Tuition-free Waldorf Education for Native American Students

To honor the indigenous people of North America, we invite and prompt all Waldorf schools on the North American continent to allow Native American students to be enrolled tuition-free (see the attached "Call to all Waldorf Schools and AWSNA leaders"). Waldorf Education is more than teaching; it is a healing pedagogy and therefore has enormous potential to bring healing and new impulses into this world.

We therefore ask all Waldorf Schools and the AWSNA to help make Waldorf Education accessible to our Native American children as an act of reconciliation.

The following recommendations can serve as a guide for schools developing policies and practices that include Native Americans, First Nations, or Alaskan Natives.

The Maine Coast Waldorf School (MCWS) has done so and has created a policy statement that can be used by other schools as a template, with their own additions or modifications.

MCWS - First Nations Reconciliation Tuition Program (created 08/2022)

In recognition of the historical and continuing trauma inflicted by colonialism on First Nations peoples in North America, Maine Coast Waldorf School (MCWS) makes the following effort toward reconciliation:

To begin in the 2022–2023 school year, MCWS will accept up to 10 students for a tuition-free Waldorf education for students whose families can demonstrate eligibility of holding status as members of a recognized indigenous tribe on this continent, into classes which are not determined to be at capacity.

Interested families will make formal application to the school. In turn, MCWS intends to see these students through their graduation from our high school, so long as it is recognized that MCWS remains a good fit for a given student.

This policy should apply to students <u>from any and all indigenous nation on the North America continent</u>,
Noting that USA is a construct of colonialism and so the policy should emphasis the Indigenous students are accepted from recognized tribal nations throughout the North American continent, not just the USA and not only to tribes from the actual land on which the schools reside.

Suggestion for schools using this program statement as a template: Consider omitting the provision that students will be admitted only into classes that are not at capacity, because this puts Native American students into second place.

Eligibility

The question will arise as to who is eligible to join a Waldorf school as a Native American. There are 574 federally or state recognized indigenous nations in the USA, and there are more than 200 indigenous nations that are not federally recognized. Every Native American must be registered at the indigenous nations of his or her origin. Tribal constitutions determine the criteria for an individual's tribal enrollment. Registered tribal members receive a tribal ID. This tribal ID is commonly used to identify a tribal member and could be used as a means for eligibility to join a Waldorf school. In the case of indigenous nations that are not federally recognized, it would be the decision of the specific Waldorf school to decide how to work with eligibility. Our Recommendation for a student that claims to be a member of a tribe that is not federally recognized, is to ask for some kind of proof or documentation.

Recommendations/Guidelines for implementation if such a policy is created.

1. **Outreach to indigenous communities**

   Once a school adopts a policy to accept Native American students on a tuition-free basis, it must be communicated to Native American communities.

   1. **Outreach to Native American communities**: A school should publicize the 'Tuition-free Waldorf Education for Native American Students" policy as widely as possible. There are several ways to reach out to Native American communities, research will build those bridges and most larger cities have a Native Americans Community Centers.
   2. **Contacts:** A school should make personal contact with Native American communities and maintain contact. Develop flyers and informational brochures about your school and the No Tuition policy and distribute in the Native American Community Centers in your region. Publish it in your local newspapers, community newsletter, and in parent/family outreach.
      Invite Native American artists, speakers, activists, parents, grandparents, leaders to visit your school.

2. **Involvement of indigenous communities.**
   1. Work together with the Native American communities of your area. Involve them in your plans and seek guidance; ask them for ideas/help to spread the word and be willing to pay for them for their services just as you do to a consultant.
3. **Identify and meet the needs of indigenous students.**
   1. Invite Native American elders to your school, to teach cultural classes and introduce the native language and code of conduct. Involve them as counselors if you have Native American students and ask them to help identify their needs. Offer stipends for their work. Decolonize your teaching practices, methods, materials, and curricula.
4. **Decolonizing curriculum.**

Include Native American history and the indigenous history of your area. Start working on decolonizing the curriculum. Learn to detect Eurocentrism and develop teaching for inclusion. Research literature relevant to your area.

5. **True Inclusion.**
    1. Hire a cultural mentor – An indigenous person who advocates for inclusion of local indigenous cultures in your school, acts as a bridge between indigenous students and the school, identifies needs that non-indigenous people may overlook.
    2. Create a culture of learning about indigenous cultures and history among the staff.
    3. Administer professional development for all staff on culturally relevant education and colonial education practices.
    4. Include indigenous people in change-making processes by putting them in leadership positions (board members, board advisors, principals, assistant principals, advisors to principals, DEI personnel etc.).
    5. Learn to identify and overcome Eurocentrism, capitalistic values, white supremacy, and societal hierarchies.
6. **Fundraising for tuition and scholarships for indigenous students**

    There are several avenues for fundraising to support this policy. You will be surprised to discover that there are many individuals and foundations who like to support Native American Students, its important to get the word out.
    1. **School community:** Reach out to your school community, through newsletters and parent communication. Ask if a school family is willing to cover the cost you lose through tuition-free policies. Develop a sponsor program, make a **brochure with a budget** of expenses for a Native American student for one school year.
    2. **Local community:** Reach out to your local community, local governments, your town, county and beyond; publish articles about the Tuition-Free Waldorf Education for Native American Students policy and your sponsor program.
    3. **Wider community**: Reach out to your wider community, for example, distant contacts on your fundraising database, relatives of school families. Distribute your brochure to all your constituencies and foundations describing the policy and explaining the costs for one Native American student, including tuition for 1 school year, extra costs for school trips, supplies, housing, meals, transportation.
    4. Create a **Native American Fund** or Native American Student sponsor program, as restricted funds in your organization budget.
    5. **Give donors** the choice to donate either to the unrestricted fund or directly to one specific student.
    6. Do not use scholarships as those still are still tuition-based.
    7. **Fundraising:** A school can find grants by searching the Foundation Center's database (with a subscription fee) using the search terms "scholarships" and "Native Americans", “Native Americans”, “Minorites”, “Education”,

"Indigenous". The Foundation Center's database is combined with GuideStar, which is a site that can be used for reviewing the 990s of foundations: www.candid.org.

8. Another possible source for funding might be the many Native American Tribes and foundations, for example, Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Company, First Nations Development Institute, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, and others. They are not all listed in foundation databases, but you can use the internet to search for these resources. Also investigate foundations that support Waldorf Education like WEF (Waldorf Educational Foundation).
9. Waldorf schools should include funding in their budgets for subscriptions for grant search software to make this possible. Be aware of laws relating to independent schools and identity-based scholarships.

AIWP - Academy For Indigenous Waldorf Pedagogy, developed by Lakota Waldorf School and located at LWS. It is a teacher training program for any interested Native American person, guided and under the umbrella of AfaP (Academy for Anthroposophic Pedagogy) in Dornach.

- For workshops on indigenous educational needs, deconstructing Euro-centric values, culturally relevant Waldorf pedagogy and inclusion, contact Celestine Stadnick: celestine.stadnick@gmail.com

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