

Council Fires

Newsletter



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Oceti Sakowin Education Consortium, Box 731, Kyle, SD, 57752

www.osdlc.org



SD GEAR UP WINS NATIONAL AWARD

In April of 2007, SD GEAR UP attended the Exemplary Institute in Albuquerque, NM and came away designated an "Exemplary Program" in Indian Education. "The EPIE winners are the 'best of the best,'" stated Dr. Dean Chavers, Coordinator of the Exemplary Institute. "They set the standards for excellence in Indian schools. Not only that, but they set the standards for excellence in all schools. The EPIE schools are the best in the U. S., we have found."

The **EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS IN INDIAN EDUCATION** Award went to two different programs that have achieved exemplary results. One award went to Mr. Stacy Phelps and the staff of the South Dakota GEAR UP program. The program has prepared hundreds of Indian students for college, and maintained a very high retention rate, serving the State of South Dakota for a decade and a half. Mr. Phelps will also be the keynote speaker at the 2008 conference. This year's conference is titled "Teaching Math and Science." Mr. Stacy Phelps is the Department Chairman of the Math and Science Department at Oglala Lakota College. The GEAR UP program has helped to send over 1,000 students on to college in the past 15 years. The completion rate of GEAR UP students is over 90%, and the college entrance rate is over 80%. The program is an Exemplary Program in Indian Education and the winner of an outstanding program from the U. S. Education Department. The other award went to Mr. David Nelson, Principal of Box Elder Elementary School, MT. The school is one of the top-rated schools in the State of Montana. ♦

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Rapid City man named to South Dakota State Board of Education

By R.C. Journal staff Wednesday, April 09, 2008

A Rapid City man who founded the SD GEAR UP, a pre-college enrichment program designed to focus on the number of Native American students who enter college, has been named to the South Dakota Board of Education.

Stacy Phelps will fill the position previously held by Clint Waara.

"Stacy brings the experience of developing and operating successful middle and high school academic programs focused on increasing student interest and awareness in science, technology, engineering, and math career areas," Gov. Mike Rounds said in a news release announcing Phelps' appointment to the board. "He also serves as Department Chair at Oglala Lakota College (OLC) on the Pine Ridge Reservation and has developed extensive STEM-based (Science Technology Engineering and Math) programs at the college level."

A graduate of South Dakota School of Mines & Technology in Rapid City with a Bachelors degree in Mechanical Engineering and a Masters in Educational Technology from Dakota State University, Phelps is near completion of a second Masters in Educational Leadership from Oglala Lakota College and an Educational Doctorate in Adult and Higher Education from The University of South Dakota.

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Bridges: A web-based career awareness and exploration program

By Angela Quinn-Estes, SD GEAR UP Coordinator

Bridges is an interesting multi-level program that enables students to plan for high school and college. Our SD GEAR UP summer programs in high school and middle school has fully implemented this. Students enjoy getting to know their interests and what career would be a good match. This program can be used at home if there is an internet service. This would allow families a chance to look at the portfolio and share what the student is interested in.

The program is divided into work, learn and life. The work component allows the students to explore careers, watch videos, examines real-life activities and interviews. The Learn component provides a high school and college guide. The students can take a major finder quiz that directs the student towards a college that has the major they are interested in. The life component looks at volunteer and recreation ideas.

Students develop an electronic portfolio that accumulates helpful information. Things you will find in the portfolio are: career plan builder, colleges and careers saved, a journal, activities and plans.

Bridges is a free very valuable tool that can help your student plan for their future. The free access is provided by South Dakota Department of Education. If more information or training is need contact me at (605) 730-1962. ♦

Website: www.bridges.com

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From the Desk

By Brian Wagner, SPED Director

An administrator asked me to conduct research how to handle the visitation of a parent who is on the South Dakota and/or National Sex Offender Registry. Based upon the research, a school administration has to work in good faith to protect the children within their school/Head Start. However, in doing so, the administration cannot violate another individual's rights. I would make the following recommendations:

1. Be aware of the National and State registries
2. Work with local law enforcement to be aware of those individuals who cannot have any contact with children
3. Keep your staff informed and diligent in supervision
4. Train your staff for signs of abuse and neglect
5. Educate your students
6. Establish a sign-in sheet for school visitors, if your school does not already have this implemented
7. Establish a signature for individuals picking up students during the school day, if your school does not already have this implemented
8. Work in good faith to supervise identified individuals if they choose to participate in school activities
9. Work/meet privately with identified individuals who cannot have contact with children, if they have custody of a son or daughter who is attending your school
10. Respect the rights of identified individuals while ensuring the safety of the children you are trusted to supervise and educate

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about anything included in this article. You may reach me through my office phone: 605-472-1402; cell phone: 605-450-1497, or my e-mail: bdwag45@yahoo.com ♦



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School Improvement

By Stephanie Charging Eagle
Director of School Improvement

Iyuha cante waste nape ciyuzapi. I greet all of you with a warm hand shake and wish you a happy new year.

I am happy to share with you the exciting work I have been involved with the membership schools of OSEC and other schools serving native students. I continue to provide professional development in school improvement that includes development of standards for curriculum development, integration of language and culture in academics, teacher observations, behavior management and development of school improvement plans.

I am working with Isna Wica Owayawa (Loneman School) in teacher observation. The process includes the use of a criterion based observation form that has been adapted for local use and individualized personnel plan for each teacher. I will share more on this process in the next newsletter.

I am providing professional development in culture-based behavior management to the Flandreau Indian School and St. Francis High School. Based on personal experience, research and case studies, I developed a power point that is an overview of Lakota specific child rearing practices. I continue to build on the initial power point presentation with the expectation to produce a model on culture-based behavior management.

Another project in the works, is working with Shannon County School District to audit social studies standards and assist in integrating or fusing the standards with Lakota Studies standards. The target grades are K-8 and expand standards to grades 9 through 12.

Crow Creek School is in the process of developing their school improvement plan for next year. The Plan will include the professional development of staff, math and reading standards and the parental involvement. I am facilitating the process for the team identified to work on the plan. This is a monthly activity or as needed.

In the fall, the Cangdeska Cikana Community College (CCCC-Little Hoop) at Spirit Lake, ND joined OSEC for technical assistance. The college initiated the gathering of two Dakota tribal colleges to begin discussion on the formation of a Dakota Tribal College Alliance.

The purpose of DTCA is to strengthen the Dakota language, history and culture. A meeting was held in Santee, NE on December 19, 2007 to begin the discussion. In attendance were Cangdeska Cikana Community College, Sisseton-Wahpeton Community College, and Nebraska Indian Community College. The presidents from the three colleges were in attendance. OSEC is contracting with CCCC to adapt a curriculum for Dakota-specific curriculum. I will be providing that technical assistance to CCCC.

Ted and I are drafting a proposal to Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) to develop the alternative Annual Yearly Progress definition. The development of an alternative AYP definition has been in the works for couple of years. It is a unified effort between seven (7) schools in South Dakota. I will be writing more on the progress of alternative AYP definition in the next newsletter. ◊

Rapid City man...

Continued from page 1

A graduate of South Dakota School of Mines & Technology in Rapid City with a Bachelors degree in Mechanical Engineering and a Masters in Educational Technology from Dakota State University, Phelps is near completion of a second Masters in Educational Leadership from Oglala Lakota College and an Educational Doctorate in Adult and Higher Education from The University of South Dakota.

In 1992, as an undergraduate student, he initiated the SD GEAR UP program, which today targets 1,100 students per year in grades 6 through 12 for college awareness and preparation.

In 1996, he began working at OLC and has expanded the infrastructure, capacity, and focus on STEM for students in rural, higher education settings. Through his work, OLC serves as a national leader in STEM for tribal colleges and universities.

Phelps has been involved in several efforts focused on creating articulated pathways and partnerships that move students from K-12 educational systems through tribal colleges and on to state regental institutions.

Phelps' appointment begins immediately. ◊





Ivy League Colleges Are A Real Goal

Harvard, Stanford and Yale Universities have all announced in the past three years financial aid programs for students whose parents earn less than \$60,000.00 per year. There are deadlines coming up to take advantage of these opportunities. The list below is Internet links to the financial aid offices at a number of schools who reduce tuition for low-income students.

Stanford: http://www.stanford.edu/dept/finaid/prospective/1_1_financial_aid.html

Harvard: <http://www.fao.fas.harvard.edu/>

Yale: <http://www.yale.edu/sfas/finaid/>

Princeton: <http://www.princeton.edu/admission/financialaid/>

With these types of opportunities, the only question is: Do you have the courage to apply and go to one of these fine schools? **Bet you do!** ◊



Tribal Higher Education

Tribal Higher Education is a program funded by Congress that is managed by tribal offices and can help provide thousands of dollars for a student's college education. This is how it works; Congress passes a Tribal Higher Education appropriation every year. This year the amount of money allocated by Congress was just under 30 million dollars. The Bureau of Indian Education divides the money by tribe and sends it to Tribal Higher Education offices. The tribal offices and their tribal councils then set up rules (criteria) to distribute the money.

In the Oceti Sakowin Education Consortium, all Tribal Higher Education grants are "needs based". This means that students wishing to get the money have to fill out financial aid forms with the college they wish to attend and then report back to their tribal Higher Education office to get the Higher Education grants. In addition to determining need, tribes may have rules regarding residency. Tribal members may be required to live within a certain geographic area to receive support or to attend an institution within a specific region. These are rules established by the tribal councils.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING. All the Tribal Education officers I spoke with in getting this article together impressed on me the importance of getting paperwork in on time. Deadlines may seem a bit of a hassle, but they are important. The Higher Education departments work with the college or university Financial Aid Office to determine need and how much money can be made available.

The best way to get help from the tribe is to contact the Higher Education office. This is a list of people and phone numbers you should call. Keep in mind the tribal Higher Education program can provide as much as \$3,000.00 per year for college expenses. That's nearly 1/3 of the cost of attending a State Board of Regents college or a Tribal College. ◊

Tribal higher Education Offices:

Pine Ridge Tribal Higher Education

Phone Number: (605) 867-5338

Lower Brule Tribal Higher Education

Phone Number: (605) 473-9232

Cheyenne River Higher Education

Phone Number: (605) 964-7880

Sisseton Tribal Higher Education

Phone Number: (605) 698-3966

Yankton Tribal Higher Education

Phone Number: (605) 384-3997

Rosebud Tribal Higher Education

Phone Number (605) 747-2375

Crow Creek Tribal Higher Education

Phone Number: (605) 245-2356

Flandreau Tribal Higher Education

Phone Number: (605) 997-3891

Standing Rock Tribal Higher Education

Phone Number: (701) 854-7408



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SD GEAR UP SITE COORDINATORS CORNER

BY: Angela Estes-Quinn, SD GEAR UP Coordinator

SD GEAR UP had its winter Site Coordinator's meeting on Feb 4 & 5 in Oacoma, SD at Cedar Shore Resort. The conference agenda covered subjects on school matching, data collection, 9th grade transition program, and curriculum Jay Larsen from SD College Goal Sunday presented on the program. This is a free financial aid program that assists families in filling out the FAFSA forms on line.

SD GEAR UP's next focus is the 9th grade transition program. The high school's have chosen a site coordinator and some were present for the conference. The high school site coordinator will develop a plan that will be instrumental in increasing the retention rate and academic success for freshmen. An example of activities would be: 1-3 day freshmen orientation before school starts. During orientation the students can plan their courses for the next 4 years, understand how many credits are needed to graduate, learn what a GPA is, and invite guest speakers who can provide motivation and inspiration to students.

The high school site coordinator will be responsible for visiting the middle school students to discuss high school expectations and transition issues. They will be available at Parent-Teacher conferences to share information with middle school students and parents about high school. In the spring the 8th grade students will be scheduled to visit the high school. Also the site coordinator can plan activities that would help students graduate from high school and attend college. During the conference a curriculum was presented to the middle school site coordinator's. The contents on the curriculum were aligned with the goals and activity log. The monthly activities are: tutoring, homework assistance, academic enrichment, computer assisted labs (Bridges & Catapult), mentoring, counseling, academic advising and planning, career counseling, college visits, job shadowing, educational field trips, college planning/financial aid, cultural activities and family events.

Also a new and exciting item was introduced at the conference was the SD GEAR UP student and parent newsletter. This can be reproduced at the schools to be attached to the daily bulletin, presented at family nights or sent home for families to review. The major featured articles are the SD GEAR UP alumni, college planning tips, senior guidelines for getting ready for college and a college review. There is a column for parents and teachers on how they help their student be prepared to graduate from high school and college. Also featured is a career of the month from the Bridges program and a vocabulary builder. ◊

South Dakota GEAR UP's Mission is to increase the number of low-income Native American students that are prepared to graduate from higher education.

Special Education Department

By Brian Wagner, SPED Director

Ted Hamilton, OSEC Executive Director, requested that a summary of the activities the Special Education Department (SED) has accomplished since its inception. As the SED Director the responsibility falls upon me. OSEC's SED has seen substantial growth because of the initial support provided by the Tribes and numerous schools. Thanks to the hard work and support of the OSEC Board, Brian O'Connor, Ted Hamilton, Nick Hernandez, Scott Westerhuis, Dan Guerkie, other Mid-Central staff, and friends of OSEC we have come a substantial distance in a short period of time, but we have a long way to go before we can meet the needs of the children that we are all responsible for.

Some of the things the SED has done, is doing, or is working on doing are:

- Organized and held two OSEC Fall Conferences (2006 and 2007), which have a special education emphasis
- Provided technical assistance to BIE funded schools through on-site visits, phone TA, internet TA, and regional trainings
- Assisted with drafting of Special Education Budgets
- Drafted technical assistance documents
- Assist schools with the provision of related services through OSEC staff, subcontractors, and location of and facilitation of services with other service providers

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If you wish to contribute an article or editorial to **Council Fires, contact:**

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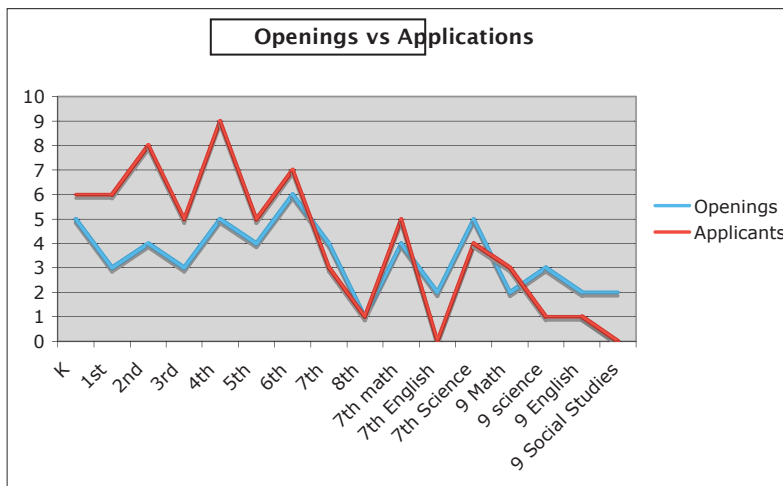


We Need Teachers!

By: Ted Hamilton, OSEC Director

In October of 2007 we created a simple survey to get an idea about how teacher recruiting was happening across the consortium and how many openings we were seeing. There were 13 respondents to the 18 surveys we sent out. We found some interesting things and opened up even more questions.

Two of our schools, Little Wound and Takini, are currently using an on-line service to identify potential teachers while the other schools are advertising locally in newspapers and through regional colleges. The table below indicates the number of opening by grade level across the schools surveyed and the number of applicants. The schools that did not use on-line recruitment had a rate of 1.2 applicants per open position.



What this means is we have more job openings than we have eligible applicants. We simply need more teachers. We particularly need high school teachers. If you are a school counselor, teacher, principal or parent, encourage the students you come in contact with to consider teaching as a profession.

If you are a student, think about teaching as a great career choice. All of our tribal colleges can get you on a path to becoming a teacher. There are opportunities to learn to teach at the Board of Regents Universities. Teaching on Reservations can also be financially beneficial.

If you take out a Stafford DOE Guarantee Student Loan, you can receive a \$5,000.00 forgiveness for the loan if you teach in a BIE Operated or Grant school and a Title I Public School. If you teach Math or Science you can get a loan forgiveness of \$17,500.00. You will need to teach for five consecutive years at the school. For more information on loan forgiveness go to:

<https://www.dlsonline.com/borrower/DefermentFormList.do?cmd=initializeContext> (on the left go to teacher loan forgiveness form) ◊

Paying For College

By: Ted Hamilton, OSEC Director

Going to college takes money. Fortunately, there are many ways to get money to attend college if you know where to go. It is amazing what is available for financial aid for students and families. Each edition of this newsletter will have a section on Financial Aid. Our goal is to make sure everyone knows all the vocabulary and initials used by the Financial Aid people and to help people see that there are many different ways to get money for students after High School.

Needs Based Funding

In this edition of the newsletter we want to talk a little bit about "needs based" funding for students. Needs based funding is money given to a student because their family incomes are a certain amount. There are two types of Federal needs based funding for students, PELL and SEOG.

PELL is a Federal program that determines a family's income and then, through a formula, figures out how much families are expected to contribute on an annual basis to a student's college education. This number is called an EFC that stands for Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The lower the Expected Family Contribution (EFC), the more money is paid to the student up to \$ 4,050.00 per year. Right now about 70% of students at Oglala Lakota College have an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of zero (0) so they get a full PELL Grant.

The other type of needs based funding is the Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG). The Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG) is money given to colleges by the Federal Government to hand out to students with the highest need. SEOG can range from \$800 to \$2,000 per year depending on the college or university. Students with a low Expected Family Contribution (EFC) are likely to get SEOG.

If your family is able get PELL and SEOG, you can expect to have as much as \$6,050.00 in financial aid to help get your child through college. The cost for attending Black Hills State for one year, assuming a student takes 16 credit hours of classes (look for a description of credit hours in future newsletters) is \$ 10,123.00. That means from two sources you can get over half of the money needed for college!

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Special Education...

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- Contracted by the Crow Creek Tribe to complete Child Find activities for Birth to 5, which includes the provision of additional support for the Early Head Start and Head Start Program. Services include access to a school psychologist, speech therapist, early childhood specialist, social worker, cultural educator, and a field person to manage the screenings and other activities. The contract also includes Interagency Meetings, which are meant to inform program directors of new programs or services available within the Crow Creek communities on a monthly basis.
- Contracted by the Lower Brule Head Start to assist with the Child Find activities for the Birth to 5 children on the Lower Brule Reservation. Services include a school psychologist, early childhood specialist, occupational therapist, and field person to assist with the screening process. The contract also includes Interagency Meetings, which are meant to inform program directors of new programs or services available within the Lower Brule communities on a monthly basis. The Interagency meetings have also resulted in a cooperative effort to hold a Community Fair to educate parents on positive parenting activities/techniques and what a community member should do if he/she suspects a child is being abused or neglected.
- Drafted and provided an electronic IDEA school level policy and procedure template, which includes directions on how the school can personalize the template.
- Provided guidance on IDEA issues to school boards through participation in Board Meetings or Board Retreats
- Provided reminders and assisted schools with the completion of IDEA reports required by Bureau of Indian Education
- Set up a recruiting table at the National Association of Hearing, Speech and Audiology (ASHA) conference in attempt to hire additional speech therapist
- Working with Watertown Lake Area Technical School to promote field opportunities for Certified Occupation Therapist Assistants (COTA)
- Working with the University of South Dakota Speech Program to see how services can be increased for the communities OSEC serves
- Assisted schools and Tribes with residential placements
- Assisted schools with the completion of South Dakota Medicaid application, which includes acquiring a National Provider Identifier (NPI)

- Completed mock program reviews to help schools recognize strengths and weaknesses
- Assisted with the provision of special education services for students incarcerated
- Facilitated IEP meetings through conference call and on-site
- Provided parent trainings
- School staff training on multiple IDEA issues upon request
- On-going recruitment and/or pursuit of additional related service staff based upon school needs and requests
- Participation in BIE trainings to maintain current on BIE requirements and advocate that maintenance of BIE policy and procedure stay true to IDEA regulations and get rid of BIE implemented timelines under the current BIE policy and procedure (BIE Eligibility Document)

The OSEC SED has a long ways to go before it will be able to fill the needs of all of the schools. There are some schools that have all of the services that there students require. Unfortunately, there are also schools that are short staff or being overcharged for services their students need. We have worked hard to meet some of these needs through additional staff, recruitment, subcontractors, facilitation of services and brokering services for private contractors. The needs continue to exist and we will keep working to support you and your children.

Please, feel free to contact me at bdwag45@yahoo.com or 605-472-1402, if you have any questions about the services the SED can provide, or if you have a need you would like OSEC to assist with. Please contact me if you know or are a related service provider who would be interested in becoming a part of the OSEC team. ◇

Paying For College...

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To help you determine your PELL Expected Family Contribution go to:
<http://www.finaid.org/calculators/finaidestimate.phtml>

Keep in mind that to get PELL and other financial aid you will need to apply on the Internet, so plan on contacting your school counselor for access to the Internet to fill out forms. PELL forms should be filled out no later than eight months before you intend to attend college.

A good place to find out about financial aid for college is at: www.finaid.org

The official PELL web site is at:
<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> ◇



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By the Way!

By: Ted Hamilton, OSEC Director

I am not sure when Nick will get this newsletter out to everyone, but today it is sunny and warm and I am remembering the morning I woke up in Flandreau to -18 degrees. Let's hear it for Spring.

Changes are afoot around the Consortium these days. Crow Creek and Takini are looking for new superintendents, if you know anyone interested have them apply. Porcupine residents are watching a new school grow on the old playing field North of the school and St. Francis is growing into their new high school. As is always the case, I hear that there is so much to do and so little time in which to do it.

As I look at all we are doing, I am very hopeful for the future. A year and a half ago Dan Guericke contacted us about working with Catapult Learning to try out a new on-line tutoring program. Angela Estes and Nick Hernandez worked with Mid-Central's Sylvia Street to get computers into student's homes and get them tutoring in reading and math. It worked so good we ended up helping schools get the service. We are also working on two new grant programs that will help expand the Catapult program into other schools. Every now and then I get to go over to Wounded Knee District School and they are showing me some very positive results using Catapult.

I hope to be able to include in our summer newsletter some test score data that shows the impact of this program. So far so good! The study we conducted for teacher recruitment from this past fall and our experiences trying to hire speech pathologists for the Consortium have led us to conclude that we need to encourage our young people to pursue careers in education. All of us, parents, grandparents, teachers, uncles, aunts, need to be helping our children and guiding those with the aptitude into education. It is more and more challenging to hire new people and I am excited that schools are now starting to use on-line tools to find faculty.

I understand that Ryan Wise from Teach for America is leaving his position. Teach for America has been instrumental in filling gaps in our teacher corp. Ryan worked very hard at bringing in the TFA program to South Dakota and particularly on the reservations across the State. If you get a chance to see him, wish him well and thank him for his hard work.

Well, it's time to get back at it. I hope this finds you well.