom activities (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Feshbach & Feshbach, 1987; Wentzel & Erdley, 1993). On the other hand, negative academic outcomes have been associated with negative classroom behaviors such as noncompliance with classroom expectations and rules, inattention, and sleeping in class (Akey, 2006; Kane, 2004). Additionally, Jeynes (2005) found that students from a disadvantaged home or home with high poverty had high academic achievements and positive behavior when their parents were actively involved in their education.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of elementary, middle, and high school teachers on Native American student academic performance in public schools with 90% or above Native American student enrollment in North Dakota. Teachers play an essential role in students' lives on a daily basis. This is because teachers spend 8 hours or more with students every school day and interact with students in different ways. Some students have teachers as mentors. Some teachers even spend more time outside their classroom with students, especially those who are involved in after school programs or extracurricular activities like basketball or football. Therefore, teachers provide support that is essential for students to succeed academically, especially students from poor homes or who have a low socioeconomic status. Additionally, many students who come from poor homes do not believe they have the capacity to learn and grow (Jensen, 2013).

Considering the pivotal role teachers play in the education process, and that this study examines the perceptions of teachers in school districts with high Native American

student enrollment, the data and recommendations of this research may support professional development programs not just for the participating school districts, but also other school districts with similar Native American student enrollment. Colleges and universities may also use the recommendations and data from this study to improve their undergraduate teacher preparation programs.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Do teachers perceive that quality of home life impacts academic performance of Native American students?
2. Do teachers perceive that parental involvement in education impacts Native American students' academic performance?
3. Do teachers perceive that teacher relationships with Native American students impact their academic performance?
4. Do teachers perceive that school attendance impacts Native American students' academic performance?

### **Significance of Study**

The outcome of this study has been a document with recommendations made available by mail to participating school districts in North Dakota, the Department of Public Instruction in North Dakota, and tribal offices of the different reservations in North Dakota. The research findings of this study provide data on teachers' perceptions that may support overall Native American students' academic performance in schools across the state. Additionally, the findings of this study provide future research recommendations for understanding and providing solutions to improve Native American



students' school achievements. Educators and policy makers may also find the outcome of this research useful as they redesign and make decisions towards closing the achievement gaps between Native American students and other ethnic groups.

### **Definitions of Terms**

The following definitions and acronyms support understanding of content of this paper for the reader:

**Academic Performance:** The extent to which students achieve their educational goals; it is the outcome of education (Ward, Stoker, & Murray-Ward, 1996).

**Teacher Perceptions:** Teachers' feelings about students' ability to perform specific activities or tasks, such as students' academic performance (Alvidrez & Weinstein, 1999).

### **Acronyms**

DPI	Department of Public Instruction
ECLS	Early Childhood Longitudinal Study
ELA	English Language Arts
HLC	Home Life Construct
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NCES	National Center for Educational Statistics
NDSA	North Dakota State Assessments
PIC	Parental Involvement Construct
SAC	School Attendance Construct
SRC	Student Relationships Construct

### **Delimitations**

This study was limited to three public school districts in North Dakota with at least 90% of the students enrolled consisting of Native American students. These three school districts were located on or near three of four reservations in North Dakota and did not address the many more reservations in the U.S. at large.

### **Organization of the Study**

There are five chapters in this study. Chapter I described the problem, conceptual framework, purpose, significance of the study, and research questions. In Chapter II, literature related to the topic is discussed. Chapter III presents the methodology of this study, which includes information on participants, survey design, data collection, data analysis, and the researcher's background. Chapter IV provides the results of data collected. Chapter V provides a discussion, conclusions, limitations, and recommendations for educators, educational leaders, and for future research.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter includes a discussion on literature related to this study, including a historical summary of Native American education from the 1600s. Specific events and their impacts on Native American education today begins the discussion. Research regarding student-teacher relationships, student attendance at school, parental involvement in students' education, students' quality of life at home including family income, and student behaviors impacting students' academic performance were explored in this study.

#### **Brief History of Native American Education**

The history of Native American education is a combination of federal laws, mandates, and policies that dictated Native American behavior and formed the educational landscape for Native Americans. From the 1600s, different policies were enforced at different periods that brought cultural and political turbulence to Native American communities across the country. This was because the policies were paradoxical to Native Americans' views and negatively affected their traditions and way of life (Heinrich, Corbine, & Thomas, 1990; Spring, 2004). Despite all the adversities Native Americans faced from European colonization, federal policies were continuously implemented by the government, often detrimental to Natives, and resulting in long-lasting effects on Native Americans. Historical periods affecting Native Americans are

grouped into five-time intervals: the removal from colonial occupied land, the restricted reservation, reorganization within tribes, termination of the people, and self-determination. A detailed analysis of the historical characteristics of these periods is pivotal in understanding the extent to which policies implemented by the government impacted Native American communities and education.

The education of young Native American children, historically, was predominantly in the hands of Christian religious organizations and missions. The religious organizations and churches during these times did not consider the idea of educating Native American children in the ways of Anglo-American culture, religion, and technology as inappropriate. This practice was described as educating the “savage,” rescuing the godless, and Christianizing the “heathen” (Prucha, 1984). The act of educating Native Americans by religious organizations in the United States became an official government policy after the Civil War. This was part of President Grant’s peace policy, which intended to solve the “Indian problem” (Prucha, 1984). The core principle of the peace policy was formalized; Methodist, Lutheran, Catholic, Baptist, and other churches received funds from the federal government for the education of Native Americans in 1871. Furthermore, the main purpose of the program of receiving federal funds for the education of Native American children by churches was to calm the Native people by removing their “Indianness” and Americanizing them (Prucha, 1984). Although there were laws that clearly separated states and churches, religious institutions were at the forefront of educating Native American people. Therefore, at that time, Native Americans were not yet recognized as true Americans.

## **Removal and Relocation**

The 1600s through the 1840s was the period when the federal government made its first move to overcome Native American people. The Native Americans were removed from their desired traditional lands and relocated to less desired lands called reservations. During that time, Native Americans began to see all kinds of oppression, including offensive language like, “The only good Indian is a dead Indian” (Heinrich et al., 1990, p. 129). Cultural and racial prejudice intensified when The Naturalization Act of 1790 was enacted (Spring, 2004). The federal statute excluded Native Americans and all nonwhites from citizenship (Spring, 2004). This early legislature laid the foundation of discrimination in the United States, which negatively affected Native Americans. Today, the effects of that single action by the federal government has affected the lives of old and young Native Americans in different ways, but especially with their education. Another feature that characterized this period was the perception that the indigenous people of America must be controlled (Spring, 2004).

## **Restricted to Reservations**

This period began in 1860 and continued into the 1920s. Some characteristic features of this period were offensive and demeaning phrases that were used to describe the Native Americans including, “Kill the Indian, but save the man” (Heinrich et al., 1990, p. 129). The Common School Movement was a major component of this era, which was led by Noah Webster, and the focus was to promote the prevalence of a multicultural society (Heinrich et al., 1990). The common school movement’s primary goal was to continue the education and preservation of the Native American culture by separating them from the dominant culture (Heinrich et al., 1990).

The first official leader of the Office of Indian Affairs was Thomas McKenney, who instituted a plan to acquire the southern Indian land by coercive means, thus forcing the Native American people to relocate to the west of the Mississippi River (Spring, 2004). Additionally, there was the establishment of a number of segregated schools after the forceful removal of civilized members of the southern tribes into their new lands. The removal and relocation of the Native American people from their traditional lands tremendously affected their educational achievements (Spring, 2004). Another important event during this period was the changes that occurred in education provided to the reservations by church missionaries. There was the introduction of a new centralized system in which the federal government controlled boarding schools in the 1870s. The new movement resulted from the support of education provided by churches and missionaries to Native Americans on reservations. The new system included 25 boarding schools, and the Carlisle Indian School was the model, founded by General Richard H. Pratt in 1879. Pratt developed a program for the federal government to fund and control Native American schools for the next 50 years:

We do not separate the people of each nationality into schools exclusively for themselves; we provide that the youth of all our people go into all schools. But we shall not succeed in Americanizing the Indian until we work on him exactly the same way. . . . By means of the public school, Native Americans would take their place in the mainstream of American culture (Provenzo & McCloskey, 1981, p. 13).

McKenney believed the Native Americans were simplistic people who needed protection from evil and education in the ways of the white man (Spring, 2004). He also believed

that Native American children could become civilized in just one generation under specific conditions of isolation and learning (Viola, 1973). In addition, McKenney believed that the removal of the Native American people from their lands could yield more humanitarian goals through education (Reyhner, Lee, & Gabbard, 1993). McKenney's impact on Native American education during and after the restricted reservation period had long-lasting effects. As the federal government continued the implementation of the removal policy for education, many Native American children were displaced from their families. The children were separated from their parents to receive white man's training in a boarding school. The children were taken and relocated, often far from their families, to attend boarding schools (Spring, 2004). Manual labor was a required task to be performed by the students in these schools, and they were taught Christian doctrine until "thoroughly soaked" (Spring, 2004, p. 34). Life in the boarding schools was not comfortable for most children; furthermore, educational activities were often secondary to other functions. Education seemed to be more of punishment than learning.

In the 1920s, criticism of boarding schools continued to mount, resulting in many investigators who sought to better understand the conditions at these schools. The findings were horrendous. The students often were made to perform extreme manual labor, provided with a poor diet, and forced to live in overcrowded quarters, which lead to the spread of diseases like tuberculosis and trachoma (Reyhner et al., 1993). However, the publication of these findings did little to change public opinion of the schools. Additionally, the results were not widely available.

Native American children, who were forced to attend these schools were also prohibited from practicing their customs, wearing traditional dress, and speaking their languages. The goal was to “convert” them to Western mores and practices (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). As an illustration of the idea behind boarding schools, the Federal Board of Indian Commissioners (1881) described the rationale of official federal policy which prevailed until the 1930s:

As a savage, we cannot tolerate him any more than as a half-civilized parasite, wanderer or vagabond. The only alternative left is to fit him by education for civilized life. The Indian, though a simple child of nature with mental facilities dwarfed and shriveled, while groping his way for generations in the darkness of barbarism, already sees the importance of education. (The Board of Indian Commissioners, 1881, p. 7)

### **Reorganization Within Tribes**

This period began after the Great Depression and continued until the 1950s. During this period, the Indian New Deal was instituted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and John Collier of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). This was in response to the Meriam Report (Deloria, 1991; Reyhner et al., 1993). The Meriam Report (Meriam et al., 1928), with its official title “The Problem of Indian Administration,” criticized boarding schools and emphasized the integration of Native American children into mainstream public schools (Reyhner, 1996). This was in contrast with the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 that provided Native language textbooks, created more day schools on reservations, and emphasized teaching American Indian languages and culture (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2012; Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Nonetheless, domestic affairs



became characterized by approaches that were more conservative after the second world war (Szasz, 1999). The progress made in boarding schools was cut short by the reappearance of conservatism in United States policy regarding Native communities.

Empowered by the Indian Reorganization Act, the 1930s saw a departure from federal policies of forced cultural assimilation; tribal governments became part of the U.S. constitution, and rationing of land ended. The emphasis in education shifted Native American education children off the reservation in boarding schools to a system that recognized that Native American cultures and communities might have productive roles in the education of Native youths (Locust, 1988). Consequently, there was an expansion of Bureau of Indian Affairs day schools on reservations, although some reservations maintained boarding schools for students from multiple tribes (Spicer, 1962). In the meantime, the apparent attention to the value of Native culture and curriculum yielded little outcome. Gray (1975) substantiated that a study conducted on BIA schools in the southwestern United States found no courses in tribal culture as late as 1969. In addition, Native Americans account for only 11.5 percent of the teachers in these schools (Gray, 1975). Another study carried out by the National Study of American Indian Education, reported in 1970, found that the curricula of federal reservation schools were similar to the state and municipal public schools around them (Havighurst, 1970).

Reyhner and Eder (2004) explained that the Meriam Report publication initiated a process that ended efforts to change the language and culture of Native American communities. Louis Meriam, the chief investigator of this report, criticized the removal and isolation of children from their families. He was actively against heavy manual labor and contended that harsh discipline destroyed the initiative and independence of Native

American children (Meriam et al., 1928). The Merriam Report findings helped to close the Native boarding school era and open a new chapter of federal policy on Native Americans (Spring, 2004).

### **Termination**

This period occurred between the 1950s and 1960s. During the termination period, relocation programs were developed with social integration and ending of governmental dependence by Natives being the primary goal (Heinrich et al., 1990). However, there were barriers to Native American independence. During the civil rights period, a dramatic increase in poverty and the sale of American Indian lands jeopardized the independence of Native Americans (Heinrich et al., 1990). A major outcome of this period from a government standpoint was the governmental policy stipulating abandonment of Native American causes. This made it possible for the federal government to withdraw their interest in Native American lands or cultures and left the responsibility of addressing Native American concerns to individual states (Heinrich et al., 1990). Numerous Native American communities lost their rights to their ancestral lands and regaining their rights was a daunting task.

### **Self-Determination**

This period began around 1970 and at the time of this report, had continued into the present. During this period, Native American activism increased, and Native tribes gained sovereignty. Native Americans' experiences working within the dominant culture helped create a leadership that could communicate Native American needs and desires to the federal government (Heinrich et al., 1990; Reyhner et al., 1993). Tribal sovereignty was described as the freedom to establish and operate a governing body and laws without

interference from local or federal authorities (Spring, 2006). Native American communities confronted many obstacles, including boarding schools, one of the most undesirable experiences in their history (Diller & Moule, 2005). The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 gave tribes, whose legality was recognized by the federal government, authority to determine educational needs and curricula in their schools (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2012). The Education Amendments Act of 1978 granted tribes more authority by giving them the right to control funds and to authorize the hiring of local administrators and teachers (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2012).

By the late 1960s, various research studies demonstrated that Native American children were as educable and intelligent as other American children (Croft, 1977). The desire for self-determination led to policy changes in the 1970s that changed the face of Indian education. Educators, with Native American backgrounds, were among the first to call for self-determination and, in the process, cultural renewal (Croft, 1977). With this new Native American identity, self-determination and civil rights, 53.8 percent of BIA schools in the nations' southwestern region that originally had no course offering in Native American culture, included one or more of these courses by the end of 1974 (Croft, 1977). The idea of self-determination inculcated a sense of pride and resurgence of Native culture. At the dawn of this self-determination period, several "Indian Nations" created their own tribal education departments (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). These Native departments of education served as administrative units that negotiated with public and other school administration to allow reservation schools to interact with public schools, and other schools Native American students have attended. These Native departments of education also have supported research and administered financial aid and students'

support programs (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Native departments of education also performed other functions that tribal councils had usually carried out, such as hiring of teachers and permit specialization of educational professionals (Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

However, research literature in the early 1970s found discouraging results in terms of Native American students' educational achievements. For example, "On average, Native American students enter ninth grade achieving at slightly more than one grade level below the national average and completed twelfth grade nearly three years below the national average" (Croft, 1977, p. 16). Other studies during this period showed Native American high school student dropout rates were 50-100 percent higher than the overall U.S. rate (Coombs, 1970). In summary, despite the large extent to which Native Americans had control of education on reservations, many Native American students failed to attain educational achievements similar to their dominant culture peers. Table 2 summarizes the five periods in Native American History discussed in this section.

Table 2

*Summary of Native American History*

<b>Period in History</b>	<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Main Events</b>
Removal and Relocation	1600-1840s	The Firsts set of policies and action were taken to discriminate and oppress the Native Americans
Restricted Reservation	1860 - 1920	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naturalization Act of 1890-bedrock of discrimination</li> <li>• Boarding school era</li> </ul>
Reorganization Within Tribes	After Great Depression until 1950s	Mariam Report-The Problem of Indian Administration
Termination	1950s-1960s	Government abandonment of Native American causes
Self-Determination	1970-present	Increase in tribal sovereignty

## **Traditional Native American Values**

In order to understand the traditional value system of Native Americans, it is important to become familiar with Native American family structure. Sutton and Broken Nose (2005) stated, "Family represents the cornerstone for the social and emotional well-being of individuals and communities" (p. 45). The typical Native American family is comprised of extended family members and immediate; often, non-relative members of the community are included as well (Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Noland-Giles, 1984; Sue & Sue, 2003; Sutton & Broken Nose, 2005; Tsai & Alanis, 2004). Adoption of non-blood relatives into their families as "fictive kin" is a common practice in Native American communities (Garrett & Garrett, 1994).

Sutton and Broken Nose (2005) explained that the word "Tafoya" is a Native word used to illustrate the importance of extended family in Native American culture. In Native American languages, the same words are often used to refer to both siblings and cousins. Native languages have no words for in-laws, which suggests that extended family members are perceived differently in closeness or relation to other family members in Native cultures than in-laws are perceived in non-Native cultures. Tafoya is used to discuss the significant parental roles aunts, uncles, and grandparents play in raising Native American children. Sutton and Broken Nose further explained that in many families, aunts, uncles, and grandparents have just as much control over a child as the child's parent. Also, Garrett and Garrett (1994) stated that "elders are honored and respected because of the lifetime's worth of wisdom they have acquired" (p. 137). A summary of some native American traditional values as compared with contemporary mainstream American values is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

*Comparison of Cultural Values*

<b>Traditional Native American</b>	<b>Contemporary Mainstream American</b>
Reliance on extended family	Reliance on nuclear family and experts
Respect for elders	Respect for the “rich and famous”
Community needs more important than one’s own; emphasis on the group and cooperation	Personal goals considered most important; emphasis on the individual and competition
Sharing, work to meet present needs	Private property, work to acquire wealth
Harmony and balance; harmony with nature	Power and control; power over nature
Spirituality as a way of life	Spirituality as only a part of life
Noninterference; Try to control self, not others	Need to control and affect others
Nonverbal communication; use encouraging signs	Verbal skills highly prized; use verbal encouragement
Time is always with us; present time orientation	Clock watching, future time focus

Adapted from “Red as an apple: Native American acculturation and counseling with or without reservation,” by M. T. Garrett and E. F. Pichette, 2000, *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 78, p. 7. Copyright 2000 by the American Counseling Association.

### **Contemporary Educational Situation**

Education has been a topic of concern in Native American inhabited communities across the U.S. for many decades. Issues of low quality education and poor access to schools, in addition to other issues on Native American reservations, have made it difficult for Native children to perform well academically. Persistent poverty has exacerbated the situation and has further increased the educational deficiency of Native American children in relation to children from the rest of the U.S. population (Harvard

Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008, p. 202). Research on Native American history has revealed that past philosophies for educating Native children have centered on the concept of assimilation, which required Native American children to “become white.” Focusing on assimilation forced many different practices of life onto Natives, practices that Native people were not accustomed to. These practices included placing many Native American children in boarding schools, with the goal of separating Native children from their culture and past. Recent policies, however, have focused on cultural modification otherwise known as acculturation, which allow Native American students to keep part of their culture as they move into dominant societal norms (Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008).

### **Academic Performance of Native American Students**

The disparities in academic performance between Native American students and other ethnic groups like white students is remarkable. Data from 2015 from the National Assessment of Educational Progress has shown that most Native American students score significantly lower than white students on mathematics, science, and reading assessments (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2018). Data has also revealed that students from Native American backgrounds typically score 20 or more points lower than white students on these assessments. Also, substantial gaps remain in academic performance despite gradual progress observed within the past few decades (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2018). These statistics emphasize the importance of considering variables that relate to students’ backgrounds when judging academic performance. This research explores some of those variables to better understand educational trends.

## **Native American Students' Achievement Gaps**

Various research in Native American student studies has centered on qualitative methods with little emphasis on factors influencing academic achievements (Akee & Yazzie-Mintz, 2011). Research shows that Native American students' scores are lower than white students' scores both in reading and mathematics achievement on NAEP assessments (Grigg, Moran, & Kuang, 2010). In 2009, data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicated that Native American students perform, on average, 22 points lower in eighth grade reading and 26 points lower in fourth grade reading than White students (Grigg et al., 2010). There was a repetition of this trend in mathematics: Native American students scored, on average, 27 points lower in eighth grade and 23 points lower in fourth grade than White students (Grigg et al., 2010). Another study using Educational Longitudinal Study (ELS) data found that only 75% of Native American sophomores in 2002 had earned a high school diploma by 2006, a figure remarkably lower than the 88% graduation rate of the average student (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008).

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) otherwise known as the "Nation's Report Card" is administered biannually to a sample of 4th and 8th graders in all 50 states. The process involves each student taking a portion of a mathematics or reading assessment. NAEP results are reported for each state, and the nation, and there are no individual published school or district results. The ND 2016-2017 report shows that 11% of Native American students were proficient in reading and 1% were advanced in fourth grade. Whereas, 32% of White students were proficient and 7% advanced in reading in the 2016-2017 school year. In mathematics, 15% of Native American students



were proficient and 2% were recorded as advanced, while their White peers were 42% proficient and 10% advanced in mathematics in the 2016-2017 school year.

Fourth-grade Native American students' NAEP results for 2014-2015 were a little better than 2016-2017 results, although still far below that of White students. In reading, 15% of Native American students were proficient and 3% were advanced, while their White peers recorded 33% proficient and 8% advanced in the 2014-2015 school year. It was a similar record in the mathematics assessments: 15% of Native American students were proficient and 2% were advanced. White students showed 42% proficient and 10% advanced in mathematics in the 2014-2015 school year.

The North Dakota's Native American and White eighth grade students' NAEP results for North Dakota for the 2017-2018 and 2015-2016 school years were no different from that of students in fourth grade. In the 2017-2018 for example, 14% of Native American students were proficient and 2% advanced in mathematics while 35% eighth-grade White students were proficient and 11% had advanced placement (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2018).

### **Student-Teacher Relationships**

The relationship between a teacher and a student has numerous effects on the student's academic achievements. This includes a student's behavior, academic achievements, emotions, and motivation. Students need trust and adults with positive attitudes in their lives. Students who grow up in more secure relationships at home and have positive relationships with adults, behave and respond appropriately to emotional situations, and usually learn more than students who grow up in a poor household (Jensen, 2013). A lack of adults and/or caregivers with positive behaviors in the lives of

students from poor homes usually results in students failing to learn positive behaviors and other life skills (Jensen, 2013). Research indicates that a countless amount of time is needed for positive care giving of students from low socioeconomic status to help students learn how to respond appropriately to daily emotional situations (Malatesta & Izard, 1984). In addition, on average, the ratio of positive proclamation to negative rebuke is 1-to-2 in low socioeconomic homes. This sharply contrasts to a 6-to-1 positive to negative ratio in affluent family homes (Hart & Risley, 1995). These differences in relationships of students with their families based on the type of homes they come from creates a deficiency in loving relationships and skills that can negatively affect students' academic performances.

Developing brains of children from single parent homes, or of children who experience chaos during their early ages, usually become insecure and stressed (Jensen, 2013). The severity of the insecurity is even more for children from impoverished families. According to Jensen, approximately three-quarters of poor parents are unmarried, compared to one out of four affluent parents.

In school, a solid student-teacher relationship can positively affect a student's academic performance. This positive relationship between a student and teacher can help minimize a student's inappropriate emotional responses and can substantially help the student engage in learning. Teachers can build strong relationships with students by teaching students how to respond appropriately to emotional situations. Good relationships between students and their teachers can lead to students liking teachers. Research shows that students almost always work harder for teachers they like (Cornelius-White & Harbaugh, 2010). Other research shows that strong student-teacher

relationships have strong and healthy effects on student achievement from kindergarten up to eighth grade (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

Developing caring relationships with students is very important because some students do not believe teachers are interested in them. Black (2002) found that students who have repeated discipline problems sometimes become convinced that teachers no longer want them in school. This may exacerbate existing disruptive behavior or other disciplinary issues and may result in chronic absenteeism and even in students giving up trying to succeed academically.

### **Student Attendance**

Maintaining a high attendance rate has been an issue of concern to school districts across the United States for a long time. In the teaching and learning process, a teacher and his/her students have to be in regular contact. The most obvious place where students and teacher can be in contact is in the classroom. It is logical to believe that students and teachers should meet on a regular and consistent basis for effective learning to occur. Nevertheless, in the United States, during the 2015-2016 academic year, one in every six students; that is, more than seven million students, missed 15 or more days of school (U.S. Department of Education, 2016/2019). Additionally, teacher attendance data showed that one in every four teachers; that is, 27.0% of teachers, missed 10 or more days in one academic year. In states like Nevada and Hawaii, teacher absenteeism is as high as 49.0% and 75.0% respectively (U.S. Department of Education, 2016/2019). When students and/or teachers are absent from school, irrespective of the reason, this hinders effective teaching and learning and reduces the chances of student success.

A U.S. Department of Education (2016/2019) report indicated that children in kindergarten and elementary school classrooms who have repeated absences from preschool, are up to 25.9% less likely to achieve a reading level comparable to their peers by third grade. In addition, the likelihood of children who cannot read proficiently after third grade dropping out of school is four times higher than their peers who can read at grade level. The report also indicated that in one public school in Utah, even if students from Grades 8 to 12 recorded chronic absenteeism (i.e., missing more than 15 days of school) during only one year between eighth and twelfth grade, students' likelihood of dropping out of school was seven times higher. Poor health, poverty, and involvement in criminal activities in their later lives were characteristic features found to correlate with students who drop out of high school (U.S. Department of Education, 2016/2019). Studies also show that a high rate of teacher absenteeism makes the situation even worse as it was found to increase student absenteeism and decrease student school achievements (Harris van Keuren, 2009). According to Woods (1995), poor academic performance is one of the strongest predictors of early dropout. Research also shows that early academic engagement and performance in both middle and elementary school are indicators that students will avoid early withdrawal from high school (Rumberger, 2001, Woods, 1995).

### **Absenteeism**

Considering that there are many circumstances beyond the control of humans, it is logical to think that a student could be absent from school for a few days during an academic year for legitimate reasons. However, when absences occur for 15 or more days in the same academic year, that is, when absenteeism becomes chronic, irrespective of

whether the absences are excused or not, a student's risk of dropping out of high school increases (U.S. Department of Education, 2016/2019).

Research shows that students from families with low income or from particular cultural backgrounds record repeated and frequent absences from school (Romero & Lee, 2007). Native American students have been identified to be part of the group of students who record repeated absences from school and are said to be 50.0% more likely to have chronic absenteeism than their White classmates (U.S. Department of Education, 2016/2019).

In 2013, states with large Native American student populations including Arizona, Montana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Wyoming, reported some of the highest rates of absenteeism in the U.S. In some grade levels, the absenteeism rates were as high as 25.0% of students being absent from school for three or more days within a month (Ginsburg, Jordan, & Chang, 2014). Furthermore, research has suggested that absenteeism could be self-perpetuating: Students perpetuating chronic absenteeism at earlier ages also signal greater possibilities of failure to attend school regularly throughout their later school years (Romero & Lee, 2007). Research has also shown that high school students tend to have the highest rate of chronic absenteeism in schools compared to elementary and middle school students (U.S. Department of Education, 2016/2019).

### **Truancy**

Truancy means a student is chronically absent from school without excuse (Lane, Gooden, Mead, Pauken, & Eckes, 2008). A student can exhibit truant behavior by not coming to school without an excuse. If a student is absent from school for several days

within a given period, the truancy may be considered chronic. Most school organizations focus on chronic absenteeism when dealing with truancy; however, there is no specific minimum number of days a student may be absent without an excuse that would define truancy as chronic. From the federal standpoint, truancy is still an on-going debate.

Individual state departments of education have statutes on truancy and different school districts also have different policies on students' attendance. Chapter 15.1-20 of the North Dakota Century Code deals with school attendance. Section 15.1-20-02.1 of the statute stipulates:

A student may not be absent from school without an excuse for more than:

- a. Three consecutive school days during either the first half or the second half of a school or school district's calendar;
- b. Six half days during either the first half or the second half of a school or school district's calendar; or
- c. Twenty-one class periods.

(North Dakota Century Code, n.d., 15.1-20-02.1)

## **Parental Income and Involvement in Education**

### **Effects of Poverty**

U.S. Census Bureau (2017) data has shown about 6.7 million Native Americans live in the United States accounting for 2% of the total population in 2016. Data has also revealed that there were 326 reservations, 567 tribes, recognized by the federal government in 2016. Native Americans' poverty rate was 26.2%, the highest rate of any race group, while the nations' poverty rate was 14% in 2016. The median household income among Native Americans was \$39,719 compared to \$57,617 for the nation in

2016. Fifty-two and nine-tenths percent (52.9%) of Native Americans owned their own home in 2016 compared with 63.1% for the general U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). In 2006, the American Community Survey found that one-third (33%) of Native Americans under the age of 18 lived in poverty compared to 22% of all children under 18 in the general population (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008). Poor performance by individuals on national achievement assessments appears to predict future hardships for those individuals, and these hardships might place a burden on the emotional and social welfare of Native Americans.

American society has a huge disparity in income among different sectors of the population. This difference affects students' performances in standardized tests and other measures for gauging academic achievements. Among other factors, achievement gaps are created as a result of high- and low-income disparities in the nation. The U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Deputy Secretary, Planning and Evaluation Service (2001) used its own data and other research and avowed that poverty adversely affected student achievements at all levels. They added that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds score below average consistently in all grades and all subjects tested. Also, schools with higher populations of students from low-income homes consistently achieve, on average, lower scores than students from more affluent schools (U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Deputy Secretary, Planning and Evaluation Service, 2001).

The effects of low income on education are extensive and detrimental to students. Poverty creates several stressors in the lives of those it affects, and the stressors lessens learning and achievement (Barton, 2004). Students living in poverty are less likely to

perform well on standardized tests, to obtain high levels of achievement, and to pursue higher education than students who do not experience poverty, (Bradshaw, 2002; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Strelitz & Lister, 2008). Furthermore, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network (2005) found that negative effects resulting from poverty are exacerbated for students who experience poverty early in their lives. These effects were found to be long-term and remain throughout students' schooling years. Additionally, students exposed to poverty throughout their educational careers are at a greater risk for low academic achievement (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). It is evident that low income affects academic performance, and these effects accumulate with increased exposure to poverty. Students exposed to poverty have fewer opportunities to demonstrate academic success.

Poverty affects the quality of a student's life at home and the neighborhood in which children find themselves. Children from low-income families must bear a range of difficulties including less access to books and computers, more authoritarian caregivers, less social support, more dangerous neighborhoods, and more polluted air and water (Evans, 2004). Parents living in poverty tend to have lower educational achievements and employment opportunities than those who are not seriously affected by poverty (Adelman, Middleton, & Ashworth, 2003; Magadi & Middleton, 2007). Students whose parents did not complete secondary school or obtain college degrees (or are at an increased risk of lower performance at work, and chronic underemployment) may be threatened by instability in their home lives. Additionally, single parenthood and early parenthood are more common among lower socio-economic groups of people (Hobcraft & Kiernan, 2001). These two factors are related to increased parenting stress and might



predict social and academic problems in the future for children. Research shows that children's academic success is related to parent gross income and number of hours of worked (Duncan, Ziol-Guest, & Kalil, 2010). It is difficult to overstate the importance of adults making sure they are ready to have children before they do and the increased resources and attention that come to children from dual-parent homes.

### **Parental Involvement in Education and Student Behavior**

Student behavior is an integral component of student learning. The manner in which a student behaves both in school and at home, impact the student's performance academically. Studies have been conducted on this subject and findings reveal both positive and negative behaviors affect student academic performance. Negative or disruptive behaviors can be defined as behaviors manifested by a student that interrupts normal classroom procedure. Several studies have found there is a relationship between reading and math achievement and negative behaviors (Akey, 2006; Wexler, 1992). Research also shows it is important to study negative or disruptive behaviors among students because these behaviors can potentially mar classroom instruction, which may in turn affect academic outcomes (Akey, 2006; Wexler, 1992). When negative behaviors occur in a classroom, it is usually difficult for a teacher to redirect or manage disruptive students and provide quality instruction at the same time (Wexler, 1992; Williams & McGee, 1994). Studies have found that students who display negative behaviors including aggressive behaviors such as sleeping in class, inattentiveness, or uncontrolled talking have low academic performance in the elementary grades (Finn, Pannozzo, & Voelkl, 1995; Ladd & Burgess, 1997). Other studies suggest that students who display maladaptive behaviors for a considerable length of time in their early school years are

more likely to be attracted to other students who indulge in negative behaviors, have difficulties interacting with other students, and perform poorly academically (Akey, 2006; Barriga et al., 2002). If there is no intervention, these negative behaviors may continue and could stabilize with time.

The relationship between student behavior and academic performance could also be influenced by teacher-parent relationships. The importance of developing effective teacher-parent bonds is unquestionable as several research studies show this relationship positively impacts students' academic outcomes. Flynn and Nolan (2008) found that students whose parents were involved with their school and had good relationships with school faculty had fewer absences, were more prepared and eager to do their homework, had higher graduation rates, were confident in their abilities, and had good academic performance. Jean Brooks (2006) stated, "Because parent involvement influences a student's sense of the meaningfulness of school and increases students' commitment to school goals, it is essential that schools maintain connections with parents to encourage their involvement with their children's education" (p. 72). Some research suggests school staff should visit their students at home. Quintanar and Warren (2008) reported, "Parents, who at first were embarrassed with home visits, later indicated that these visits provided personal parent-teacher time for asking questions and sharing concerns" (p. 119).

## **Conclusions**

Chapter II presented a historical outlook of events that characterized Native Americans and education, including the implementation of policies by the federal government that were contrary to Native American culture and way of life. The chapter also discussed oppressive and discriminatory practices by the dominant culture that were

perpetrated against Native Americans. The literature also indicates that actions taken against Native Americans have had lasting impacts, especially in the education of Native American children. Chapter II also presented literature related to student-teacher relationships, students' attendance, students' quality of home life, and parental involvement in the education of students. Chapter III discusses the methodology, which includes methods used to collect and analyze the data of this study. Chapter IV provides results of the research in this project; Chapter V discusses the results and provides recommendations for future research.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of elementary, middle, and high school teachers on Native American students' academic performances in public schools. In order to be included in the study, schools had to have Native American student enrollments of 90% or above, and schools had to be located in North Dakota.

Research has been done on issues related to Native American education, such as the Comprehensive Study of Education and Related Services on the White Earth Indian Reservation conducted by Bradbury et al. (2012). However, at the time of this study, substantial findings targeting K-12 students' academic work that could be used to improve the situation of low academic performances in schools with high Native American student populations were few. This study provides data that may be utilized by school districts with high Native student populations to improve students' academic achievements.

#### **Research Participants**

Research participants included approximately 90 elementary, middle, and high school teachers from Minnewaukan, Dunseith, and Solen public school districts. These are school districts in North Dakota with 90% or above Native American student enrollment. Teachers of these school districts interact with Native American students regularly and at different grade levels. This gives the teachers the opportunity to have

first-hand information about the students not just from their interactions with students but also with parents during Parent Teacher Conferences or sports events. These school districts are also located in or near three of four Native American reservations in North Dakota. These schools also have academic records that are consistent with existing records on Native American students in North Dakota. Given that 90 teachers constituted the sample size, a minimum of 30 or 33.3% response rate was expected.

### **Survey Design**

With the advice of the advisor and committee members overlooking this study, the researcher's survey for this study was adapted from a comprehensive study conducted by Bradbury et al. (2012). A survey (Appendix A) was created using University of North Dakota's Qualtrics online survey tool. Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement on statements using a 6-point Likert-type scale with 6 = *strongly agree*, 5 = *agree*, 4 = *somewhat agree* (responses of 6, 5, or 4 indicates some form of agreement), 3 = *somewhat disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, and 1 = *strongly disagree* (responses of 3, 2, or 1 indicates some form of disagreement). A six scale Likert-type scale was chosen to give participants the option of choosing either some form of agreement or some form of disagreement to the statements in the survey. In other words, respondents could indicate how strongly they felt about a statement or how intense their agreement or disagreement was.

Factors that impact Native American students' academic performances were grouped into four constructs. The four constructs in the survey were: students' attendance, students' relationships with teachers, students' home life quality, and parental involvement in students' education. The survey was divided into two parts: Part I

included five demographic questions, and Part II contained eight questions in each of the four constructs. At the end of the questionnaire, two opened ended questions were asked for participants to provide any additional information or suggestions they wished to share.

### **Data Collection**

A request for permission to research in North Dakota was made to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of North Dakota. Initially, five school districts were targeted for the study: Solen, Dunseith, Warwick, New Town, and Minnewaukan. After several attempts by emails and phone calls to contact two school districts (Warwick and New Town), permission to include Warwick and New Town in the research could not be obtained from the superintendent and reservation leadership, respectively. In the case of New Town public school district, the school district's superintendent approved the study to be conducted in the school district. However, UND's IRB required a second approval from the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation since the school district is on tribal land. Multiple phone calls were made, emails were sent to different members of the reservation leadership, including the chairperson, but the approval could not be obtained. Warwick and New Town school districts, although they did not take part in the survey, their data contributed to making a stronger case of low academic performance from schools with 90% or above Native American student enrollment across North Dakota.

Once UND IRB's approval was given (Appendix B), the researcher's committee members were notified via email. An email was sent to superintendents of the three school districts selected to participate in this study that had a student enrollment of 90%

or more Native American students ; the email described the study's purpose and asked superintendents for permission to have their teachers participate in the study. Upon receiving an email from the school districts' superintendents approving the study (Appendices C, D, E, and F), an email containing a Qualtrics link to the study survey was sent to each superintendent to provide to teachers to complete the survey within a two-week time frame. The email to superintendents also informed teachers that their participation was voluntary and anonymous (Appendix G), and if they went to the link and completed the survey, they were giving their consent to participate in the study. Toward the end of the two-week period, a reminder was sent out through another email to superintendents to remind teachers to complete the survey because 33.3% of the teachers had not completed the survey.

### **Data Analysis**

Results of the survey were analyzed in two parts. The first was descriptive (mean, percentage, and standard deviation). This data provided demographic analyses of teachers responding to survey statements in relation to the four constructs. A second type of analysis included one-way ANOVA tests to determine if there were differences between the means of teacher responses based on teachers teaching position, level of education, and school district. Another type of inferential statistical analysis used *t*-tests to determine if there were significant differences in the means of data gathered on perceptions of teachers based on gender in regards to questions addressing the four constructs.

A reliability analysis was conducted to estimate the reliability or internal consistency of the four constructs. Responses for the questions addressing each construct

were averaged and each construct was given a code – students’ home life quality (C1), parental involvement in students’ education (C2), students’ relationships with teachers (C3), and students’ attendance (C4).

With respect to the two open-ended questions at the end of the survey, themes were identified from the responses of teachers. Information from themes was analyzed descriptively.

### **Dependent and Independent Variables**

Academic performance was the dependent variable or the outcome variable. In a social setting like the school, some factors usually impact academic performance; these factors were grouped into four constructs, which were the independent variables. Thus, teachers’ perceptions were examined on the impact of students’ attendance, students’ relationships with teachers, students’ home life quality, and parental involvement in students’ education on students’ academic performance.

### **Researcher’s Background and Subjectivity**

It is widely accepted that people’s views and perceptions of issues are based on their beliefs and experiences. It is crucial for researchers to be aware of their beliefs and biases that may affect the research they conduct. It is equally important for readers to know the background of a researcher for curiosity purposes and to instill some validity in the mind of the readers. As researchers undertake their research endeavors, it is worth noting that they inject some assumptions (Crotty, 1998).

Coming from a poverty-stricken country and after experiencing poverty at its worst, I was excited to serve as a high school science teacher in one of North Dakota’s school districts with 90% or more Native American student enrollment. As I undertook



my new assignment, I realized so many issues; one of which was the low academic performance of students not only in the high school where I was working, but in the entire reservation. I later learned that poverty is a characteristic phenomenon of Native American reservations all over the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). For some time, I have tried to understand why these trends occurred and why they continued up to the time of this study, why the poverty trend is likely to continue into the future, how it occurs, and what promotes such a pattern. Most importantly, I wondered about what I could do to make the situation better. Many pieces of research that I have come across have merely provided more descriptions of the poor academic performance problem than solutions to improve it. In this study, my personal experiences and beliefs enabled me to approach the study from a pragmatic perspective. I believe a pragmatic perspective added validity to this study and facilitated an outcome that could be very useful to educators on reservations and policymakers, too.

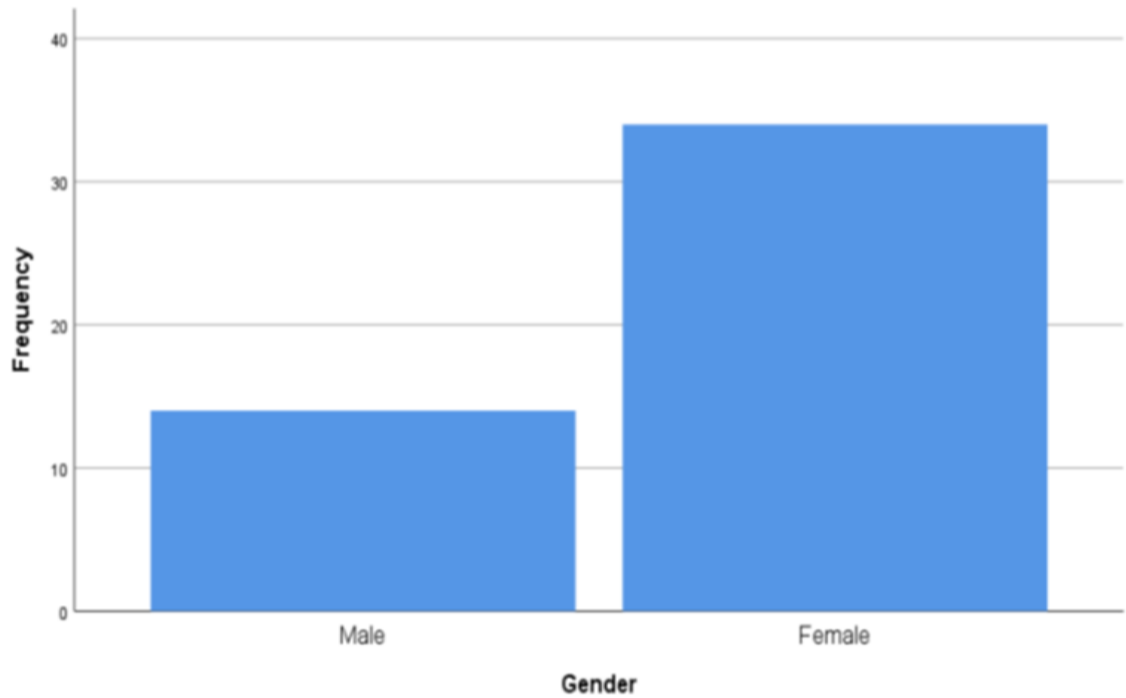
## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS**

This chapter presents the perceptions of elementary and secondary teachers on academic performances of Native American students. Descriptive statistics provided a portrait of the composition of participants. Teacher's perceptions on academic performances of Native Americans were analyzed from participant responses to statements on this study's survey addressing four constructs influencing Native American academic performance. Inferential statistics included *t*-tests and one-way ANOVAs to determine if there were statistically significance differences between responses of participants according to gender of teachers, level of education, school districts, and grade level taught (elementary, middle, or high school).

#### **Demography of Respondents**

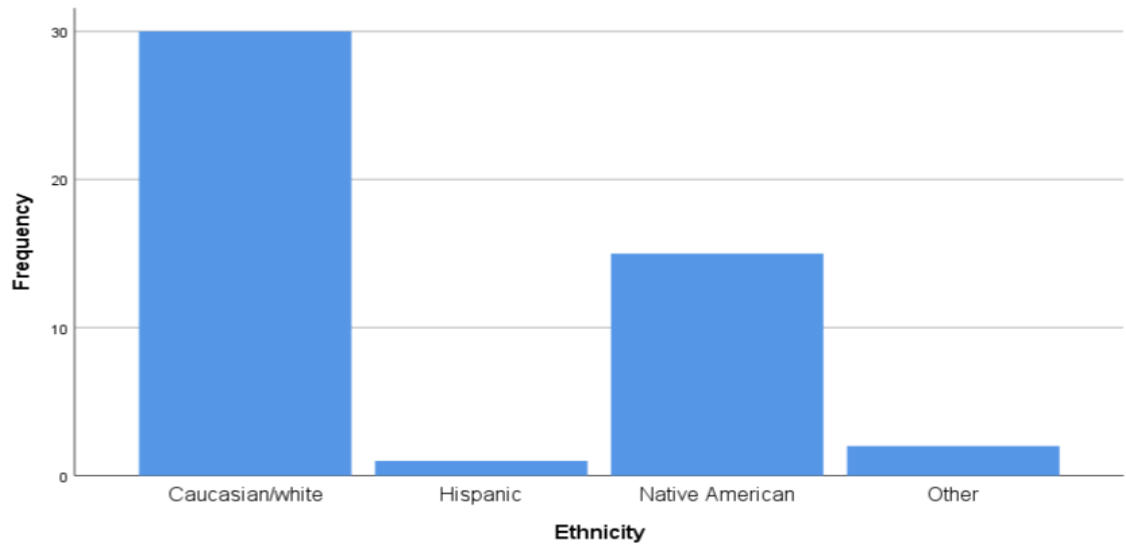
Figure 2 illustrates the gender of respondents from three school districts. Out of the 90 available teachers, there were 14 male and 34 female teachers who responded to the survey, making a total of 48 respondents for a response rate of 53.3%.



*Figure 2.* Gender of respondents.

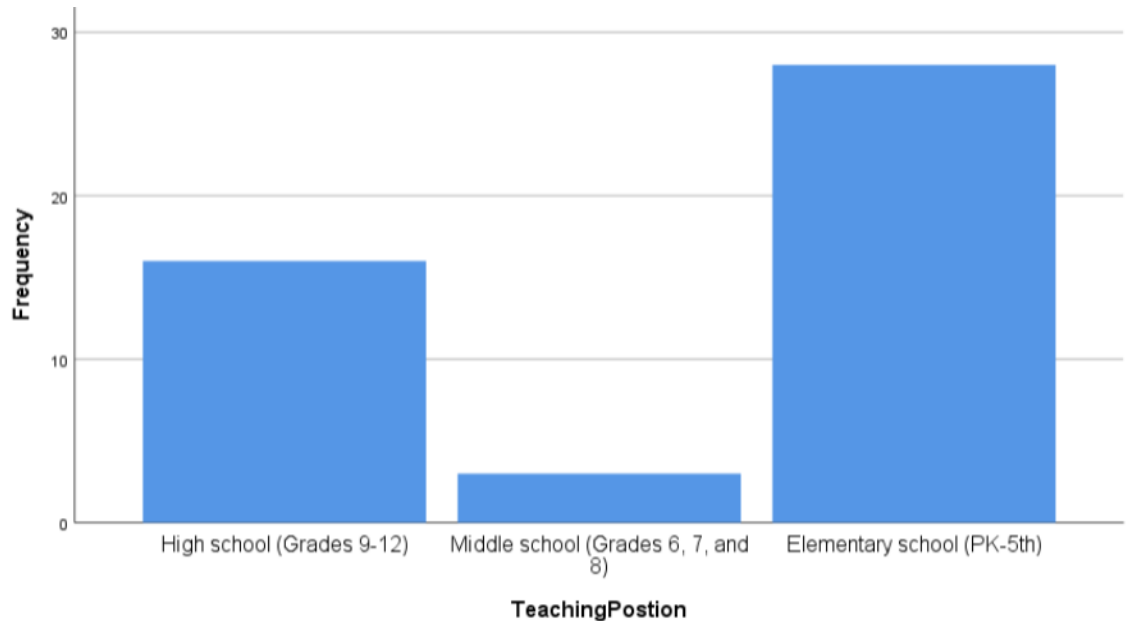
Among respondents, there were 30 Caucasians (62.5%), 1 Hispanic (2.1%), 15 Native Americans (31.3%), and 2 respondents belonging to other ethnicities (4.2%).

Please see Figure 3.



*Figure 3.* Ethnicity of respondents.

Figure 4 illustrates how 28 respondents taught in elementary school (58.3%), 3 taught in middle school (6.3%), and 16 taught in high school (33.3%). One respondent did not indicate his or her teaching position.



*Figure 4.* Teaching position of respondents.

Figure 5 shows 35 respondents had a bachelor's degree (72.9%), 9 had a master's degree (18.8%), and 3 had a specialist degree (6.3%). One respondent did not indicate his or level of education. Figure 6 indicates there were 16 respondents from each of three school districts that took part in the survey. So, 33.3% of respondents were from Minnewaukan, 33.3% of respondents were from Dunseith, and 33.3% were from Solen.

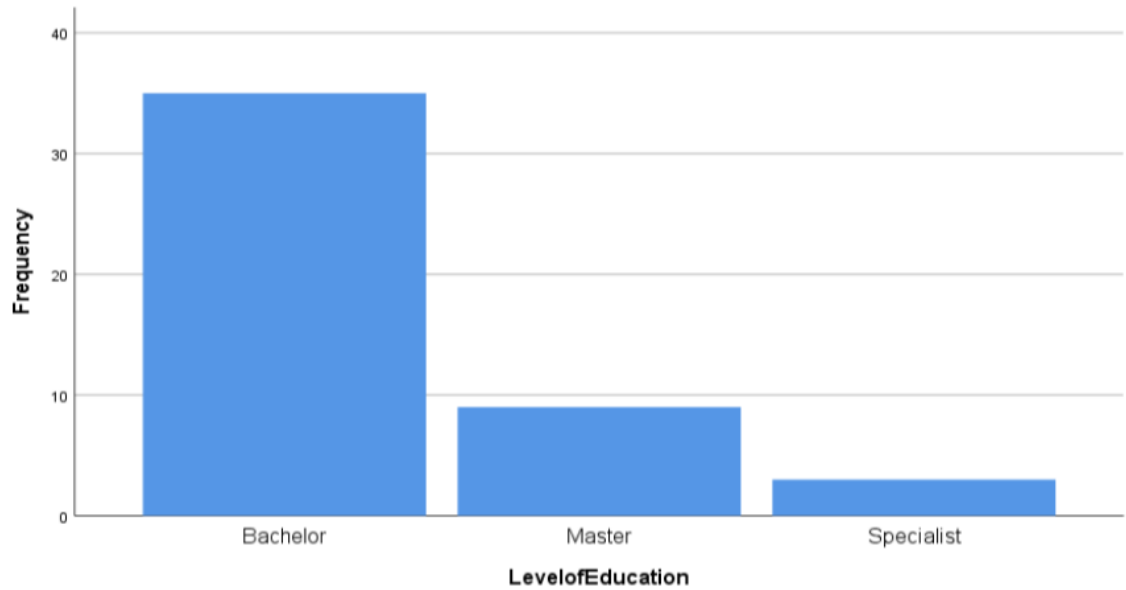


Figure 5. Level of education of respondents.

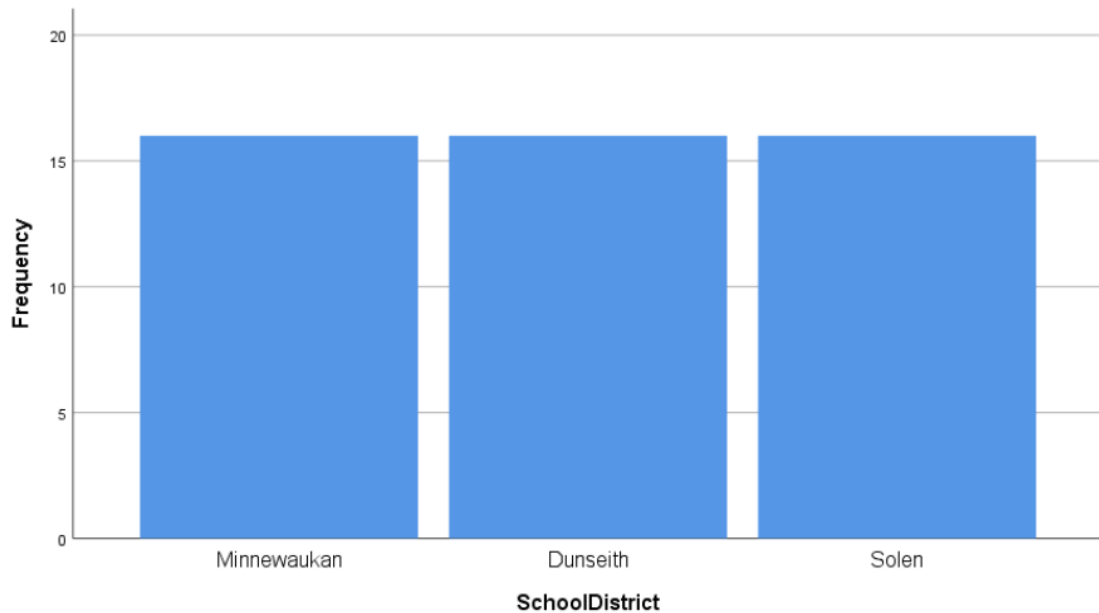


Figure 6. School district of respondents.

A summary of teachers' responses to Likert-type scale questions pertaining to all four constructs is presented in Table 4. Table 4 includes percentages of respondents showing some form of agreement (6 – *strongly agree*, 5 – *agree*, and 4 – *somewhat*

*agree*), and percentages of respondents showing some form of disagreement (1 – *strongly disagree*, 2 – *disagree*, and 3 – *somewhat disagree*) as well as a mean and standard deviation for responses to all statements under the four constructs of the survey.

Table 4

*Teachers' Descriptive Responses to Likert-Type Scale Questions on Survey*

Question	Some Form of Agreement (%)	Some Form of Disagreement (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Home Life Construct (HLC)</b>				
1. Most Native American students, whose family have average or above average income, do well academically.	81.2	18.8	4.1	1.0
2. Most Native American students never know for sure where they will be staying at night.	35.4	64.6	3.1	1.1
3. The behavior of most parents or guardians of Native American students has a negative impact on their learning.	56.3	43.7	3.6	1.4
4. Most Native American students who feel safe at home do better academically.	91.7	8.3	4.8	1.1

Table 4 (continued)

Question	Some Form of Agreement (%)	Some Form of Disagreement (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Home Life Construct (HLC)</b>				
5. Most Native American students who get hit, pushed, kicked, yelled at, or witness this sort of behavior in their homes perform poorly academically.	85.5	14.5	4.2	1.1
6. Most Native American students watch violent movies or play violent video games at home.	56.3	43.7	3.6	1.3
7. Most Native American students have a lot of books and other academic materials in their homes.	4.2	95.8	2.1	0.7
8. Most Native American students who do well academically have parents who completed high school or college.	70.9	29.1	1.1	3.9
<b>Parental Involvement Construct (PIC)</b>				
1. Most Native American students whose parents or guardian are involved in their education do well academically.	97.9	2.1	4.8	0.8
2. Most parents or guardians care if Native American students do well in school.	68.8	31.2	4.0	1.0

Table 4 (continued)

Question	Some Form of Agreement (%)	Some Form of Disagreement (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Parental Involvement Construct (PIC)</b>				
3. Most parents or guardians of Native American students help them with homework.	23.0	77.0	2.8	1.1
4. Most parents or guardians of Native American students care if they go to school every day.	62.6	37.4	3.8	1.0
5. Most parents or guardians of Native American students check to see if they have homework every night and make sure that they get it done.	25.1	74.9	2.8	1.1
6. Most parents or guardians of Native American students leave them alone in the evening.	62.6	37.4	3.9	1.1
7. Most parents of Native American students attend parent-teacher conferences and other school organized meetings.	62.6	37.4	2.8	1.1
8. Most parents or guardians of Native American students would rather watch TV or do something else at night rather than spend time with their children.	73.0	27.0	3.8	1.0



Table 4 (continued)

Question	Some Form of Agreement (%)	Some Form of Disagreement (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Student Relationships Construct (SRC)</b>				
1. I believe Native American students who have good relationships with adults in their schools do well academically.	41.8	58.2	3.4	1.3
2. I believe that most Native American students like most of their teachers.	37.5	62.5	3.3	1.3
3. I believe that most Native American students like their principals.	39.4	60.4	3.3	1.3
4. I believe that most Native American students like their counselors.	37.5	62.5	3.1	1.3
5. I believe that most Native American students feel bullied in school.	67.1	32.9	3.7	1.2
6. I believe that classmates influence Native American students' behaviors and performances in schools more than any other thing.	64.6	35.4	3.9	1.3

Table 4 (continued)

Question	Some Form of Agreement (%)	Some Form of Disagreement (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Student Relationships Construct (SRC)</b>				
7. I believe that adults in schools influence Native American student behavior and performance in school more than any other thing.	45.9	54.1	3.4	1.0
8. I believe that when something really bad happens, there is an adult in the lives of most Native American students with whom they can visit and trust.	48.6	51.4	3.6	1.1
<b>School Attendance Construct (SAC)</b>				
1. Most Native American students, who are absent from school a lot, do worse academically.	77.1	22.9	5.3	1.3
2. Most Native American students are absent from school because class is boring.	18.7	81.3	2.6	1.1
3. Most Native American students are absent from school because they do not know how to do the work.	29.2	70.8	2.8	1.0

Table 4 (continued)

Question	Some Form of Agreement (%)	Some Form of Disagreement (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>School Attendance Construct (SAC)</b>				
4. Most Native American students are absent from school because other students bully them.	47.9	52.1	3.3	1.0
5. Most Native American students are absent from school because they are sad/depressed.	31.2	68.8	3.0	1.0
6. Most Native American students are absent from school because school is not that important to them.	81.3	18.7	4.2	1.2
7. Most Native American students are absent from school because they do not get along with other students.	31.3	68.7	2.9	1.3
8. I believe that drug use causes most Native American students to skip school.	50.1	49.9	3.4	1.3

Table 4 shows that respondents agreed on several questions of the 32 questions in the four constructs. The questions under each construct on this research survey were designed to provide responses to the four research questions for this study.

### **Research Question 1**

Likert questions under the Home Life Construct (HLC) on the study survey provided teachers an opportunity to respond to Research Question 1. Teachers responses indicated they agreed in some form with several questions within the HLC. The percentage of respondents showing some form of agreement with Survey Questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 was 81.2%, 56.3%, 91.0%, 85.5%, 56.3%, and 70.9%, respectively. Among these questions that teachers showed a high percentage of some form of agreement, there were three questions respondents showed an overwhelmingly high percentage of agreement with. Survey Question 4 asked teachers if most Native American students who feel safe at home do better academically; the percentage of responses showing some form of agreement was 91.7%. Survey Question 5 asked teachers if most Native American students who get hit, pushed, kicked, yelled at, or witness this sort of behavior in their homes perform poorly academically; the percentage of respondents showing some form of agreement was 85.5%. In Survey Question 1, teachers were asked if most Native American students, whose family have average or above average income, do well academically; teachers showed some form of agreement at 81.2%.

### **Research Question 2**

Survey questions within the Parental Involvement Construct (PIC) were designed to elicit teachers' perceptions on the impact of parental involvement in the education of Native American students' and how parental involvement affects academic performance. Teacher responses showed a high percentage of some form of agreement in six out of the eight questions in the parental involvement in students' education construct. The percentages were 97.9% in Survey Question 1, 68.8% in Survey Question 2, 62.6% in

Survey Question 4, 62.6% in Survey Question 6, 62.6% in Survey Question 7, and 73.0% in Survey Question 8. Among these questions with high percentages of responses with some form of agreement, Survey Question 1 and Survey Question 8 were distinct because percentage of responses showing some form of agreement were greater in these two questions than the rest of the questions. Survey Question 8 asked teachers if most parents or guardians of Native American students would rather watch TV or do something else at night rather than spend time with their children. The percentage of responses showing some form of agreement was 73.0%. Teachers had even a higher percentage of some form of agreement with Survey Question 1, which was 97.9%. Survey Question 1 asked teachers if most Native American students whose parents or guardian are involved in their education do well academically.

### **Research Question 3**

Survey questions addressing the Student Relationships Construct (SRC) were designed to obtain teachers' perceptions for answering Research Question 3 that asked teachers if relationships with students have impacted students' academic performances. Teacher responses showed a high percentage of some form of agreement with only two questions. Survey Question 6 asked teachers if they believed classmates influence Native American students' behaviors and performances in schools more than any other thing. The percentage of teachers answering with some form of agreement was 64.6%. In Survey Question 5, teachers were asked if they believe that most Native American students feel bullied in school. The percentage of teachers with some form of agreement was 67.1%. This was the survey question in the Student Relationships Construct with the highest percentage of respondents showing some form of agreement. It is important to

point out that in the SRC, teachers either had a higher percentage of some form of disagreement or were fifty-fifty in their responses to most survey questions within this construct.

#### **Research Question 4**

Within the Student Attendance Construct (SAC), survey questions were developed to elicit teachers' responses and help the researcher answer Research Question 4, which asked teachers if they perceive that school attendance impacts Native American students' academic performance. There were two questions in which teachers showed a high percentage of some form of agreement. In Survey Question 1 under the Student Attendance Construct, teachers were asked if most Native American students, who are absent from school a lot, do worse academically. Seventy-seven and 1/10 percent (77.1%) of the teachers who responded to this question either strongly agreed, agreed, or somewhat agreed. The highest percentage (81.3%) of responses showing some form of agreement with a statement occurred in Survey Question 6 where teachers were asked if most Native American students are absent from school because school is not that important to them.

#### **Reliability Analysis**

A reliability analysis was conducted to estimate the internal consistency or reliability of the four constructs. The responses for the questions of each construct were averaged. The reliability and correlation of each construct was determined and is shown in Table 5. The correlation between constructs were as follows: Home life and student attendance,  $r = .294$ ; home life and parental involvement,  $r = .177$ ; home life and student relationships,  $r = .204$ ; student relationships and parental involvement in student

education was  $r = .471$ ; parental involvement and attendance,  $r = .184$ ; student relationships and attendance,  $r = .206$ .

Table 5

*Correlation of Subscale Constructs and Measures of Internal Consistency for Survey Data*

Construct Number	Construct Subscale	Question Number	C1	C2	C3	$\alpha$
C1	Home Life	HLC (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)				.60
C2	Parental Involvement	PIC (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)	.177*			.52
C3	Student-Teacher Relationships	SRC (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)	.204*	.471*		.70
C4	Student Attendance	SAC (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)	.294*	.184*	.206*	.82

\*  $p < .05$

### Independent Sample *t*-Test

A second inferential statistics test conducted was an independent sample *t*-test to determine if there were statistically significant differences between mean responses of male and female teachers. A mean for each construct was determined by averaging mean responses for each question under a construct. This method of developing one mean per construct (instead of eight, instead of a mean for each question) was used in order to improve assumption of normality or make the data closer to a normal set of data. A *t*-test was used for the analysis because the independent variable gender has only two levels (male and female). Table 6 presents group statistics of the independent sample *t*-test of male and female teachers. Table 6 shows the number (*N*) of male teachers who responded to the survey was 14, and that of females was 34. There were no statistical differences in mean responses of males and females for any questions in any of the four constructs.

Table 6

*Independent Samples t-Test – Male and Female Group Statistics*

Construct	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
Home Life (C1)	Male	14	3.6071	.43539	.11636
	Female	34	3.7033	.65426	.11220
Parental Involvement (C2)	Male	14	3.6224	.54789	.14643
	Female	34	3.5956	.45337	.07775
Student-Teacher Relationships (C3)	Male	14	3.5497	.62042	.16581
	Female	33	3.4053	.74806	.13022
Student Attendance (C4)	Male	14	3.3571	.60617	.16201
	Female	34	3.4811	.80463	.13799

For C1 or the home life construct, the mean for male teachers was 3.6071, while it was  $M = 3.7033$  for female teachers. The difference was not statistically significant,  $t(46) = -.504$ ,  $p = .617$ . For the C2 construct (the parental involvement construct),  $M = 3.6224$  for male teachers, while  $M = 3.5956$  for female teachers. The difference was not statistically significant,  $t(46) = .176$ ,  $p = .86$ . The C3 construct (or student-teacher relationships construct),  $M = 3.5497$  for male teachers, while  $M = 3.4053$  for female teachers. The difference was not statistically significant,  $t(45) = .635$ ,  $p = .529$ . Lastly, for the C4 construct (the student attendance construct),  $M = 3.3571$  for male teachers, while  $M = 3.3481$  for female teachers. The difference was also not statistically significant,  $t(46) = -.518$ ,  $p = .607$ . Table 7 presents the independent samples  $t$ -test results of mean responses of male teachers for male and female teachers who responded to the survey.



Table 7

*Independent Samples t-Test Results for Male and Female Teachers*

Construct	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		<i>t</i> -Test for Equality of Means		
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
C1 (Home Life)	.446	.507	-.504	46	.617
C2 (Parental Involvement)	.180	.673	.176	46	.861
C3 (Student-Teacher Relationships)	1.833	.183	.635	45	.529
C4 (Student Attendance)	.867	.357	-.518	46	.607

*p* < .05

**Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

Unlike the gender variable that has only two levels (male and female), teaching position, level of education, or school district respondents worked in variables have more than two levels ( e.g. teachers' level of education can be bachelors, masters, specialist, or PhD./Ed.D). In order to determine if there were statistically significant differences between mean responses from different sectors of respondents (e.g. differences in mean responses based on teaching position, level of education, or school district respondents worked in), one-way ANOVAs were performed. Results showed there were statistically significant differences between the mean responses of participants for the four constructs based on teaching position (high, middle, and elementary) and school districts (Minnewaukan, Dunseith, and Solen) where respondents worked. To further evaluate the nature of the differences between groups of a demographic variable, the statistically significant ANOVA was further tested by performing a post-hoc test. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was tested and satisfied based on Levene's *F*-test. However,

the ANOVA test of mean responses of participants in all four constructs showed no statistically significant difference based on level of education. Table 8 shows results of the ANOVA test on mean responses of participants based on teachers' teaching position.

Table 8

*ANOVA Tests Based on Teachers' Teaching Position*

Constructs	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
C1	.579	2	.289	.808	.452
C2	.216	2	.108	.453	.639
C3	.729	2	.365	.707	.499
C4	4.106	2	2.053	4.088	.027*

\*  $p < .05$

Table 8 presents an ANOVA test in which mean responses of different groups based on the teaching position variable (high school, middle school, and elementary school) were tested for statistically significant differences. An ANOVA test was conducted for each of the four constructs. Results showed differences in mean responses of teachers in high school, middle school, and elementary schools were statistically significant for the C4 (or Student Attendance) Construct,  $F(2, 44) = 4.09$ ,  $p = .027$ .

**Post-Hoc Test for Teaching Position ANOVAs**

A post-hoc test was conducted to determine which mean responses of the three teaching position groups (high school, middle school, and elementary school) were significantly different for the Student Attendance Construct (C4). Results showed that the difference between mean responses of high school teachers ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = .84$ ) and

elementary school teachers ( $M = 3.19$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ),  $p = .021$  were statistically significant. These results suggest that high school teachers ( $M = 3.81$ ) more than elementary school teachers ( $M = 3.19$ ) perceive school attendance impacts Native American students' academic performance.

### **ANOVA Tests Based on Teachers' Level of Education**

ANOVA tests yielded no statistically significant differences between mean responses of groups based on the level of education variable (bachelors, masters, or specialist degree). Table 9 shows results of the ANOVA test on mean responses of participants based on teachers' level of education.

Table 9

#### *ANOVA Tests Based on Teachers' Level of Education*

Construct	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
C1	.539	2	.270	.735	.485
C2	.193	2	.096	.410	.666
C3	.439	2	.220	.420	.660
C4	.468	2	.234	.400	.672

$p < .05$

### **ANOVA Tests Based on Teachers' School District**

ANOVA tests on mean responses between groups of teachers from the three school districts yielded statistically significant results on two out of the four constructs: the parental involvement construct (C2),  $F(2, 45) = 5.952$ ,  $p = .005$ , and the student relationship construct (C3),  $F(2, 44) = 16.479$ ,  $p = .000$ . Table 10 shows results of

ANOVA tests on means of teacher responses in the three school districts (Minnewaukan, Dunseith, and Solen).

Table 10

*ANOVA Tests Based on Teachers' School District*

Constructs	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
C1	.071	2	.035	.096	.909
C2	2.237	2	1.118	5.952	.005
C3	10.786	2	5.393	19.246	.000
C4	1.074	2	.537	.958	.391

$p < .05$

**Post-Hoc Test for School District ANOVAs**

Post-hoc tests were also conducted to determine which mean responses of participants based on their school districts (Dunseith, Solen, and Minnewaukan) were significantly different. Post-hoc tests showed statistically significant differences between mean responses of teachers in the three school districts on the transformed parental involvement in students' education construct (C2), and student relationships construct (C3). Mean responses between participants from the following school districts were statistically significant: parental involvement in education construct (C2), Minnewaukan ( $M = 3.35$ ,  $SD = 0.31$ ) and Dunseith ( $M = 3.98$ ,  $SD = .59$ ),  $p = .004$ ; student-teacher relationships construct (C3), Dunseith ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = .55$ ) and Solen ( $M = 3.07$ ,  $SD = .39$ ),  $p = .000$ , and Minnewaukan ( $M = 3.14$ ,  $SD = .62$ ) and Dunseith ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ),  $p = .000$ .

Results for school district ANOVA tests suggest that teachers in Dunseith public school ( $M = 3.98$ ) more than teachers in Minnewaukan ( $M = 3.35$ ) perceived parental involvement in education impacts Native American students' academic performance. In addition, Dunseith public school teachers ( $M = 4.11$ ) more than Solen teachers ( $M = 3.07$ ) and more than Minnewaukan teachers ( $M = 3.14$ ) perceived that teacher relationships with Native American students impact students' academic performances.

### **Responses to Open-Ended Questions**

There were two open-ended questions at the end of the survey. Twenty-three teachers out of forty-eight (47.9%) responded to the first question that asked teachers to offer suggestions to help improve academic performances of Native American students. Nine teachers out of forty-eight (18.8%) responded to the second open-ended question that asked teachers to provide any additional comments.

#### **Open-Ended Question 1**

Out of the twenty-three teachers who responded to Open-Ended Question 1 (What suggestions can you offer to improve the academic performance of Native American students?), seven emphasized the need for Native American's parents to be more involved in the education of their children. Three of the seven teachers wrote:

- “Parental involvement really makes a difference in students who experience success! I have seen it. Unfortunately, some parents are unable, for various reasons, to be involved or choose to be involved in their student(s) school experience.”

- “Parental involvement would be a great starting point. Very few come to educational meetings regarding their student(s).”
- “I think the core factor in Native American students’ academic performance is parental involvement. Parents/guardians are the only ones who can make sure their child feels safe at home, gets to school every day, and gets their homework done. Those are three huge factors in academic performance.”

Two teachers suggested that Native American culture and family values should be integrated into schools. Two other teachers suggested Native American students should come to school every day, in other words have good attendance. Another teacher stated that there should be consequences for a student’s behavior. The other teachers provided a variety of suggestions that are listed below:

- “We need more resources/funding/smaller class sizes.”
- “Providing a whole child education rather than an academic standard-based strategy.”
- “Teachers need to realize Native students learn in differently and at a different pace than other students.”
- “We need to change their mindset from ‘I’m just a reservation kid’ to ‘I can be and do anything I want, despite of how and where I was raised.’”
- “I believe Native American students need to take responsibility for their education and not blame others all the time.”

- “The more we can reach parents and help them to understand that education is important, and we are all on the same team, the better off we, as educators, will be.”
- “I think it's important to engage the Native community outside the school setting.”
- “In order for us to make a positive change in academics, the drugs and alcohol in our community needs to be taken care of. Get rid of those components and we might be able to make a change.”
- “Everyone who is involved in the students' lives need to truly care about the students and the students need to be able to feel that people in their lives do care about them! The students also need to challenge themselves to do better than those in their lives who don't seem to care enough about how well they do in life.”
- “I believe if the parents show their kids that school is important, the kid will feel that school is important and will do better academically. I don't have any suggestions as to how, we, as a school, can make this happen. Also, I would like to see our students do better prepared to start school as kindergarteners. We have started some things in pre-school that will address this issue. I would like to see our tribe do more about truancy.”
- “Native American students are misunderstood a lot of the time because of their cultural upbringing. The students have a difficult time developing trust from their teachers. A lot of the students come to school for meals and some place other than home to be at. The students need understanding from teachers and staff to help them improve their understanding of how important an education is. A lot of the

students are coming from homes where there is no education being taught because of the high dropout rates of Native people.”

- “Stop thinking that Native American students are unique students. It is the tribal leaders and other adults in the community that do not value education. Nothing is expected of Native American students, because of the cultural indifference to education. Native American students do not learn differently from any other ethnic group of children. However, when adults give them every reason or excuse not to excel in school the cycle of poverty continues. I believe generational poverty is the issue, not their ethnicity. The students' parents are their primary teachers, and the students have received their parents' message loud and clear. Learning is optional, and we will protect you from the learning process. Please limit your options in life by not accepting the gift of education. Let's focus on our negative emotions and the drama of a life. Let's blame teachers for everything; the people who have dedicated their lives to teaching children.”

### **Open-Ended Question 2**

The second open-ended question asked teachers for additional comments. Nine out of 48 (18.8%) participants responded. Here are some of their comments:

- “Teachers are trying to get students up to par when learning. It is difficult when students come from broken homes.”
- “Students are realizing what they are being taught in the school systems does contain the truth about what happened to the Native American.”



- “BIA needs to do their job and take care of the drugs and alcohol so these children have a chance in life.”
- “A big part of the issue is not just that they are Native Americans. It is that they are living in generational poverty, and it is extremely hard to get out of. In our school, we have had so many occurrences of students wanting to go on to college off of the reservation and be successful, but family members have told them they need to stay on the reservation after high school and help take care of family. Families living in generational poverty constantly feel the need to "give back" to their families, even if they can't provide for themselves. And if a family member chooses to live a more successful, independent life and not "give back," they are ridiculed by family members that they are trying to be "too white.”

### **Summary**

In Chapter IV, a detailed description of findings of this study was presented. Descriptive statistics indicated teachers agreed on many questions of the constructs. Inferential statistics conducted were ANOVA tests and independent sample *t*-tests. Both showed statistically significant differences in responses between groups of independent or demographic variables when compared with Likert questions of the constructs. In Chapter V, discussion and recommendations based on findings will be made.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study validate existing literature and provide insight into the complex issue of low academic performances of Native American students. Findings illustrate how teachers are deeply troubled by the situation of Native American students' education and the need for urgent attention to this matter. It is essential to understand this situation, especially from a teacher's point of view given that teachers interact with these students regularly and in different settings and activities. This chapter presents conclusions, discussions of research questions, and provides recommendations for teachers, school districts leaders, and education policy makers who may help improve the academic performance of Native American students. A description of the limitations of this study and recommendations for future studies will conclude the chapter.

#### **Summary of Findings**

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of elementary, middle, and high school teachers on Native American students' academic performances in three public school districts with 90% or more Native American student enrollment in North Dakota. Forty-eight teachers from three school districts with high native American student enrollment (Solen, Dunseith, and Minnewaukan in North Dakota) responded to the survey questions. There were four constructs; each addressed by eight survey questions to elicit teachers' responses and help the researcher form conclusions regarding

the four research questions. Each construct was designed to provide a response to one research question. Descriptive statistics (mean, percentages, and standard deviations) were used to analyze the responses of teacher participants. Inferential statistics (ANOVAs and independent sample *t*-tests) were conducted to compare the means of different groups of demographic variables to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the groups.

### **Research Question 1**

The first research question asked teachers if they perceived that quality of home life impacts academic performance of Native American students? All eight questions in the homelife construct were designed to generate teachers' perceptions in regards to Research Question 1. Teachers had a high percentage of some form of agreement (strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree) in six out of the eight questions. The percentage of some form of agreement in the six questions ranged from 56.3% to 91.7%. This suggests that teachers do perceive quality of home life (measured by students' having parents with adequate or higher income and the appropriateness of students' behaviors) as a factor that impacts Native American academic performance. In the constructed response, several teachers stated that poverty is a big factor that negatively impacts students' academic performances. One teacher wrote, "A big part of the issue is not just that they are Native Americans. It is that they are living in generational poverty, and it is hard to get out of." These findings are consistent with existing research on the effects of poverty on Native American students' academic performances. An American Community Survey in 2006 found that one-third (33%) of Native Americans under the age of 18 lived in poverty compared to 22% of all children under 18 (DeVoe & Darling-

Churchill, 2008). In 2001, the United States Department of Education, Office of the Deputy Secretary, Planning and Evaluation Service found that poverty adversely affected student achievements at all levels. The effects of low income on education are extensive and detrimental to a student's school achievements. Poverty creates several stressors in the lives of those it affects, and the stressors lessens learning and educational achievement (Barton, 2004). This is consistent with Question 1 (HLC1) under the home life construct (HLC) that asked teachers if most Native American students, whose family have average or above average income, do well academically? Eighty-one and two tenths percent (81.2%) of teacher participants either agreed, strongly agreed, or somewhat agreed with this statement. This suggests that students from homes with average or above income do well academically, and students from low income or low socioeconomic status have low academic performance.

Question 8 of the HLC asked teachers if most Native American students who do well academically have parents who completed high school or college. The percentage of participants who responded with some form of agreement was 70.1%. These perceptions of teachers are also consistent with existing literature. Research shows that students whose parents did not complete secondary school or obtain college degrees are at an increased risk of lower performance. And chronic underemployment threatens the stability of the home lives of many children. Additionally, single parenthood and early parenthood are more common among lower socio-economic groups of people than they are among higher socio-economic groups (Hobcraft & Kiernan, 2001).

## **Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 asked if teachers perceive parental involvement in education impacts Native American students' academic performances. Statements focusing on the parental involvement construct (PIC) were designed to elicit teachers' perceptions regarding Research Question 2. Teachers had high percentages of some form of agreement in six out of the eight statements under the PIC. The percentage of some form of agreement ranged from 62.6% to 97.9%. Question 1 (PIC1) of the parental involvement construct asked teachers if most Native American students whose parents or guardian are involved in their education do well academically. Teachers' responses to this question were distinct because the percentage of some form of agreement was 97.9%, the highest degree of agreement not just for the PIC, but in all the questions showing a high percentage agreement in the four constructs of the survey. Also, seven teachers emphasized the need for parental involvement in their students' education in their constructed (written) response to open ended questions. Among teachers' remarks on parental involvement in students' education, one was very compelling and appealing:

“I think the core factor in Native American students' academic performance is parental involvement. Parents/guardians are the only ones who can make sure their child feel safe at home, gets to school every day, and gets their homework done. Those are three huge factors in academic performance.”

This finding is consistent with existing research which shows that students have better academic performance when their parents are involved in the education of their students. Flynn and Nolan (2008) found that students, whose parents were involved with their school and who had good relationships, had fewer absences, were more prepared

and eager to do their homework, had higher graduation rates, were confident in their abilities, and had good academic performance. Furthermore, Brooks (2006) concluded:

Because parent involvement influences a student's sense of the meaningfulness of school and increases students' commitment to school goals (Learning First Alliance, 2001), it is essential that schools maintain connections with parents to encourage their involvement with their children's education (p. 72).

### **Research Question 3**

Survey questions focusing on the student relationships construct (SRC) were designed to obtain information on teachers' perceptions on Research Question 3, which asked teachers if they perceived that relationships with Native American students impacted their academic performance. There were two questions out of eight in the student relationships construct where teachers showed a high percentage of some form of agreement. In Question 5 (SRC5), teachers were asked if they believe that most Native American students feel bullied in school. The percentage of responses showing some form of agreement was 67.1%. In Question 6 (SRC6), teachers were asked if they believe that classmates influence Native American students' behaviors and performances in schools more than any other thing? The percentage of participants indicating form of agreement was 64.6%. Research shows that strong student-teacher relationships have strong and healthy effects to student achievement from kindergarten up till eighth grade (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

### **Research Question 4**

Research Question 4 asked if teachers perceive that school attendance impacts Native American students' academic performances? The questions within the school

attendance construct (SAC) were designed to respond to Research Question 4. Teachers showed a high percentage of some form of agreement in two out of the eight questions within the school attendance construct (SAC). Question 1 (SAC1) asked teachers if most Native American students, who are absent from school a lot, do worse academically (than students who are not absent a lot). The percentage of participants who showed some form of agreement to SAC1 was 77.1%. In Question 6 (SAC6) of the school attendance construct, teachers were asked if most Native American students are absent from school because school is not that important to them. The percentage of participants showing some form of agreement with SAC6 was 81.3%. This suggests that teachers agreed that poor attendance impacted students' academic performances. That is, students who have good school attendance usually perform well academically, while students with poor school attendance perform poorly. Some teachers also emphasized the need for Native American students to come to school regularly to have better academic performance in the first open ended question of the survey.

This finding mirrors current research on school attendance. The U.S. Department of Education (2016/2019) concluded that Native American students have been identified to be part of the group of students who record repeated absences from school and are said to be 50.0% more likely to have chronic absenteeism than their white classmates. In 2013, some of the highest rates of absenteeism in the U.S. were reported in states with large Native American student populations including Arizona, Montana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Wyoming. In some grade levels, absenteeism rates were as high as 25.0% of students absent from school for three or more days within a month (Ginsburg et al., 2014).

## **Limitations**

One limitation to this study was only three school districts with high Native American student enrollment in North Dakota agreed to participate, and 48 out of 90 teachers participated in the study. A larger sample size of teachers may have given a more generalized description of teachers' perceptions on issues of low Native American academic performance. A second limitation to this study was that the results of this study may have been affected by the bias of some teachers toward Native American students considering cultural and socioeconomic status differences. Another limitation of this study is the fact that some tribal leadership have long bureaucratic, complicated, discouraging, and disappointing procedures for obtaining permission to conduct research in any school, whether public or tribal, that is located on reservation land. This impediment prevented some school districts and teachers from participating in this study. Lastly, teachers' perceptions on poverty were based on their assumptions about income levels of students' parents.

## **Recommendations for Teachers**

Based on findings of this study, several recommendations for teachers are made. The fact that teachers were split fifty-fifty on some issues or showed a high percentage of some form of disagreement (strongly disagree, disagree, or somewhat disagree) in their responses to most questions within the student relationship construct suggests that most teachers may not have a clear understanding of the importance of their relationship with their Native American students. Teachers' perceptions of students can significantly impact the students' present and future academic performances. It is equally important for students to understand their behaviors impact their academic performances.



The following recommendations are made to help teachers improve on how they perceive students and the relationships between teachers and students, which can potentially impact student academic performance. It is important for teachers to work with school counseling agencies and school counselors to improve how teachers perceive students and understand how their perceptions can impact students' academic performances. Counselors can work with teachers to improve teacher-student interactions through coaching and positive communication, providing encouragement, and affirming students' importance (Akey, 2006; Weissbourd, 2003). Through this intervention, teachers can recognize how their personal beliefs and values can impact their perceptions and interactions with Native American students. This may influence their daily practice, which may impact academic outcomes of Native American students. Other interventions that school counselors could work with teachers to implement to improve Native American students' academic performances could be time management training, guidance activities designed to improve test-taking skills, and study skills groups.

In addition to counseling services, teachers should also seek research-based practices in order to improve Native American students' academic performances. One research-based practice is to develop long term goals for students' academic success (Goor & Schwenn, 1993). There should be regular monitoring of students' progress to determine where to make necessary adjustments as teachers work with students to ensure students' academic success. Research also shows that behavioral contracts are effective at impacting students' academic achievements (Brown, 1999).

Research shows that Native American students are often misinterpreted by teachers as being indifferent or lacking attentiveness (Garrett, Bellon-Harn, Torres-Rivera, Garrett, & Roberts, 2003). Therefore, teachers should use appropriate teaching styles and classroom instructional practices needed to reflect learning styles of American Indian and Alaskan Native children in order to effectively engage students in classroom instruction and activities. Also, when the preferred learning style of students are used in a classroom, the students are more likely to achieve academically, express more interest in a given subject area, like the way they are being taught, and want to learn other subjects in a similar way (Gilliland, 1999).

### **Recommendations for Educational Leaders**

One of the bases for this study was to create data from findings that would inform educational leaders as they make decisions on Native American education matters. Several teachers emphasized the need for parents to be more involved in the education of their Native American children. In this connection, educational leaders should create programs that will encourage parents to be more active in their children's education. These programs can be located in schools or out of schools, which may even include transportation services that might motivate parents and their community to get involved in the education of their students.

Research suggests that using every opportunity to get involved in a community such as attending church, service clubs, pow-wows, sporting events, town council meetings, community planning meetings, or other open tribal meetings, in an attempt to learn more about Native American culture helps teachers relate to their Native American students. This will also demonstrate to the community and parents that school districts are

genuinely interested in bridging the gap between home and school (Gilliland, 1999, p. 125).

Another way of getting parents involved in their children's education is to "recruit parents as volunteers" (Gilliland, 1999, p. 129). After establishing effective and regular communication with parents, it would be easier for education professionals to put the strategy of using parents as cultural resources into practice. Classroom volunteers may be involved in telling stories, reading to children, playing games, or even supervising recess or lunch periods.

Gilliland (1999) suggested a school district can involve parents and the community at large in the education of Native American students by "get[ting] the whole school and the whole community involved" (Gilliland, 1999, p. 130). By doing this, the school would become the point of focus in a community. Also, a school should not open its doors only to Native American students, but also to adults and parents in the community as well. Education leaders and professionals should encourage members of a community to make use of their school facility for different events. Furthermore, Gilliland (1999) suggested a school district could open up the gymnasium for community recreational activities and get Native American parents involved in the: (a) planning of curricula, (b) serving in advisory committees, (c) attending parent orientation meetings at the beginning of a school year, and (d) giving their school suggestions on how to improve the school climate.

Teachers also raised the issue of school attendance as a major factor affecting the academic performance of Native American students. This research suggests that school leaders should revisit the attendance policy of their schools or school districts and find

ways to make improvements in order to improve the school attendance of Native American students.

Teachers also mentioned issues with classroom resources, larger class sizes, more funding, and community involvement in education. This research suggests that educational leaders and policy makers should consult with local district teachers to understand their specific needs since not all schools or school districts have the same needs. This could be done by creating a committee whose role would be to channel teachers' concerns to higher authorities.

Finally, this research suggests that one effective strategy for working with youth like Native American students who are at risk and who need positive role models and support systems would be for educational leaders to consider implementing (either as district wide or school wide) mentoring programs. A mentoring process helps to establish a caring and supportive relationship between an adult and a student based on trust and respect built over time. For a mentoring program to be successful, there should be a clear purpose statement for the program as well as expectations for students. Also, a mentor and a mentee should be able to create a trusting relationship, thus the selection process should be effective. Effective mentoring relationships require that both mentor and mentee decide how to spend their time with each other and require that a mentor be a strong and consistent presence in a student's life.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study was designed to sample teachers' perceptions on Native American students' academic performances in order to find ways to improve Native Americans students' academic performances and to add to the body of literature related to Native

American education. The results of the study suggest several recommendations for future studies. More research is needed to better understand the issue of low academic performance of Native American students. Some of the topics which could be further researched include:

1. Study of the effects of classroom behavior on academic performance, as well as the effects of teacher expectancies on academic achievement is needed. Emphasis could be made on targeting the causes of negative behaviors. This could help ascertain the root of the behavior and take specific actions to decrease these behaviors, and likely increase subsequent academic performance.
2. Research could also be done on effective classroom management strategies that foster better academic achievements of Native American students.
3. Research could be done on effective strategies to teach children from low socioeconomic homes or children from poor families.
4. Research could be done on how culture and family values of Native Americans impact the academic performance of Native American students.

### **Conclusions**

Current literature shows that many Native American students are struggling academically in school or have already dropped out. In order to ameliorate this trend, educational professionals must first identify and understand the problems surrounding Native American students in schools in North Dakota and across the U.S.A. This research identifies home life quality, student-teacher relationships, lack of parental involvement in student education, and poor school attendance as some of the main causes of the problem

of low Native American student academic performance. It is crucial for the educational professional to understand the relationships between these factors. This research also provides some useful data for the educational professional to have a better understanding of the situation. To address the problems of low academic performance of Native American students, meaningful, measurable, effective, and research-based strategies can be implemented. Some of these strategies have been recommended to educational leaders and teachers to implement based on a school district's unique requirements and circumstances. Implementation should be a collective effort in which all stakeholders get involved in the education of the Native American student. This implies school district leadership should involve school staff, parents, and community members to ensure effectiveness of the implementation of strategies identified by school district leadership.

### **Summary**

This study was conducted to investigate teachers' perceptions on Native American students' academic performances. Findings were consistent with existing research. Inferential statistics were conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences between responses of select groups of participants based on demographic variables (gender, teaching position, level of education, and school district) in regard to Likert questions for four constructs (dependent variables). An overview of the study and the findings were discussed. Recommendations for improving Native American students' academic performances and teachers' perceptions and practices were made.

## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**  
**TEACHERS' SURVEY**

**Introduction**

Thank you for completing this survey. By completing this survey, you are giving your consent to participate in the research. Your identity will be kept confidential, and no harm to participants is anticipated in this process. You can discontinue your participation at any time. Your responses to questions or statements in this survey are applicable to Native American students. If there is any concern, please contact a professional for support.

**Part I. Demographic Variables**

- A) What is your gender?
  - 1. Male
  - 2. Female
- B) What is your ethnicity?
  - 1. African American/Black
  - 2. Asian
  - 3. Caucasian/White
  - 4. Hispanic
  - 5. Native American
  - 6. Other
- C) What is your current teaching position?
  - 1. High school (Grades 9-12)
  - 2. Middle school (Grades 6, 7, and 8)
  - 3. Elementary school (PK-5th)
- D) What is your level of education?
  - 1. Bachelor
  - 2. Master
  - 3. Specialist
  - 4. PhD/Ed.D.



E) In which school district do you work?

1. Minnewaukan
2. Dunseith
3. Solen

## Part II. Likert-Type Questions

**Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements or questions by clicking on the number that best describes your belief about each statement below. The statements or questions apply to Native American students.**

<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6

### A) Home Life Construct

1. Most Native American students, whose family have average or above average income, do well academically.
2. Most Native American students never know for sure where they will be staying at night.
3. The behavior of most parents or guardians of Native American students has a negative impact on their learning.
4. Most Native American students who feel safe at home do better academically.
5. Most Native American students who get hit, pushed, kicked, yelled at, or witness this sort of behavior in their homes perform poorly academically.
6. Most Native American students watch violent movies or play violent video games at home.
7. Most Native American students have a lot of books and other academic materials in their homes.
8. Most Native American students who do well academically have parents who completed high school or college.

**B) Parental Involvement Construct**

1. Most Native American students whose parents or guardian are involved in their education do well academically.
2. Most parents or guardians care if Native American students do well in school.
3. Most parents or guardians of Native American students help them with homework.
4. Most parents or guardians of Native American students care if they go to school every day.
5. Most parents or guardians of Native American students check to see if they have homework every night and make sure that they get it done.
6. Most parents or guardians of Native American students leave them alone in the evening.
7. Most parents of Native American students attend parent-teacher conferences and other school organized meetings.
8. Most parents or guardians of Native American students would rather watch TV or do something else at night rather than spend time with their children.

**C) Student Relationships Construct**

1. I believe Native American students who have good relationships with adults in their schools do well academically.
2. I believe that most Native American students like most of their teachers.
3. I believe that most Native American students like their principals.
4. I believe that most Native American students like their counselors.
5. I believe that most Native American students feel bullied in school.
6. I believe that classmates influence Native American students' behaviors and performances in schools more than any other thing.
7. I believe that adults in schools influence Native American student behavior and performance in school more than any other thing.
8. I believe that when something really bad happens, there is an adult in the lives of most Native American students with whom they can visit and trust.

**D) School Attendance Construct**

1. Most Native American students, who are absent from school a lot, do worse academically.

2. Most Native American students are absent from school because class is boring.
3. Most Native American students are absent from school because they do not know how to do the work.
4. Most Native American students are absent from school because other students bully them.
5. Most Native American students are absent from school because they are sad/depressed.
6. Most Native American students are absent from school because school is not that important to them.
7. Most Native American students are absent from school because they do not get along with other students.
8. I believe that drug use causes most Native American students to skip school.

**Please respond to the following open-ended questions.**

- 1) What suggestions can you offer to improve the academic performance of Native American students?

- 2) Additional comments

## APPENDIX B

### UND IRB APPROVAL

#### UND IRB approval letter

Bowles, Michelle <michelle.bowles@und.edu>

Fri 9/13/2019 3:53 PM

To: Mangwa Younkam, Andrew <mangwa.andrew@und.edu>

Cc: Houdek, Sherryl <sherryl.houdek@und.edu>



UND.edu

#### Institutional Review Board

Tech Accelerator, Suite 2050

4201 James Ray Drive Stop 7134

Grand Forks, ND 58202-7134

Phone: 701.777.4279

Fax: 701.777.2193

[UND.irm@UND.edu](mailto:UND.irm@UND.edu)

September 13, 2019

<b>Principal Investigator(s):</b>	Andrew Mangwa
<b>Project Title:</b>	Elementary and Secondary Teachers' Perceptions of Native American Students' Academic Performances in North Dakota
<b>IRB Project Number:</b>	IRB-201909-053
<b>Project Review Level:</b>	Exempt 2
<b>Date of IRB Approval:</b>	09/13/2019
<b>Expiration Date of This Approval:</b>	09/12/2022

The application form and all included documentation for the above-referenced project have been reviewed and approved via the procedures of the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board.

If you need to make changes to your research, you must submit a Protocol Change Request Form to the IRB for approval. No changes to approved research may take place without prior IRB approval.

This project has been approved for 3 years, as permitted by UND IRB policies for exempt research. You have approval for this project through the above-listed expiration date. When this research is completed, please submit a Termination Form to the IRB.

The forms to assist you in filing your project termination, adverse event/unanticipated problem, protocol change, etc. may be accessed on the IRB website: <http://und.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/>

Sincerely,

Michelle L. Bowles, M.P.A., CIP  
IRB Manager

Cc: Sherryl Houdek, Ed.D.

**Michelle L. Bowles, M.P.A., CIP**  
Manager, Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research Compliance & Ethics  
Division of Research & Economic Development  
University of North Dakota

Tech Accelerator, Suite 2050  
4201 James Ray Drive Stop 7134  
Grand Forks, ND 58202-7134

P: 701.777.4279  
F: 701.777.2193

[Michelle.Bowles@UND.edu](mailto:Michelle.Bowles@UND.edu)

[[UND.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/](http://UND.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/)][UND.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/](http://UND.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/)

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## APPENDIX C

### STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE CHAIRMAN'S APPROVAL

#### Fw: Request for Permission

Mangwa Younkam, Andrew <mangwa.andrew@und.edu>

Thu 9/5/2019 11:10 PM

To: Bowles, Michelle <michelle.bowles@und.edu>

---

**From:** Mike Faith <mfaith@standingrock.org>

**Sent:** Thursday, June 27, 2019 2:25 PM

**To:** Mangwa Younkam, Andrew <mangwa.andrew@und.edu>

**Subject:** RE: Request for Permission

Andrew

As Chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe you do have my permission to do this study.

Thank You,

Chairman Mike Faith

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

---

**From:** Mangwa Younkam, Andrew [mailto:mangwa.andrew@und.edu]

**Sent:** Thursday, June 27, 2019 2:35 PM

**To:** Mike Faith <mfaith@standingrock.org>

**Subject:** Request for Permission

Dear Chairman Faith,

I am a Ph.D. candidate in the department of Educational Leadership at the University of North Dakota. I am conducting research to complete my dissertation. The topic of my research is *Elementary and Secondary Teachers' Perceptions of Native American Students' Academic Performance in North Dakota*. Solen public school district is one of the school districts I am working with. I have already received permission to sample teacher's perceptions from the superintendent, Fryer.

However, UND's Institutional Review Board require a second approval from you since the public school district is in the reservation land. The approval can be a letter or a response to this email stating that you approve the study.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

Andrew Mangwa

## APPENDIX D

### MINNEWAUKAN PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT'S APPROVAL

<https://outlook.office.com/mail/inbox/id/AAQkAG>

#### Re: Request to conduct research

Jean Callahan <Jean.Callahan@k12.nd.us>

Mon 5/13/2019 10:09 AM

To: Mangwa Younkam, Andrew <mangwa.andrew@und.edu>

It is ok to conduct your survey in our school.

Jean

Jean Callahan  
Minnewaukan Public School  
Superintendent

---

**From:** Mangwa Younkam, Andrew <mangwa.andrew@und.edu>

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 8, 2019 2:14 PM

**To:** Jean Callahan

**Subject:** Request to conduct research

Dear Superintendent Callahan,

I am a Ph.D candidate in the department of Educational Leadership at the university of North Dakota. I am conducting a research to complete my dissertation. The topic of my research is *examine elementary and secondary teachers' perceptions on Native American students' academic performance in North Dakota*. I write to request permission to sample teachers in your school district's perceptions on Native American students academic perform. A detail description of the process is in a letter I have attach to this email.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to receiving your letter in response.

Sincerely,

Andrew Mangwa

## APPENDIX E

### DUNSEITH PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT'S APPROVAL

#### Fw: Request for permission

Mangwa Younkam, Andrew <mangwa.andrew@und.edu>

Thu 9/5/2019 11:11 PM

To: Bowles, Michelle <michelle.bowles@und.edu>

---

**From:** David Sjol <David.Sjol@k12.nd.us>

**Sent:** Thursday, September 5, 2019 11:48 AM

**To:** Mangwa Younkam, Andrew <mangwa.andrew@und.edu>

**Subject:** RE: Request for permission

Mangwa:

You may include Dunseith Public School s in your research.

David Sjol

Dunseith Public School Dist. #1

Superintendent

---

**From:** Mangwa Younkam, Andrew [mailto:mangwa.andrew@und.edu]

**Sent:** Thursday, August 29, 2019 3:25 PM

**To:** David Sjol <David.Sjol@k12.nd.us>

**Subject:** Fw: Request for permission

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**From:** Mangwa Younkam, Andrew <mangwa.andrew@und.edu>

**Sent:** Thursday, August 29, 2019 2:23 PM

**To:** Sjol, David <david.j.sjol@ndus.edu>

**Subject:** Fw: Request for permission

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**From:** Mangwa Younkam, Andrew

**Sent:** Thursday, August 29, 2019 11:18 AM

**To:** Sjol, David <david.j.sjol@ndus.edu>

**Subject:** Request for permission

Dear Mr. Sjol,



## APPENDIX F

### SOLEN PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT'S APPROVAL

#### Re: Request to conduct research

Justin Fryer <Justin.Fryer@k12.nd.us>

Tue 5/14/2019 11:04 AM

To: Mangwa Younkam, Andrew <mangwa.andrew@und.edu>

Andrew,

You have my permission.

Thanks,

Justin Fryer, Superintendent

Solen Public District #3

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**From:** "Mangwa Younkam, Andrew" <mangwa.andrew@und.edu>

**Date:** Tuesday, May 14, 2019 at 11:56 AM

**To:** Justin Fryer <Justin.Fryer@k12.nd.us>

**Subject:** Fw: Request to conduct research

Dear Superintendent Fryer,

I am a Ph.D candidate in the department of Educational Leadership at the university of North Dakota. I am conducting a research to complete my dissertation. The topic of my research is *examine elementary and secondary teachers' perceptions on Native American students' academic performance in North Dakota*. I write to request permission to sample teachers in your school district's perceptions on Native American students academic perform. A detail description of the process is in a letter I have attach to this email.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to receiving your letter in response.

Sincerely,

Andrew Mangwa

## **APPENDIX G**

### **PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

**Project Title:** Examining Elementary and Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions of  
Native American Students' Academic Performance in North Dakota  
(ND)

**Principal Investigator:** Andrew Younkam Mangwa

**Phone/Email Address:** mangwa.andrew@und.edu

**Department:** Teaching, Leadership and Professional Practices

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Sherryl Houdek

**Phone/Email Address:** 701-777-3577, sherryl.houdek@und.edu

#### **What should I know about this research?**

- The survey is anonymous.
- Taking part in this research is voluntary. Whether you take part is up to you.
- If you don't take part, it won't be held against you.
- You can take part now and later drop out, and it won't be held against you.
- If you don't understand, ask questions.
- Ask all the questions you want before you decide.

#### **How long will I be in this research?**

We expect that your taking part in this research will last for one week.

**Why is this research being done?**

The purpose of this research is to examine the perceptions of elementary, middle, and high school teachers on Native American student academic performance in public schools with high Native American student enrollment in North Dakota.

**What happens to me if I agree to take part in this research?**

Participants will be asked to rate their level of agreement on statements using a 6-point Likert-type scale. Upon receipt of a signed consent form or letter from the school districts' superintendents approving the study, building principals will be provided the Qualtrics link for teachers to complete a survey within one-week time frame.

**Could being in this research hurt me?**

There is no anticipated risk involve in the study.

**Will being in this research benefit me?**

The outcome of this study is a document with recommendations that will be made available to ND school districts and Native American tribal offices of the different reservations in North Dakota which could be beneficial to participants.

**The findings of the study will be made available to . . .**

The outcome of this study will be a document with recommendations that will be made available to ND school districts, DPI, and Native American tribal offices of the different reservations in North Dakota.

**How many people will participate in this research?**

Approximately 150 teachers from four school districts with high Native American students' enrollment will take part in this study.

**What other choices do I have besides taking part in this research?**

Instead of being in this research, you may choose not to participate.

**Will it cost me money to take part in this research?**

You will not have any costs for being in this research study.

**Will I be paid for taking part in this research?**

You will not be paid for being in this research study.

**Who is funding this research?**

The University of North Dakota and the researcher are receiving no payments from other agencies, organizations, or companies to conduct this research study.

**What happens to information collected for this research?**

There are no identifiers in the survey. Participation is anonymous. The survey will be done online in UND Qualtrics and will be stored there throughout the study. No other agency or persons will have access to the data. The data will be deleted upon completion of the research following UND protocol.

**Could being in this research hurt me?**

No, you will not be hurt and there is no risk involved.

**What if I agree to be in the research and then change my mind?**

There is no consequence if you decide to leave the study early.

**Who can answer my questions about this research?**

- 1) **Andrew Y. Mangwa**, 3600 Campus Road Apt 219, Grand Forks, ND 58203  
mangwa.andrew@und.edu
- 2) **Dr. Sherryl Houdek**, Associate Professor, EDL Pk-12 Program Coordinator,  
Office Phone: 701-777-3577, sherryl.houdek@und.edu  
Office Location: Education Building #370, 231 Centennial Drive MAIL 7189,  
UND, Grand Forks, ND 58202-7189
- 3) **UND Institutional Review Board**, Tech Accelerator Suite 2050, 4201 James  
Ray Drive, Grand Forks, ND 58202  
Phone: 701.777.4279, Fax: 701.777.2193, UND.irb@UND.edu

Subject's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I have discussed the above points with the subject or, where appropriate, with the subject's legally authorized representative.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Who Obtained Consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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