The 360|Report

Ramsey County, the City of St. Paul and St. Paul Public Schools Presents

Engage! | Indigenous ISI
Facilitated by MTI, hosted by American Indian Magnet School in St. Paul
Special Guest: The Sioux Chef

Date: Monday, March 7th 2016 | 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

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Ramsey County, the City of St. Paul & St. Paul Public Schools
Engage! Indigenous ISI
Monday, March 7th 2016

The 360 Report | Convening Details

Miscellaneous Notes & Demographics
Approximately 47 attendees at mid-point of event (7 p.m.)
At least 42 of 47 participants are POC
Approximately 10 children in attendance
98% met someone new
100% learned something they didn't know before from someone they met here today

The 360 Report | Oral Report Notes

Group One | The main thing we discussed is that kids need adults who care.

Group Two | What we came up with is that the question is all wrong – we are Indian people, we're not separate from our culture. It's way out of line to separate our youth from the family unit. There is no place where we can go as adults to hang out and our kids can be with us – like a community center where gathering is welcome. And how much is the city gonna put up (or shut up)? We know we haven't been unified enough, but we are starting to pull together to unify for our children, but we need a place where we can hang out and bring our families.

Group Three | Talking about where are we connecting with these kids before they get into difficult and challenging situations. That's gonna happen in the schools – it's gotta happen in the school. One thing we talked about is that mainstream schools don't understand Indian kids and families and the historical trauma that is so prevalent because of the boarding school era (right up into the 70s – not a long time ago). Now we're seeing kids who have been raised by those generations. In order to help that child, we need to help that family. But the parents get pushed aside and the kids get yanked around somewhere else. That's one of the ways we're losing them. Too often planning happens around the community, but leaders and elements in the community are not part of the planning. We need to be involved from the beginning to the end, so people aren't just making decisions for us without the families having part.

Group Four | Coming from the perspective of working with these kids and parents/families when they seek out counseling and therapy – we have so many families who are being torn apart and scattered to the wind. Kids pick up on the community stress that results from historical trauma – or it get's put on them, and instead of addressing that and reaching out, they are labeled as delinquent and placed into the system. When did kids become criminals for struggling and needing help? The whole colonized system is not effective. When are the governmental systems going to acknowledge that this is Indigenous land and that what has been done here not so long ago is the root cause of all these things? Why don't we have the freedom to speak up or access to any resources in order to undo what has been done?

Group Five | We talked about what we see in the community – we all, of different nations, are tired of society telling us who and what we are and where we belong. We took care of the Band Aid, but never the wound – not because we didn't know it was there, but because society keeps us so distracted in dealing with other things we shouldn't have to carry that we aren't able to address the real problems. We have resources in the community, but we need to come together for healing and looking for alternative, out of the box ways to heal. Dialogue is great, planning is great, but action is what's needed.

Group Six | We talked about the cultural piece and the mental health piece. Schools only teach what is in the books – not our true history. Schools need more support for families, and kids need support from both.

Group Seven | Our group talked about how our teachers at our school, they're teaching straight from the books – the white people's perspective of everything, but not the native side. In the books it seems like we're the ones who were the bad people and they were the best people in the world – that's what they see. I think we need both sides of the story. Funding for new books containing both perspectives would be good. Sometimes to get connected into services you have to already be struggling, but there's really nowhere for families to connect socially in a positive way and share resources or information about how to access resources and services. We talked about a community center as a potential solution to this problem – which is something we've discussed a lot in the past.

The Ramsey Triad//Concerted Social Action
Engage! An Indigenous Community Stakeholder Conversation
We have included these instructions and questions for your information.
March 7th, 2016/5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Mindstorm

Directions: Find a group of people that has the fewest number of people you know in it. Form into groups of 3-4 people (two groups per table). Freely enter and exit groups. Remember to listen and give everyone a chance to speak. Speak authentically from your own personal point of view. Don't speak for others. Always imagine what feels best. When you felt most welcomed. That you belong in this conversation and your voice is equal to any other at the Table. Remember that this is a two-way street and listening is as important as sharing your feelings.

Identify one scribe to take notes about the conversation and write down the names of the members of your group in the space provided. Read the questions out loud and discuss briefly which questions you as a group think are the most important to answer. Answer the questions that you have chosen in order from most-to-least important. Be as concrete and specific as possible. We are focused intently in this conversation about youth contact with the criminal justice system. We are seeking tangible places, where our children fall through the cracks, how this happens, and what we can do to better connect kids to valuable community resources and support.

Scribes: Please write legibly! Be prepared to hand over your notes to the team at the end of the evening.

Questions for Discussion (approximately 20-25 minutes per question):
1. Is there a young person in your life who has been involved in the criminal justice system? What do you think would have helped that young person at an earlier point in life to avoid that interaction?
2. What needs to be present in our community so a young person can feel comfortable self-identifying if s/he needs extra support or a safe space away from home? Is our community currently lacking any aspects of what you just described?
3. Are there already programs or people that do a very good job of connecting with kids? How do they do so? What qualities make them effective?
4. What (if any) are the unique needs of Indigenous youth in our urban community? How can the greater community institutions support these community specific needs?

The 360 Report | Mindstorm
Themes & Analysis

Ramsey County, the City of St. Paul & St. Paul Public Schools
The 360 Mindstorm Report | Themes & Analysis
Engage! Indigenous ISI | 7 March 2016

For this Table, held on March 7th 2016, we used a version of our December Engage! Mindstorm discussion guide and notes that we modified to centralize the needs of Indigenous communities and help support deep conversation around the most pertinent issues as identified by community members. The following represents an overview and analysis of the emergent themes resulting from these focus group discussions.

Q1 | Historical, Economic Distress & Trauma

In the first question of the discussion guide, we asked, *"Is there a young person in your life who has been involved in the criminal justice system? What do you think would have helped that young person at an earlier point in life to avoid that interaction?"* This question generated 44 responses from participants. Concerns regarding education, historical trauma and economic inequality and healthcare needs (especially mental health resources) figure prominently in this section.

Nearly half of these responses – 20 of the 44 responses in this section – address matters of historical and economic distress along with the impact of trauma and the need for more resources to address inequalities and healing. Respondents highlight the challenges associated with instability of home life related to colonialist displacement and economic oppression, along with the difficulties of maintaining good health and obtaining quality education given the inadequate resources for healthcare, quality education, and maintaining stable communities and lifestyles that exist under conditions of economic distress. Three of these 20 responses indicate the importance of early intervention and greater efforts toward the development and implementation of preventative measures.

Several respondents indicate a need for healing in general and/or in relationship to historical trauma (specifically, the impacts of the boarding-school era displacements and separation of young Indigenous children from culture, community, and family). Relatedly, four of these 20 responses indicate that the resulting cultural alienation and "identity issues – not understanding what it is to be 'Native'" has been a contributing factor to the criminalization of Indigenous youth. One response group indicates that "[we/our children] don't get to make the same teenage mistakes [as non-indigenous people in the U.S.]."

Q1 | Education, History & Culture

Another 18 of the 44 responses to Question One of our focus group discussion guide center

upon education particularly as it relates to Indigenous history, colonialism and culture. Respondents urge a need for culturally relevant education – that acknowledges rather than erases the lived experiences and history of Indigenous students, saying "schools only teach what's 'in the books' about our culture" and requesting "public education that matches our children's learning styles better, [the] current system is not set up for [the success of] too many [of our] children." Respondents also highlight the importance of having safe, engaging programs and spaces in the community for youth and families to access – particularly the need for neighborhood programs that are accessible via multiple modes of transportation and without restrictive fees that limit students' ability to participate in existing programs. One response group shared, "We have few places we can go where it is safe. [This] causes us to close down. We are living in parallel worlds."

Q1 | Community Connections

The remaining 7 of 44 total responses to Question One center upon the primacy of community and family relationships in creating stability for youth. Concerns cited in this section include a "disconnect" within and between communities, the need for "adults [to] have compassion" for youth, and the role of systems and communities in providing "concrete support for children and families," with one group opining that the "community needs to be more involved and more connected," and the general tone of the comments leaning toward a need for an increase in community voices in the decision-making that affects the lives of those in the communities.

Q2 | Cultural Relevance, Youth in Community

In Question Two of the Mindstorm discussion guide, we asked, *"What needs to be present in our community so a young person can feel comfortable self-identifying if s/he needs extra support or a safe space away from home? Is our community currently lacking any aspects of what you just described?"* This question received 25 total responses from discussion groups with themes ranging from the need for positive cultural representation and role models, the need for fun, accessible and inclusive community spaces as well as a desire to see more Native and Indigenous peoples – especially elders – in the schools and in outside programs serving youth.

Responses in this section emphasize the importance of "culturally relevant afterschool activities and programs that teach to culturally specific/relevant [standards], and center education and community spaces as valuable modes for creating safe places for kids to go and helping to provide accessible resources for youth and community development. One response group encourages systems to "take [a] community-responsive approach," that speaks to the need for asset-based frameworks to community solutions, while another indicates the importance of centering youth voices, concerns and experiences ("Make it about [the] youth").

Q3 | Themes This Section

In Question Three of the discussion guide, we asked, *"Are there already programs or people that do a very good job of connecting with kids? How do they do so? What qualities make them effective?"* This section received 36 total responses. These responses are largely divided between (general) activities that anyone might engage with and specific programs and organizations currently extant in the community. Additional responses highlight challenges and concerns and/or positive outcomes of engaging with kids in community.

Specific Programs & People Currently Connecting with Kids in Community

➢ ADY (Ain Dah Yung)
➢ Afterschool – WeCare
➢ American Indian Education Program – Maggie Lorenz (Indian Ed Check & Coordinator)

in schools
- ➢ American Indian Family Center
- ➢ American Indian Montessori
- ➢ Big Bros, Big Sis
- ➢ DIW- Summer Indian Youth Enrichment
- ➢ Indian ECFE program
- ➢ Garden Warriors (Mpls)
- ➢ Golden Eagles (Mpls)
- ➢ Mazinaakizige (Native Teen Photography Program)
- ➢ Travis Decory (CD Prevention Specialist – Ain Dah Yung)
- ➢ Tribal work – Mille Lacs
- ➢ Y-Start (afterschool program)

General activities highlighted in the responses also include school classes, language courses, service learning projects, talking circles, Pow-Wows, art, documentation, quilt-making, youth leadership opportunities in general and opportunities for kids to engage parents. Qualities considered to be supportive of these initiatives include consistency, positive and asset-based approaches, helping others, and opportunities for youth to see positive representation of their communities and backgrounds. Participants also indicated questions and concerns here with responses constelling around the importance of relationship-building and mentoring along with the importance of creating a sense of being valued, respected and listened-to for youth in the community to truly feel that their needs are being acknowledged and met. One response group notes that proper resourcing is necessary to achieve and sustain long-term work.

Q4 | Themes This Section

In Question Four of the discussion guide we asked, *"What (if any) are the unique needs of Indigenous youth in our urban community? How can the greater community institutions support these community specific needs?"* This inquiry received 25 total responses.

Sixteen of the 25 responses in this section indicate a concern with cultural identify and the need to unify community and solidify cultural connections within and between communities. Specific themes emerging here are the need to create a sense of belonging by fostering youth connections to self and community via the transmission of cultural history ("learn the history of treaties," "less [of the] settlers' perspective," "[we need] alternative teaching resources") and support and resources for connecting or reconnecting to native languages and lands ("access to language," "access to homelands/rez"). Respondents placed heavy emphasis on education and history as tools for creating strong communities and youth. Five of 25 responses in this section emphasize a need for cross-cultural support and collaboration, with respondents urging "[we] need support from outside communities," and "[listen] to us, hear what we are saying." One response group admonishes systems leaders to "invite our community to the planning table at the beginning of the process – not as an after thought – and listen," indicating the value placed upon giving voice to community members and stakeholders in decisions that affect marginalized communities. Additional responses indicate a need for extra support and resourcing around different learning and communication styles, parenting, and mental health and addiction issues.

Additional Observations & Comments

Additional observations and comments largely center on the impact and importance of minimizing or eliminating family separations and removals. Responses include the following community-generated responses:

- ➢ Family separation – huge deal

- Outside creative solutions
- Caregiver (foster) living in the home rather than tearing kids from home
- Reaching out to key leaders in community
- FUNDING!!!

The 360 Report
Ramsey County, St. Paul & SPPS
Mindstorm Raw Response Data

Engage! Indigenous ISI
Mindstorm of March 7, 2016 | Raw Response Data

Question 1: Is there a young person in your life who has been involved in the criminal justice system? What do you think would have helped that young person at an earlier point in life to avoid that interaction?

- Schools only teach what's in the books about our "culture" *
- 15 year old autistic son – huge amount of adequate resources from parents, health care, school system*
- Having school be a [safe, inclusively welcoming] place*
- Problem recognized in school, but school made problems worse *
- Address the gap between entitlement, resources, and private health services, childcare
- Afterschool enrichment programs that don't have fees
- More children in trauma, more diagnoses, but it's not helping
- Neighborhood schools, community strengths and relationship
- Public education that matches our children's learning styles better, current system not set up for too many children*
- Eliminate poverty, poor health, abuse in home
- Staff dealing with our children are left-brain developed. We are more right-brain developed. We have to adapt, but they don't. We have few places we can go where it is safe. [This] causes us to close down. We are living in parallel worlds.
- Columbus in America
- Systemic oppression
- Live in neighborhood that has "lots" of police presence – "less" militarization
- [We/our children] don't get to make same teenage mistakes
- American Indian responsive programming
- Identity issues – not understanding what it is to be "Native"
- Historical trauma – boarding school era
- "Need to be grounded in culture, tradition"
- Need to heal!
- Addressing trauma (different kinds of trauma)
- Earlier intervention
- Community (or lack of)
- Resources for families (healing trauma)
- Identifiers of young people who need an intervention/resources
- Concrete support for children & families
- Not identifying or aligning with the dominant culture
- Identity questions

- Yes – ==discontinuing special education services when student was improving==
- Decrease adverse early experiences – more support for regular educational programming
- Community needs to be more involved and more connected
- Disconnect
- Early intervention
- Mental health
- Stability in the home
- Relationship, connected to other adults
- Life can be really tough
- ==Not being in one place, moving around, loss of community==
- Cultural understanding
- Therapy
- Administration listening, more resources in
- Too many kids, not enough resources for them
- Adults have compassion
- ==Not enough prevention/intervention==
- Teachers have relationship/care

Question 2: What needs to be present in our community so a young person can feel comfortable self-identifying if s/he needs extra support or a safe space away from home? Is our community currently lacking any aspects of what you just described?

- ==Positive role models, their culture represented in every aspect of community==
- Text books, media, teachers, in foods, and music
- Culturally relevant afterschool activities and programs that teach to culturally specific/relevant [standards]
- Being […]
- Community centers
- ==Rec centers – safe places for kids==
- Access to resources – safe spaces
- ==Lack of modeling/demonstration of strong support system==
- Social emotional support
- ==Fun space==
- Community center – Native center
- Everyone has a part
- Improve our social norms
- Value education
- A person to talk to that you trust/friend
- Therapy
- Good schools
- Affirmations from community (self-identity)
- Develop social skills (culturally relevant communication style)
- ==Systems take community-responsive approach==
- Long-term relationships with youth ➔ aren't just doing behavior
- More guidance counselors
- ==Native people in schools==
- ==Elder volunteers (keep the adult drama out of it)==
- Make it about youth

Question 3: Are there already programs or people that do a very good job of connecting with kids? How do they do so? What qualities make them effective?

- Maggie Lorenz – in schools!
- Travis Decory
- Tribal work – Mille Lacs
- *Relationship building ➜ What & how matter!
- Problem – Resources to sustain and do long-term work
- Indian Education (limited program)
- Garden Warriors (Mpls)
- Golden Eagles (Mpls)
- Big Bros, Big Sis
- ➜ valued, respected, listened to, one on one attention (mentorships)
- Yes - Indian Education
- How can it carry over?
- Kids engaging parents
- More investment in community
- DIW- Summer Indian Youth Enrichment
- ADY (Ain Dah Yung)
- American Indian Family Center
- American Indian Montessori
- Needs to be positive based
- Y-Start (after school program)
- Indian ECFE program
- Talking circle
- Schools (classes), language courses
- Pow-Wows
- Consistency
- Afterschool – WeCare
- In-school language program
- Service learning project, helping others
- If youth feel they are addressing needs in community
- Mazinaakizige (Native Teen Photography Program)
- Art galleries
- Art
- Documentation
- Quilt-making, etc.
- Youth to get power and learn skills to share how they want to be portrayed

Question 4: What (if any) are the unique needs of Indigenous youth in our urban community? How can the greater community institutions support these community specific needs?

- Support
- Invite our community to the planning table at the beginning of the process – not as an afterthought – and listen
- Language camps (Kiwenz)
- Access to language
- Access to homelands/rez
- *Community cultural connections need to be solidified and unified
- Cultural identity

- ➢ Sense of belonging
- ➢ Communication styles
- ➢ <mark>Learning styles</mark>
- ➢ Parenting
- ➢ Mental health
- ➢ Addiction prevention (resources)
- ➢ <mark>Mental health</mark>
- ➢ Cultural balance
- ➢ <mark>Teachers that are supportive and understanding of community need, concerns, etc.</mark>
- ➢ Listening to us, hear what we are saying
- ➢ More culture classes
- ➢ <mark>Learn the history of treaties</mark>
- ➢ <mark>Less settlers perspective</mark>
- ➢ <mark>Alternative teaching resources</mark>
- ➢ Need support from outside communities
- ➢ "Sovereignty" terms
- ➢ Ojibwewin (Ojibwe language)
- ➢ For Indigenous Eyes Only (Decolonization)

What else should we know?

- ➢ <mark>Family separation – huge deal</mark>
- ➢ * Outside creative solutions
- ➢ Caregiver (foster) living in the home rather than tearing kids from home
- ➢ Reaching out to key leaders in community
- ➢ FUNDING!!!

The 360 Report | Selected Circle Share-in Responses

Circle Share-in Notes

One Sentence – *What is it that you could do to be more welcoming to people left out of the conversation?*

➢ I want to work to focus more on the families of the students I work with – we're all on a team, so I want to learn their names and connect with them as well.

➢ Bringing people into the conversation.

➢ Validate other people's stories.

➢ Stop and listen.

➢ Get away from questions about what do you do, where are you from (things to hang a label on), and instead ask what do you do for inspiration, what inspires you?

➢ Mine would be just to ask a question – the questions on the table made me think about my students, sometimes it's as simple as asking them to be part of the group.

➢ Make someone comfortable like a friend or a relative instead of a stranger.

➢ Making people feel welcome, introduce yourself – say "hello," smile, be warm.

➢ I think we just haven't introduced ourselves well or slowed down enough to listen to someone else's introduction.

➢ I would say maybe involving people – if you're in a group you don't know, just introduce yourself. Making people feel welcome, connecting over food. If you notice someone is especially quiet in a group, ask them a question.

➢ Listening and acknowledgment of what is happening.

➢ Just being vulnerable, relaxing and being yourself.

➢ To include others or get them to share you have to share yourself, listen, be kind, but be vulnerable too.

- In listening to others, always assume good intentions.

- Be the example that you can be the shy, introverted Indian girl, but you can also come forward and speak truth to power, speak for your community and make things happen.

- I try to stay connected in community to former students – meeting their children, spouses, the rest of their families.

- When I'm talking to new people, I try to step away from any stereotypes that I have in mind and ask questions – starting out small and working up.

- I always encourage everyone to "tell your story!"

- I think a smile is free and a great way to connect, so I start with a smile.

- Cracking a joke, make people laugh and feel comfortable, value everybody – their differences and likenesses.

- Don't judge a book by its cover, keep an open mind, help people feel comfortable, at ease.

- In community, I think kindness wins. Language is important, but so is nonverbal language – kind eyes, a smile.

- Making those connections in the room with people, help facilitate networking and connecting people.

- How many times can you answer the same question in a different way? I agree with everybody's answer, but a lot of times I think you can listen, but you're just listening – in one ear and out the other. I think you have to really train your body and yourself to shut up – that's me I have to train myself to shut up and really hear other people. I have to learn how to become my culture. Our people used to really hear other people, to give them the time to [speak fully]. They knew, if we're together in a room it's for a reason – everyone has a voice and a story. We have to shut up to make that possible.

- What Colin said – how do you follow Colin, seriously? I think just being open and kind – that's the best way you can go about any situation.

- I think stories are important too, but many of our youth are hearing teacher's story's, the school's story, the institution's stories – I want them to hear their own stories.

- I like to meet new people and get to know them. I think this is good, but we need more of this – more for our people and our youth to be included.

Important – need to keep participants here informed and included in the process, so that there is a clear line from the conversations to the visioning to the action.

Point made by participant: What are the results – what are the outcomes – what is the purpose of this meeting (on 10 March 2016)? I work for the county and I know we don't

have enough funding anywhere (for the last year, my daughter has had to sit on the ground at school because there isn't enough funding in her school district) – So, I'm going to say this a little harshly – I don't want to participate if this is just going to be us arguing and fighting each other for limited resources.