



The Challenge: A Significant Achievement Gap

In 2012, **American Indian students in Minnesota had a graduation rate of 42 percent.** The overall Minnesota graduation rate at the time was 77 percent. The data on mathematics and reading proficiency that the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) had for the same year also highlighted a significant achievement gap between the state's American Indian and overall student populations.



The Strategy: Fostering Communication and Collaboration

In response to a disproportionately low graduation rate and large achievement gap, **MDE established the Director of Indian Education position** to work closely with the Tribal Nations in the state. MDE partnered with the Midwest Comprehensive Center (MWCC), which **supported the director's office in planning and hosting the first Minnesota American Indian Education (AIE) Summit.** MWCC served as a thought partner to MDE staff on the content development, speaker selections, and design of the summit, which brought together Indian education program staff, teachers, tribal organization representatives, superintendents, higher education faculty and staff, community members, and other nonprofit organizations.

MWCC supported MDE in developing effective approaches to management, planning, and communications with the AIE advisory board and MDE, including identifying necessary activities and steps to achieve revisions to the state curriculum about American Indians.

MWCC brought together **state education agency staff from Minnesota and Wisconsin to help create working relationships and dialogue aimed at improving the AIE curriculum.**



Immediate Impact: Bringing a New Awareness to American Indian Education

The AIE Summit proved successful in **convening a variety of educators to identify strategies for closing the achievement gap, sharing resources, exploring solutions, and scaling up effective practices** to improve outcomes for American Indian students. Many of the attendees reported that they planned to share or use what they learned at the Summit with some expressing interest in intensive training and coaching related to American Indian education.

MWCC strengthened the relationships and collaboration between the stakeholder groups, including MDE, the Tribal Nations Education Council, the Minnesota Indian Education Association, and the White House Initiative on Indian and Alaskan Native Education. MDE is currently working with the Tribal Nations of Minnesota to **revise sections of the AIE curriculum framework and increase its alignment to the state's social studies standards.**



The System Change: Increased State Capacity Means More District and School Support

As a result of its partnership with MWCC, **MDE has increased its outreach and cooperation with internal and external stakeholders.**

MDE now has dedicated **staff members with increased knowledge and skills to provide guidance and strategies specific to the state's American Indian populations** to schools, districts, and organizations. MDE has the skills and tools to bring the right stakeholders to the table and develop AIE curriculum resources to improve American Indian student outcomes.